

## Fit and Healthy to the Core!

Your core is the midsection of your body, from groin to shoulders. It includes the pelvis, abs, back and chest muscles. Your core offers stability, balance and flexibility. Every movement originates in the core - whether you are reaching for a toothbrush or running a race.

Core exercises train your body to rely on the core and reduce the strain you put on your limbs. Exercises designed to strengthen your core create resistance (or instability) so that muscles must respond to maintain balance. Exercises are gentle on the body, but are intense. Proper alignment is key. Allow a fitness specialist to check your position to help identify the safest and most effective way to perform an exercise.

Good core strength is important at every age and fitness level. Whatever your goals, find a way to incorporate core conditioning into your exercise routine to reduce fatigue, avoid muscle strain and improve strength and mobility.



A Stability Ball is an easy and fun way to strengthen the core muscles of your body. While many exercises can be performed with a Stability Ball, simply sitting on it will create the instability needed to engage the core muscles to maintain balance.

Work those abs! - The average person can burn approximately 250 calories through 20-25 minutes of abdominal strengthening exercises. Each day this month, dedicate some time to your abdominal muscles. Whether you seek muscle definition, better balance, or are simply looking for some variety in your routine, ab exercises can be your friend. While it is not possible to target fat loss to a certain area of the body such as the belly, one can strengthen those muscles while losing weight to reach your desired results. Strong abs provide the core your body needs to perform every physical activity. Additionally, you will find that your daily activities will become easier. There are many ways you can work your abs. Try some of the following exercises:

- Pelvic tilts
- Abdominal crunches
- Bent knee leg raises
- Low back extensions

For examples of core exercises, go on line to [www.mayoclinic.com](http://www.mayoclinic.com) and type “core exercises” in the search box. You will find videos and slide shows of core exercises you can do on the floor or using a stability ball.

## Advanced Performance Exercise



### Cable Ab Crunch

Instead of lying on your back and performing a basic abdominal crunch, try this more advanced version. The cable ab crunch is a great way to engage all of your abdominal muscles.

Start by grabbing the rope and cable. Assume a kneeling position and slowly lower your upper torso towards your thighs. Make sure to only use your abdominal muscles; do not use your arms. Select a weight that will allow you to perform 2 sets with 10-15 repetitions per set.