Orthopaedic Connection

Core Exercise

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Transforming patient information into patient understanding.

It has been very popular in the last few years for Physical Therapists and patients who are into exercise, to be talking about "their core" or core muscles and core exercises.

What Is your Core?

This refers to your midsection and pelvic area basically.

What Does the Core area do?

Well, I'll bet 99% of my patients don't realize that core muscles have everything to do with balance. These important muscles are making intricate adjustments on their own every time you raise your arm or take a step.

What are the Core muscles?

They are the centrally located muscles that form a kind of box. To be specific, 29 pairs of muscles comprise your core structure. Never mind their names. Just remember you have 29 pairs and they are very important. I referred to a box structure. The sides are:

- diaphragm on top
- pelvic floor muscles and hip muscles on the bottom
- para spinous muscles in back that support the spine
- gluteal muscles that you sit on.

Function of "the Core"

These muscles surround your center of gravity and provide stability to the body.

They stabilize the body as your arms and legs move.

The bottom line is this. Stronger core muscles make the arms and legs less prone to injury. If the core muscles are in poor condition it makes injury to the joints much more likely.

Strong core muscles make doing our activities much easier. This includes simple everyday activities on up to the more strenuous like playing tennis or golf or even raking a lawn full of leaves.

Core muscle strength also combats poor posture and lower back pain.

Building Strength

Core muscle strength is increased by doing exercises that use the mid section of your body.

There are key abdominal muscles which are like a belt around your abdomen. You feel it contract when you cough. Exercises for core strengthening focus on tightening this deep abdominal muscle.

As you can imagine proper technique needs to be used to derive benefit from your exercise. Proper technique also avoids injury.

Ideally it is best to have a trainer or physical therapist get you started. I realize this is not available to most of you. So – next week I will try to put into words how you, at home, can do some exercises yourself to build core strength.

Hopefully I have gotten your attention about how vital it is to have adequate core strength to do your activities more effectively and comfortably and avoid injury.

Gratiot County Herald Archive and Office Website.

I sincerely appreciate all of you loyal readers and patients present and future and welcome all newcomers!

Besides what you read today there is a huge treasure trove of Orthopaedic and musculoskeletal information at www.orthopodsurgeon.com. It contains the Website Library, Your Orthopaedic Connection and complete archive of every GCH article I have written.

I specialize in you. Be well.

Dr. Haverbush