

# Core strength



*The 'core' is a group of muscles in the stomach area, back, hips and shoulders that work together to keep our bodies upright and support our back. Having a strong core helps children play, concentrate when learning, sit or stand correctly, and even write properly.*

## Signs of poor core strength are:

### Being tired, fatigued, fidgety or easily distracted.

This can lead to difficulty learning new skills, because the child's attention is focused on moving or they are too tired to concentrate.

### Poor posture when sitting or standing.

Children with poor posture may lay their head on the table when sitting or slouch when standing. Slouching doesn't require much muscle work, so it's important to work on both core strength and posture so children can sit, stand and walk well.

### Clumsiness or falling over often.

### 'W' sitting.

'W' sitting is when children sit with their legs bent out to the side. Sitting like this reduces the need for a child to use their core muscles and can also impact their walking and muscle development.

## How to increase core strength:

- Children should move their bodies in different directions. The easiest way to do this is through outdoor play. Play games as a family to increase physical activity and movement.

- Set good examples with sitting and standing posture.
- Avoid W sitting and encourage your child to sit with their legs crossed in front of them.
- When playing games on the floor, encourage your child to lay on their tummies using their elbows to prop their bodies up.
- Ask your child to stand on one leg and see how long they can balance for, trying to keep their body still and straight.
- Complete animal walks such as bear walks, crab crawls, inch worms ... you name it!
- Play games like tug-of-war.



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