

Core Work

Ask almost anyone on the street about low back pain, and even a lay person will eventually mention “core muscles” or “core stability”, but is there anything to this? Absolutely! But what are we talking about when we talk about the core? The core consists of the muscle of the trunk and abdomen, which support the spine. It runs from the diaphragm to the pelvic floor. When most people think about the core, they picture the abdomen or the “six-pack” area, but the core includes this and so much more! The core also includes the muscles of the lower back, glutes, pelvic floor, and hip muscles. So, we see that the core is not just the front, but also the back and side muscles from just under the chest to the hip bones. Functionally, you could even argue the upper thigh muscles like the quads, hamstrings, and TFL should be included when discussing the “core”.

Another common misconception about the core is that it always needs to be strengthened. Because the core consists of many muscle groups supporting and surrounding the lower spine and pelvis, it is important to think in all three dimensions. Some muscles may very well need strengthening, but others may be too tight and need to be stretched. Muscles may be strong enough, but, could be underused by the body due to some biomechanical dysfunction. When addressing core issues, strength is important, but stability and balance are more important. Chiropractic adjustments and other passive modalities may be used in tandem to restore natural biomechanical function. Having a professional familiar with the anatomy of the back and pelvis properly identify areas of imbalance is vital to designing a program to address core issues. Otherwise, you may find yourself strengthening a muscle that is already strong enough!

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