

THE

**CORE STRENGTHENING**

EXERCISE PROGRAM

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Disclaimer: The activities and exercises in this program are designed for children and require close adult supervision and assistance. The activities and exercises in this program are not intended to replace therapeutic evaluation or intervention by a trained therapist. By doing any of the exercises or activities in this program, you take sole responsibility for how the activities are done. Always consult with a physician before beginning any exercise program with your child. The Inspired Treehouse, LLC assumes no responsibility.

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## WHO ARE THESE EXERCISES FOR?

These exercises are designed for therapists, teachers, other child development professionals, and parents to use as a visual reference to support the development of core strength in children.

-Therapists can use the exercises during treatment sessions or to create exercise programs for clients to practice at home.

-In every classroom, teachers will encounter children who struggle with insufficient core strength. The activities and exercises in this program are great for using as movement breaks to help kids stay active and alert while also strengthening their core muscles.

-Parents may also notice that their children have weak core muscles, seeing how it impacts their ability to participate in sports, play, and other everyday tasks. All of these core strengthening activities are designed to be fun, playful, and easy for anyone to work into the daily routine.

\*\*If you have concerns about your child's development or ability to participate in any of the activities in this book, consult with your pediatrician and/or a pediatric physical or occupational therapist.

## HOW TO USE THE EXERCISE PAGES

On each of the following pages, you'll find a core strengthening pose or exercise.

1 - Show the picture of the pose/exercise to the child/children with whom you are working for a visual prompt.

2 - Use your phone or tablet to scan the QR code next to the image. The QR code will lead you to a short video demonstration of the pose or exercise.

The videos and pictures are a great way to capture kids' attention and get them excited about completing the activity. These visual prompts also promote correct positioning and alignment, ensuring that kids are getting the maximum benefit from the core strengthening activities.

3 - After you've looked at the picture and video of each exercise, read through the fun variations of each activity and try them out!

# PLANK

Have the child lie on his stomach on the floor with his hands under his shoulders and toes on the floor. On the count of 3, have him push up on his hands to straighten his arms and lift his body off the floor.



Have the child try plank position on his forearms, with elbows resting on the floor. Can he move between the two positions, pushing from his elbows back up onto his hands? How many times can he move between the two positions?

If plank position is too difficult, have the child try it with knees resting on the floor.

In high plank, challenge the child to lift one leg and hold it out behind him. Then, challenge him to lift one arm. Can he lift opposite arm and leg and hold it?

Have the child try shifting into a side plank position, rolling from high plank onto one hand and the outside edge of the same foot, with the other arm raised to the sky.

Make it a game! Have one child hold plank position while another child tries to roll or gently kick a ball under his body.

# BRIDGE

Have the child lie on her back with her knees bent and her feet flat on the floor. Have her push through her feet and heels to raise her bottom up off the floor. Be sure that she is keeping her head and shoulders on the ground.



Have the child slowly lower down from a bridge position onto the floor and then slowly lift back up into bridge. Try counting to 3 as the child lifts and lowers.

Put a stuffed animal or ball between the child's knees and have her squeeze while bridging.

For a challenge, have your child place her feet on a pillow or small ball and try to maintain stability while pushing up to bridge position.

Make it a game! Try zooming some toy cars under the child's bridge. How many cars can you get under the bridge before it falls?

Find a few small stuffed animals and "walk" them under the bridge. Tell the child not to squish the animals!

# SUPER HERO

Have the child lie on his stomach on the floor and try to lift his arms and upper chest up off the floor in front of him like a flying super hero.



Challenge the child to lift his legs off the ground at the same time as his arms.

See if the child can hold a ball between his hands or his feet and lift it up off the ground. Can he hold two balls? One with his hands, one with his feet?

Place a stuffed animal on the child's back and see if he can complete this exercise with enough control to keep the animal from falling.

In super hero position, have the child reach up for you to hand him pieces of a puzzle or to place stickers as high as he can on the wall.

Try super hero pose on a swing or a large ball for an extra challenge and to add some sensory input to the exercise.

# BOAT POSE

Have the child lie on her back on the floor and then lift her torso off the floor at a 45 degree angle while raising legs (knees bent) off the floor as well. Shins can be parallel with the ground or legs can be extended.



Challenge the child to straighten her legs up to a 45 degree angle off the floor, making a "V" shape with her body.

Have the child hold a large ball between her hands in boat pose and ask her to bring it to the floor to the side of one hip and then the other. Count how many repetitions she can complete.

Have the child lie on the floor on her back, holding a ball between her ankles. Challenge her to lift up into boat pose, passing the ball from her ankles to her hands, and then lying back down flat on the floor, raising the ball overhead. Repeat, passing the ball back and forth between her ankles and hands as many times as she can!



# CRAB WALK

Have the child sit on his bottom on the floor. Show him how to place his hands on the floor behind him and push up so his bottom is off the ground. Then, have him start walking like a crab!



Have the child crab walk on different surfaces for a different kind of challenge. Try inclines, declines, hard surfaces, soft surfaces, etc.)

Try a crab walk race where the child moves forward to touch a target and then backwards to the starting point.

Set up cones or pillows as obstacles and have the child crab walk between them.

Play a game in the crab walk position! Try Red Light, Green Light, Tag, or Soccer

For extra work on core stability and body awareness, place a toy or stuffed animal on the child's belly and see if she can crab walk without it falling off.

Do a crab dance! See if the child can lift one hand up and hold it for 5 seconds, then try a foot!

# WHEELBARROW WALK

Hold the child's feet and have him walk on his hands.



Try a wheelbarrow walk relay with a friend!

Try a crab walk race where the child moves forward to touch a target and then backwards to the starting point.

Wheelbarrow "Walk Outs" - Have the child start with belly on an exercise ball or bolster and hands on the floor. Have her walk her hands out, rolling forward on the ball to retrieve a toy or place a piece in a puzzle.

Have the child balance a bean bag on her back while wheelbarrow walking across the play space, placing it in a container at the end.

Try wheelbarrow walking up and down an incline or around obstacles.

# INCHWORM WALKS

Have the child start in standing. Have her bend forward, touch the ground, and walk her hands forward. Then, have her walk her feet in to meet her hands. Repeat!



Try inchworm walking up or down an incline.

Instead of walking feet forward, try jumping them forward to meet the hands.

Have the child inchworm walk forward and then try walking backward!

If the child is struggling with putting all of the movements together, try isolating just the feet. Have him start in plank and practice walking the feet in to meet the hands and then back into plank. Then try isolating just the hands, walking them in and out

# COMMANDO CRAWLING

Have the child creep across the floor on his tummy using arms and legs to pull body forward. Try an obstacle course, or crawling through a tunnel!



Try commando crawling up or down an incline.

Add obstacles to make it more challenging. Try commando crawling over rolled blankets or cushions or weave in and out of obstacles.

For even more of a challenge, have the child try commando crawling while keeping a ball between his knees.

Placing a scooter under the child's legs will lighten the weight of his legs, but will challenge the obliques to control the lower body.









# CORE STRENGTHENING EXERCISE TRACKING SHEETS

Use the following charts to provide families, caregivers, or teachers with a way to track a child's completion of designated core strengthening activities.

On the first chart:

- Circle or highlight the activities for the child to complete.
- Then make note of how many repetitions or how long the child should hold the position.
- You can also include a note indicating how many times per day and how many days per week the child should complete the activity.
- The QR codes with videos of each activity are provided for reference.
- The parent, teacher, or caregiver can then indicate that the child has completed the activity for the day by circling the day abbreviation.

Use the second blank chart if you prefer to write in your own activities and other notes.

EXERCISE	VIDEO	REPS/TIME	COMPLETED
Plank			M T W T H F
Bridge			M T W T H F
Super Hero			M T W T H F
Crab Walk			M T W T H F
Boat Pose			M T W T H F
Wheelbarrow Walk			M T W T H F
Inchworm Walks			M T W T H F
Commando Crawl			M T W T H F

EXERCISE

REPS/TIME

COMPLETED

M T W TH F

M T W TH F

M T W TH F

M T W TH F

M T W TH F

M T W TH F

M T W TH F

M T W TH F

# PRINTABLE CORE STRENGTH CARDS

Use these printable cards to provide visual prompts during core strengthening activities for kids. Print on card stock and laminate.

Here are some ideas for how to use them:

- Print the QR codes and images as their own sets of cards or print the QR codes on one side and the corresponding images on the back of each card.
- Place Velcro on the backs of the cards to create sequences or "schedules" with the activities.
- Punch holes in the cards and put them on a keyring for quick, easy core strengthening breaks throughout the day!
- Set up stations around the room for different movement activities. Place these cards in one of the stations and allow kids to scan the QR codes themselves to increase interest and independence.





## PLANK



## BRIDGE



## SUPER HERO



## CRAB WALK



## BOAT POSE





## WHEELBARROW WALK



## INCHWORM WALKS



## COMMANDO CRAWLING





## PLANK



## BRIDGE



## SUPER HERO



## CRAB WALK



## BOAT POSE

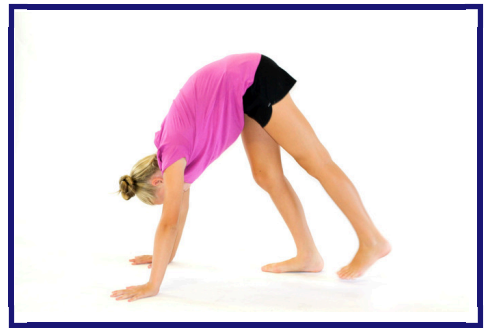




## WHEELBARROW WALK



## INCHWORM WALKS



## COMMANDO CRAWLING

