

How to... strengthen your core

Toning your tummy muscles can help improve posture and keep your back strong and pain-free. Here are two great exercises to try

1. Crunches

Focus area: abdominals

- Lie on your back with knees bent. If you need to, support your head with your hand/s.
- Look just beyond your knees and lift shoulder blades off the floor towards a 45-degree angle, breathing out as you do.

- Focus on moving from the shoulders, not from the head and neck. Breathe in as you lower back down again.

Aim for: 1-3 sets of 15-25 repetitions.



2. Hover

Focus area: deep core muscles

- Lie face-down on a mat or towel with forearms and knees on the floor.
- Lift your chest and tummy up off the ground and lower your bottom to keep your back flat. As you exhale, imagine you're trying to bring your belly button up towards your spine.
- Keep breathing and hold this position for as long as possible – this may only be for

a few seconds at first, but try to build up to the recommendation below.

Aim for: 3 sets of 15-60 seconds.

Tip: If this exercise is too hard, start by lying flat on the floor and simply lifting your navel off the floor. If it becomes too easy, perform it on toes rather than knees. Remember to keep your back straight and bottom flat at all times.

