

During the summer months, I am often asked how to maintain strength and core stability without sacrificing the love of outdoor activities. Indeed not many want to remain indoors while the beauty of Jackson's weather allows many opportunities for outdoor activities. However, come September a large percentage of participants who resume regular training fall short of a strong or maintained core. Core strength usually takes a back seat to hiking, paddling, biking or simple enjoying an evening walk.

As a brief reminder, Dr. Ben Kibler and colleagues at the Lexington Clinic Sports Medicine Center in Lexington, Kentucky describe the following: "Core stability is defined as the ability to control the position and motion of the trunk over the pelvis to allow optimum production, transfer and control of force and motion to the terminal segment in integrated athletic activities".

One would think that outdoor recreational activities allow for the above to automatically occur. The core stability of a cyclist breaks down especially after 120 miles of riding in a day. The core stability of a hiker relies on leg strength and low back to climb up to the upper saddle at 11,500 feet. Bottom line, unless one is aware of core stability all the time, it inherently becomes lazy. It is not your fault necessary, it is fact that the body will find the path of least resistance to accomplish the activity at hand.

I will be the first to tell you that I get outdoors as often as possible but do have a maintenance workout twice a week. In addition, no one ever said the workout had to be performed indoors. Training to be Balanced offers an outdoor plyometric floor to help break the monotony of always being indoors. Clients take jump ropes, bands, kettlebells and dumbbells out and work on core predominantly with minimal legwork. (The legs are worked but the volume is reduced considerably with a concentration of lateral leg work e.g. side movements.)

Not all areas have an outdoor plyometric floor therefore here are a few functional exercises for both indoor/outdoor fun:

Medicine Ball Push Up:

Starting position begins in a push up position on medicine ball with the chest over ball. **Movement:** Lower entire body as a unit towards medicine ball and hold for one second. Return to starting position and repeat nine more times. **Considerations:** Keep back and legs straight while also keeping the medicine ball stable and in-line with chest. Activate and maintain core throughout movement. You should feel your shoulders, chest, triceps, abs.

Single Leg Curl-to-Press:

Starting position begins in single leg stance. **Movement:** Curl one arm towards chest and press weight overhead. return to starting position and repeat steps with other arm. Repeat for three more times on each are and switch legs. **Considerations:** Maintain straight posture and stable core and avoid swaying or rocking. Endure you have soft bend in knee of base leg. You should feel muscles in the balancing leg, biceps, shoulders, and core.

T-Stabilization Push Up Advance

Starting position begins in a push up position. **Movement:** Lower entire body as a unit to floor and return to starting position. Before arms straighten completely, push off one side and rotate shoulder and hips to be perpendicular to floor. Hand and foot reach up at this time. Repeat on other side and repeat five more times on each side. **Considerations:** Hands should be in line with chest while in push up position. Hands should also be just outside of shoulders while in push up position to ensure a smooth transition between all steps. You should feel upper back muscles, shoulders, obliques

Another avenue for core stability is Pilates. Pilates has long been a part of the exercise industry embraced by boxers, gymnasts, football players, and dancers but recently hitting the main stream at high regard by celebrities such as Madonna and Liz Hurley who swear by its results.

Holly Wooldridge, a certified Pilates instructor with a Masters in Dance states that, "Practiced faithfully Pilates can yields numerous benefits. Increased lung capacity and circulation through deep, healthy breathing, strength and flexibility, particularly of the abdomen and back muscles, coordination-both muscular and mental, are all key components in an effective Pilates program. Posture, balance, and core strength are all heartily increased. Bone density

and joint health can improve, and many experience positive body awareness for the first time. Pilates teaches balance and control of the body, and that capacity spills over into other areas of one's life.”

Holly will be teaching Pilates mat training beginning June 8th at the ALL Body Therapy Building for Training to be Balanced. It is an exciting addition to the T2BB philosophy of training all aspects of the body. It will enhance current and future performance. Personally, I will be taking this group training...in which I need and works me to a puddle of sweat! The line goes out the door for those to see that happen to me. More information regarding Pilates mat training, please visit www.t2bb.net or email augie@t2bb.net.