

# **Do you want less back pain, better posture, and a flatter stomach? All of these can be achieved by building CORE STRENGTH.**

Core strength and mobility is top priority in training my clients and this is why. Your core muscles are not just your abs, but are ALL of the muscles that attach to your spine. They are your “pillar of support” and the center where all movement originates. Pretty important job, huh? Think of your core muscles as your girdle that supports your spine. When you strengthen the core, your body is better equipped to distribute movement throughout the spine, thus alleviating stress to the lower back which is where most individuals experience pain.

Let's talk about a very important core muscle called the Transverse Abdominis or TVA for short. It wraps horizontally around your waist and when properly engaged lifts and supports your spine for upright posture (neutral spine). If you often sit or stand in a slouched, forward-head, rounded shoulders posture, this posture will eventually cause strain to the neck and back. Over time poor posture takes a tremendous toll not only on your back but your whole body. It can lead to joint problems and reduced flexibility. Tight leg and hip muscles can pull on lower back muscles and cause pain. Therefore, it is equally important to stretch tight muscles to regain their range of motion.

Being aware of your sitting and standing posture, learning how to engage the TVA (inner core) and abdominal bracing techniques will train your body to stay in the neutral spine posture. Try this...picture a string attached to the top of your head pulling your head towards the ceiling. Engage your abs to lift the ribcage and contract your scapular muscles (squeeze the muscles between your shoulder blades together and down). That should feel like neutral spine. You can tell if you are in neutral spine if you look at your side body and your ear, shoulder, hip and ankle are all in alignment.

Wondering how core strength and better posture fits into getting a FLATTER stomach? When you stand in neutral spine posture and are engaging the core muscles, your stomach will appear flatter. Furthermore, if you learn techniques such as abdominal bracing to tighten up that girdle, it will in time whittle your waistline!