

Stoma friendly 10 minute exercises from Fern, our physiotherapist partner

Exercises 1: The corset squeeze:

Think of your ribs, tummy, back and pelvic floor like a corset.

Knit your ribs together by squeezing them towards each other and back towards your spine. Aim to pull your belly button towards your spine, and engage your pelvic floor as if you were stopping urine mid flow. Work with the natural flow of your breathing to create the engagement of your muscles. Complete 10 squeezes with the in and out of your breaths.

This exercise is also the base to which you should perform the other exercises in order to engage your core muscles and maintain good posture.

Try to do this as you go about your daily life, out walking is a great place to fire up your core muscles while moving.

Don't hold your breath whilst working on this exercise!

Exercise 2: Pelvic tilts:

Lay on your back on a bed. Engage your core muscles as we have done in exercise 1. Then aim to peel your lower back from the bed approximately 1 inch or so then stop and hold. Check you are still holding your core correct. Then lower back to the bed and tilt your pelvis the opposite way creating a deeper curve in the lower spine. Aim for 10 repetitions of this exercise.

Exercise 3: Bridge:

Engage your core as per exercise 1. Begin a pelvic tilt as per exercise number 2, then fully lift your bottom and lower back off the bed. Aim to press your hands and arms into the bed. The key is to engage your core, push your heels into the bed and feel as if you are pulling your heels towards you bottom. Aim for 10 repetitions of this exercise. You can adjust the height of your lift as you get stronger. It is better to only lift a little but maintain a strong and engaged core than lift higher.



Exercise 4: Knee rolls:

Laying on your back on a bed, bend your knees and place your feet on the bed, hip width apart. Then, engage your core as per exercise 1, then gently and slowly roll your knees from side to side as if they were a windscreen wiper on a car. You can start off by moving the knees a few inches side to side if you don't feel confident, aim to get your legs fully flat on the bed as your confidence grows. This is also a lovely side stretch for your lateral core muscles. Aim for 10 repetitions and build up as you get stronger.

Exercise 5: Mini air squat:

Standing in front of a chair or a kitchen work top, place your feet hip width apart. Engage your core as per exercise 1. Place your arms extended out in the air in front of you, the higher they are the more difficult. Slowly bend at your knees and hips to perform a squat. Go as low as feels comfortable for you. Ensure your knees don't go over your toes as this can damage them overtime. Aim for 10 mini squats. Progress repetitions, depth of squat and arm position to add difficulty as you get stronger.

Together with