

# Evolve

## It's the Core of the Matter.

Focusing on core muscles is essential to pain free and effective work-outs  
*Holly Burt, DPT*

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

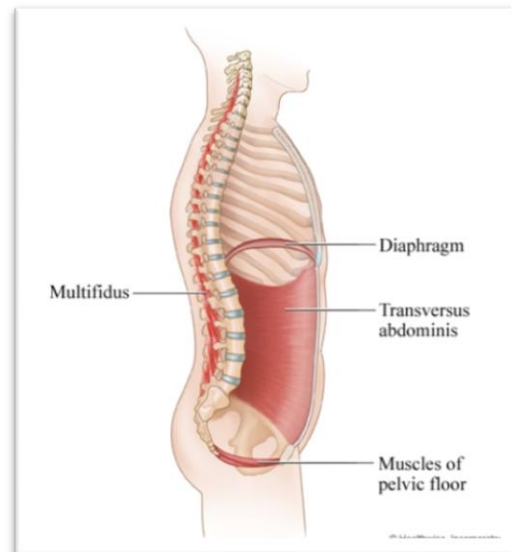
- Core Principles 1  
 Elves on Call 2

With the holidays around the corner, healthy habits can be difficult to maintain. Surrounded by family, food, and fruit cake healthy living is the last thing on your mind! Even without the pressure of the holidays, workout programs can quickly become mundane, leading to a "workout rut." New Year's resolutions lead to new workout goals, personal trainers, and gym memberships.

This year before setting new goals for yourself, we will help you understand the science behind designing a proper core strengthening routine.

Many training programs focus on major muscles such as biceps, quadriceps, and chest without addressing the core musculature that provides a solid foundation for proper injury-free exercise. Muscles attached to the hips, pelvis, lower back, ribs, and shoulder blades should be the focus of any exercise program in order to strengthen posture and stabilize the spine.

Such muscles include but are not limited to the transversus abdominis, multifidus, pelvic



Core muscles should be the core of your workout routine.

floor muscles, hip rotators, and mid/low trapezius. These core muscles support the torso of the body making it a solid, stable center on which the arms and legs rely during exercise and every day activities. With a solid core, you are less likely to suffer injury during your exercise. You will be better able to handle forces of rotation and compression that occur with typical weight training routines and other hobbies.

For example, if you play golf and do not implement a core strengthening program, the shoulders will take the brunt of the force of the swing. Over time ligament and rotator cuff damage will occur as these joints were not meant to take this type of load.

*"don't just think about physical goals - consider making performance goals instead"*

## Core Principles

Training the core muscles will allow the shoulders to do less work as you operate from a stable torso.

Another example of the importance of core training which is often overlooked is the role of the pelvic floor. The pelvic floor muscles, which control bladder and bowel function, are also a part of the core. If the pelvic floor muscles are weak, they cannot contract properly during every day activities or vigorous exercise leading to issues with incontinence. Training these muscles will lead to better posture, balance, and strength along with less low back pain, shoulder pain or injury, and incontinence (to name only a few).

When considering your goals, don't just think about physical goals, but consider making performance goals instead. Last month, Jason wrote about gaining flexibility during the golf off-season for better game. If you are a golfer, what if your motivation for performing core exercises was to add yards to your drive? Would you be more likely to perform a core routine? Or if you are initiating a walking program either again or for the very first time, your motivation would be to gain the ability to walk at higher speeds to burn more calories. If you do not have exercise or sports-specific goals but currently have back pain, your goal for implementing a core program could be to sit for 2 hours at work without discomfort. Whatever goal you choose, functional goals such as these may prove to be more motivating than typical resolutions of "flattening my tummy" or "losing a few pounds." Motivation will then lead to consistency with an exercise program and eventually success.

There are some basic exercises you can perform to get started. One basic exercise is the abdominal drawing in maneuver. To perform this exercise, lie on your back with your knees bent. Take a deep breath in, then exhale drawing your belly button towards your spine. Maintain the abdominal contraction for 10 seconds, as you continue to breathe normally. Mastering this basic maneuver will form the basis for your new core program. If you would like to continue with core training, working with a Pilates-fitness trainer at Body Dynamics is a great way to begin. If you have questions on how to get started and how to personalize your program, working with a trainer or physical therapist at Body Dynamics will give you the confidence to achieve your new goals. Core principles are important to understand, and even more important for achieving a better, well-rounded routine for the New Year.

## Elves on Call!

The Body Dynamics Holiday Elves are back! They would be happy to drop a note to your holiday honey to let him or her know that, rather than a bottle of perfume or another neck tie, you might prefer to see a "Massage 3-Pack," BDI gift certificate, or Pilates fitness ball under the tree or by the Menorah this holiday season. We'd be happy to mail or e-mail your loved one a flyer indicating your BDI holiday wish list. Just fill out an "Elves on Call" information form at the front desk or call Body

Dynamics for more information at

703.527.9557.



Get treats from your sweetie with the help of the holiday BDI Elves!