Yogis

The athlete is on the knees with the hands behind the head; a partner holds the athlete’s feet. The athlete leans forward as far as possible without falling and then moves back to the start position. The abs control the movement. The athlete must maintain an upright posture (straight back, shoulders held back) throughout the movement.

Core Strength and Stabilization

The human body is a unique structure. The skeletal system provides support and a point of origin and insertion for muscles. Yet despite its strength, the skeleton would collapse into a useless pile of bones if the muscles and connective tissues were not providing support and stability. Just standing in place requires a great deal of stability within the system. Imagine the stability needed when sprinting and then jumping!

The pelvic girdle is the critical stabilizing joint. The pelvis can rotate somewhat freely both forward and back and side to side. Without stabilization of the pelvic girdle during sprinting, the hip flexors would pull the pelvis forward, thus limiting knee lift and range of motion. This, in effect, would minimize elastic force generation, which is critical to running at high velocity.

Posture is also related to stability and has a direct bearing on movement efficiency. Both general posture and dynamic posture must be addressed on a daily basis when training elements that build stability in the system. Core, or pillar, training is a primary way to do this. The exercises in this section should be done at some level every day. They can be done at the beginning or end of the session. The load can be increased by increasing the number of repetitions or the amount of time.
Low-Level Bikes

Sitting on the buttocks, the athlete leans back, supported by the lower arms. The legs do a low rotation as if the athlete were riding a bicycle. The athlete extends the leg and then recovers the heel to the buttock. The feet are about 3 inches (7.6 cm) off the floor for the whole movement. The athlete should begin by performing the drill for 30 seconds and extend the time as fitness increases.

V-Sits

These are also called clam shells. The athlete is on the back, arms extended straight with hands overhead. The action involves tucking the chin and folding the body up with the hands and feet together at the top of the action. The athlete recovers until just short of touching the ground. It is important to maintain the contraction of the abs. If the athlete can’t make the hands and feet meet, he should stretch as far as he can while maintaining the posture. This exercise is best done on a soft mat.
The athlete lies facedown with the arms bent and elbows out to the sides. The hands are in front of the face with the palms down. The athlete lifts the hands, elbows, and upper body while lifting the legs off the ground. The upper and lower body should be raised no more than 3 inches (7.6 cm) off the ground. Only the trunk is on the ground when in the up position.

The athlete lies on the right side with the right buttock and right lower arm supporting the upper body. The action involves raising both legs 6 inches (15.2 cm) and then lowering them slowly and under control until the right leg nearly touches the ground. The athlete then repeats on the left side.
Russian Leg Lifts

The athlete assumes a crab position (faceup with hands and feet on the floor) with toes facing straight forward. Making sure the knees are at a 90-degree angle, the athlete presses the hips as high as possible and extends one leg straight forward to 180 degrees at the knee. The athlete then repeats the action with the other leg. The key is to keep the trunk parallel to the ground (shoulders to hips) and not allow the hips to drop. The load can be increased by adding repetitions or increasing the time spent holding the hips high.