**Core Stabilization**

**The Bridge**

**Preparation**

1. Lie on your back on the floor with your knees bent and shoulder-width apart, and feet flat on the

 floor and pointed straight ahead. Place your arms to your sides with your palms (Figure 1).



 **Figure 1 Figure 2**

**Movement**

1. Do the drawing-in maneuver (draw your navel in, squeeze your buttock, tuck your chin in,

 and gently push your head and neck towards the floor).

2. Slowly and gently lift off the floor until your knees, hips, and shoulders are in line. Hold for

 two seconds (figure 2).

3. Slowly and gently lower your pelvis to the floor to a count of four seconds.

**Key Points**

1.  Try not to lift your hips too far off the floor when performing this exercise. This can

     place excessive stress on your lumber spine.

2. Maintain the drawing-maneuver throughout this exercise.  This ensures the intrinsic core

 stabilizers are staying activated.

3.  Make sure that your knees, hips and shoulders are in alignment when lifting your

 pelvis off the floor.

**Benefits of activating and strengthening your core stabilizers**

**Alleviates Back Pain**: Core stabilization exercises can help reduce discomfort; and improve mobility and support for the spine in people with both acute and chronic low back pain.

**Improves Posture**: Core stabilization exercises can improve your posture and decrease your risk of disc herination and vertebrae degeneration.

**Better Athletic Performance**: Your core is the link between your upper and lower body, it is what allows a golfer to swing the club to strike his golf ball, or a tennis player to serve and optimize her racquet speed. It’s critical to sports performance.

**Improved Balance:** Poor posture is a complicated condition, but lower body weakness, vestibular dysfunction and neurological deficits are often contributing factors. Studies have shown that dynamic balances improves as your core stabilization increases.

**Safer Everyday Movement**: Daily tasks-such as maintaining balance on an icy surface carrying groceries, hoisting children and walking up a steep flight of stairs-are easier and less likely to result in an injury when your core stabilizers are strong.