

Isolated Core Exercises

Floor Bridge

First lay on your back (barefoot preferably) and bend your knees so that your feet are close to your bottom, with feet and knees hip width apart and feet flat on the floor. You can also lay your arms down by your sides and turn your palms up.

Next you need to prepare for the movements by checking how high you can raise your bottom without arching your back. This will be dictated mostly by the flexibility in your hip flexors. So after lifting your bottom up in the air, simply squeeze your buttocks to find your ceiling height that you will perform to that does **not** create an arch in your back.



Starting from this position then, lower your bottom back towards the floor by flexing your hips and knees and keeping your back straight. Try also to keep your bottom tensed throughout the lowering so that the hamstrings do not take over. Relax the soles of the feet but keep the big toes on the floor. Finish with the bottom still slightly off the floor.

Now return back to the top position by first engaging the Short Foot technique and matching the arch shortening of the foot and big toe pressing to the floor with the squeezing-in of your buttock muscles until the climax at the top when again you hit your ceiling. Along with your buttocks tightening you can also engage your lower abdominal area which will in turn help prevent you from arching your back.



Kneeling Leg Extension

First kneel down on all fours with your hands shoulder width apart and directly below your shoulders and your feet and knees hip width apart and knees directly below your hips, also have your toes extended up. Keep your head lifted up with your chin tucked in and your back neutral.

Without shifting your body weight across from side to side or rolling your hips, press back one heel to lead the leg into extension behind you level with your body (if your hip flexors will allow it) and engage the sole of your foot and big toe and buttock on the same side (Short Foot) as well as your abdominal muscles to steady your torso and stop your back from arching. So you finish the movement with a pointed toe as if toeing off from the floor.

Next slowly lower the leg back into its original position minding that it does not stray inwards or forwards. Then repeat on the opposite side.



Dying Bug

Prepare by lying on your back with your head close to a wall. Place your hands to the wall shoulder width apart, with your elbows bent and your fingers pointing down towards the floor. Next lift up your legs with knees, hips and ankles bent to 90 degrees.

Keeping your back as flat to the floor as you can by engaging the lower abdominal area whilst pressing your palms back to the wall, lead one leg into extension with the heel and use the Short Foot technique. The leg extension finishes as low to the ground as you can get the leg (without touching down) and keeping the back flat, with the toes pointed down as if pushing off a surface.

Next bring the leg back towards its original position whilst simultaneously extending the other leg to replace the extended one.



Squat

Prepare by standing on a flat surface (barefoot preferably) with feet hip width apart and feet parallel with toes straight forward. Fingertips to temples and elbows pointing outwards. Stand tall with the crown of your head lifted and chin tucked in.

Slowly flex your knees, hips and ankles sinking down into your feet keeping an even pressure between your hip joint/buttocks and knee joint/front thighs as well as an even weight between the balls of your feet and your heels and let your feet spread relaxing your toes. Only go as low as you can maintain the same angle in your back as created by your shin bones and be careful not to allow the back to arch. To help with these points, try standing with your toes approximately 4 inches away from a wall and use the wall as a vertical guide for your knees and forehead. Your knees can come past your toes if the flexibility in your ankle joint will allow it, but however far forwards your knees come, your forehead (with chin still tucked in) should be approximately twice as far forward. So for example, if your toes are 4 inches distance from the wall, then when you descend until your forehead touches the wall, your knees should still be 2 inches back or half way in-between. This however may not be your maximum depth, in which case you can move your toes a little further back and try again until you feel you have reached your maximum range, or vice versa as required, you can then use a wall as a reference for you form. Once you have reached the base of your squat, apply the Short Foot technique to encourage the buttocks to drive you back to the top of the squat whilst maintaining stability in you abdominal area. Squeeze the buttock firmly at the top of the squat feeling the pelvis tucking under rather than arching the back.

