

Why should I do Core Training?

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If you were to ask me which muscle group in your entire body you could work to get the greatest benefits in the shortest amount of time, I would tell you without hesitation, "the core." Strengthening the core has tremendous benefits to anyone regardless of her level of fitness and can do so very quickly.

But what is the core?

The core consists of all the muscles in your abdominal and lower back areas. This includes all the deep and external abdominal muscles as well as the muscles associated with the spine and the hip flexors. These muscles all work in harmony to provide stabilization for your body and to transfer power from the legs to the upper body and vice versa.

And why is strengthening the core so important?

Weak core muscles contribute to all kinds of problems in the body, the most prevalent of which is lower back and pelvic pain. This is especially evident after childbirth. By strengthening the muscles that help support the spine and improve posture, you can dramatically decrease the symptoms of lower back and pelvic pain.

How do I strengthen my core?

Core strength training differs from many traditional exercise routines by working both the lower back and abdominals in unison. Instead the whole body works as a unit.

How does Core Training help to prevent injuries?

A strong, stable core can help to prevent injuries because with stronger muscles supporting the spine, pelvis, and shoulder joints it can better handle the forces of rotation and compression that lead to back and joint injuries.

The body's joints are like links in a chain and are surrounded and supported by muscles and tendons. If any of these supporting structures are weak others are called upon to compensate for this weakness. Because they were not designed for this purpose they can become injured over time by the repetitive wear and tear.

Core Training can improve bowel function and reduce incontinence?

The pelvic floor muscles are part of the core. These muscles help to eliminate waste products from our bodies through contractions. And, we all remember very well what pelvic floor contractions feel like. If these muscles are weak or deconditioned they cannot contract properly which may lead to incontinence or improper bowel functioning.

Core training has many benefits including:

- Functional workouts that help you with daily life activities
- Improved performance in other exercise classes or sports
- Reduced risk of injury
- Better ability to function each day (picking up baby, getting the stroller in and out of the trunk)
- Interesting workouts that challenge you in new and different ways
- Greater efficiency of movement
- Improved body control and balance
- Reduced risk of injury (the core muscles act as shock absorbers for running & jumping)
- Improved balance and stability

Core Training improves posture making the stomach look flatter!

The protruding "pooch" people seem to obtain after pregnancy is usually caused by weak abdominal muscles, specifically the transverse abdominal muscles that are located deep in the lower abdomen. The weakness in the abdominal and low back muscles also contributes to the "old lady hump" look.

Lots of women end up "still pregnant looking" with an overly round protruding abdomen. It is a result of strength and functional imbalances between the deepest abdominal and spine muscles and the external muscles of the abdomen. Without strong abdominal muscles to support the spine and to compress or hold in the abdominal contents, your posture will falter along with the protrusion of the lower abdomen.

The good news is that it is NEVER too late to re-flatten the abdomen after pregnancy. You need to do two things: first, you need to strengthen your deep core muscles, and then you need to train those muscles to function as stabilizers.

Fit Mommy Tummy classes are offered on Tuesday mornings at Giggle in Walnut Creek. You are welcome to bring your baby with you. Three levels (Beg, Int, Adv) are offered based on how long it has been since you had your baby. There is a 0-6 month class, 6-12 month class and a 1yr+ class. Each class builds on the next and each module prepares you for the next level. Space is limited to 8 participants per class so act fast!

To learn more about a FREE Trial Class contact Hilarie Hsu at: Hilarie_hsu@hotmail.com