In our foundational training program, RESTORE: The Foundation, you learned how to perform a **Basic Abdominal Brace** using only your hands. If you haven't watched that video and learned that skill FIRST, then you need to. To make things easy, it is the first video you will find here. Watch and learn from this first!

Take the time to learn and practice. Once done, you can then move on and learn how to perform this skill using the stabilizer.

The Basic Abdominal Brace (for Core Stability)

Now that you've revisited this important basic approach to creating stability at a foundational level, let's move on to discuss how you can *raise your game* and improve your skill with objective feedback – using the stabilizer.

As I mention in **RESTORE: The Foundation,** there are a lot of opinions in the "fitness and training world" as to what the "core" really is, or whether or not it even exists.

I'm here to tell you that what I am about to teach you with this exercise, flat-out **works**. *I promise you, this works.* **I've seen it become THE lynchpin that has changed how people move and feel, and most importantly, how they're able to progress to more difficult and challenging movements successfully.**

I will also tell you that the *devil is in the details*, so to speak. Because this IS the beginning, your margin of error is infinitesimally small. Focus on the details!

How it applies:

Whether it's a simple daily activity like bending over to pick something up off the floor, or a more complex dynamic skill like a kettlebell snatch, this simple idea of learning how to effectively engage the low anterior core (as part of a holistic whole-body) with the **Basic Abdominal Brace**, could very well be THE thing that causes that little light to go off in your head, and helps you develop the kind of stability that will take your training to the next level.

This is THE simplest way to learn how to master this essential skill!

Simply put, the **Basic Abdominal Brace** is the simplest way to learn what it is to create core stability. It works as a great, I mean GREAT, starting point. It's been tested over and over with the work I have done in a gait analysis lab with literally hundreds and hundreds of athletes.

To provide a basis for understanding and to keep things simple, let's start with this basic concept: the core is your FOUNDATION as an athlete.

The "core" (which I also refer to as your trunk) gives your body an "anchor" for your arms and legs so they can do their thing. When functioning well, the stiffness and support it provides allows for the efficient transfer of energy through your body.

This exercise essentially teaches you how to create **stillness** in your core, which for our purposes is *measured by movement (or lack thereof) of your low-back.* (Read that again, understanding it is vital to your success with this exercise and this program).

In this exercise, there's no gravity acting upon your body such as when you're standing. And because you're only lifting your leg and then extending it, the load placed upon your core is very small. Hence, this is the beginning – the easiest and best way to learn how to create a stable core. Again, a great starting point.

The focus of this next video is teaching you how to use the Biopressure Feedback Stabilizer. If you have already reviewed the page titled "Equipment and Resources", then you already know how to get your hands on this important piece of equipment.

I've provided the link below once more, in case you've forgotten to grab it. 🙂 Don't wait, get it now!

The Basic Abdominal Brace with Stabilizer

Looking ahead: What about BREATHING?

As I mentioned in the program **RESTORE: The Foundation,** and as you've no doubt experienced first hand already, when you are first learning how to create stability and maintain a braced lower ab, it is very common to find that the **easiest path** to achieving – and then holding a neutral position – is by *holding your breath.*

While it's common to experience this, IT'S NOT where you want to be long term, especially if you expect to be able to hold a safe and stable spinal position through increasingly challenging dynamic exercises in this program, and out in your chosen sport!

For those of us who have spent a lifetime of quasi-panicked chest breathing, the challenge is even greater.

YOUR GOAL as you improve your ability to get into and hold a neutral spine position is to breathe diaphragmatically, NOT up in your chest with shallow chest breathing.

So how do you improve?

1. Begin by incorporating the work you are doing in the **Basic Three-Dimensional Breathing Practice**, which is the last movement practice in Circuit 1 of **RESTORE: The Foundation.**

2. Combine your improving breathing skills – with your improving ability to create – and then maintain – a stiff, neutral spine position.

3. Maintain these basic skills throughout your training – especially as the exercises and skills become more dynamic and challenging!

Here's why I consider this stabilizer as an absolute MUST-HAVE training tool when it comes to training core stability the RIGHT way.

You Get Objective Feedback!

Think about it: objective feedback that tells us, "are we doing it correctly?" or "aren't we doing it correctly?" is what every single one of us needs at a time like this.

We can't rely simply on how "it feels." We can't rely on guesswork, not at this level. We have to KNOW for certain we're doing it correctly (or not), and that we understand WHY we're doing it too.

This only happens with objective information to tell us, "is this what I am supposed to do?" "Is it how I am supposed to do it?"

To dig a bit deeper into this, let me ask you a question:

Have you ever been to a gym and watched someone who was exercising, doing something similar to these leg lifts on the floor? This is a very popular movement in yoga classes, bootcamp classes, etc.

Here's an image of the movement I'm talking about:

Look familiar at all?

Sometimes they'll have their hands under their low-back for support, other times they won't.

If you consider what the purpose of this training is all about, and just how difficult this movement is to do correctly, you can imagine the potential problem here.

What do I mean?

To review a very important concept central to your progress and understanding: the **purpose of core stability is to stop or control motion in one place, in the presence of motion somewhere else.** In our case and for our purposes here, that "stillness" and control needs to occur in our low-back.

We *don't want* excessive arch of the low-back, nor do we want the low-back to *flatten or flex*. After all, THAT is the entire purpose for this basic Abdominal Brace exercise – to help you learn how to create that stillness and thus stability, while lifting a leg or moving your arm.

Think about it: lifting BOTH legs up off the floor???

That's very hard to do – because when you lift your legs like this, there's a LOT of load on your trunk. Not sure what I mean, give it a try!

Naturally, it would be less load and easier to perform for someone who was small in size or had very short legs, and vice versa, much more difficult for someone with long legs.

Now, because of the inherent load, imagine the amount of movement (most likely, a big arch) in the low back.

If you're not sure what I mean, get down on the floor and try it.

Here's what will happen: as your legs rise, your low-back will ARCH. Perhaps, a LOT!

And that isn't a good thing if the goal is to have your entire trunk and core functioning as it should be.

What do I mean?

Your body is attempting to stabilize your trunk/core WITH the muscles of the low-back, while the other muscles around the trunk fail to do THEIR job effectively, especially the lower abdominal region. That isn't the responsibility of the muscles in and around your low-back. After all, just because of our normal lives, are probably already over-stressing the back to begin with, hence our core not being quite as stable or strong as it ultimately needs to be.

Remember the goal of core stability my friend: **to maintain stillness and control in THAT area (the low-back), so that the other areas such as the extremities, can move freely. With control.**

What role does the stabilizer play in all of this?

As you think about all of this... and imagine (while thinking of that leg lift exercise) in your mind's eye, your lower-back arching mightily and feeling the strain as you lifted your legs up, all the while increasing stress ON your back and increasing your risk of injury in the process... you'll then be able to come back to WHY this **objective feedback** from the stabilizer is so valuable!

With it, you can watch and move perfectly. At this most basic level, near-perfection is our goal. After all, if we can't stabilize our core at the lowest dynamic level, how on earth will it get better as dynamic load increases?

It won't. It can't.

Think about it.

With the gauge, you'll see the needle moving, indicating you're either arching or flattening your back – that's not our goal.

Or…if you're doing it as intended, you'll see the needle remain still – almost as though it's painted onto the dial. **That is your goal.** Keep that entire mid-section still, demonstrating good stability of the core in the process.

It's an essential starting point for more advanced skills. Master this. Make it unconscious – automatic. Every other movement we do in this program is based upon this foundational skill.

Onward we go!