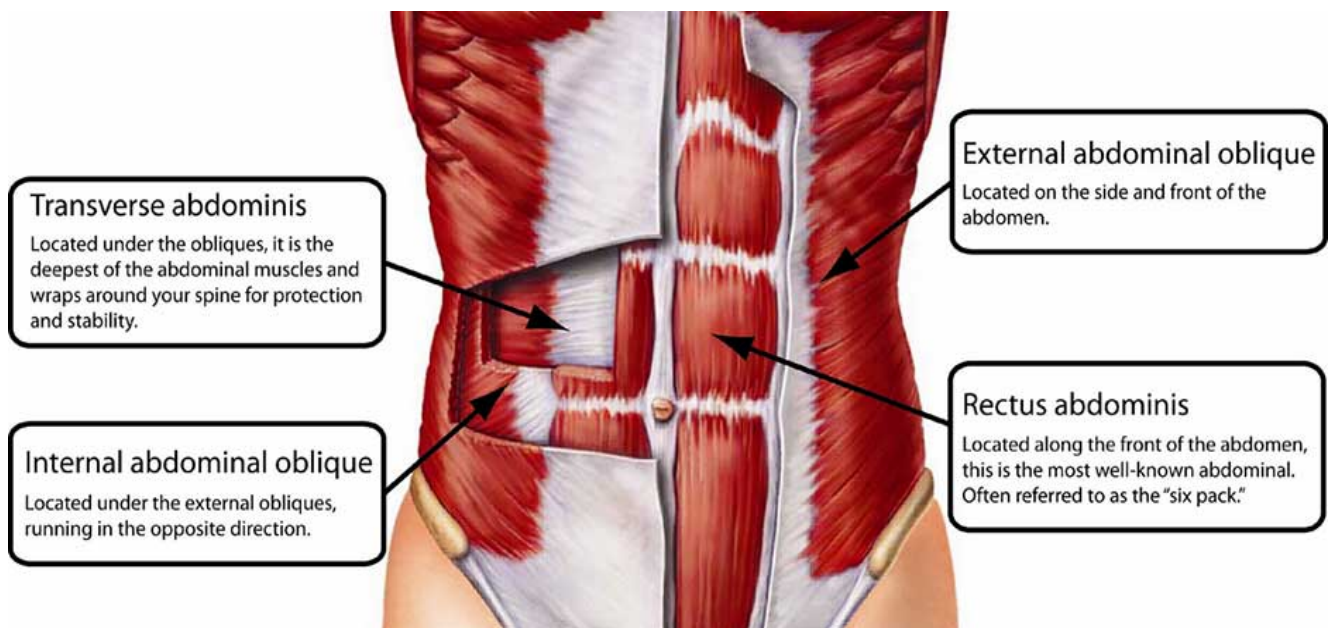


Attention all Cyclists and “Want-To-Be” Cyclists

Working on core exercises for cycling enables more of the power that is generated by your legs to go into the pedals rather than being wasted on wobbling around.

What is Core Strength?

Core strength is a topic physiotherapists harp on about endlessly, but what are we talking about exactly? And what core exercises for cycling are there?



Core stability is the ability to control movement around ones trunk or midriff, good control in this area allows the muscles that power our limbs to work more effectively at their specific job of producing power. The core is supported by the abdominals, these can be broken into three key muscles: rectus abdominus, obliques and the tranverse abdominus. Each of these groups has a specific role but they work together to provide overall stability.

Core Exercises for Cycling

There are many different core exercises for cycling; from functional movement too more controlled Pilates. Our initial part of this series will focus on relatively static exercises that can be used to work the core effectively. As a warning to those with lower back problems, it may be worth consulting a physiotherapist before starting these core exercises for cycling.

Standard Crunch:

- The standard and twisting crunch work the rectus abdominus and the obliques
- Lying on your back with legs bent and feet shoulder width apart
- The standard crunch involves placing hands on thighs and sliding them up until they are touching the top of your knee
- The movement is small to protect the lower back; this area should be kept in neutral or pressed into the floor so it does not over arch
- Three sets of 25-30 repetitions with 30-60 seconds rest between sets would be a good starting point
- Although one of the easiest core exercises for cycling it must be done with good form to be effective – protect that lower back

Twisting Crunch:

- The twisting crunch involves taking one hand to the opposite knee and alternating hands
- The same principles of keeping the lower back flat against the mat still apply

Dead Bug:

- Dead bugs are relevant to cycling because they involve a similar cyclical action while having to stabilize the lower back
- Keeping your lower back in a neutral position or pressed into a mat, go into the start position above
- From here extend one leg out to 45 degrees whilst keeping the other leg at 90 degrees
- Extend your leg over 2-3 seconds in controlled fashion and focus on your lower back so that it doesn't arch upwards
- Your breathing should remain controlled
- Now alternate legs in a controlled manner ensuring your back stays firm and your breathing remains controlled
- Attempt three sets of 45-60 seconds
- If you have any twinges or pain in your lower back stop the exercise and consult someone who will be able to give you appropriate coaching on the correct technique

Standard and Side Planks:

- Planks are a great way to work on your static core strength, but they do require a relatively good level of fitness
- The aim is to support your midriff between your elbows and feet
- Attempt 3 sets of 45-60 seconds with the equivalent rest between sets
- Side planks are great for the obliques
- The aim is to support your body weight between an elbow and feet, this time on your side
- Ensure you keep a straight back from in front and at the side