

# THE BRIDGE

## START



### BENEFITS

Improve core strength and stability.

### TARGETS

Hamstrings, buttocks, low back, upper back and shoulders.

## FINISH



### TECHNIQUE

With heels on the ball, engage your TVA and slowly raise your hips upwards until your body is straight. To help maintain balance, keep your hands out to the side, palms facing up. This adds a challenge to your upper back and shoulders.

As you get tired your hips will tend to sag; try and prevent this! However, avoid arching your hips too far towards the ceiling; do not push beyond your neutral spine position.

As you improve, bring your hands in closer to your sides. Eventually cross them on your chest. This will increase the challenge of the exercise. You can then progress to Single Leg Bridging (see Advanced).

## ▶▶▶▶ PROGRESSIONS

### INTERMEDIATE      ADVANCED



-  5 reps x 10 seconds
-  7 reps x 15 seconds
-  8 reps x 30 seconds

# SWAYING BRIDGE

## BENEFITS

Improve upper back and shoulder stability.

## TARGETS

Upper back, shoulders, hamstrings, buttocks, obliques and low back.

## TECHNIQUE

Get into the starting position by performing The Bridge (see page 44). Once in The Bridge position, slowly sway side-to-side with your toes pointing in the direction you are swaying. Make sure you stop swaying before you reach the point of no return.

Turning your palms upwards will increase the challenge to your rear shoulder, arms, and upper back. Palms facing downwards will challenge the front of your shoulders and chest.

## START



## SWAY RIGHT



## SWAY LEFT



20 seconds



45 seconds



90 seconds



## Bearing in mind....

...coming out of the Neutral Spine position or letting your hips sag is cheating!



# HIP CRUNCHES

## BENEFITS

Increase lower trunk strength and control.

## TARGETS

Lower abs, pelvis and front of hips.

## TECHNIQUE

With knees bent, squeeze the ball between your legs. Without changing knee angle, use your hips to lift your legs towards your chest. Hands can be used palms up for support.

The Progression requires a high level of core and abdominal strength. You may be at risk for injury if you cannot perform this exercise with excellent technique. To check that you are performing this Hip Crunch correctly, keep your finger tips under your low back. If upon lowering your legs you feel your low back lift off your finger tips, **STOP!** You are no longer in a neutral spine position. If this is the case, lower your legs only to point where your low back is about to lift, pause, and return to the Start position. With practice and increased core strength you will be able to lower your legs farther and farther.

10 times



15 times



25 times



## START



## FINISH



## ▶▶▶ PROGRESSIONS

### START



### FINISH



# SKI TUCK & TWIST

## BENEFITS

Increase trunk rotational strength and whole body control.

## TARGETS

Abs, obliques, shoulders, arms and hips.

## TECHNIQUE

Start in the Ski Tucks Finish position (see previous page). Once in this position, keep your abs contracted and slowly rotate your trunk over to one side. Your uppermost shin will lift off of the ball, with the downward shin now bearing the weight.

Challenge yourself by lowering your hips as far as possible to the sides. Do not lock your elbows. Keep your knees and ankles together.

Increase the challenge by starting with the ball positioned under your feet.

## START



## LEFT



## RIGHT



5 times



10 times



15 times



# THIGH KICKS

## START



### BENEFITS

Integrate leg strength with core stability.

### TARGETS

Quads, TVA, inner thigh and hips.

## FINISH



### TECHNIQUE

Place finger tips under your low back and squeeze the ball between your ankles. With hips bent at 90 degrees, slowly straighten your knees to lift the ball. Return to the Start position. Keep your head resting on the floor so that your neck remains relaxed.

Maintain a neutral spine throughout this exercise. If you feel increased pressure from your back against your fingertips, then you are cheating and using your abs instead of your TVA. If you feel your back lift off your finger tips you are not stabilizing your low back and should practice easier exercises to strengthen your TVA, such as the Hand-Stand on page 49.



5 times

12 times

20 times

# WALL SQUATS

## BENEFITS

Integrate leg strength with core stability; great for improving lifting technique!

## TARGETS

Quads, hips, buttocks and TVA.

## TECHNIQUE

Lean on the ball and place your feet one step in front of you. Slowly lower into a 'seated' position so that your trunk is parallel to the wall and at right angles to your thighs. Avoid letting your buttocks slide under the ball or towards your heels! Pause for a second before returning to the Start position.

In the Finish position, your knees should not protrude beyond the tips of your toes. When straightening your legs, do not let your knees 'snap' back. Move in a controlled manner, maintain a neutral posture, and keep your head upright throughout.

Progress by using only one leg, starting with the ball higher up on the wall, holding weights, or all three!

10 times



15 times



25 times



## START



## FINISH



## ▶▶▶▶ PROGRESSION

