

# CORE

## Fundamentals

1

The “core” is too often associated with the abdominal muscles. While this is technically true—abdominals are indeed part of the core—there is so much more going on. It is useful to think of the core as a 3D area that involves everything from the rib cage down through the pelvis and around the back. This means all of the muscles of the mid- to lower- back are also involved in the core! Thus, it is better to view the core in terms of a region instead of a muscle group.

2

The core’s NUMBER ONE role is to protect the spine from unwanted movement! More specifically, a strong core will properly transfer forces between the upper and lower body while maintaining a neutral curve in all regions of the spine. The lumbosacral region—the most common site of debilitating long term injury, is not designed for a lot of movement. Yet, much of life’s demands, poor posture and inattention to proper mechanics during activity make it easy to allow excessive movement where we don’t want it. The mid-spine is more flexible and meant to allow rotation.

3

If the best attribute of a strong core is stability. It makes sense that we should value stability exercises (planks) over flexion exercises (sit-ups/crunches) in terms of functional and protective strength! To challenge the core to stabilize it is best to use **anti-rotation** exercises that factor in deeper core muscles, obliques, and mid-back musculature.

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Here are 3 examples of great anti-rotation exercises! For each one, commit to maintaining tension so that the pelvis and lower back stays locked in place. Do this by compressing the space between belly button and spine. 2-3 sets, 10-12 reps.

### Hovering Weight Twist



#### Prep:

Sit down, hover feet, lean back to max tension. Hold dumbbell in both hands

#### Execute:

Tap the dumbbell on the ground, side-to-side by twisting upper body against a stabilized and neutral pelvis/lumbar

### Plank With Row



#### Prep:

Get in plank position, with a slight bend in the knees. Hold a dumbbell in one hand

#### Execute:

Pull the dumbbell up until the elbow is fully extended, and pelvis remains square to the ground. Reinforce tension to avoid rotation through the pelvis

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### Lunge Alphabet



#### Prep:

Get in a strong and balanced split stance as shown. One dumbbell held in both hands

#### Execute:

Maintaining locked elbows, write the alphabet in big capital letters, moving nothing but the arms— note in the pictures I'm starting the capital A. Stop to take breaks as needed, even a light dumbbell will provide a significant challenge if you keep your “letters” big enough!