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# Welcome!

## MY WHY & DISCLAIMER



Thank you for choosing to invest in your health through educating yourself on your core and pelvic floor by investing in The Resilient Guide! Whether you're not yet a mom, pregnant, postpartum whether recently or decades removed, or never want to be a mom, the contents of this guide are applicable to every stage because your pelvic floor and core health is the foundation of which all movement is built upon.

I created this guide to empower you to make your own decisions when it comes to applying breath and core engagement techniques, not only to exercise, but in your daily living as well. The concepts and information in this guide are lifetime principles. They are intended for you to use all day, every day. I want you to walk away feeling empowered to make decisions that support your current stage of motherhood because that will change. You may become pregnant, navigate postpartum, experience an injury, have to undergo a surgery, or walk through life's other challenges. But one thing that doesn't change through all of that is how your body speaks to you. By understanding how to listen and knowing what to do with that information is how you optimally protect your body and live a life without pain, leaking, or dysfunction.

Often times, we become so focused on just doing exercises and just getting through them that we miss the signs that the body is struggling. But it truly is HOW you perform them that makes a huge impact on your core and pelvic floor and how goes beyond just good form which many of us don't do a good enough job in. We also fail to realize that daily living is movement too. I'm a big believer in movement is exercise. Cleaning the house, doing the laundry, picking up toys, doing yard work, tending to children – all of it and more is movement. So it is important to connect what you do in the gym to what you do in daily living. All movement is connected, therefore, awareness to technique, breathwork, and core engagement should be apart of both your workouts AND daily living. Will you be perfect? No, you won't and that's okay. We are all human, but I want you to dedicate to be better at being aware. Because when you bring awareness to things such as your posture and breathing and make adjustments to the right way, I promise your body will automatically begin doing these concepts for you more.

As you saw in the table of contents, you will dive deep into the inner core unit, intra-abdominal pressure, diaphragmatic breathing, pelvic floor engagement, pelvic floor and core dysfunction, types of core engagement, and when/how to apply core engagement to movement. I provided a lot because I want you to walk away with a deep understanding of just how beautifully made your body is. How every piece is connected and works together to create stability and function in the body. I want you to feel empowered to make educated decisions for yourself as you navigate your fitness journey so your body never feels unsupported.

While empowering, the contents of this guide are just that – a guide. I am not a medical professional, nor do I claim to be one. The information I've put together in this guide are based off my own research, educational training and certifications, personal experiences, and working with other women like yourself. This guide is not to be used to diagnose your core and pelvic floor health or replace medical advice. Instead, this guide is designed to educate you on your inner core, how it works, and how to utilize proper breathing and core engagements to protect and support your inner core. As you learn about your body, you may need additional help or knowledge from a pelvic floor physical therapist to better assist you in assessing your pelvic floor and core (more on this below). In fact, I highly suggest ALL WOMEN to seek out their expertise throughout their life, because their expertise is often times the missing link to a nagging injury and you'll gain invaluable information on your body.

With that being said, I have some tips for getting the most out of this guide.



# 2

## YOUR INNER CORE

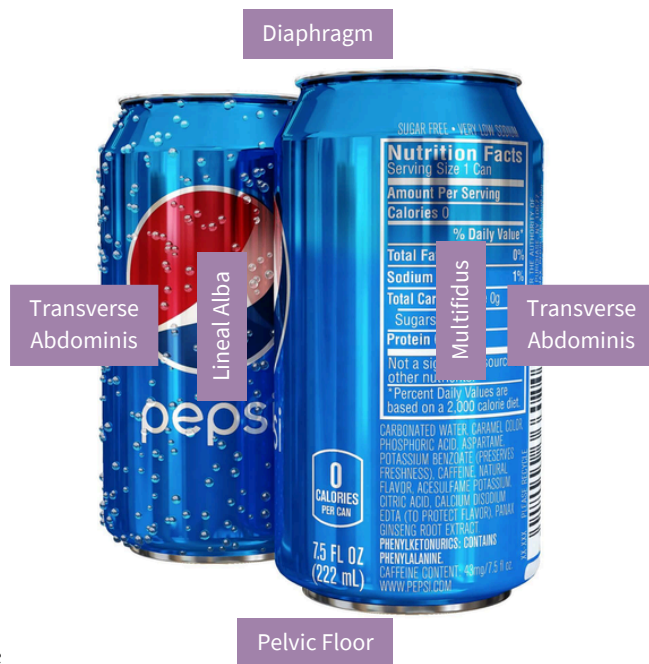
First, I think it is important to understand what your inner “core” unit actually is. Many people mistakenly think that their inner core unit or “core” is just the front of their abdomen or the “6-pack muscles”, but that is such a small component to the larger unit that is your core. I will dive into each individual muscle below, but the best way to visually understand your inner core unit is to think of it like a can of pop – a Pepsi Can more specifically. I like to term this your “core canister” because your inner core is exactly that – a canister inside your body.

The lid or top of the can is your diaphragm and directly opposite of that, on the bottom of the can, is your pelvic floor. This relationship of diaphragm stacked over pelvic floor is important to note because these 2 parts of the core canister function best when stacked on top of one another.

The nutrition label on the back of the can is your multifidus and directly opposite that your linea alba, or the Pepsi label. This relationship is also important because your multifidus runs throughout your spine and your linea alba runs down your midline, both opposite each other. And wrapping the sides of the Pepsi can is your Transverse Abdominis or TVA which is exactly what your TVA does on your body wrapping from your spine to your linea alba.

So hopefully you can see how your “core” is more than just the muscles on the front of your body. Your core is actually at the center of your body and makes up a majority of your trunk. And there is a reason your core is at the center of your body - It is literally apart of every. single. thing. you do from every breath you take, to every step you make, to every movement you’ve ever done because the limbs attach to your core.

Since your core is literally apart of everything you do, its most important job is to stabilize (protect) your spine for movement. Another mistake often made is believing that the spine stabilizes itself. That isn’t true, the muscles that make up your core and the pressure inside do all of the heavy lifting. What’s worse, is that many people have no idea about these crucially important muscles and how to turn them on.



determine your tone. For example, if you experiencing leaking, it could be either from tightness or weakness. But maybe you're also experiencing pain with intercourse, especially at insertion. Well that is your arrow telling you that most likely your leaking is due to PF tightness. I still though cannot encourage enough for you to see a PFPT who can give you a definite picture and provide you with resources that can best serve your body.

If it's determined that you have a HYPER-tonic floor, then practicing deep core engagement shouldn't be your emphasis. Instead, you first need to learn how to lengthen and relax your pelvic floor. Feel what it feels like to let your PF go. You would do that with emphasis on the inhale and getting air down to the pelvic floor. On exhale, you don't worry about engaging. Once you've got that mind-to-muscle connection, and you know the PF is releasing, then you can practice coordination to re-teach your PF how to turn on (engaging) and off (lengthening).

If it's determined that you have a HYPO-tonic floor, then emphasizing lengthening shouldn't be your emphasis. Instead, you need to purposely work on turning on your PF as much as you can. (This was my situation after my episiotomy with my 3rd pregnancy) You'll need to possibly incorporate PF engagement during times when you need additional support (incontinence or urinary urgency). Once you've got the mind-to-muscle connection and the PF is engaging properly when needed, then you can practice not intentionally engaging and seeing if your PF turns on when needed.



## SO WHAT INFLUENCES PELVIC FLOOR TONE?

So you may be wondering to yourself, well how does all of this happen? How do the vast majority of women walk around with super tight pelvic floors like you mentioned earlier? There are obviously many things that can influence the tone of your PF, but the big 3 are pregnancy, lifestyle habits, & trauma or stress. Is this sounding familiar? Well it should because your body is so connected. Your posture affects your breath, your breath affects your pelvic floor, and they all affect function.

How a woman carries her pregnancy and what she does during her pregnancy play big roles in the function of her pelvic floor. Even looking at how she does postpartum can play a big influence. Gripping the butt cheeks can and will cause the posterior (back) of the PF to become tight and dumping forward of the pelvis can cause weakness because of the amount of pressure being pushed downward. Trauma and stress also play a huge role. If you've experienced grief, sexual abuse, pregnancy loss, or a drastic, sudden life event you weren't expecting, these events can be "carried" in your PF. As a safety response, your PF will tighten, grip, and clench as a way to help you feel safe. This is usually accompanied with gripping in the jaw, shoulders, and butt cheeks. Clenching in these areas also means your PF is clenching. As if you're just looking at stress, us women as a whole place a lot more stress on ourselves to be a certain way or look a certain way. We worry and fill the cups of others before our own. And without recognition, we're in a state of "fight, flight, freeze" and our PF is too, and we don't even know it. So for almost every women, a focus needs to be placed on letting the PF go because of how much we ask of it to hold on and support us.

“The ticket to understanding your deep core is connecting to your pelvic floor. The two of you should be best friends who trust one another.”

### ADDITIONAL LEARNING

*Videos*

Click video to view or scan the QR code off the QR code sheet located in the back



*Connecting* Workouts designed around building your foundation by getting in tune with your breath.

Find these on page 66 with instructions on page 63-65.

- [Stop Doing Belly Button to Spine](#)
- [Incorrect Engagement Types](#)
- [Audible Exhale Sounds](#)
- [Deep Core Activation Tutorial](#)
- [Feeling Your Pelvic Floor Move](#)

- [Feeling TVA Engagement](#)
- [Finger Drill](#)
- [Quadrupled Drill](#)
- [Balloon Drill](#)

### *Start* IMPLEMENTING

- Recognize between diaphragmatic breathing & core engagement
- Practice in different positions
- Do the drills (finger, quadrupled, & balloon)
- See PFPT if needed
- Begin "Connecting" Mini-Workouts

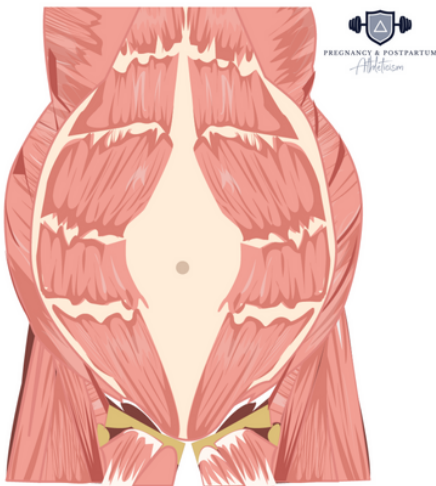


1. Be sure you are beginning to feel difference in how to engage your deep core vs. diaphragmatic breathing.
2. You should be able to sense what PF & TVA engagement feels like.
3. Begin the "Connecting" Mini-Workouts



By not getting good exhales, you're missing the contraction portion, strengthening portion, and stabilization portion of your breath. Remember, when you inhale, everything lengthens and expands, but when you exhale, everything needs to contract and recoil. When this happens, your pelvic floor, TVA, and diaphragm all contract to both move air up and out, AND to stability the spine for movement. That piece right there is vital to your ability to heal and protect your core canister from core and pelvic floor dysfunction. So I hope you can now see that when you couple any poor breathing pattern with poor posture, how pressure can drastically change and influence different parts of your core function depending on where air is being directed to.

When air gets trapped in the wrong places or forced to the same spot every time, your body has to do something with it...doesn't just disappear or be absorbed by your body (wouldn't that be nice?!). The victims who are most willing to step in and say, "Oooooo I'll help!! Pick me!!", - are your linea alba and pelvic floor. Why? Because they are the most adaptable to pressure and tension change. The LOVE to accommodate pressure. They are literally designed to stretch and thin, especially your linea alba. During pregnancy, both stretch and thin to accommodate growing baby and the increase in pressure and weight. But as much as these two love to stretch and thin, eventually they say "ENOUGH! I'm done. I'm tired of working so hard. You've ignoring all the warning signs I'm giving you (we'll get into this later)! So I'm going to stick you with a core and pelvic floor dysfunction, maybe you'll notice now that I'm not doing okay." But before you body gets to that point, it does shout out some warning signs at you which you can use as feedback to make adjustments to your posture or alignment, breath, and or core engagement. Let's take a look at what they are.



As a women's body accommodates pregnancy, the mid-line or linea alba stretches and thins which allows the abdominal muscles to separate.

Graphic courtesy of: Pregnancy and Postpartum Athleticism™ & used with permission

## THE PHYSICAL SIGNS OF IAP MISMANAGEMENT

As I've highlighted many times in this guide, your body is pretty amazing. And its ability to communicate to you that it isn't able to manage intra-abdominal pressure in an exercise, movement, or position is pretty incredible. There are 6 ways total – 6 "P's" to be exact in how your body communicates to you that it isn't handling pressure very well – pain, peeing, pressure, puffing, poking, and peaking. By recognizing these and understanding what they mean and what to do about them is what truly listening to your body means. I'm not going to go deep into pain, peeing, or pressure because you'll learn more about 3 of them in the next chapter, but I am going to dive deeper into poking, and peaking.

PAIN

PEEING

PRESSURE

PUFFING

POKING

PEAKING



## APPLICATION TO EXERCISES

If you ask me, the application of deep core engagement to exercise is where the magic happens. All of a sudden, movements that used to cause you symptoms no longer do. Or maybe you begin feeling stronger in your movements and more connected to your body as a whole. Now, I did say magic, but I need to stress that a deep core engagement isn't the magic cure. It plays a huge role, but there are many factors that come into play as to why someone may leak, experience pain, or other dysfunction during exercise. Your form and positioning also play really big roles. I won't be diving into those two topics, but they will be briefly touched on in the application videos.

But what I do want you to walk away with from this chapter is this - an understanding that your deep core engagement is critical to locking your spine in place during movement and keeping your pelvis in a good position under the ribs. And how you do this will vary depending on what YOUR body needs. You'll quickly see that the application of a deep core engagement to exercise isn't black and white. Some of it is, but a lot of it is going to be determined by what your body needs and that will depend on your chapter of motherhood, the load, and demand being asked. This understanding stems all the way back to understanding how your body speaks to you - the 6 P's - which is why we spent so much time learning the fundamentals so that you can make adjustments to workouts based on how your body is speaking to you.

In the previous chapter, you learned all about the different breathing/deep core engagement strategies. In this chapter, you'll learn more as to what exercise types are best supported by what engagement strategy. This understanding is one of the big ways in which you make adjustments to your workouts based on how your body is speaking to you. That way, if you're performing something like a squat and feeling pressure, you can change your breathing/engagement strategy to see if that makes the pressure go away. When I began doing this, I suddenly was able to do many exercises again that would always trigger my low back to flare up just by 1) knowing how to properly engage my deep core and 2) use a strategy that provided more support to my low back so it didn't have to work as hard. Over time, I was able to increase my loads again and all but eliminated my low back pain.

So are you ready?!?!?!?

I know I'm so excited to wrap all this up for you and pull all the pieces together to finish the puzzle. But I do need to really stress this - the contents inside of this chapter are an overview. I could (and probably will) write a sequel to this guide that dives so much deeper into core engagement strategies for strength training. What I did in this chapter is pick the "big bucket" movement types as a launching off point to begin to understand how the deep core ties into your movements and what that looks like. Now I don't want you to think I'm short-changing you because I'm really not. The understanding of how your deep core works, how to turn it on with breath, and how to engage are the big building blocks you must understand first which is why I spent the most time there. I wanted to keep this guide tangible and not overwhelm you with SO much information you didn't know where to begin.

# WORKOUTS

*How to*

## How do I read the workout?

Each workout begins the same - with 10-15 breaths within your breathing position of choice. These are the breathing positions you learned back in Chapters 6 & 8. You will only need to do this breathing position 1x to begin your workout.

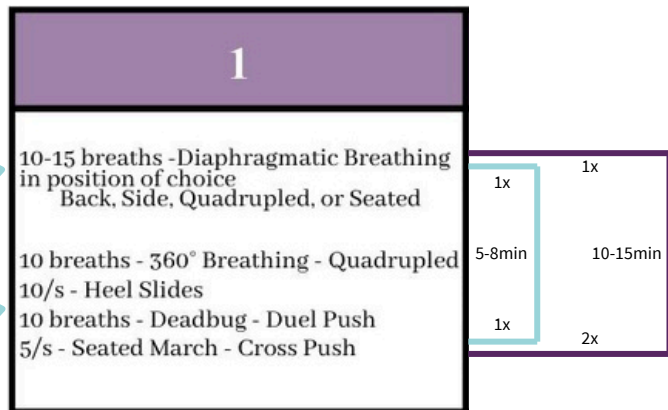
Once you complete your breathing position of choice, you will then move onto the 4 exercises listed below. Each exercise will tell you the number of reps or breaths you'll need to complete. See the key to the right to understand the lingo I used. These 4 exercises can be done 1x through = 6-8min to complete or you can complete 2 rounds of the 4 exercises to bring your total time to 10-15min. See below for a sample example

### Workout Wording Key

- 10 breaths = 2-3sec inhale w/ 4-6sec exhale
- 10/s = 10 reps per side (leg and or arm)
- 10 (2-3) = Pause for 2-3sec during the concentric portion of the exercise. Make sure you blow out through this. You will do that 10x

I would complete this 1st and do it 1x only

I would complete these 4 exercises 2nd & choose to do these 1x too or 2x



## Where are the exercise demos?

Every single exercise is linked to a 60-75sec demo video. That demo video has voiced-over coaching cues to help you maximize how to perform the exercise. These videos are linked out to YouTube and can be clicked on from the PDF. To help you find the exercises quicker, especially if you follow a printed off sheet or save a photo of the tier to your phone, each of the 4 tiers will have their own playlist of all the exercises within that tier and you can either click on that from the workout page or scan the QR code on the back. You will be able to save this playlist if you have a YouTube Account or you can save the link somewhere on your phone or computer.

## When should I do the workouts?

You can do these workouts as a stand-alone or you can implement them into your workouts as a part of your warm-up or as a part of your workout. There truly is no right or wrong way to do them, as long as you're doing them. I, again, kept the barrier to implement low, so that you can do them anywhere, even with kiddos running around.

## When do I move to next tier?

First the first 2 tiers - Connecting and Building - where it says to in the guide. For Layering and Resiliency, when you feel ready to move on. The mini-workouts are designed to compliment what you're learning in the guide, so you can continue working through the guide when you begin a tier, but don't continue forward in the guide when you hit the next tier. If you start a new tier and you don't feel ready, you can always go back and repeat a week or two of the previous tier. What's important is that you're meeting your body where it is at while also not being afraid to hold it back. Each tier will progressively get harder and within each tier, there is a step-up as well around the mid-way point, so please do not skip around on the page. When you do take the jump and try the harder stuff, it's okay if it isn't perfect right away - keep practicing because you're learning. Lastly, all the tiers will always hold relevance. Just because you move on, that doesn't mean you can't still do those exercises. I truly hope you continue to incorporate all of these into your daily living and workouts for the rest of your life.

