

Core Restoration Exercises

American Fitness Magazine: Nicole Nichols

Heel Slides: Lie on the floor with knees bent, spine neutral and arms at sides. Begin with the basic breath to engage the abs. Slowly slide one leg out (inhaling) until it is parallel to the floor, and then exhale as she slides it back in to the starting position. Alternate sides, extending the other leg out and then back in to complete one rep. Your back should remain neutral throughout this exercise. When you can comfortably perform 20 heel slides on each leg she can move to the next level.



Leg Extensions: Lie on the floor with knees bent, spine neutral and arms at sides. Begin with the basic breath to engage the abs. Exhale to raise one leg to tabletop position (knee in line with hip, shin parallel to the floor). Inhale to slowly extend the lifted leg out as close to the floor as she can without arching her back. Exhale and return leg to tabletop position, then bring foot back down to the starting position. Switch sides. Progress over time until you can extend/hover your leg about 2 to 3 inches above the floor (without touching it). Work up to five repetitions on each side without stopping, building to 20 hovering repetitions on each side before you move to the next level.



Toe Taps: Lie on the floor with knees bent, spine neutral and arms at sides. Begin with the basic breath to engage the abs. Then exhale to bring legs up one at a time to tabletop position. Keeping knee bent, slowly lower one foot down to the floor on an inhale, then exhale to return to tabletop. Repeat on the opposite side, working up to 10 controlled repetitions on each leg (with no changes in lower back position) before moving on to the next level.



Advanced Leg Extensions: Lie on the floor with knees bent, spine neutral and arms at sides. Begin with the basic breath to engage the abs. Then exhale to bring legs up one at a time to tabletop position. Inhaling, slowly extend one leg parallel to the floor without touching it. Exhale to return the leg to the starting position and switch sides. (If you arch your back at all during the exercise, you are not strong enough to progress to this level, and should return to the previous exercise.) Work up to 10 repetitions each leg to start. When you can repeat this exercise 20 times on each leg without discomfort or arching her back, you can move to the final level.



Double Leg Lowerers: Lie on the floor with knees bent, spine neutral and arms at sides. Begin with the basic breath to engage the abs. Then exhale to bring legs up one at a time to tabletop position. Squeeze legs together, extend legs up in line with hips. On inhale, slowly lower both legs toward the floor as far as she comfortably can without moving her lower back. Exhale and contract the abs to lift legs back up to the start position. Work up to 20 repetitions. (If you notice back pain during this exercise, return to the previous level.)

