

4 Ways to Identify Core Muscle Weakness

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We all know the importance of CORE STRENGTH in keeping the kids healthy as it is a key contributor to body control and movement consistency.

Here is a paper out of the National Strength and Conditioning Association:

<http://www.nscs-lift.org/Perform/articles/070604.pdf>

that talks about 4 simple tests to identify core weakness in your athletes:

THE LUNGE

What to look for

During a lunge, core weakness will be shown with:

- Side bending of the upper body
- The front knee moving toward the mid-line
- The front toe turning inward
- The back bending as they come up from to finish lunge

How the fix it

- Strengthen the Gluteus Maximus and Medius muscles by doing 'Swimming Supermans'. (Those who have attended my conditioning camps know how to do this).

THE SQUAT

What to look for

Looking from front, core weakness will show as:

- The knees coming together
- Uneven lowering and tilting of the shoulders

From the side:

- The head will move forward ahead of the toes
- The back does not stay straight or slightly extended but will instead become flexed (bent)
- The knees will move forward over the toes

How the fix it

- Stand with your feet six inches from a wall and squat down to pick up a basketball between your legs
- This exercise is courtesy of a Russian Strength Coach named Pavel who specializes in a FANTASTIC training tool that I used called a kettlebell: (<http://www.russiankettlebells.com/index2.html>)

Back Extensor Muscle Test



What to look for

- See how long the athlete can keep the spine in a neutral position as in the above picture.
- Unfortunately, the article does not state how long this needs to be held so **I have contacted the author on this and am awaiting his response.**

How the fix it

- Focus on do 'Swimming Supermans'. (Those who have attended my conditioning camps know how to do this).

Lateral Prone Hold Endurance Test



What to look for

- Like the Back Extension Test, keep neutral posture like in above picture for as long as possible
- **I have also emailed the article author on how long of a hold constitutes satisfactory core strength.**
- The National Pitching Association expects their athletes to hold this pose for 3 minutes just to get into their program so I am curious to see what the author responds to me with regarding timing.

How the fix it

- Just keep doing this exercise and focus on keeping this posture and NOT letting the hips sink to the ground.