

Fun to the Core!

Core Exercises for Kids | BY India Burgess

The movement towards health and wellness has swept the nation in the past few years. Americans are beginning to realize how important fitness is. But if you think about it, how many parents invest in a [gym membership](#) for their children? I don't know too many, but fitness is just as important for children as it is adults.

As a mother and Occupational Therapist, [Tracey le Roux](#) gives tips on how to help your child develop strong core muscles in fun ways.

Before you attempt any core exercises, she suggests the following:

1. Consult your health professional before commencing any exercise program with your child
2. Make it a game! Take turns being the leader. Your child will feel less of a demand knowing that they'll have a chance to take charge too.
3. All core exercises should be done slowly with as much control as possible. It's better to have your child do one or 2 good repetitions than several sloppy ones.

Tightrope Walker

You Need: A rope (5-10m) stretched out in a line, a beanbag, and an empty plastic bottle.

Demonstrate how to walk heel-to-toe on the floor (without a line). If they're able to copy you on the floor, have them repeat the same movement on the rope. If your child struggles, however, have them walk normally on the rope without stepping off. Later, challenge them to walk heel-to-toe for short sections of the rope. (Any child younger than 5 doesn't need to walk heel-to-toe)

See her [site](#) for more advanced challenges on the rope.

Crab Walk

You Need: A beanbag or soft toy

Have your child sit on the floor with their hands back and feet forward. Place the beanbag or toy on their stomach and lift themselves off of the floor to make their beanbag balance flat on their tummy. They will have to keep their bottom up to stop the toy from falling off. Set a short distance (2-3 meters) for their first attempt.

Chair Leg-Lifts

You Need: A child sized chair

Demonstrate this exercise to your child first.

Stand sideways behind your chair so your left hand is resting lightly on the back of their chair. Lift your left leg keeping their leg until your hip is bent 90 degrees. Hold it and slowly lower your leg almost to the ground, and raise it again. Repeat once or twice but increase repetitions as your child's endurance increases. Then do the other side.

Jungle Gyms/Playground

Have your child to climb a knotted rope. They may not succeed initially, but encourage them to do their best. Any activity that requires them to lift both feet together will use their core muscles.

References

OT Mom - Tracey le Roux [Web log post]. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.ot-mom-learning-activities.com/core-exercises-for-kids.html>