

5 SIGNS YOUR CORE NEEDS WORK – ...AND WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT!

**Weak
Core**



A strong, healthy core is important for our health and posture. When your core is strong and working properly, it can help reduce back pain, improve posture, and help you to move with more ease and endurance. But how do you know if your core strength is where it needs to be?

FIRST- HOW DO WE DEFINE YOUR CORE

The core is your centre of gravity and where all movement begins. It is also the centre of stability for the lower limb, from the foot to the hip. In order for muscles to move the bones other muscles need to hold on to the bones creating a solid base. Therefore, the muscles in your core function as stabilizers to allow movement.

While there is no fixed definition of the core, it usually refers to the pelvic floor, diaphragm, deep abdominal muscles and the small, deeper back muscles. Some people also simplify the Core muscle by dividing them into four regions; back extensors, abdominals, lateral trunk muscles, and the hip muscles.

However you classify it, those main groups work together in a coordinated fashion to provide us with a well-coordinated trunk that the forces from our limbs can be worked with and also against as needed.

HERE ARE FIVE SIGNS THAT MIGHT INDICATE YOUR CORE COULD NEED IMPROVING AND WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT:

1. Your Back and or Neck Hurt

The most common side effect of a weak core is spinal pain. Your core helps support your spine and act as the center from which all movement stems. If those muscles are not properly conditioned – meaning, if they aren't conditioned to engage when they are supposed to – your spine can be at risk for being overworked with subsequent muscle strain and tension.

What can you do?

When it comes to back and neck pain, it's really important that you talk to an expert about how to properly strengthen your core. Don't go at it haphazardly. A lot of people jump to core strengthening to fix their pain when there are other things that need to be addressed first. Without proper guidance, you could make your pain worse doing the very thing that is meant to help you.



2. Your have poor balance

Believe it or not, it's not just your feet and ankles that help you balance. Your core strength plays a huge role in this as well. Your core muscles surround your pelvis help to stabilize it – if those muscles are weak – particularly your hips and glutes – your balance will undoubtedly be affected.

What can you do?

Work your core in a functional manner. In conjunction with balance exercises, actively focus on the connection between your foot and your deep core. This visualization will help both your balance and core activation. If you struggle with this – then it's a good idea to work with an expert who can help you.



3. You slouch all the time

If you're struggling to maintain good posture – you might have a weaker core. Observe your posture right now. Are your shoulders rolled forward? Is your low back missing its natural curve? Is your head poked forward? When you go to correct your posture – does it feel difficult or tiresome to maintain? If so, your core might need some endurance-training.

What can you do?

This is a situation where consistent training will carry over into your sitting posture. Your postural stabilizers are what allow you to sustain prolonged sitting and standing postures. The more accustomed they are to being activated and working – the more likely they will naturally kick in when you're standing and sitting. Over time, it will become easier to maintain good posture and with a lot less effort.



4. Your feet hurt

When you have a weakened core – and lack the proper central support and stability you need – your outer muscles and joints may suffer too. If your core isn't working to help you stay more stable and balanced, your feet will have to work harder. This can contribute to overloading the bottom of your foot- see our information on [PLANTAR FASCIITIS](#)

What can you do?

If you've been trying to resolve your foot pain for a while and aren't getting the results you hoped for – consider shifting your focus to deep core training. Not sit-ups and crunches, something like Pilates can help you achieve this – provided you're working with a skilled instructor. Pilates is specifically designed to strengthen your core in a way that emphasizes full body strength.



5. You're always holding your breath when exercising

If you're always being reminded to breathe when you move or exercise, it's a sign your core might not be working properly. Your deep core is made up in part by your diaphragm, which is your main breathing muscle. When your core lacks stability, or in most cases, doesn't know how to engage in the right way, your diaphragm will contract to compensate. One of the most tell-tale signs that this is happening is that you always hold your breath during exercise.

What can you do?

When in doubt – just breathe. If you're breathing through every movement then your diaphragm can't stay contracted. Start here. If you notice that other things start to get tight and uncomfortable as a result – namely your hips and your neck – then it means you're now over recruiting those muscles instead of your diaphragm to compensate for your weak core. Neck pain from Pilates is an example of this when working harder than your core is ready for.



IN CONCLUSION

There's so much more to a strong core than 6-pack abs and the ability to hold a plank for days. Pay attention to the more subtle signs we've outlined for you. If you're noticing one or more – it could be a sign that your core needs some extra attention – and you need to learn how to strengthen it properly.

Are you near to Hindmarsh SA ?

If any of these signs sound familiar to you, then you might want to start paying more attention to your core strength!

Check out our Pilates offerings and other services [HERE](#) or request more information on our [PILATES](#). We have PHYSIOS with a special interest in [PILATES](#) who may be able to help you strengthen your core properly. We would love to help.



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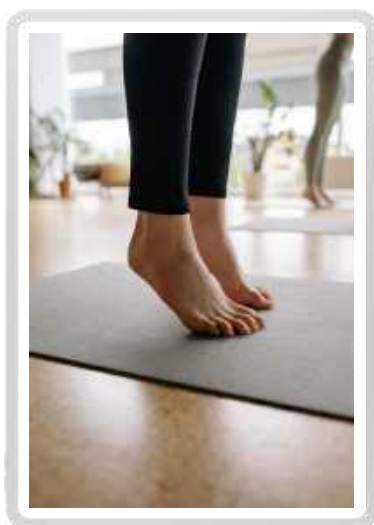
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