



Core Strengthening

Infant/Toddler Edition



Physioball Sitting



Physioball Sitting



- Place child on physioball in sitting and support them around the torso (easier) or hips (harder). The lower you hold them the more work they have to do.
- Use up and down motion with your hands to create bounce, which triggers the tummy muscles to turn on in order to help the body stay in a seated position.
- You can also use forward-back and side-to-side shifting motion to challenge the muscles a little differently. Small grade motions are easier and larger grade motions are harder.
- If your child tends to grip onto you, try giving them a toy to hold or incorporating a song with hand motions so their tummy muscles get the most from the activity.



Kneeling

Kneeling

- Help your child get onto knees with hands on an elevated surface like a step stool, delivery box, or storage bin.
- If your child keeps their bottom down on their heels, present a toy or item of interest above the support just out of their reach. Coming forward off of heels will work their bottom and back muscles.
- If your child needs more of a challenge, help them get into a half kneeling position, which involves one foot coming forward to plant on the ground.
- It takes a lot of work to maintain these positions, so it's okay for it to take some time for your little one to build up the ability to hold them. Have fun in these positions by including reaching (forwards, sideways, up, down, and across the body). Turning and reaching backwards really works the core too!



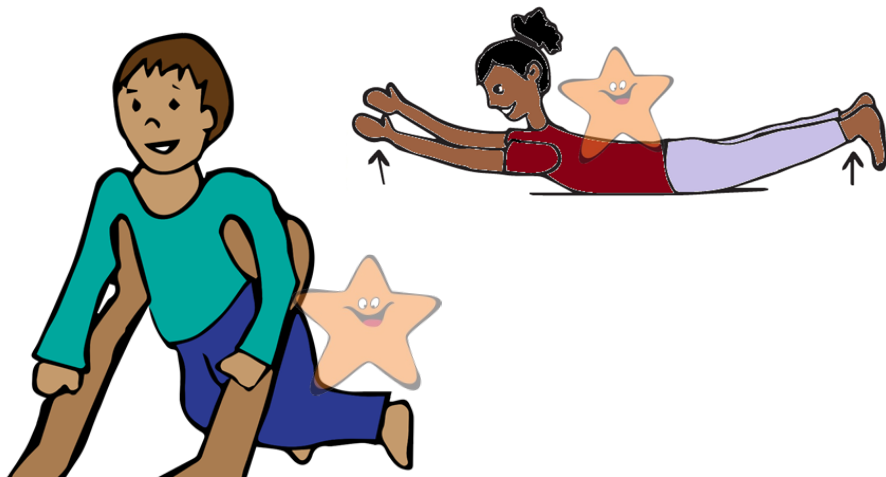
Crawl/climb over



Crawl/climb over



- Once your child has figured out progressing forward on tummy or hands/knees, you can add the challenge of moving over pillows or cushions.
- Start simple with one firm, small pillow/cushion and progress the challenge by using multiple compliant and larger pillows/cushions.
- It may help to set up in a hallway or small area of a room so the only way to the other side is over. Kids can be very clever about finding a way around!
- Keep it fun and without frustration. If your child needs a little help, provide your hand at their foot to help push off or a hand to pull on. Over time as they improve, provide less help.



Super Kid

Super Kid



- This exercise works the muscles on the backside of the body and can be performed in a couple of ways.
- One option is to pick up your child under their arms or with one hand under their chest and the other under their thighs allowing you to gently move them around as if they are flying.
- Another option involves your child positioning on their tummy on the floor. Present a toy up from the floor out of their reach so they have to lift their upper body to make contact. You can also present something up over the feet to encourage them to lift their lower body against gravity to kick it.

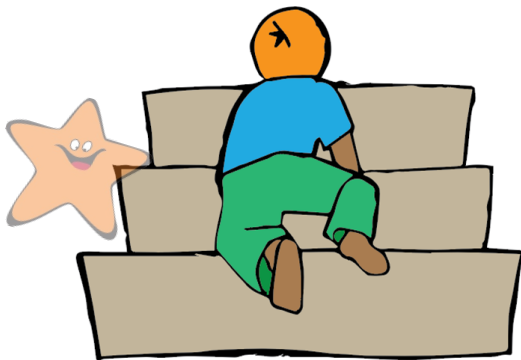
Crawl over leg



Crawl over leg



- Sit on the ground with one or both legs straight out in front of you and place your child on one of your side.
- Place a toy or any item of interest to them on the other side of you to encourage them to crawl over your leg(s) to get it.
- If your child is having a hard time, you can simplify by having them start with their belly on top of your leg so that they only have to problem solve getting their legs over first.
- Make it more challenging by having your child crawl over both legs!



Crawl Up Stairs

Crawl Up Stairs



- Crawling up stairs is another great way to build strength and coordination!
- Start your child at the bottom of the stairs and place a toy or another item they will want to work for at the top or a few steps up for motivation.
- Encourage them to crawl up leading with hands and following with legs. Guide their hands up if they need help initiating.
- Some children may prefer to lead with only one leg. Make sure to encourage them to use both legs equally by tapping the leg you want them to use and/or by holding the leg they prefer to use.

Side Sitting



Side Sitting

- Have your child sit on the floor with their knees bent in front of them and their feet pointing to the same side.
- Have them put their hands on the floor or on a toy in front of them if they need a little more support to start
- Help them place their hands down at their sides if they need help maintaining the position. As they get the hang of it, have them engage with an item using their hands challenging their tummy muscles to work harder.
- Make sure to do both sides!





Rolling

Rolling

- Lie your child down on their back. Place a toy or something they will want to reach for to the side and up from their head.
- Help by bringing the leg opposite side the toy up and over towards the toy. This starts the process for them. Gently hold them in this position and allow them to work the core and upper body to roll to their belly in order to reach the toy.
- It can help to present the toy in front of them and gradually move it across their body and up as they simultaneously reach for it.





Hand & Foot Play

Hand and Foot Play

- Lie your child down on their back.
- Use fun socks, bells, or toys on their feet to bring them to your child's attention.
- Hopefully your child will become aware of their presence and begin to kick their feet and/or tuck up their legs so their hands can reach towards the fun.
- If they are having a hard time, you can help guide the foot up so they can take hold and play. Ideally over time, they will get the hang of it on their own.





Great job!