

## A Deeper Look at Core Stabilization

The term “Core Exercise” is in widespread use especially when looking for relief from Lower Back Pain (LBP). Unfortunately it seems that some teachings will consider most any exercise an activity that can work the “core”.

What is the core? By definition the core muscles are those groups meant to stabilize the pelvis and trunk during movement. When dealing with lower back pain (LBP) however, not all core exercises will be beneficial. In fact, many can cause more pain.

Here’s one explanation why. The original concept of core strengthening was formed around 2 muscle groups, the multifidus and transverse abdominus muscles. Deeply located on the front and back of the spine, these muscle groups work to control the segments of the spine. Years ago an Australian physician by the name of Bogduk came to the conclusion that these 2 muscle groups were partially stimulated to contract by a reflex that occurs during movement of the intervertebral disc.

One can see that a problem arises when a disc becomes degenerated and/or damaged. If this occurs what activates these muscles to contract? When individuals with LBP perform exercise meant to strengthen the core muscles, they are often stressing an unstable spine and causing more pain. Therefore it must be emphasized that in the presence of LBP you must first learn to re-activate the deepest core muscles and teach them to control the spine before you ask the rest of the body to move. Maintaining good spinal alignment at all times and training your muscles to help hold you in this posture is the best way to do this. Once the core is properly trained then a more intensive core program can be performed.

In the presence of LBP, it is never safe to start an exercise program without first consulting with your spine specialist to determine the source of your problem.

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