

## About your Abdominal Muscles

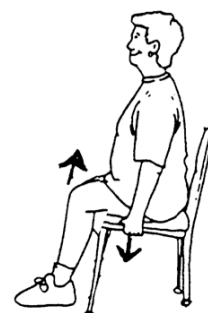
Our abdominal (stomach) muscles are critical in supporting our backs. It is very important to keep them strong.

We have four layers of abdominal (stomach) muscles, the rectus abdominis, external obliques, internal obliques and transversus abdominis. The first three of these muscles are vital for support of your lower back. They act as an inbuilt corset and are the majority of muscles that make up your core muscles.

To protect your back from injury keeping your core muscles strong is very important along with ensuring when you're handling loads you lift without twisting and losing the curve of your spine. If you want to protect your back from injury here is a simple way to strengthen your abdominal muscles.

Here is an exercise you can try to improve your abdominal strength.

Sitting on a dining chair try lifting both feet *just off* the floor while your hands push down on the chair seat just beside your legs. (See diagram).



Hold for a few seconds and increase the time, as your muscles get stronger.

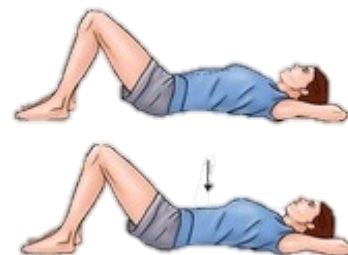
Practice four times before each meal perhaps!

NB Remember to breathe normally – do *not* hold your breath

Notice how your stomach (abdominal) muscles feel while doing this exercise so you will know when trying the following.

Now you can practice bracing your abdominal muscles in any position – sitting, lying, standing, or walking.

Try doing it while doing everyday activities like vacuuming, standing doing the dishes, sitting watching the TV, lifting anything and while you do exercises and stretches.



It's particularly useful to brace these muscles while lifting, or carrying anything with a little weight especially children.

***Strong abdominals help your back and as well as your figure!***

If you are having trouble doing this exercise or have back pain, you don't have to struggle alone. Our friendly physiotherapists can help.

### Just contact us

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*Compiled for you by Therapy Professionals Physiotherapists*