

A side-profile photograph of an older man with glasses, wearing a checkered shirt and dark trousers, sitting on a wooden chair. He is leaning forward slightly, with his hands resting on his thighs, demonstrating a core exercise. The background is a solid light blue.

Build a strong core

“A strong core is key to good posture and for doing most day-to-day activities with ease, such as getting in or out of a car, walking up and down stairs, or reaching for a book from a shelf,” said Michelle Miller, an exercise physiologist at Indiana University. Weak core muscles can result in poor posture, increased susceptibility to back injuries, poor balance, lack of range of motion, and an altered walking stride.

See how it feels to turn on your core muscles—in less than a minute.

- Sit on the edge of a firm chair with feet and legs at a 90-degree angle and place both hands on the front of your stomach area.
- Now, draw your bellybutton toward the center and pretend to lift at the same time to feel contracted and lengthened throughout the middle of the body—but not so much you hold your breath. Miller often tells clients to imagine putting on a tight jacket and then zipping it up. When doing this, the front and back of the body should contract at the same time.
- Finding the neutral position of the hips is important for proper posture. The hips should not be tipped forward or backward. Miller encourages you to “think of your pelvis as a bucket of water—tipping means spilling.”
- Now, for the shoulders and head. The head should not jut forward, nor the shoulders round in. Face straight ahead, chest high and sit tall.

“If you can hold this position sitting, you can hold it when you walk, drive, do household chores or other leisure time activities,” Miller said.