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SELF-HELP: PATIENT'S ADVICE

Spinal stabilization—an update. Part 3[☆]

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Abdominal training is a key part of your core spine stability program. The primary features of safe abdominal training are that your muscles around your low back are tensed to prevent motion, and that you don't hold your breath while exercising.

1. Trunk curl-up

1.1. Procedure

- Lay on your back with 1 leg straight and the other bent at the knee.
- Place your hands palm down under the small of your lower back.
- Tighten your core by bearing down slightly, without holding your breath.
- Slowly lift your upper back up from a point just below your shoulder blades, but above your hands.
 - Avoid poking your chin, flexing your neck, or rounding your back excessively.
- Keep your elbows on the floor.
- Once your trunk is raised hold that position while you keep tightening your abdomen and you breathe normally for 2 breaths.
- Lower slowly and repeat 12 times.
- Perform this task once or twice daily.
- For further training:
 - Once you curl-up lift your elbows off the floor
 - Add a second set of 8 additional repetitions and a third set of 6 more repetitions (see Fig. 1).



Figure 1 Trunk curl-up.



Figure 2 Dead bug (beginner).

2. Dead bug

2.1. Procedure

- Lay on your back with 1 leg straight and the other bent at the knee.

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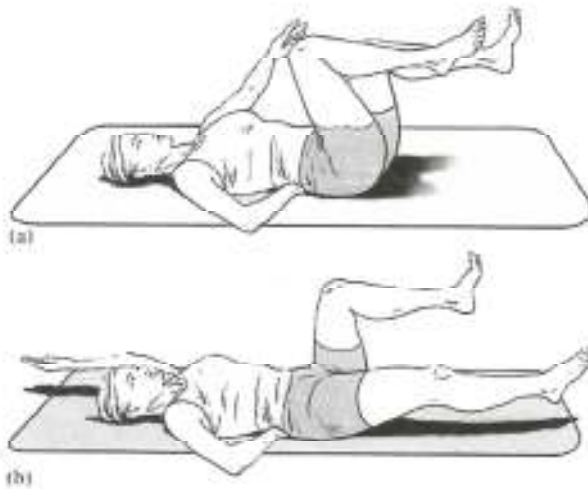


Figure 3. Dead bug (advanced).

- Place the hand opposite your bent knee palm down under the small of your lower back.
- Raise the arm opposite the leg that is straight over your head supported on the floor.
- Tighten your core by bearing down slightly, without holding your breath.
- Slowly draw your arm and leg which are straight together over your abdomen.
- Bring them back to the start position.
- Repeat 12 times.
- Perform this exercise once or twice daily.
- For further training:
 - Lift the foot on the leg that is bent at the knee so that it is unsupported.
 - Add a second set of 8 additional repetitions and a third set of 6 more repetitions (see Figs. 2 and 3).