

Article: **Getting in touch with your lower abdominals**

**Approximately 85% of all Americans will experience some sort of back pain during their lifetime. Back pain is the most common ailment in the golfing world. Yet many people are not educated enough on how to treat back ailments.**

**If you think for a moment on how much we abuse our backs, with improper body mechanics, with bending, twisting, reaching, pushing and pulling on an ongoing basis, its no wonder why our backs ache. You've been told to put ice on it for 48 hours, with rest and light activity for a few days, but were you ever taught on how to actually treat the problem not the symptom.**

**As golfers we must be able to efficiently bend forward, rotate, extend, and balance our bodies in unison repeatedly, this places an excessive demand on our muscles, spine and connective tissues. So where is the protection going to come from? It all starts with your lower abdominals.**

**It is the lower abdominals that houses the protection for your pelvis during static and dynamic activity. When you have weakness in the lower compartment there tends to be a muscle imbalance problem between the upper abdominals, hip flexors and lower abdominals.**

**It is so easy for us to activate the upper abdominals during flexion of the trunk, since our nervous system is already programmed that way, either by way of doing hundreds of sit-ups, or by just naturally rounding the back when we bend over. Yet many of us were never taught the proper way on how to activate our lower abdominals.**

**For the golfing community, this could be a game saver, along with good posture. When the lower abdominals are contracting during movement, the intracompartamental pressure increases causing a protective barrier around the pelvis, and with the help of the pelvic floor muscles and multifidi this only strengthens the "loop". So conditioning these muscles becomes just as vital as picking the correct club for your next drive.**

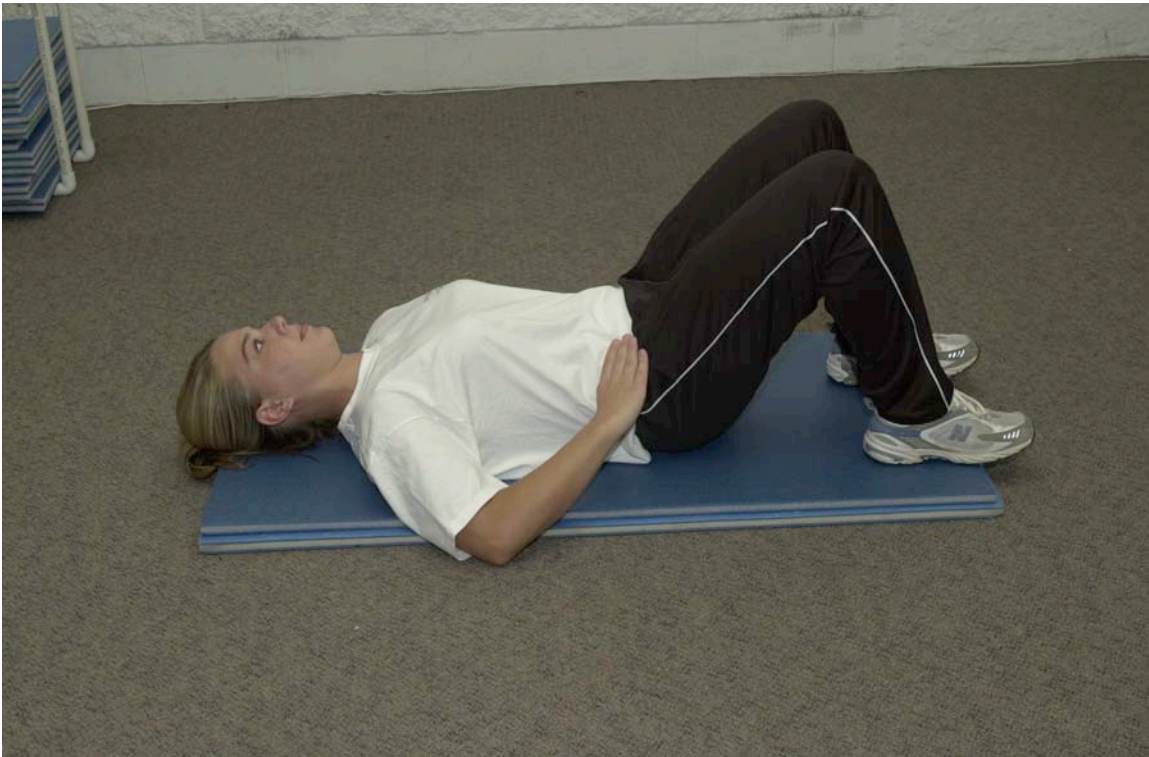
**A good example of upper abdominal overuse is taking a look at a body builder's mid section, if they have bulging upper abdominals, but a puggy looking lower section then you know that there is a significant imbalance between upper and lower.**

**A good way to test your abdominal strength, is to lay on the floor and do as many sit ups as you can. Then try laying over a swiss ball allowing your head to extend over the ball with clasped hands. Place your tongue under the roof of your mouth, this**

will activate your neck flexors, so that your neck will be stabilized. Allow yourself to come up one vertebrae at a time and see if you can do just as many sit ups as you did doing it your old way. **Note: Do not try this exercise unless you have had previous experience or get a physicians approval.**

Here are 2 beginning abdominal exercises that will help you learn how to activate your abdominals in sequence.

1. **TVA activation- It is your transverse abdominus that is the main stabilizer of your back, so learning how to activate it is crucial. You begin by placing a rolled up towel under your back, between your navel and your lower back. Then take a deep breath in, allowing your stomach to protrude out, then exhale, and let your stomach sink into the towel, as soon as all the air is blown out tuck in you navel towards your spine, you have just activated your TVA. Do not allow your pelvis to rotate.**
2. **Bent knees in air- Repeating step 1, bend both knees, keeping hips up at 90 degrees. Slowly allow one leg to touch the ground while keeping the pressure constant in step 1. Do not allow your pelvis to tilt or you will lose the activation of the TVA. Reoeat 10x.**



**TVA activation**



**Lower abdominal exercise Start**



**Lower abdominal exercise Finish**

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