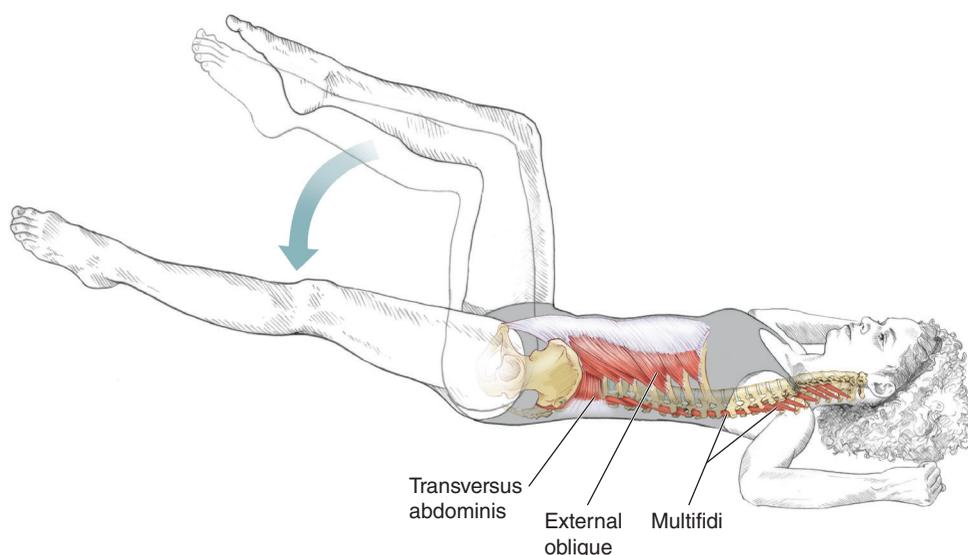


LEG GLIDE



Execution

1. Lie on your back with your arms in first position. (Note: In the illustration, the arms are placed in a position to make the abdominals more visible.) Locate your neutral pelvic alignment and bring one leg at a time to 90-degree hip flexion and 90-degree knee flexion (i.e., 90/90 position). Align your knees with your hips.
2. Inhale to prepare. As you breathe out, deepen the abdominal contraction and let one leg glide away from you at approximately 60 degrees. Allow your knee to extend fully. Focus on anchoring your abdominals to your lower back; allow no movement of the pelvis. Feel the deep transversus abdominis and external oblique firing to help stabilize your pelvis.
3. Inhale to bring the leg back to the starting position. Repeat the sequence with the other leg. As you exhale, focus on flattening your abdomen to anchor your pelvis; reemphasize deep abdominal contraction, not the hip flexors. Perform 10 to 12 times with each leg.
4. As your leg moves away from your center to extend the knee, notice the movement of your leg occurring along the sagittal plane and actively increase the abdominal contraction to resist pelvic movement.

SAFETY TIP: Maintain stability in your lower back. If you find that it is too difficult to hold your lower back in a stable neutral position, do not take the leg as low; try it again with the leg extending higher. You may lower the leg when your back is stable.

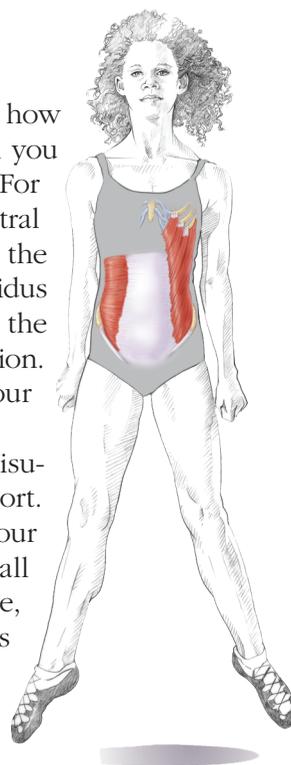
Muscles Involved

Transversus abdominis, external oblique, multifidus

DANCE FOCUS

This exercise emphasizes the fact that what matters is not how many abdominal exercises you can perform but how well you can use abdominal strength to improve your technique. For example, Irish dance requires intense trunk control in a neutral position in order to maintain a stable position. Focus on the deep transversus abdominis along with the deep multifidus to give you double support. This cocontraction provides the anchor you need before performing any arm or leg motion. Remind yourself that only your legs are moving, not your pelvis or your spine!

The same principle applies to jumping combinations. Visualize your navel moving toward your spine for added support. Put energy into your abdominal muscles, not tension into your neck and shoulders. Take a moment to practice a few small jumps in place. Feel the core muscles bracing your spine, and feel the external oblique working to connect your ribs and your pelvis. Relax and enjoy the ride! Teachers can use this tool to help students move from the center with less stress on the spine. In order to teach it, instructors must be able to feel it and explain it.



VARIATION

Rotated Leg Glide

Begin with your legs at 90/90 and turn out both thighs. On exhalation, deepen the abdominal contraction and lower one leg to about 60 degrees as you extend your knee. Maintain turnout and emphasize leg movement only—not pelvis or spine movement. Inhale on the return and focus on deepening the abdominal contraction while maintaining hip turnout. Perform this exercise 10 to 12 times with each leg.

