

Core Stability

Core strength comes from trunk muscles and it enables us to develop posture for movement and anti-gravity positioning. Core stability is required for most movement based control over the body including head control upper limb control and mobility. It gives us balance, enables effective bilateral skills and the ability to stabilise joints for the use of tools such as a pencil. Core stability is required to enable shoulder stability which then enable upper limb stability and then hand skill development.

Reduced core stability can be the result of low tone and this can be seen in various positioning:

- Leaning on furniture or tables
- Holding breath during tasks
- Wrapping the limbs around furniture to stabilise
- Leaning on peers
- Sinking into furniture
- Reduced strength in hand grips
- Fatigue
- 'W' sitting
- Poor balance
- Climbing difficulties
- Reduced engagement in physical activity
- Anxiety with balance challenges

Activities can be provided to aid developing core stability including:

- Sitting on a wobble cushion on a chair and at floor time. Sitting on an unstable surface promotes activation of core muscles for seated tasks, therefore increasing core muscles.
- Floor activities – bridging, 4-point kneeling and raising opposite arm and leg. These will increase core strength.
- Lying on backs and curling into a ball – this increases flexor muscle strength.
- Chair push ups, wall push ups, 4-point kneeling push ups – these will increase shoulder and upper limb strength and increase awareness of upper body.
- Balance beanbag on heads and crouch down to touch the floor – this will promote a good posture.

- Plank!! Older pupils – very good for core stability!!!
- Activities completed on tummies such as reading – this will increase back extensor strength
- Lying on tummy and assuming superman position – this increases back extensor strength
- Sitting on a gym ball and balancing, then leaning back while walking feet forward (older children) - this is much like a stomach crunch activity and will increase core strength.
- On tummy over gym ball and holding a straight body position – this increases back strength and upper limb weight bearing.