



ELITE

Personal Training and Fitness Solutions

HEALTH TIP OF THE WEEK

11/23- A Quick Core Primer

Many people think "core" is synonymous with "abs," but that's not true. Your core does indeed include abdominal muscles, but it also includes the many muscles that move your hips and back.

You have surely heard of developing your "core". This week's tip will help you understand and appreciate the various muscles that comprise this vital area of the body. The following week we will look at why the core muscles are so important and this will be followed by exercises you can do to strengthen your core.

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You have four distinct ab muscles:

- The **rectus abdominis**, or the "six-pack muscle," extends from your rib cage to your pubic bone.
- Your **external oblique muscles** make up the sides of your torso. The external obliques are one of the largest parts of the trunk area. The external obliques function to pull the chest downwards and compress the abdominal cavity. It also performs ipsilateral (same side) bending and contralateral (opposite side) rotation.
- Our **internal oblique muscles** lie just beneath the external obliques. These muscles act with the external obliques of the opposite side to achieve trunk movement. For example, the right internal oblique and the left external oblique contract as the torso flexes and rotates to bring the left shoulder toward the right hip. Weakness of the internal obliques, along with other abdominal muscles, increases the risk for abdominal hernias.
- The **transverse abdominis** is a deep muscle that wraps around your spine and abdominal organs. It has a protective and supportive role. A weak TA is one reason people experience low back pain. If you want to alleviate lower back pain, adding exercises that strengthen the TVA muscle may help.



Elite Personal Training and Fitness Solutions does not provide medical treatment or intervention. We acknowledge scientific evidence that appropriately intensive exercise and sustainable nutritional intervention can have significant impact on chronic health disorders and obesity, dramatically improving symptoms when recommendations are followed. Please visit us at Eliteptf.com for more information and to schedule your evaluation.

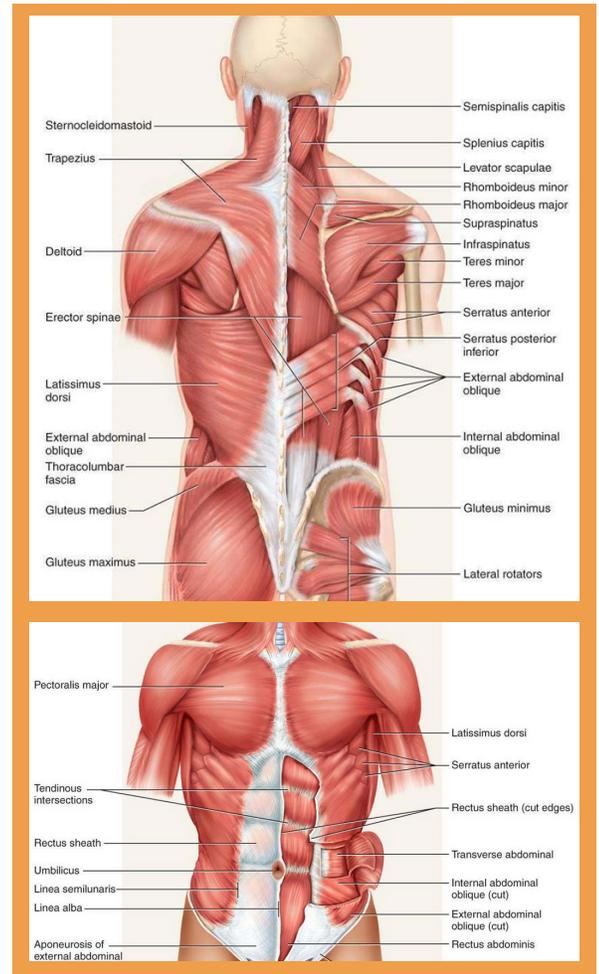
More About Your Core

Then there's the group of hip muscles:

- Your **three glute muscles (maximus, medius and minimus)** contribute to stability and balance and move your legs away from your body (hip abduction) and backwards (hip extension). The **gluteus maximus** is responsible for much of the strength and power in your lower body.
- Your **hip adductors** (muscles that move your legs inward) also support balance, stability, and alignment.

Various back muscles also contribute to core strength:

- The **latissimus dorsi** or "pull-up muscles" run the length of your back from just below your shoulder blades to your hip bones. The **latissimus dorsi** help protect and stabilize your spine while providing shoulder and back strength. Your "lats" also help with shoulder and arm movement and they support good posture. Strengthening and stretching your lats is essential in building upper-body strength, improving range of motion, and preventing injury.
- Your **erector spinae** includes three muscles that lie next to your spine and stabilize and extend the back.
- Finally, your **pelvic floor muscles** -- a collection of small muscles supporting your bladder, bowel, and reproductive organs -- are part of your core, too. A weak pelvic floor can affect bladder and bowel control and sexual function.



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Take-Home Message

As you can see, there are compelling reasons to strengthen your core, which is far more than just abs! And, not to throw another curveball, but visible abs do not always equate to a strong core. Having visible abs just means your body fat percentage is low enough to show the muscle fibers beneath subcutaneous fat. You can definitely have great core strength without having visible abs.

Check out next week's tips for further discussion and specific exercises.

If you have questions about training time frames or anything else related to exercise nutrition, please reach out to us so we can partner with you and help you improve your health and wellness.

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