

Oxford University Hospitals **NHS**

NHS Foundation Trust

Physiotherapy Department

Core Stability Class

Information for patients



You have been assessed by your Physiotherapist, who has decided that you may benefit from taking part in the Core Stability Class.

The aim of the class is:

- To introduce a series of specific core strengthening exercises that help to correct muscle imbalances and develop your central core stability.
- To correct movement alignments; this will help to improve how you perform everyday activities.
- To improve your flexibility through your spine and hips and reduce your pain.

You will need to come to the class regularly to help you to achieve your goals.

What happens in the class?

The class is run by a Physiotherapist. Each person coming to the class will follow the same exercise programme. The Physiotherapist will introduce each exercise to you and then show you how to do it. Each exercise can be varied by your Physiotherapist to suit your individual ability and will be closely monitored during each class.

Each class has a maximum of 10 participants. It involves carrying out a series of mat work exercises. Ideally, we need you to feel comfortable getting down and up from the floor. However, we have two plinths that can be used if required. Please speak to your Physiotherapist or class instructor if you feel you need to use these.

The Physiotherapist will monitor your progression by filling in a Class Record sheet after every class.

Coming to the class

- Please arrive promptly for each class.
- Wear appropriate suitable clothing such as shorts/t-shirt/ jogging bottoms and trainers.
- Bring a drink with you.
- Please inform the class instructor if you have any medical problems such as asthma, diabetes, or a heart condition.
- If you are asthmatic please bring your inhalers to the class.

The core stability class takes place weekly at:

- Horton General Hospital Physiotherapy Department
- Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre Physiotherapy Department

at _____ on a _____

You have been booked in for the following dates:

We hope you will find your time in the class a rewarding experience, but please remember as helpful as the class is, it is essential that you continue with your exercises at home. You will be given the exercises performed in the class on a hand-out in your last session.

If you need more information or are unable to come to any of the classes please contact us.

Horton General Hospital Physiotherapy Department

Tel: **01295 229 432**

Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre Physiotherapy Department

Tel: **01865 738 074**

Preparation for the class

Before you come to your first Core Stability Class it will be beneficial for you to practice these two exercises at home:

Exercise one



- Lie on your back (on the floor or a bed) with your knees bent up. Your feet and knees should be hip distance apart. To keep control through your hip and knee joints, place a rolled up towel between your knees.
- Place a small pillow under your head and make sure your neck and shoulders are relaxed. Rest your arms by your side.
- Gently flatten your lower back into the floor/bed as much as you can. Then gently arch your lower back up off the floor/bed as much as you can. Keep repeating these two actions until you find the mid position between the two (halfway between flattened and arched). This position is what we call the Lumbar Neutral Spine. Try to hold the **Lumbar Neutral Spine** whilst performing the exercises.

Engage your core muscles by following the next 5 steps:

- Step 1** – Pull in your pelvic floor muscles (imagine you are stopping yourself from passing wind and water at the same time).
- Steps 2-4** – Draw this contraction up, as though you are slowly doing up a tight pair of trousers (you should gently feel the contraction building around your waist).
- Step 5** – Finish by slowly drawing your belly button down by about 1cm towards your spine. Hold this contraction for 5 seconds and then slowly relax. Repeat this exercise 10 times, twice a day.

Make sure your lower back doesn't flatten into the floor/bed whilst you perform each repetition and that you remain in the Lumbar Neutral Spine position.

Exercise two

- Lie on your back in the same position as explained above.
- Find the mid position between completely flattened and arched on the floor/bed (Lumbar Neutral Spine).
- Engage your core muscles as explained in the 5 steps above.
- Once your core is engaged, slowly allow your lower back to flatten into the floor/bed. (You may see your t-shirt crumple around your tummy as you do this.) Hold this position for 5 seconds and then slowly relax.
- Repeat this exercise 10 times, twice a day.

When carrying out both of these exercises, make sure that you remain relaxed through your neck and shoulders. If you can, try to relax your rib cage so that your ribs don't flare out from your chest.

Both of these exercises should be comfortable, if either of them cause you any pain then please do not continue. Speak to the Physiotherapist who will be running your Core Stability Class.

Contact us

If you have any questions, please contact us:

Horton General Hospital Physiotherapy Department

Tel: **01295 229 432**

Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre Physiotherapy Department

Tel: **01865 738 074**

This leaflet is designed to be used alongside advice given to you by your Physiotherapist. It is not designed to replace their advice.

If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter, a document in Easy Read, another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221 473** or email **PALSJR@ouh.nhs.uk**

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