

Core some extra points

Now add these exercises for posture, power

Ashleigh Gleeson

You might be feeling a little sore from all the squats, wall sits, push-ups and walking over the past couple of weeks. So, in the third instalment of the Get Your Body Right series, we are adding some core exercises to help with it all.

Kieser exercise scientist Deb Lawrence, who designed the program on this page, said strengthening the core would make the exercises from the first two weeks easier.

“What is great about these core exercises is they actually help us with our first-week program and second-week program,” she said.

“If our core is nice and strong, it helps us translate the strength from our limbs and actually support us through other movements.

“For example, when I’m walking, if my core is nice and strong I can present a better posture. When I’m doing my squats (which also use core muscles), I can be a bit more upright with less effort.” Accredited exercise physiologist at Peak Fitness Health Hub and University of Sydney clinical educator David Hutchinson works with a lot of patients with osteoporosis. He agreed the bird dog, deadbug and plank helped build important strength in “the bridge between the legs and upper body”. “Without your core muscles, your body would flop around like a wobbly noodle any time you try to do something with your arms, because there is no stable base for it to push off,” he said. “If we want to do anything with our arms, whether that’s carrying baskets, or raising things above our head, or driving the car, we need to have a steady base to push off, and that’s where the core comes in.

“Your core does offer that support to the rest of your body and therefore it will have knock-on effects in improving your body capacity as well.

“These are three very accessible and easy exercises you can do at home to achieve that without any equipment.”

Mr Hutchinson said the deadbug and the plank were good stabilising exercises to do.

“It would also absolutely strength-



SCAN



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WEEK THREE

WALK: Can you bring your step count up to 6000 a day or about 40 minutes of walking when factoring in the walking you do just through everyday tasks?

CORE EXERCISES:
BEGINNER: 8-12 repetitions
INTERMEDIATE: 20 repetitions
ADVANCED: Go beyond, until fatigued

LEG RAISE



en the muscles in the stomach area,” he said. “But if you want to lose fat over your belly, unfortunately you’re going to need a bit more of an energy-burning stimulus like aerobic exercise such as walking or running (that’s why the program is again increasing the step count for week three).

“However, I would suggest a much more efficient option is to just improve your diet for a flatter stomach.” He said it was important to also include the bird dog when doing core exercises because it helped with the back. “It is important to include the bird dog in the routine because the other two are very focused on the muscles at the front of the body,” Mr Hutchinson said. “It has potential to maintain postural muscles, which will help you to stay upright and not slouch forward.

“It’s a great lower-intensity exercise.”

LEG RAISE

This exercise incorporates a little bit of hip flexor as well as stabilising the core. Lie down on your back. Use a pillow if you need, for your neck. Make sure you do not rock through your hips; move one leg up then down. Repeat on the other side.

PLANK ON HANDS



BIRD DOG

Beginner: Get on to your hands and knees into a tabletop position like you have a glass of water balanced on your back. Extend one leg out straight behind you and bring it back in slowly while keeping your torso steady and squeezing your glute.
Harder: As you extend out your left leg in this way, extend your right arm out straight in front of you so you’re balancing only on your right hand and left knee. Alternate.



DEADBUG

DEADBUG

Beginner: Lie on your back with your legs bent and feet on the ground. Lift one knee up to a 90-degree angle slowly without shifting your torso then lower it back down. Swap to the other leg.

Harder: While lying on your back, bring your knees up to 90 degrees and have your arms up in the air. As you extend your left leg, extend your right arm so it goes by your head. Squeeze and hold. Bring them back to the start and alternate.
Advanced: Try extending both legs and both arms at the same time.

PLANK

This one is a bit harder than the bird dog. Get into a tabletop position again before extending your legs out straight so you are on your toes. Hold, squeezing your tummy. If you’re a beginner, aim for five to 10 seconds. If you can do a bit more, aim for 20 to 30 seconds. And if you’re advanced, try for 45 seconds to a minute. You can plank on your hands (left) or come down to the regular position to engage your core with the weight on your forearms (right).

PLANK



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