

Physiotherapy

Shoulder class - week 5

This week's class will explain the importance of core exercises.

The core refers to the area of your body between your ribs and pelvis. It includes the:

- abdominal muscles
- pelvic floor muscles
- diaphragm, which is important for breathing

A strong core supports your pelvis, which is a main anchor for your leg muscles. It also supports your spine.

When the core is weak, our body recruits other muscles to provide stability. This means we commonly overuse muscles around our upper shoulders and neck. If you carry tension in your neck and shoulders, you may benefit from strengthening your core.

The exercises provided here are just some examples. There are many exercises and many ways of teaching them.



Basic core stability exercise



A. Lie on your back with your knees bent. Rest your hands lightly on your tummy.

B. Contract your pelvic floor muscles. You can do this by imagining you're stopping yourself from peeing.

C. Pull your belly button in. Hold this for 10 seconds.

Repeat 10 times.

In the following exercises, try to keep your core contracted. Try to breathe **evenly** as you move. If in doubt, exhale as you push a limb out and then inhale as you bring it back.

Whilst doing these exercises, pay attention to your spine, pelvis and neck. If your back arches away from the floor, your pelvis wobbles, or the muscles around your throat tighten, you may be trying an exercise that is too advanced for you. Or you may need to contract your core more firmly.

Abdominal exercises



- A.** Put your hands on your legs. Keep your head in a neutral position - imagine you're holding an apple between your chin and your chest.
- B.** Tighten your abs. Slide your hands up your legs and raise your shoulders off the floor.
- C.** Slowly lower yourself back to the floor

“Scissors” lower abdominals with legs on a stool



- A.** Lie on your back and rest your legs on a stool. Tighten your lower abdominals.
- B.** Lift one leg off the stool and bring your knee towards your body.
- C.** Rest back onto the stool and change legs

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“Obliques” in crook lying



- A.** Lie on your back and rest your legs on a stool. Tighten your lower abdominals.
- B.** Try and touch your left hand to your right knee.
- C.** Change hands and repeat on the other side.

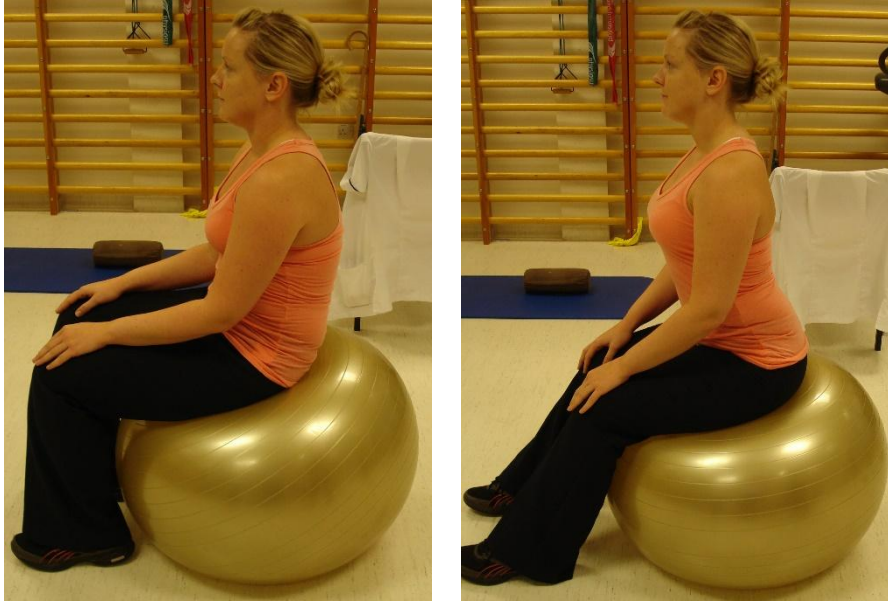
Gym ball - sitting on the gym ball



- D.** Work in pairs or sit close to the wall/stool. Sit on the ball with your feet on the floor shoulder-width apart and arms resting by your side.
- E.** Tighten your lower abdominals. Do this by pulling your belly button towards your spine and tightening your pelvic floor.
- F.** Sit in an upright posture. Your shoulders should be over your hips and your ears in line with your shoulder. Lengthen the back of your neck by gently drawing your chin in.

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Pelvic tilt on gym ball



- A.** While sitting on the ball, try rocking your pelvis backwards, forwards and side to side. Only allow your lower spine to move.
- B.** Maintain a good posture with your upper spine, neck and head.

Rolling gym ball in kneeling



- A.** Kneel behind the gym ball.
- B.** Press your elbows into the ball and tighten your lower abdominals.
- C.** Roll the ball away from your body.

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Press up over a gym ball



- A.** Kneel behind the gym ball.
- B.** Rest your body on the ball. Put your hands on the floor shoulder-width apart and keep your fingers pointing forwards.
- C.** Walk your hands out so that your legs rest on the ball. Walk out as far as you're comfortable.
- D.** Tighten your lower abdominals.
- E.** If you feel safe, try and bend your elbows to lower your upper body to the floor.

Superman over the gym ball



- A.** Kneel behind the gym ball.
- B.** Rest your body on the ball. Put your hands on the floor shoulder-width apart and fingers pointing forwards.
- C.** Walk your hands out so your legs are resting on the ball. Keep your toes on the floor.
- D.** Tighten your lower abdominals.
- E.** Keep your shoulders level and raise one arm. Hold for a count of 10.

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Progressions

If you wish to explore more core exercises, swimming is thought to be helpful. Or you could look for an exercise class such as “Pilates.” A wide selection of books and DVDs are available to buy on this subject.

The Physiotherapy Department can't recommend any individual product. We advise that any exercise you do is controlled and within your pain tolerance. One-to-one supervision with a qualified therapist or trainer is usually best.

The APPI (Australian Physiotherapy and Pilates Institute) train therapists in Pilates. They sell a variety of useful DVDs (www.ausphysio.com). They're not the only suitable provider of Pilates training, and their products may not be suitable for your particular needs.

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Document History

Department:	Physiotherapy
Contact:	26861
Updated:	September 2025
Review:	September 2028
Version:	5
Reference:	HIC/LFT/1898/15