



## Core exercises: Why you should strengthen your core muscles

You know core exercises are good for you — but do you include core exercises in your fitness routine? Here's why you should.

[By Mayo Clinic Staff](#)

Core exercises are an important part of a well-rounded fitness program. Aside from occasional situps and pushups, however, core exercises are often neglected. Still, it pays to get your core muscles — the muscles around your trunk and pelvis — in better shape. Read on to find out why.

### Core exercises improve your balance and stability

Core exercises train the muscles in your pelvis, lower back, hips and abdomen to work in harmony. This leads to better balance and stability, whether on the playing field or in daily activities. In fact, most sports and other physical activities depend on stable core muscles.

### Core exercises don't require specialized equipment or a gym membership

#### Related information

- [Slide show: Exercises to improve your core strength](#)
- [Slide show: Core-strength exercises with a fitness ball](#)



[Bridge exercise](#)

Any exercise that involves the use of your abdominal and back muscles in coordinated fashion counts as a core exercise. For example, using free weights in a manner that

involves maintaining a stable trunk can train and strengthen several of your muscles, including your core muscles.

You may also try several specific core exercises to stabilize and strengthen your core. Some examples of core exercises include planks, situps and fitness ball exercises.

A bridge is another example of a classic core exercise. Lie on your back with your knees bent. Keep your back in a neutral position, not arched and not pressed into the floor. Avoid tilting your hips. Tighten your abdominal muscles. Raise your hips off the floor until your hips are aligned with your knees and shoulders. Hold the position for as long as you can without breaking your form.

## **Core exercises can help tone your abs**

Want more-defined abdominal muscles? Core exercises are important. Although it takes aerobic activity to burn abdominal fat, core exercises can strengthen and tone the underlying muscles.

## **Strong core muscles make it easier to do most physical activities**

Strong core muscles make it easier to do many activities, such as swing a golf club, get a glass from the top shelf and bend down to tie your shoes. Strong core muscles are also important for athletes, such as runners, as weak core muscles can lead to more fatigue, less endurance and injuries.

Weak core muscles can also leave you susceptible to poor posture, lower back pain and muscle injuries. Strengthening core muscles may also help improve back pain.

## **Core exercises can help you reach your fitness goals**

Aerobic exercise and muscular fitness are the primary elements of most fitness programs. But to have a well-rounded fitness program, consider including core exercises in the mix as well.

Whether you're a novice taking the first steps toward fitness or a committed fitness fanatic hoping to optimize your results, a well-rounded fitness program is the best way to reach your fitness goals.

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/fitness/in-depth/core-exercises/art-20044751>