

SPINAL HYGIENE FIT-BALL AND FLOOR EXERCISES

I want to stress that the reason you should exercise is NOT to hold your adjustment better, it should be because it is a daily requirement to living a healthier, longer life! That should be the same reason you visit us and get adjustments, to maintain proper nerve supply to all of your body, as that is a requirement of your body for health. I was watching the Calgary Stampede a while ago and I noticed the rippling core and stabilizer muscles on the bulls and bucking broncos. Wow they must really do a lot of core training! Wait a minute, they don't do any! We were not designed to need daily plank, fitball, or ab exercises to be healthy? It is because we are so sedentary that our core muscles are shot in anyone who is not active. The KEY solution though is not to just do core strength exercises and solve the weakness there. Walking, running, swimming, and almost any full body movement involves core strength training so you don't need to put more focus there than you do on lower body, or upper body training. The old ways of working out isolated one muscle group and did not involve your core so you did have to target them separately or they got weak. That is why I love surge training and TRX training (www.fitnessanywhere.com). They integrate your core into a workout even more than natural movements do. If you have been working out the old way of targeting muscle groups and have left out your core or if you have been sedentary for a long time, sit or drive a lot at work, then doing some core strength work can be helpful BUT do it alongside other training like walking, running, swimming or surge training so you get full body benefits to your health.

Because your core is always working, you can do these exercises everyday. A fit-ball can be purchased at any department or sporting goods store. The bigger the ball the easier the exercises.

***Unless otherwise stated, repeat each action 8-10, and do 3 sets if possible. Work to increase the time you hold the action, then increase the number of reps.**

IN ORDER FROM EASIEST TO HARDEST- Start from 1 down and if some are too painful or too difficult do the ones you can manage for a month then retry the others again.

1- Ball - Superman

Start position - Lying with your stomach on the fit ball (or lying flat on the ground) with your hands and toes touching the ground.

Action - Keeping your body straight, slowly lift your right arm and left leg off the ground to horizontal and hold it there for 2-3 seconds. Repeat this with the left arm and right leg.

2- Pelvic Tilt

Start position - Lying on the floor on your back with your knees bent

Action - Lift your buttock off the ground while keeping your lower back pressed against the floor and hold it for 2 - 3 seconds.

3- Ball - Bridging

Start position - Lying on your back with the ball under your lower leg and your legs straight

Action - Lift your buttocks and lower back off of the ground and hold for 2-3 seconds. As an advanced move only put one leg on the ball, the other in the air.

4- Ball - Figure 8

Start position - Sitting on the ball with your spine straight

Action - Move your hips on the ball in a figure eight pattern side to side. Do this for about thirty seconds. Repeat three times. **This is great for re-hydrating damaged discs in your lower back.**

5- Plank (and Half Plank)

Start position - Lying on your front with your elbows bent and hands under your shoulders

Action - Keeping your body straight "as a plank", push yourself up onto your elbows so only your forearms and toes are touching the ground, with your elbows bent 90 degrees underneath you. Hold this for 30 seconds if possible. Progress up to one minute or as long as possible. Repeat it 3 times. For many people this will be too hard, so try it with your knees on the ground as well (half plank). To progress, cross your legs, or put a fit-ball under your shins.

6- Ball - Russian Dancer

Start position - Lying on the ball with it between your shoulder blades with your knees bent 90 degrees and feet on floor.

Action - Straighten one leg keeping it parallel to the floor and hold it for 8-10 seconds. Repeat with the other leg.

7- Tripod

Start position - On hands and knees

Action - Keeping your leg bent at 90 degrees, slowly lift one leg off the ground until your thigh is parallel to the floor focusing on keeping your body stable and not changing the position of your upper or lower body to compensate. Hold it for 2-3 seconds then repeat with the other leg.

8- Side Plank

Start position - Lying on your side with your elbow tucked under your side and arm bent to 90 degrees

Action - Keeping your body stiff, lift your body off of the ground so that only your lower arm and feet are touching. Hold this for as long as possible then do it on the other side. Repeat it three times on each side. Work up to one minute each side.