

Stand Up Strong: Go vertical with these core exercises.

by Eve Fleck, MS

A strong and stable core is the best foundation for improved strength, endurance, balance and agility. No matter what type of class you teach, you'll enhance the experience by helping students engage their cores more effectively. These simple exercises can be used in any type of class because they're performed while standing and do not require equipment. Try them in your warm-up to activate core muscles for a more effective workout, or use them in your cool-down to practice core control. You can even add resistance and make them part of a core-strengthening class!

Standing Hundred

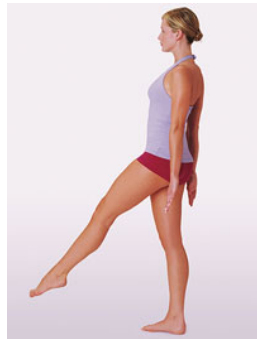
The Pilates of the same inspired this exercise.

Position. While standing in neutral-spine position

(maintaining lumbar and thoracic curves), lift your left foot slightly off the floor. Arms are at sides with palms facing backward.

Movement. Engage deep abdominal and pelvic-floor muscles to maintain neutral spine, and begin pumping arms quickly forward and back. They should travel just barely in front of and behind hips. Switch sides.

Purpose. The more stable your core is, the faster you will be able to move your arms. This exercise will tell you immediately which of your students have good core control!



move name

Side Hinge

Position.

Stand on right foot and abduct left leg slightly. Extend right arm overhead to form a line between left foot and right hand.

Lean right as far as you can while maintaining form and balance.

Movement. Reach left hand up to touch right hand, and return left hand to hip. Repeat until you feel fatigue in left side of back (or "waist"). Add medicine ball in right hand for more advanced training. Switch sides.

Purpose. This will effectively activate and strengthen the quadratus lumborum muscle, responsible for lateral flexion, as well as the hip stabilizers on the standing leg.

