

# CORE STRENGTH FOR RUNNERS

Many people give only a passing thought to doing core strength exercises. These exercises are often done at the end of a workout when you are tired (assuming they aren't put in the 'too hard basket' and neglected altogether) or worse still – done, but done incorrectly. However, strengthening your core shouldn't be thought of as a chore, as the benefits far outweigh the time and effort needed.

The 'core' refers to the deep layer of muscles found in your abdominal cavity and lower back. The Transversus Abdominus and Multifidus muscles play a key role in stabilising the mid section of your torso between your ribs and hips and reduces the requirement for the surface muscles to be as active. The surface muscles (including your Rectus Abdominus or '6 pack muscles') tend to use a lot more energy than the core muscles, and so a strong core can reduce fatigue both when you are working, and when exercising.



Good core stability can greatly benefit your running and sports performance. Usain Bolt credited his gold medal performances in the Olympic Games partly to Pilates improving his core strength. While we aren't all looking to run a sub ten second 100 metre race, it has benefits for everyday athletes too. An experiment was conducted where half of a group of recreational runners were given a core strength program (5 exercises, 4 days per week) while the whole group

maintained their normal training schedule. After a couple of months the runners that didn't do any core strength had improved their 5km time by about 5 seconds each. The group doing the core exercises however, each improved by almost a minute! Aside from the performance enhancing abilities, a strong core can help you to avoid certain injuries. Recent studies have shown that runners with poor core strength are much more likely to develop knee and leg injuries. Illio-Tibial Band (ITB) injuries are more prevalent in runners with a weak core and gluteal (butt) muscles. Poor core strength is also a factor in many lower back pain injuries which are becoming increasingly common as people are spending longer hours sitting with bad posture.

There are many good reasons why you should be doing core strength exercises a few times each week. Taking part in a Pilates class is a great way to dedicate time to improving your core while also learning how to perform the exercises correctly.



intraining Running Injury Clinic has recently opened the 'Balance, Core & Sports Rehab Studio' at 33 Park Road Milton. The studio offers mat Pilates classes designed to develop core strength. The classes are kept to a small number of participants and are instructed by a physiotherapist with a focus on teaching you correct technique. Pilates is suitable for most people and offers a great way to improve strength and conditioning in a low impact way.

Book online at [www.intraining.com.au/sportsrehab](http://www.intraining.com.au/sportsrehab)  
Or call the intraining Running Injury Clinic on 07 3367 3088.

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