



FIG 1 Frisbee Push



FIG 2 Magic Carpet Ride

CORE STRENGTH ACTIVITIES FOR PRESCHOOL AND BEGINNERS

BY LINDA THORBERG AND BRANT LUTSKA

What's so important about CORE strength for young children?

A strong CORE is a fitness buzz word these days. Parents go to the gym, they work out and can understand when we talk about the importance of a strong CORE in children.

Parents don't always know or care that some of your drills may lead to a clear hip or giant circle someday. They will care that you have told them that these are life skills for healthy bodies and fit kids as well as teaching cartwheels. They will find the value in this. Perhaps most importantly, a child's self esteem, self confidence, mental discipline, performance, and coordination can all be expected to improve as a result of strength and conditioning

training.

Exercise and proper training have a positive effect on a child's cardiopulmonary/cardio respiratory status and bone mineral density, helping to reduce the risk of serious illnesses in adulthood, such as heart disease and osteoporosis, and diabetes. It can also aid in body composition and the loss of body fat, countering childhood obesity.

The body's "core" refers to the muscles around the abdomen, pelvis, and back. This core is in the body's center of gravity. As a result, it plays a role in almost all activities. From sitting to standing, walking to running, the core muscles are at work stabilizing

our body from the force of gravity.

All this is a by-product of gymnastics class. Why not advertise this important benefit to your customers?

Here are some interesting facts about Core Strength to share with your customers and staff:

- People with adequate CORE strength have good bone density – gymnasts by far have better bone density than other athletes.
- By the time children are 18-20 years old, they have acquired 90% of their peak bone mass. Age 25-30 is peak.
- Adolescence is where you save for your bone retirement – call it your “calcium bank”
- An impact sport like gymnastics is important as it contributes to your calcium bank.

Here are some examples of poor CORE strength that you may recognize in children in class:

- Tire easily – how many times have you had a child in class who needs to lay on the mat half way through class.

with better form, so you train with appropriate technique.

- Review your lesson plan so you know you have included a strength activity at every event, or some games to work on the CORE.

Here are some ideas for fun CORE activities:

Make it a GAME!

- Pass a beach ball around the circle using only your feet
- Roll a ball under the whole class as they walk their feet up the wall and hold it to make a tunnel.
- Try a frisbee push for the whole class. It will work on arms, legs, as well as core and is fun! Fig. 1 Frisbee Push

Parent and Child class can have fun CORE activities too!

Magic Carpet Ride

Giving the child a ride makes for smiles as they work on keeping the center of gravity upright. Tipping over is part of the fun! Fig. 2 Magic Carpet Ride

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- Poor posture – Look at those children who don't stand up straight and hang their head.
- Prone to injury - How about the child who always says, “Ouch, that hurts,” or always seems to have a pain.
- Poor self-esteem – Children who can't look you in the eye, or always say, “I can't.”

Positive ways to include fun CORE training for young children in gymnastics class

- To keep exercising fun for young children, limit the number of attempts they do. Counting how old you are is a good way to limit your repetitions. If you are 4, do four sit ups!
- It's better to do a few repetitions and then move on to another thing, and then come back and repeat. This keeps young ones engaged

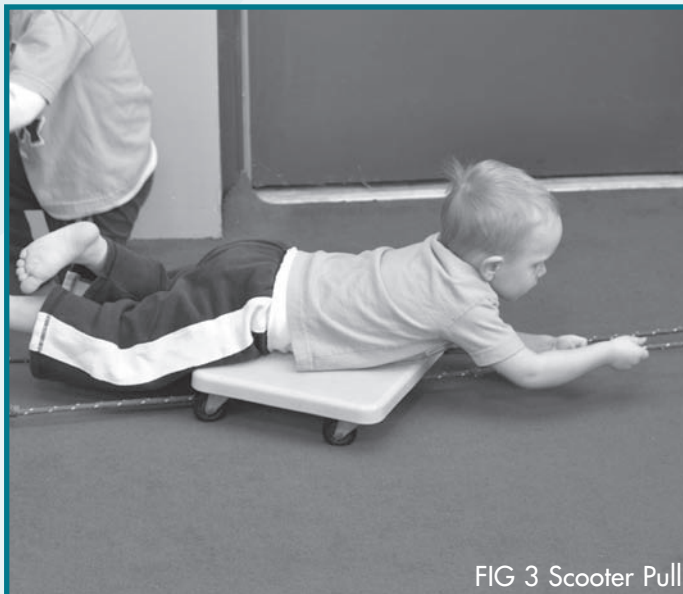


FIG 3 Scooter Pull

Activities that hold a shape work on CORE strength. Here are some examples:

Wheelbarrow Walk

There are lots of ways to play

- Walk out keeping a tight body
- Hold
- Walk back
- Do a push up

Fig. 4 Wheelbarrow



FIG 4 Wheelbarrow

Try Bottoms UP

Roll up and back or roll up and hold. This is more challenging than the wheelbarrow walk.

Fig. 5 Bottoms Up



FIG 5 Bottoms Up

Straight Body Hold

Lift and hold. Too easy? Try to roll over and hold, or move the mats further apart. Fig.6 Straight Body Hold



FIG 6 Straight Body Hold

Hold the shape while you pick up the toys

Balance in the push up position, lift an arm to pick up a bean bag and put in a bucket. Try the other arm, too. For variety, have them toss the bean bags at a target. Fig. 7 Pick up Toys



FIG 7 Pick up Toys

Hold the shape and Hi 5 your partner

It's always fun to have a friend. Face each other in the push up shape and Hi 5 each other. Fig. 8 Partner Hi 5



FIG 8 Partner Hi 5

Press Up, Count to 4

Make a straddle press on a block on the beam or on the floor. Lift up and down four times. For a challenge, lift up and hold for four if you are 4. It's a great activity for the whole class at once while sitting on a beam. Fig. 9 Press Up

Hold and Balance

Too hard? Balance on an elbow instead of hand. Still too hard? Split legs apart for a more stable base. Fig. 10 Hold and Balance

All of these activities are easy for class children to try. Give them a challenge, talk about CORE strength and how it leads to gymnastics skills as well as fitness.

Re-thinking and updating our teachers by giving them the reasons why we do these activities for young children can help sell your program's benefits to parents from the fitness standpoint.

Try and include core strength activities in every lesson. Look at these as "Life Skills" for healthy bodies. Share this with parents to show the value of gymnastics and your program!

This is part of a lecture from USA Gymnastics Congress by Linda Thorberg and Brant Lutska, USA Gymnastics National Instructors for Preschool Fundamentals. The complete lecture is available from www.flippingeducation.com

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FIG 9 Press Up



FIG 10 Hold and Balance