



CORE STABILITY

- The body's core muscles are the foundation for all other movement.
- The muscles of the torso stabilize the spine and provide a solid foundation for movement in the extremities.
- Effective core stability training improves sports performance and helps prevent injury.
- The core muscles generally attach to the spine, pelvis and muscles that support the scapula.
- When these muscles contract, we stabilize the spine, pelvis and shoulders and create a solid base of support. We are then able to generate powerful movements of the extremities.
- Training the muscles of the core also corrects postural imbalances that can lead to injuries.
- The biggest benefit of core training is to develop functional fitness - that is, fitness that is essential to both daily living and regular activities.
- The main concepts of core strengthening programs involve using many muscles in a coordinated movement. Rather than isolating a specific joint as in most weight lifting, stability exercises focus on working the deep muscles of the entire torso at once.

CORE STABILITY EXERCISES (SUITABLE FOR USE WITH SCHOOL GROUPS)

1. **Crab walk races:** Ensure that the fingers point towards the toes and that the tummy stays up as much as possible)
2. **Balancing something on the tummy in a crab position:** Children move around as much as possible trying not to let the item fall off them). They could even carry things from place to place in this way.
3. **Plank of wood:** In pairs, one lies down on their back with arms either by the side or above the head. They tense as hard as they can, then the other person lifts their feet off the ground. The idea is that the whole body lifts in a straight position with just the shoulders and head remaining on the ground.
4. **Rocking log** (suitable for the older grades): In groups of three, two people stand facing one another with the third person standing in the middle of them facing one person. The person in the middle is the 'log' and has to remain tight and straight while the two outside people 'rock' them backwards and forwards with a gentle push on the shoulders. The middle person does not move their feet but keeps them on the spot and their body should not bend in the middle. (This is also a game of trust!)
5. **Front support through side support to rear support:** Starting in front support, lift one arm up and turn into side support (hold) then take the arm in the air and place it on the ground behind the body to make rear support. The process can also be done starting in rear support.
6. **'Raised' log rolls:** Log rolls keeping the feet and shoulders/head off the floor at all times.
7. **Front support tunnels:** In groups of five or six, children all make front supports (side by side). The end person then crawls underneath all the bridges to the other end, and goes up into front support, then the next person crawls through etc.
8. **Front support with hands on the floor and feet on a bench:** Children 'walk' themselves along the bench to the other end in that position.
9. **Rear support with hands on the floor and feet on a bench:** s above (no 8).
10. **Warm up games incorporating held positions that work the core:** e.g front support, rear support, V-sit, tucked sit.