

# Strengthen Your Core

Strengthening your core – the muscles of your abdominals and back – is essential to your health. These muscles support your spine and keep your body stable and balanced. A strong core makes it easier to walk and run or do other activities like swimming and golfing. Weak core muscles increase your risk for lower back pain and muscle injuries. Incorporate the following core exercises into your workouts. If you are unsure about how to do these exercises correctly, or if the exercises cause you pain, please see your health care provider.



## FRONT BRIDGE

**Contact points:** Forearms and knees

**Action:** Raise torso up and keep back straight

**Target:** Abdominals



## SIDE BRIDGE

**Contact points:** Forearm and side of knee

**Action:** Raise torso up and keep back straight; place free hand on opposite hip

**Target:** Transverse abdominals and multifidus



## BIRDDOG

**Contact points:** Crawling (on all fours)

**Action:** Extend opposite arm and leg while keeping back straight

**Target:** Back extensors and multifidus



## ABDOMINAL CRUNCH

**Contact points:** Lay on back with head supported

**Action:** Raise upper torso off the ground, keeping head and neck still

**Target:** Abdominals



## LEG RAISE

**Contact points:** Lay on back

**Action:** With abdominals braced (back pushed into surface) and opposite leg flexed in the air, raise straight leg 12 inches

**Target:** Abdominals and hip flexors



## BACK BRIDGE

**Contact points:** Upper back and shoulders, and soles of feet

**Action:** Raise torso off the ground while squeezing your buttocks

**Target:** Gluteals and back extensors