

The “Big 3” - Core exercises.

These exercise are designed to maximize muscular effort while minimizing compression of the lumbar spine.

With all of these exercises, an emphasis should be placed on abdominal bracing. Abdominal bracing can be described to the patient as the sensation experienced when blowing a candle out... this is an isometric contraction of the abdominals.

#3 The Bird Dog



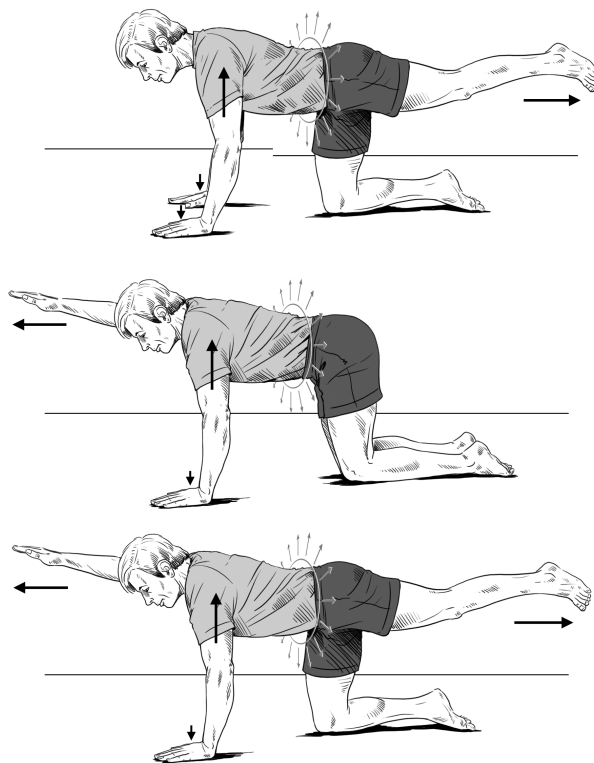
This exercise engages the whole core, targeting mainly the back extensors (lumbar paraspinals and multifidus).

1. Begin in a quadruped position, with hands under shoulders and knees under hips. It is very important that the first step of this movement is abdominal bracing. This must be done first in order to ensure proper form in the movements that follow.
2. With core engaged, maintain pelvis and torso in their neutral position and slowly raise one arm straight forward. Your pelvis and shoulders should not rock to either side. Your arm should only come up to parallel with the floor.
3. Once you can raise your arm keeping in a neutral position, you can progress to leg extension. From the quadruped position, engage the

core and extend one leg straight back until parallel with the floor. Your pelvis should not rock to either side (which can be fairly difficult for most patients!).

4. If your arm or leg can be extended individually with proper form, try extending the opposite arm and leg simultaneously. Always engage the core first, bringing the arm and leg out to parallel with the floor in a coordinated movement. Return to neutral, quadruped position and repeat on opposite side.

- Try placing small ball on your low back at the start of the exercise. If the pelvis does not rock, the ball should stay in place.



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