

STRENGTH - BALLS AND BANDS

SUPER YOU!

FACTS



Stability Balls will make your core 'wobble' as you try to remain stable. They are the best way to strengthen lower back & trunk!
Decreasing ball pressure makes it 'squidgy' & less stable! Harder!

TOP TIPS



- Try just sitting on the ball to watch TV
- Get used to being unstable – sit on your ball at your desk and study
- Try lifting one foot off the floor – then swap feet in a slow movement
- Try lifting both feet off the floor!

 **Balls and bands** - help to train muscle function, strengthen abdominals (pelvic floor) and spinal muscles by challenging your core to find the supporting muscles as you destabilise. They are the best and simplest 'ancillary' exercise tools for young athletes.

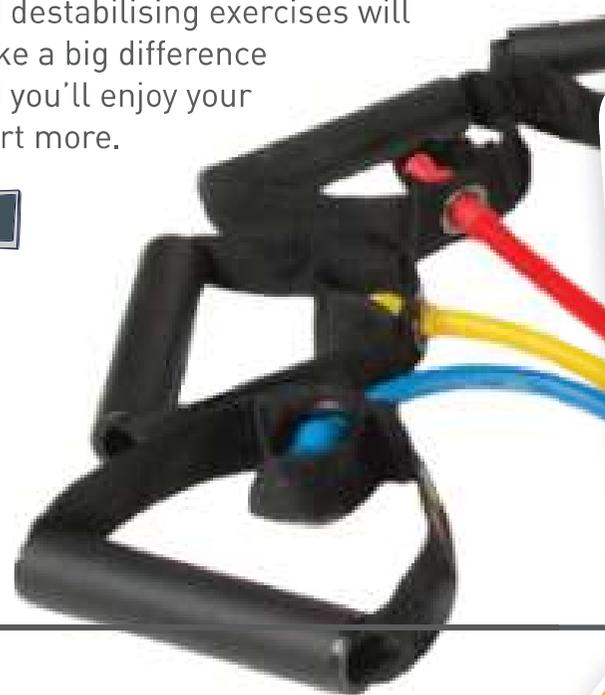
 The most important thing is to move slowly and smoothly, don't jerk nor shorten the range of movement. If you feel you have to jerk – lower the resistance or range you are moving through. Jerking means you are relying on big muscles and not giving the supporting muscles a chance.

Swiss Balls - some of the exercises require a Swiss Ball. Chose a 'burst-resistant' ball – probably a 55cm diameter.

Resistance bands – several of our recommended exercises use bands. You can buy these by the length, different colours for differing resistance - or buy a pack of several. They are made from strong, thin rubber and can have handles at each end. They help you with just about any type of strength training exercise, without the need for heavy weights.



Remember you don't need big strong muscles – you need functional, connected muscle chains to support smooth, controlled movement in your limbs. Resistance and destabilising exercises will make a big difference and you'll enjoy your sport more.



THE PLANK



The Plank is the classic, isometric core exercise for most sports.

Lying on the floor face down, lift your hips and suspend your trunk between toes & elbows. Try to hold for 15 secs in the first instance. Check in a mirror or with a friend that your hips don't 'sag' nor are they lifted too high. Spend time to learn The Plank but don't make it part of your regular core work. Rowers need to build dynamic flexibility in the hips and lower back so whilst The Plank is a great way to help discover and strengthen the core for all athletes. Once mastered rowers should move to more dynamic routines.

Progression: Once you have mastered the plank – move on to pages 36/37 (Dynamic & Side Plank) or try 'reach throughs'.

Alternatively – move onto The Squat (page 30) – but revisit The Plank from time to time.

Easier: Start balancing on elbows & knees, practice holding a stable position. Tighten up your core and slowly raise your hips. Do this with control - DON'T jerk.



"When I do The Plank I can really feel my core muscles working together to hold the position"

CORE4

PURPOSE 

Great for firing and strengthening all those core muscles together and help you move onto more dynamic exercises for your sport.

TOP TIPS

Keep your hips straight – don't let them twist or wobble

Imagine your core acting as a trampoline stretched between your hips & shoulders

CORE 4

- THE PLANK
- THE PRESS UP
- SPINE CURL
- BALL CRUNCH

THE PRESS UP

CORE4

PURPOSE 

Press Ups are the original core exercise. They can be done anywhere and are great for stabilising hips, shoulders and spine and helping develop your core and posture.

TOP TIPS

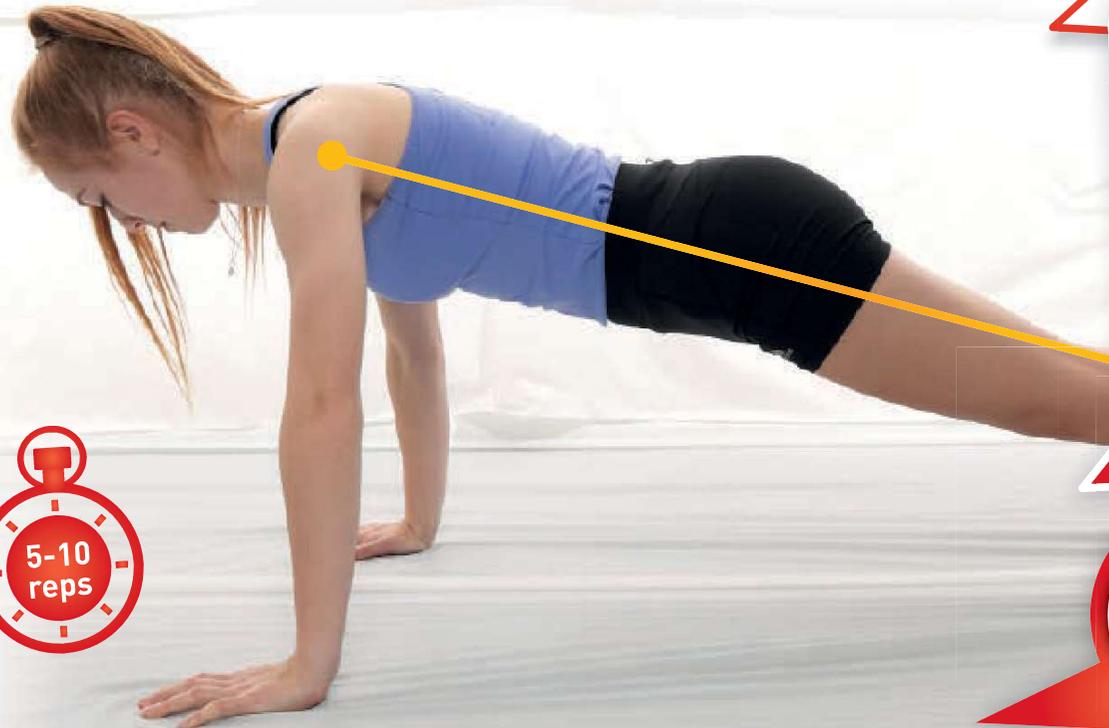
Keep your hips straight – don't let them twist or wobble. Imagine your core acting as a trampoline stretched between your hips & shoulders

“Press ups really help me strengthen a range of deep core muscles without making them bulky”

 Lie on the floor face down with your hands flat on the floor either side of your shoulders. Tighten up your core and shoulders. Begin by sliding your shoulder blades towards your waist – as they tighten transfer that strength to your hips and core as you lift your body off the floor. Hold for two seconds then move slowly down until your chest touches the floor. Rest and repeat.

Progression: Add dynamic Press Ups to your circuits but ALWAYS make the action full range, controlled and focus on your core. After Press Ups hold the position and let your hips sink to the floor.

Easier: Start as above but pivot from the knees by leaving them on the floor. Keep your core stable, try two from the knees, then one from the toes.



THE SPINE CURL

 Getting your spine mobilised and strengthened is a great way to prepare for more challenging exercise. Spine curls really work the hips, glutes and lower back. Lay on your back with knees bent & feet flat. Engage the core muscles and slowly tuck your 'tailbone' beneath you. Use your abs to press your spine to the floor. Slowly raise the hips until there is a straight line between knees & shoulders. Squeeze your glutes and keep the hips stable yet relaxed. Hold position for 5 secs with shoulders flat on the floor. Try again after a minute rest.

Progression: In the hold position try lifting one foot off the ground. Replace, now try with the other. Extend the 'hold' time to 1 then 2 mins. Try Straightening one leg before lifting the hips. Keep the thighs horizontal without twisting

– this creates an offset load (asymmetric). Try spine curl with your feet on your balance ball - maintain stability and bring your heels to your hips.

Easier: Try using a pillow or two under your hips – always make sure you engage your 'core' and lift smoothly and slowly – don't 'jolt'



PURPOSE

Alternate this with The Plank – it works the opposing (Antagonistic) muscles and helps build a balance at the base of the spine

CORE4

TOP TIPS

Use downward pressure along the length of your arms to press on the floor to keep your hips stable

With practice reduce the amount of 'arm' pressure and rely more on core

“Really important as it strengthens parts of my lower back I don't normally work on”



BALL CRUNCH

CORE4

“Ball Crunchie helps me maintain a stable core as I rock off backstops”

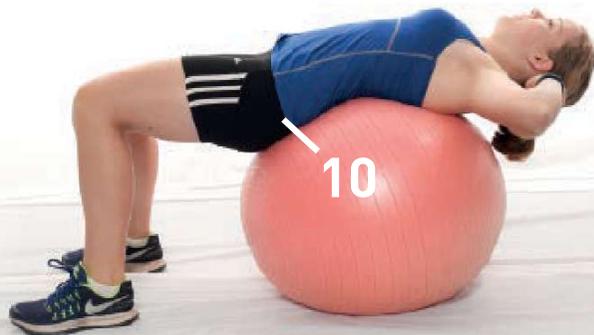


‘Crunches’ are a great way to test and strengthen your abdominal muscles. Start by sitting on the ball with feet flat on the floor. Walk your feet forward slowly and lower your spine onto the ball as you continue walking until your shoulders, back and hips are resting on the ball and knees are bent to 90 degrees. Check your hips are at about 10 o’clock (imagine the ball is a clock face). Hands behind head, squeeze shoulder blades down and keep elbows horizontal. Keep your head in line with your spine. Engage abs & core, tuck in your chin and

slowly curl your trunk towards your thighs (exhale). Maintain contact with your pelvis & lower back & continue to curl until your upper back is off the ball. Hold for 5 secs. Roll gently down (inhale) and lower your back onto the ball. Relax & stretch out completely before next rep.

Progression: Destabilise your core by moving your feet closer together – try this first with a friend to check your balance.

Easier: Move feet apart to improve stability.



PURPOSE

Helps you make a confident & stable flexion of core muscles during dynamic flexion of the upper back.

TOP TIPS

Imagine a connection between your abs and rib cage (chest) – try to think about pulling these closer during the upward movement

