

10 **Beginning Core And Abdominal Exercises For Seniors**

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SeniorFlow™
Energy Moves

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The author and publisher of this material are not responsible in any manner whatsoever for any injury that may occur through following the instructions contained in this material. The activities, physical and otherwise, described herein are for informational purposes only, may be too strenuous or dangerous for some people and the reader(s) should consult a physician before engaging in them.

Introduction



When your gut feels tight, you feel right."

- Bob McMillan

This Ebook is a smorgasbord of beginning core and abdominal exercises and movements for seniors. It is meant to be a "pick and choose" selection of movements.

Don't do all of the movements at each session. Pick and choose four or five to do at a single session, particularly in conjunction with any other exercises you do.

The list is not all encompassing and most of the movements are geared toward the abdominal area.

Keep in mind that while these movements are mostly for beginners, core and abdominal exercises are critical for overall physical strength, mobility, health and fitness. These exercises may be included at any level of fitness.

Basic Guidelines

1. Do each movement **slowly** in a controlled manner.
2. Do only a few repetitions at first. Then build to five and then to ten. Do one or two sets of each.
3. Breathe slowly and comfortably. Never hold your breath under any conditions.
4. If you have difficulty getting down to or up from the floor, use a chair or other means of support to get up and down.
5. Do these movements on a mat or a carpeted floor.
6. Don't do all exercises each session. Pick four or five and do them as well as possible. Sometimes you will take several tries to get them down correctly.
7. If you experience any sharp pain or experience difficulty breathing, STOP. See your doctor.

List of Movements

1. *Head Raise*
2. *Basic Crunch*
3. *Leg Raise*
4. *Banana Position and Bent Leg Raise*
5. *Elbow and Side Planks*
6. *Hip Bridge with Knee Pulls*
7. *Modified Superman*
8. *Side Bends*
9. *Lean Backs (floor and chair)*
10. *Cool Down Cobra Stretch*

Head Raises

This simple movement should be done on the floor, but can be done in bed in the morning.

- 1. Lie on your back as shown. Put head on floor or small pillow or rolled up blanket or towel for support.*
- 2. Lift your head and shoulders as high and as far forward as you can.*
- 3. Slightly tilt your pelvis upward.*
- 4. Lower your head back to floor or support.*
- 5. Repeat 5 to 10 times for 1 or 2 sets.*

This movement is probably the most simple of all core and abdominal movements. You should be able to feel the tension in your upper abdominal muscles just below your breastbone.



Basic Crunch

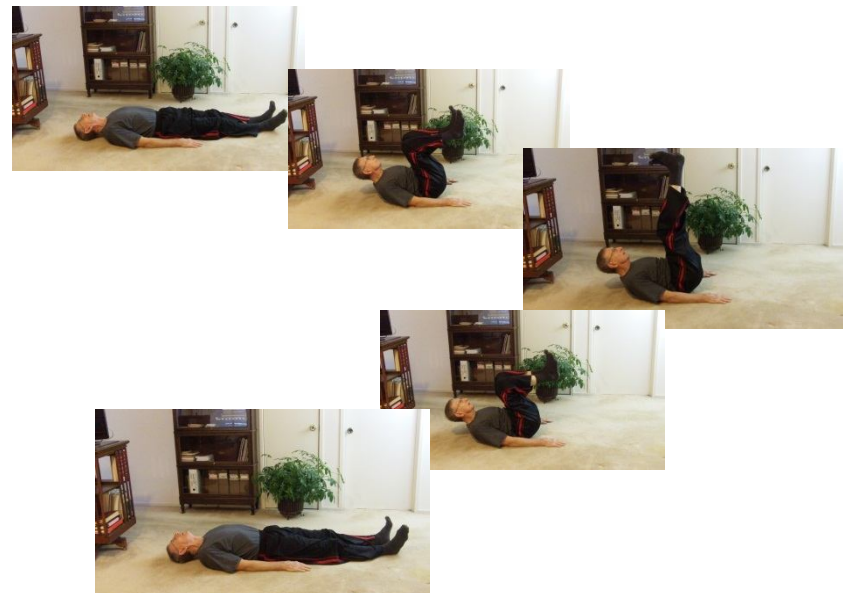
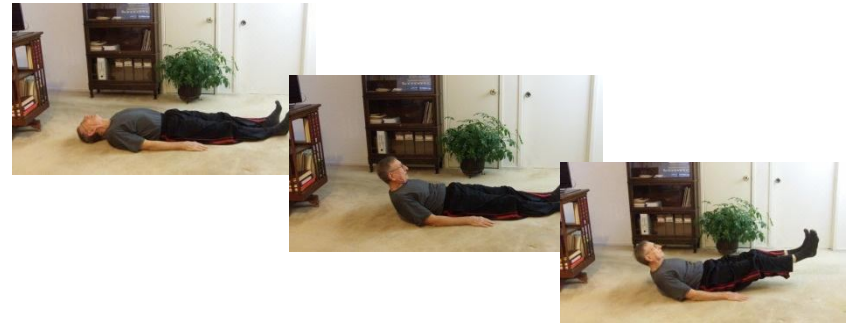
This is the granddaddy of most all the basic abdominal exercises. It's simple and effective.

- 1. Lie on ground with legs bent as shown, and your head on the ground or a low cushion or support such as a small pillow or rolled up blanket. Put your hands by your ears but don't use your hands as a support.*
- 2. Lift your head and shoulders up and slightly forward, keeping your lower back against or within an inch of the ground. Try and curl your pelvis up and in slightly to engage your lower abdominal muscles (only if you can).*
- 3. Hold for a second and return your head to the starting position.*
- 4. Repeat five or ten times and do one or two sets.*



Banana Position and Bent Leg Lift

1. Lie on your back with your legs straight and your arms straight by your side.
2. Lift your head and shoulders off the floor and drop your head toward your chest.. Drive your lower back into the floor and keep it flat against the floor. This is a basic "crunch".
3. Make an attempt to lift your legs. If you are unable to lift your legs with your legs straight, bend your knees and lift your legs. When your thighs are pointed straight up, extend your legs into the air.
4. Return to the starting position by bending your legs and then lowering them to the floor and straightening your legs.
5. Start with 5 repetitions and advance to 10 for one or two sets.



Simple Leg Raises

1. Lie down flat on back, arms by sides. Legs straight.
2. Lift head and shoulders and drop head to chest.
3. Slowly raise legs to 90 degrees or more, keeping legs straight. **Make sure your back remains flat on the floor.**
4. Lower legs back to floor slowly
5. Drop head and shoulders back to floor to starting position.

If this is too difficult at first, bend your legs and raise your knees toward your chest. As you knees approach your chest, extend your lower legs upward.



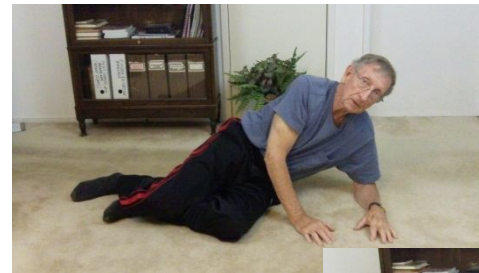
Elbow and Side Planks

These are two of the most powerful overall core and abdominal exercises of them all.

1. *Start from hands and knees position.*
2. *Move into plank position and rest arms on elbows.*
3. *Do not let your body sag. Tighten your butt and abdominal muscles. Hold for 15 seconds at first. Work up to 30 seconds and then to a minute.*

Side Plank.

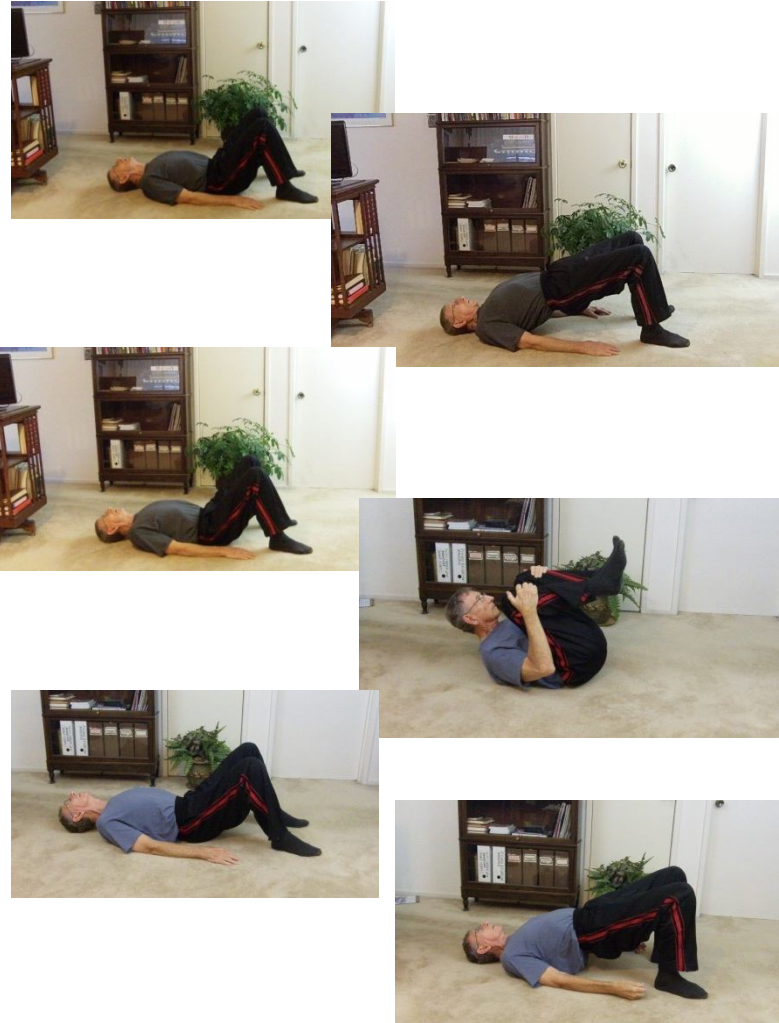
1. *Start by lying on your hip and elbow facing toward one side.*
2. *Raise you upper body onto elbow. Put one foot on top of the other.*
3. *Straighten your body*
4. *Do not let your body sag. Hold for 10 seconds. Work up to 20 seconds and then to 30 seconds.*
5. *Repeat on other side.*



Hip Bridge/Knee Pull Combo

This combination movement combines extension and contraction of you lower back and provides a powerful dynamic stretch in each position. This movement is best done on the floor but can be done in bed in the morning

- 1. Lie on back with knees bent as shown.*
- 2. Lift hips and torso and hold for a count of five.*
- 3. Lower torso to ground and slowly raise your knees to your chest. Hold your knees with your hands and pull slightly to stretch your lower back.*
- 4. Lower your feet to the floor and repeat the bridge.*
- 5. Repeat five to ten times. Do one set.*



Beginner's Superman

The “Superman” movement is a powerful lower back and butt strengthener. This is the simplified beginner’s version.

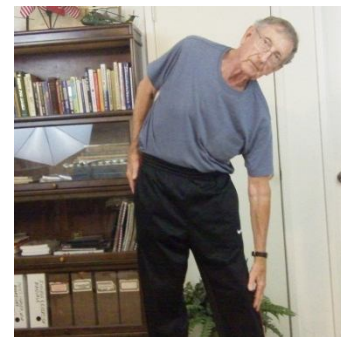
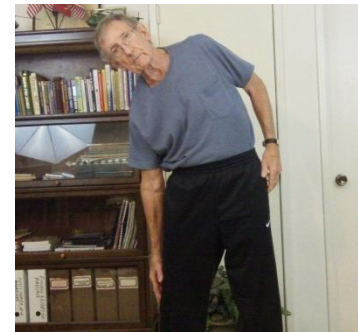
- 1. Lie on floor face down. Hands as shown.*
- 2. Raise one leg and hip off the ground keeping your leg straight. Lower back to ground.*
- 3. Repeat with your other leg.*
- 4. After a few times doing this movement, you should be able to lift both legs together, while raising your upper body at the same time.*



Side Bends

This is a simple but classic movement to strengthen the sides of your core.

- 1. Stand up straight with your arms at your side and your legs slightly apart.*
- 2. Bend sideways as far as is comfortable. Let your arm slide down you leg.*
- 3. Back to starting position.*
- 4. Repeat on other side*
- 5. Repeat 5 to 10 times per side. Do one or two sets.*



Lean Backs

*You will not find this position listed in books about exercise. It is a simple position that provides stabilization for other leg and body movements in the **SeniorFlow™** series. You should be able to hold this position as you move your legs and torso into and out of various other movements, including rotating your entire body from a sitting position.*

- 1. Sit comfortably on the ground with your legs in any position.*
- 2. Lean slightly backwards until you feel your abdominal muscles engage. Then lean ever so slightly back just a little farther. Hold a while.*
- 3. While in the position, move your arms and legs into various different positions as shown.*



Cool Down Cobra Stretch

The Cobra Stretch is ideal for stretching your abdominal muscles after working them.

- 1. Start from you hands and knees*
- 2. Lower your hips and legs toward the ground but not touching the ground. Hold for 10 seconds and build to 20 seconds.*
- 3. Return to hands and knees. Once is enough. You'll feel it.*



Alternative

If the cobra stretch is too difficult for you, simply lie on your back with your arms stretched out overhead as shown. Stretch out the length of our body. You should feel the stretch in your abdominals. Hold for 20 seconds. Do only once.



About the Author

Bob McMillan is the founder of **The Come Alive Project LLC**, and the creator of **SeniorFlow™**, a low impact, low and moderate intensity exercise and movement methodology for active seniors, for developing strength and mobility.

Bob writes a popular blog called "**Energy Bites**" on Fitness and Personal Energy Matters for Seniors. His blog is delivered every Tuesday. Sign up to be notified of new posts at www.thecomealiveproject.com.

Bob presents lectures and workshops on Health, Fitness, and Personal Energy for Active Seniors. His talk, **Come Alive After 55 is always well received.**

Contact Bob to speak to your group at bob@thecomealiveproject.com.

