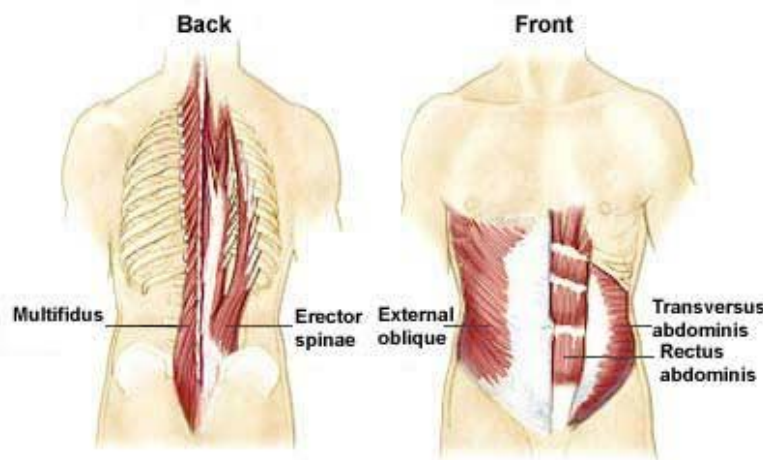


Strengthening Your Core

Your body's core is the area around your trunk and pelvis. When you have good core stability, the muscles in your pelvis, lower back, hips and abdomen work in harmony. Strong core muscles make it easier to do most physical activities — from swinging a golf club to getting a glass off a top shelf or bending down to tie your shoes. Weak core muscles leave you susceptible to poor posture, lower back pain and muscle injuries. Core exercises help you strengthen your core muscles. And it doesn't take specialized equipment or an expensive gym membership to try core exercises. Any exercise that uses the trunk of your body without support counts. Think squats, push-ups and abdominal crunches.



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Your core muscles work together to provide stability and protect you from injury. The muscle you feel contracting deep in your abdomen when you cough is the transversus abdominis. This muscle when contracting, acts as corset stabilizing your spine during activities. Other major abdominal muscles include the external oblique and the rectus abdominis. Major back muscles include the multifidus and the erector spinae.



Getting the Most from Your Workout

Do your core exercises as instructed by your Live PT Online physical therapist. For best results:

- **Breathe steadily and slowly.** Your instinct may be to hold your breath during your core exercises. Don't! It's better to breathe freely.
- **Focus on quality of movement rather than quantity.** When starting out, take it slow. Concentrate on performing each exercise with correct technique. You'll gradually build up to a greater number of repetitions.
- **Take a break when you need one.** If you work your core muscles to fatigue during an exercise session, wait at least a day between workouts to give your muscles time to recover.

Keep in mind that core exercises are an important part of getting better from low back pain and will help you return to the activities you enjoy. Aerobic exercise, strength training and stretching are important too. Your core strengthening program is the first step toward a healthy spine and overall fitness.

Note: If you experience an increase in symptoms or new symptoms, discontinue the activity and contact your Live PT Online physical therapist.