

4 LIFE FITNESS NEWS

Core Muscles | The Reading Corner | Fall Prevention Recap



Newsletter

- It's All About Your Core
- The Reading Corner
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Birthdays

A Very Happy Birthday to:

Susan Nolan - Oct 7

Julie Price - Oct 26

Diane Ross-Leech - Nov 3

Janice Schroeder - Nov 9

Member News

We would like to welcome the following members to the Agile 4 Life Fitness Community:

- ✦ Isobel White
- ✦ Vicki Dempsey

Congratulations on becoming grandparents:

- ✦ Alan Tom
- ✦ Mary Hurley

Congratulations on becoming 1st time parents:

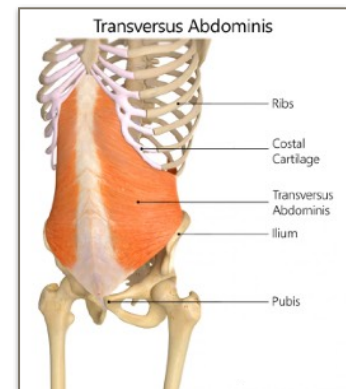
- ✦ Moorea Brega &
- ✦ Deep Dey



It's All About Your Core

If you've ever taken a class with Joy, then you've heard that phrase before. Of course, it's not food she's referring to. She's talking about the central muscle group that provides us with optimal support.

The *transversus abdominis* or transverse abdominal muscle, is sometimes referred to as the body's natural "corset" muscle. Appropriately named since it's the only muscle that runs horizontal and from one side to other side. It's the deepest layer of any abdominal muscle and spans the bottom of the rib cage, all the way down to the pelvis and ends in the midline of the abdomen. And it lies underneath the internal and external obliques, which are the side abdominal muscles that provide trunk flexion and rotation. (See pic on page 3)



The transverse abdominal muscle is the main stabilizer of the core. One of its jobs is to help protect and support the spine during everyday activities. It also helps maintain normal abdominal wall tension, which supports the internal organs within the trunk and aids in expulsive forces such as

(continued on page 3)





The Reading Corner - For Better Health & Fitness

Coronavirus Updates, click the underlined title to read the article from *The Washington Post*. Just another benefit to exercising regularly.


Fitness Inspiration

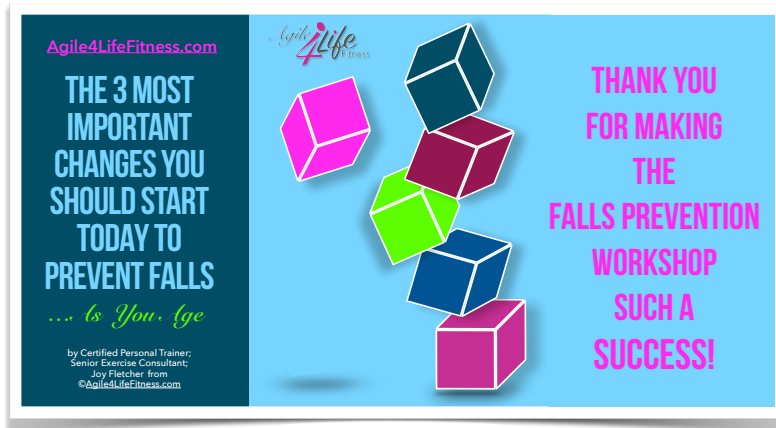
Madeline Dillion is the next fitness inspiration. Since the pandemic, Madeline has enjoyed taking the live Zoom Circuit Classes. Each week she plans her day around her exercise. Doing so, "is her time to do something good for herself," she says. I personally love that philosophy.

Madeline came to enjoy Joy's circuit class through her husband Bob. As soon as the Y moved circuit to a co-ed room Bob was a regular. He'd often mention how much his wife Madeline would enjoy the class. At the time, she was recovering from a total hip replacement thanks to arthritis.

Fast forward to the present. Madeline and Bob are still including circuit in their fitness routine. Madeline is vowing to add at least another day of stretching. She noted that since continuing circuit through COVID, she now has tricep muscles in her upper arms and her core muscles are "the strongest they've ever been". A testament to the benefits of working out hard and learning to use the right muscles for the exercise.

Playing grandmother to her 5 grandchildren, 2 of them toddlers and 2 babies, Madeline knows it's important to stay fit. Even though she suffers from pain in the other arthritic hip and manages a chronic shoulder after surgery, she feels good and her friends say she looks very fit at 74 years young.

Congratulations Madeline. And thank you for reminding us how consistency and dedication can bring real results. 



Update on the Falls Prevention Workshop

The first FREE workshop held on Sept. 20th, sponsored by Agile 4 Life Fitness, was a big success. I'm happy to say there were about 20 attendees. Thank you to every single person who took time out of their day to attend this workshop.

For those members who shared the information about the workshop with their friends and family, thank you so much for spreading the word. That means more to me than you'll know. For those who attended because you're trying to take an active part in keeping yourself safe and preventing a fall, I'm sending you a very special thank you. Working on your posture can do a lot to improve your balance and I know you're going to succeed.

The feedback from those who attended has been amazing. People are commenting on how useful the information was for them. One person said they had attended a falls prevention workshop before this one and didn't get anywhere near this much useful information. I also heard a lot of people say, they were starting the changes that very day.

With such a welcoming response and positive feedback, there will definitely be more FREE workshops. If any of you have a topic you would like to learn more about, feel free to send me an email: joy@agile4lifefitness.com. I'll make a list of the your great suggestions and start making plans for the next FREE workshop.

If you were not able to attend the workshop, it was recorded. The recording is in the Content Library of the program used to manage my classes for Agile 4 Life Fitness called PunchPass. [Here is the link: https://agile4lifefitness.punchpass.com/content-library/145075](https://agile4lifefitness.punchpass.com/content-library/145075)

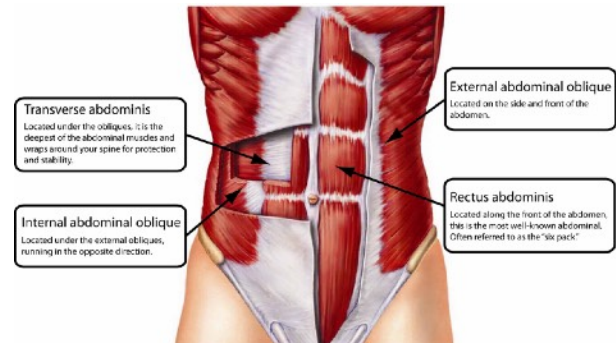
Please note: viewing the video is totally FREE and you do not need an account with Agile 4 Life Fitness to watch the video. Just click on the link above or copy and paste the link to your browser.

(It's All About Your Core— from page 1)

taking deep breaths and handling your daily restroom activities. A strong transverse abdominis can also help improve pelvic floor function which in turn prevents a problem all too common in older adults, urinary incontinence.

Those aren't the only benefits of having strong core muscles. These muscles play a huge role in maintaining good posture, by helping to decrease back pain, and by providing support when you move heavy objects. In fact, they are essentially the originator of most body movements, especially getting up and down from a lying position.

Now that you know the importance of having strong core muscles, 1) how do you find them and 2) what types of exercises help you strengthen these muscles?



To strengthen transverse abdominals, it's important to include exercises that'll engage them. That means doing what is called stabilization exercises. These types of exercises require you to hold your torso stable in a certain position for a period of time. Some examples are; a plank exercise, a bridge, or a bird dog.

Stabilization exercises can also include moving the extremities in a slow controlled fashion as you stabilize the torso. An example of that is a straight arm plank where you add an alternating shoulder touch or adding an elbow to knee touch to the bird dog. As you're moving an arm, a leg (or both), the goal is to keep your torso "stabilized" so it doesn't dip, go slack or move out of position as you move your arm or leg.

These stabilization exercises are normally the ones that elicit a bit of grumbling while you're exercising. Yes, they're the ones that have a tendency to be challenging. But it's these stabilization exercises that give you such great results in your overall strength, and they are crucial to improve balance. That's why no matter what fitness classes you take at Agile 4 Life, they'll include an assortment of stabilization exercises.

Now, let's go back to the first question. How do you find the transverse abdominals? The best way is to lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Allow your muscles to relax, especially the abdominals. Once you're relaxed, find the protruding edge of your hip bone (pelvis) with your fingers. It will be about one inch below your belly button and toward the center top of where your leg and hip join. Once you find your hip edge, you're going to very slowly start to lift your shoulders off the floor. As your body automatically tightens, in preparation of the lift, you should be able to feel muscles "pop-up" under your fingers. That's your transverse abdominals. (**Note:** For those who have trouble getting up and down off the floor, you can do this on your bed.)

The trick to activating the transverse abdominals is not to just "pull in" the muscles (belly button to spine), but to tighten the muscles as if you are bracing for an impact or beginning to lift yourself from a lying position. Once these muscles are contracted, it's important to check that you're still able to continue to breathe normally. If you find you can't keep the muscles tight as you breathe, and feel the need to hold your breath to feel braced, you may not actually be activating the proper muscles. If that's the case, don't hesitate to practice. And of course, Joy will be happy to run a quick "transverse abdominal discovery" after class. All you need to do is ask.

Happy Thanksgiving