




Backcountry
Fitness

Core Foundations





Come Prepared or Prepare to Fail

Core stability is key to preventing chronic overuse injuries, back and hip pain, and moving faster and more confidently over challenging terrain.

Oftentimes athletes will overdo core flexion, extension, and rotation work, while neglecting stability, or anti-flexion, anti-extension, and anti-rotation

Building a solid core foundation with the right exercises is the base of any outdoor athlete program

The Role of The Core

Stability Before Movement

The main, and most important, function of the core is ANTI-movement, meaning resisting bending, flexing, and rotating forces. Think keeping the back from collapsing when wearing a backpack, or your torso not flailing back and forth as you pull on a heavy, loaded rope.



The Staple Movements

Dead Bug



Click on underlined exercises for video!

Focus on the breathing! Deep breath in, letting the torso expand, then exhale and brace the core, like someone is going to step on your stomach! As you do this, think of pushing the lower back to the ground, flattening the curve (different curve)

If you feel it in the core, you can move on to more advanced movements, such as the cable held alternating leg extension or cable held dual extension.

If you're feeling it in the lower back, slow it down, focus on breathing. If it still doesn't feel right, is when I suggest talking to myself or another expert on core activation issues.

The Staple Movements

Low Plank

Focus on the breathing again, just as with the dead bug. Exhale, squeeze core like someone is going to kick you in the stomach, and squeeze your glutes (butt) as well!

If you feel it in the core, you can move on to more advanced movements, such as a plank pull across or trx high bodysaw.

If you're feeling it in the lower back, step back to a dead bug variation, or take a video and send it to us to see if there any adjustments that need to be made.

The Staple Movements

Hollow Body Hold

Do you feel it in the core? Lower back?
Hip flexors?

If you feel it in the core, you can move on to more advanced movements, such as hollow body flutter kicks or hollow body landmine presses.

If you're feeling it in the lower back, step back to a deadbug variation!

The Staple Movements

Side Plank

Line the shoulder up over the elbow, maintain a straight line from the shoulders to the feet, and breathe!

If you feel it in the core, you can move on to more advanced movements, such as a side plank with rotation or a copenhagen plank (my favorite!)

If you're feeling it in the lower back, step back to a normal low plank for now.

The Staple Movements

Pallof Hold

This one is tough! Make sure the cable is lined up across the toes, the hips and arms are even, dig the heel closest to the cable machine into the ground, and squeeze the glute on that same side. You should feel a pull across the core.

If you feel it in the core, you can move on to more advanced movements, such as pallof overhead raises or cable rotations.

If you're feeling it in the lower back, check the form, or step back to planks!

Advanced Movements

Flexion, Extension, Rotation

Once you've built up stability in all three planes with the above exercises, you can move into MOVEMENT exercises that focus on the core, such as the cable rotations and landmine sit ups listed above.

However, always remember, for outdoor athletes, these movements come secondary to stable, anti-movement!

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