

Bridge

Lie on your back with knees bent (A). Keep your back in a neutral position – not overly arched and not pressed into the floor. Avoid tilting your hips up. Cough to activate your transversus abdominis. Holding the contraction in your abdominal muscles, raise your hips off the floor (B). Align your hips with your knees and shoulders. Hold this position and take three deep breaths – or for about 5-8 seconds. Return to the start position and repeat. For a challenge, try alternately extending one knee while maintaining the bridge position.

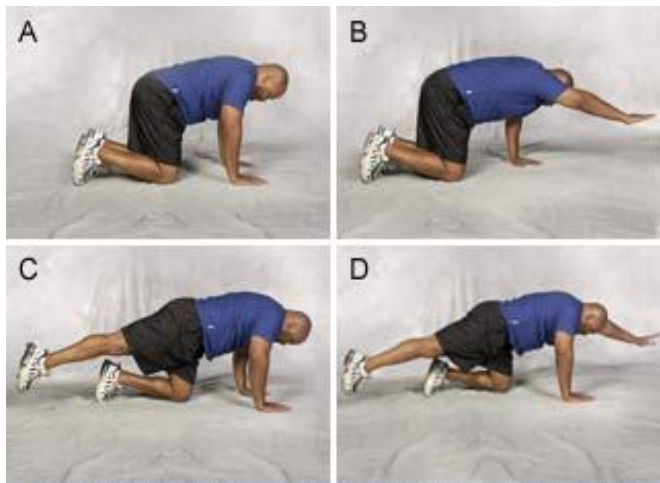


Segmental rotation

Lie on your back with your knees bent and your back in a neutral position. Cough and hold to activate your transversus abdominis. Keeping your shoulders on the floor, let your knees fall slowly to the left (A). Go only as far as is comfortable – you should feel no pain, only a stretch. Use your trunk muscles to pull your legs back up to the start position. Repeat the exercise to the right (B).

Proper crunch

Lie on your back and place your feet on a wall with a 90-degree bend at your knees and hips. Cough and hold to activate your transversus abdominis. Imagine two dots in a vertical line on your abdomen — one above and below your bellybutton. Imagine pulling those dots together. Use your trunk muscles to raise your head and shoulders off the floor. To avoid straining your neck, cross your arms on your chest, rather than locking them behind your head, and don't raise your head more than shown. Hold for three deep breaths, then return to the start position and repeat.

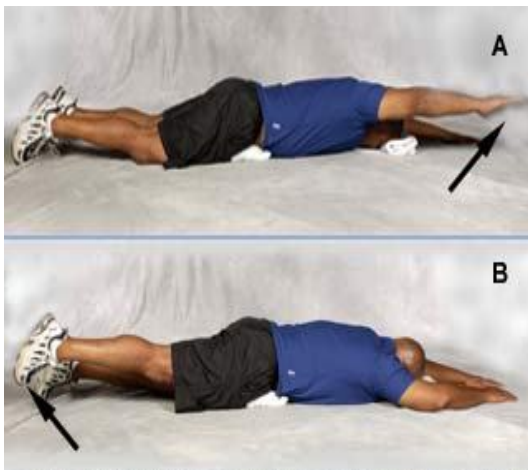


Quadruped

Start on your hands and knees with your hands directly below your shoulders and your head and neck aligned with your back (A). Cough and hold your core muscles tight. Raise one arm off the floor and reach ahead (B). Hold for three deep breaths, return your arm and raise your other arm. Repeat the exercise by raising each leg (C). Challenge yourself by raising one arm and the opposite leg together (D). When raising your leg, avoid rolling your pelvis. Center your hips and tighten your trunk muscles for balance. Do this on both sides.

Modified plank

Lie on your stomach. Raise yourself up so you're resting on your forearms and your knees. Keep your head and back in line and imagine your back as a tabletop. Align your shoulders directly above your elbows. Squeeze your core muscles. Create resistance by pressing your elbows and your knees toward one another. Neither should move from their positions on the floor. Hold for three deep breaths, then return to the start position and repeat.



Superman

Lie facedown on the floor with a rolled towel or a small pillow under your hips to support your back. You might also use a folded towel to support your head. Tighten your core muscles. Raise one arm a few inches off the floor (A). Hold for three deep breaths, and return your arm to its starting position. Repeat with your other arm. Now try the exercise lifting first one leg then the other (B). You need only raise your arms and legs a few inches to begin strengthening your lower back.

Side plank

Side planks challenge your stability and work the muscles along the side of your body. Starting on your left side, raise yourself onto your left forearm. Tighten your core muscles to keep your shoulders, hips and knees in alignment (A). Align your left shoulder directly above your left elbow. Rest your right arm along the side of your body. Hold this position for three deep breaths before relaxing. Repeat this exercise on your right side. For an added challenge, balance on your left hand, raise your hips off the floor and extend your right hand toward the ceiling (B). Hold for three deep breaths, relax and switch sides.

