

# Finding, Accessing & Activating the CORE



Correct core access & activation are some of the most difficult things for students to do properly, and yet one of the very most important! Good core stability will protect students from spinal injuries, improve their alignment, control, posture, balance, and overall safety.

The tricky part is that often students might visually look very strong, or they can do all their strengthening and core exercises like v-ups, plank variations, sit ups etc easily- but they are actually using different muscle groups, and not the actual core. It can be difficult for instructors to see when students are masking their lack of core activation.

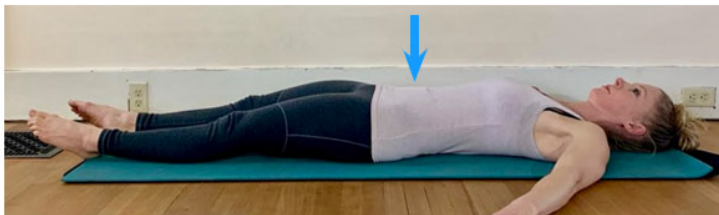
True core use needs to be drilled and practiced as it's not easy or instinctual to do it correctly. In our program, the students train the core support through almost every one of our stretches & exercises so they can then control the core with every shape, direction and movement.

Here we would like to present to you some basic drills that students of all ages & levels can practice to help find & access the core in a range of different positions.

## 1 LAY ON THE FLOOR ON BACK:

The difference between the 3 positions is small & subtle.

### POSITION 1:



Try to only use the core.

Imagine your belly button pushing your spine into the floor, with hips neutral.

### POSITION 2:



Make sure you are not using your back muscles to just arch.

Pull your belly button up to the ceiling, creating space between your back & the floor

### POSITION 3:



Push your belly button downward to the floor, then scoop downward towards your feet creating a slight tilt with your pelvis.

If you can find these positions, it means you have some movement & use of the core..

## 2 ON HANDS & KNEES:

1 Start in a relaxed position



2 Carefully push the belly button up towards the ceiling



Try not to grip the glutes, only use the core

3 Move past flat back to hollow



4 Pull the core down to small arch



5 Return back to center



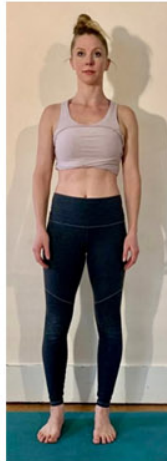
Make sure the strength & control to move through positions comes from the core

## 3 CREATE LENGTH BETWEEN HIPS & SHOULDERS



For this exercise, the goal is to imagine that you are using your core to pull up an invisible string from the belly button upwards. As soon as you start pulling it up, think about dropping down from your belly button downward. Imagine the two sections moving away from each other. The movement will be very tiny.

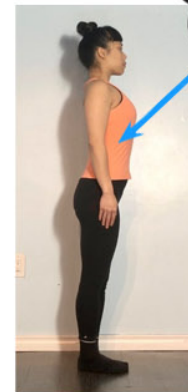
EXERCISE 1



Core In



Expanding away



Make sure not to flair the ribs out

Try to expand up and down slowly several times. When that gets easier...

EXERCISE 2

Don't hold your breath in these exercises. Practice breathing through the movement.



Set up in small lunge



Create the length



Practice in a bigger lunge

EXERCISE 3

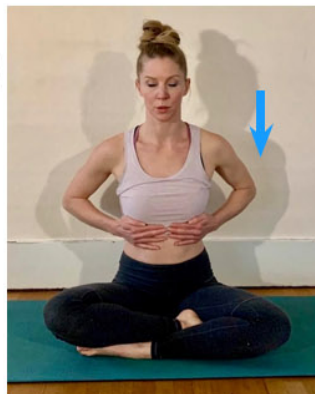


## 4 CORE IN WITH RIB MOVEMENT

Sit in butterfly with fingers on upper ribs. Engage the core by bringing the belly button towards the spine. Try to widen the spaces between your ribs upwards, and close the spaces downwards.



Use the core control to not flare the ribs out



Focus on keeping the core control while breathing.

Use breath to widen the spaces between the ribs upward & inward

Release breath to close the spaces between the ribs downward

## 5 CHECK IT'S ONLY THE CORE

It is very easy to activate other muscles and think that they are the core. This is an easy way to double check you are activating the correct area.

### EXERCISE 1

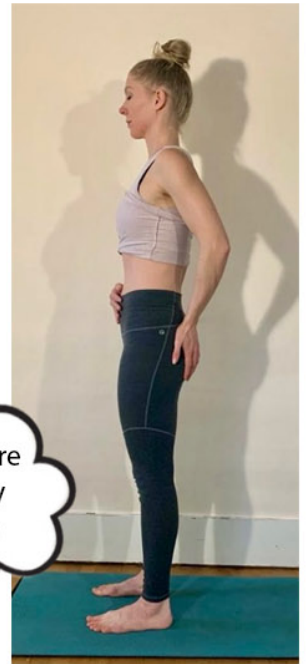
Stand in front of a mirror. Place one hand on the belly button. Practice engaging the core by bringing the belly button back towards your spine, hold 2-3 seconds, then release.



Make sure not to tuck the pelvis under

### EXERCISE 2

Put one hand on the belly button & the other hand on the bum. Practice the in & out core engagement without the glutes helping.



If the glutes are tensing, they are helping

### EXERCISE 3

Put one hand on the belly button & the other hand on the front thigh. Practice the in & out core engagement without the thighs helping.

