

## CORE STABILITY – What is it, and where do I get it?

What is ‘Core Stability’ and why has it become such a common term in discussions around exercise and fitness, back pain, posture, aging, etc., etc.

A simple Google search reveals that ‘Core Stability’ can be defined as:

*“the capacity of the muscles of the torso to assist in the maintenance of good posture, balance, etc., especially during movement”.*

If we are wanting to move our arms or legs, it will require less effort and our movements will be better coordinated if our limbs have a stable base to pivot on. That is, if our trunk is solid or ‘stable’, our arms and/or legs will be able to perform a movement or task more accurately, with less energy cost, and if desired more powerfully, than if we do not have a stable base or ‘core’.

This applies to all manner of physical activities, including fine motor tasks - try threading a needle while balancing on one leg, powerful activities such as throwing a discus or lifting a heavy box, endurance activities like running or race walking, and, even everyday actions such as walking, sitting, cleaning and gardening.

But beware! **‘Strengthening your core’** is much more than working on your 6 pack! The muscles of the torso, as referred to in the definition above, are not just the abdominal muscles near the surface of your belly. There are actually 4 layers of abdominal muscles with the deepest traversing around the waist like a girdle. There are also multiple layers of muscles extending varying distances either side of our spine, collectively called erector spinae muscles, which, as their name suggests, aid in keeping the trunk erect.

However, there are also other vitally important muscles which combine with the abdominal and spinal muscles to enable us to maintain our core stability. The muscles of the pelvic floor, the diaphragm and even the small intercostal muscles between the ribs all contribute and coordinate to assist our movements.

Many people have heard of Pilates exercises. The principles of Pilates-based exercise programs is around developing improvements in core stability, and rehabilitation of components of the ‘core’ muscles where injury or reduced function has resulted in pain or reduced performance.

If you are looking to improve your core stability to prevent or overcome injury, assessment and an individualised exercise program should be sought from an experienced Physiotherapist.

If you are looking to improve exercise efficiency and performance through enhancements of your core stability, again, targeted exercises designed by a Physiotherapist or Exercise Physiologist which are specific to your activity can be very helpful.

---

This article compiled by:

**KINGSTON**  
PHYSIOTHERAPY  
& SPORTS INJURY CENTRE



**Craig Wisdom**

Principal Physiotherapist

**Kingston Physiotherapy & Sports Injury Centre**

Green Square Centre - Shop 4 / 62 Jardine St

KINGSTON ACT 2604

Ph: 02-6260 8244 Fax: 02-6260 8255

Email: [info@kingstonphysio.com.au](mailto:info@kingstonphysio.com.au)

Web: [www.kingstonphysio.com.au](http://www.kingstonphysio.com.au)