

## **The 5 “Critical Core” Exercises Every Athlete MUST Perform to Finally Eliminate Injuries**

Carly May, DC, CCSP, MS



Dr. Carly May is a Certified Chiropractic Sports Practitioner by the American Chiropractic Board of Sports Physicians and holds a Masters Degree in Sports Science and Rehabilitation. She specializes in sports injury and corrective care utilizing manual adjustments, soft tissue treatments and rehabilitation. She believes that the combination of these techniques allows for decreased treatment times with longer lasting results. Her knowledge of the body does not end with spinal care, but extends to treatment of all joints, ranging from the ankle and knees to the shoulder and ribs. This blend of skills gives her a unique ability to diagnose the underlying cause of many conditions that may have eluded other physicians.

Why is the core so important?

The core consists of a group of muscles known as the abdominals, back, and pelvic floor. The core is the link between the upper and lower body as well as the powerhouse behind a forceful golf swing or ball kick. Our daily habits of driving, computer usage, studying (if you're a student), put us at a disadvantage because that constant posture shortens the core muscles and causes them to weaken. The longer you engage in those activities, the weaker the core becomes. In order to overcome this, performing these exercises daily is essential.

What injuries can a weak core cause?

It can lead to almost all overuse injuries, which include those from repetitive motions. Some examples include:

- ◆ Low back pain
- ◆ Rotator cuff tear
- ◆ ITband syndrome
- ◆ Stress fractures
- ◆ Shin splints
- ◆ Achilles tendinitis
- ◆ Ankle Sprains
- ◆ Sciatica
- ◆ Hamstring Strains



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## Daily Core Routine

### Curl-Up

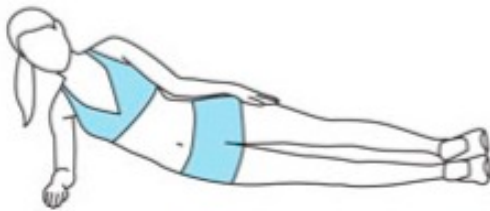


Lie on back placing hands underneath the middle of the back to maintain support. Slowly lift your head until elbows raise off the floor. If your low back moves above your hands, you've lifted too far up. Repeated 10 times and alternate bent knee after each set.



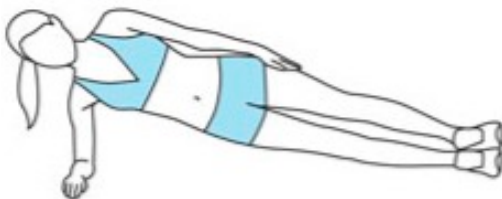
### Bird Dog

Begin with an abdominal brace, which is when you tighten all the muscles by pretending someone is about to punch you in the stomach. Slowly lift opposite arm and leg at the same time, while keeping the entire back still. Leg movement should be initiated by the hip and the lumbar spine should remain neutral. Hold for 5 seconds. 10 reps/side



### Side Plank

Begin with the abdominal brace and slowly lift your body up. Hold this position for 30 seconds, increasing the time as you increase strength.





### **Push-Up Plus**

Assume the push-up position. Allow your body to drop down, and pull it back up using shoulder blades. Keep the elbows straight and your neck in neutral. Do not allow any movement in your back by engaging your core. 10 reps x 2 sets.



### **Glute Bridge**

Start by engaging the core and squeezing your butt. Then push hips forward. Hold for 5 seconds. 10 reps x 2 sets



*\* Illustrations provided by realsimple.com and Men's Health magazine*

These exercises should be performed pain-free. If at any time they hurt, contact Dr. May at Denver Sports and Family Chiropractic Center. She can offer you an effective way to reduce pain, restore optimal movement and function, and optimize overall health.