

FFL Healthy Mid/Lower Back



Strengthening exercises for the mid and lower back can provide stability and improve your overall back health. Use these exercises as part of a larger fitness routine in combination with other body parts. For assistance in creating your routine, reach out to an athletic trainer or health coach.

General recommendations

- Begin a strengthening program as tolerated.
- Tighten or engage core muscles while completing activities.
- Perform activities slowly and with control to feel each muscle group working.
- Increase repetitions and weight as strength improves and is tolerated.

Row



- Anchor a band at chest level and stand tall with feet staggered.
- Hold your resistance band so that the arms are straight and the band has no slack in it.
- Keep your core tight, pull the arms back, squeezing the shoulder blades back and down.
- Hold the position briefly, then slowly return to start position.
- **Alternative activity:** If no resistance band available, complete row with a weight.

Supine Bridge



- Lie on your back with both knees bent. Contract your glutes and core and lift your hips toward the ceiling until your thighs are in a straight line with your torso.
- Slowly lower yourself to the floor.
- Do not lift the head off the floor.

Supine Single Leg Bridge



- Lie on your back with your knees bent.
- Lift one leg off the floor and keep this leg straight and in line with the opposite thigh.
- Contract your glutes and core to lift your hips off the ground.
- Slowly return to the initial position.

Alternate Arm and Leg Lift



- Start on your hands and knees, with your knees directly under your hips and your hands directly under your shoulders.
- Tighten your abdominals and core, then lift one arm and the opposite leg without allowing the trunk or pelvis to move or rotate.
- Keep the movements controlled, and lower your leg and arm back to the floor and repeat with the other leg and the opposite arm.
- **Alternative activity:** Lie on your stomach and raise opposite arm and leg.

Prone Upper Body Extension



- Lie on your stomach.
- Tuck your elbows and arms under your chest and relax the abdominals and glutes.
- While keeping the pelvis and legs on the surface, lift your shoulders and trunk upwards by pushing on to your elbows.
- Slowly return to the initial position.
- **Advanced:** Place your hands under your chest and slowly press up and extending your arms only as far as you can comfortably.

Plank Series



- Start on your hands and knees. Lower down to your elbows and extend your legs, propping yourself on your forearms and toes.
- Keep your neck and back straight
- Tighten your abdominals and core to maintain a straight line with your body, and maintain this position.
- You may need to take a rest if unable to maintain straight posture.
- **Modification:** To make the activity less challenging, position yourself on your forearms and knees.

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Side Plank Series



- Lie on your side with your legs straight and in line with your body.
- Support the upper body on the elbow/forearm, with the elbow directly under the shoulder. Place your top arm on your side.
- Lift your pelvis off the floor by tightening your abdominal muscles to create a straight line with your body, and hold the position without allowing your pelvis to drop.
- **Modification:** To make the activity less challenging, bend your knees as pictured.

Core Series



- Lie on your back with your knees bent and your lower back in neutral position (slightly arched).
- Activate your lower abdominals (transversus abdominis) by bringing your belly button inward and by gently activating your pelvic floor muscles.
- Maintain steady abdominal breathing while you lift one knee up until the thigh is vertical and your hip is at 90 degrees.
- While the first leg is held still, lift the other leg in the same position without moving your lower back.
- Return to the starting position by slowly lowering one leg at a time.

I understand and acknowledge that I should seek the advice of a physician before beginning any physical exercise regimen, routine, or program, including participating in the activities depicted in this handout. I further understand and acknowledge that, as with any exercise program or other activity, if at any point during my activity I begin to feel faint, dizzy or have physical discomfort, I should stop immediately.

Please contact the Fit for Life team at 442-3145 or email BIWfitforlife@gdbiw.com.

GENERAL DYNAMICS
Bath Iron Works