



Importance of CORE STRENGTH in overall health

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Multiple sources, from health professionals to yoga instructors and even media outlets, tout the benefits of core strength.

What you may not realize is how important the core is to your general health. In fact, recent studies have shown that benefits from core strengthening go far beyond the cosmetic results of a six-pack.

The core is a large group of muscles that include the abdominals, the gluteals, muscles around the spine and the hip muscles. There are 29 total muscles that make up the core. These muscles stabilize the spine and the pelvis, and they link the upper and lower body.

Medical research has linked a weak core to increased injury rate in competitive and recreational athletes. This is particularly true with certain injuries such as ACL tears, but also applies to other injuries in a variety of sports from soccer to cycling.

In addition to sports injuries, core strength also plays a role in overall health and illness. Researchers studying the size of certain core muscles on a CT scan found that ICU patients with larger core muscles recovered more quickly and spent less time in the hospital.

Core strengthening has also been shown to improve the health of developmentally delayed children, improve the quality of life of cancer patients, and improve symptoms in individuals suffering from chronic low back pain.

The good news is that it is never too late to start improving your core fitness, and we have come a long way from the days of doing simple sit-ups. A personal trainer, a physical therapist or even your sports medicine doctor, can get you started with a good core-strengthening program that can improve your quality of life for years to come. ■