

# The Core Foundation

## Transverse Abdominis (TA/TVA)

Our abdominal wall is divided into four parts. The external obliques are at the top and the outside of our abdomen. The internal obliques run under and below their counterpart. What we commonly refer to as the “six pack” are the rectus abdominis, and they sit on the top of our stomach and descend along the midline of our body. Finally, the transverse abdominis, or the TA, is the deep abdominal that runs under our six pack. The fibers act just like a corset, pulling the core in from all angles (front and back). They are the most important of the muscle groups of the abdomen. The pelvic floor and TA keep your client’s belly from dropping to her toes. The TA and PF, together with the uterus, work to push her baby out during delivery.

The transverse abdominal muscle wraps around the torso from front to back and the muscle fibers of the TA run horizontally, similar to a corset or a weight belt. These muscles are the true core muscles, and strengthening them will tone your client’s entire body and give her power!

\*See Video illustration

In the Postnatal SlimDown Core exercises, we will work all parts of the core. We use progressive movements i.e. we start with the pelvic floor and TA to create a healthy inner core. Then we build on that and add the rectus abdominis, obliques and back. It is important to build on a strong foundation. Remember the *Three Little Pigs*? Well the house made of straw was not strong, but the house made of bricks made for a strong foundation!

And just so you know how important the TA muscle is, it has been proven that training the rectus abdominis alone cannot create a flat belly. This is only achieved through training the transverse abdominis. It is not a fad, not something created in my bedroom, it is deeply rooted in research. And recently made popular by Barre, Ballet and Pilates classes.

Therefore any abdominal exercise, like a crunch, will only flatten the belly if the TA is activated.

The transverse is activated throughout the day, sometimes without our noticing. Anytime we step off a curb or pick up a car seat, the TA is activated unintentionally. As you can see starting with the inner core is of utmost importance for the postnatal mom.

## Pelvic Floor

Think of the pelvic floor as the bottom of the core, and visualize a sling from front to back. The pelvic floor is the foundation to the core; our abs cannot function

without it. The pelvic floor is important for a number of reasons. But most importantly it helps with incontinence and postpartum issues.

## **TA Activation Exercises**

\*See Video

- 1) TA activation Crunch
- 2) Triangle TA activation
- 3) Quadruped TA activation
- 4) Side Lying TA activation
- 5) Touchdown TA activation
- 6) Wall Squat with Pencil, initiates the Pelvic Floor

