

The Trunk is Not the Core

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It is often said that if one bird flies in the wrong direction many will sure to follow. This common wisdom can be witnessed in many realms of life from the food choices we make to the types of exercise we participate in. Just because someone claims to be an authority does not necessarily mean that they are leading others in the right direction. Someone who claims to have decades of experience might be doing the wrong things for all of that time. When it comes to our own human anatomy we are too often being led in the wrong direction.

It has been decades now since the advent of exercise science. Before science and technology came into place people seemed to know how to exercise. They did push-ups, sit-ups, chopped wood, swam, ran and hiked. It seemed to be simple and easy.

As exercise science has taken over into more deliberate means of training the body we find that many of the founding principles of these scientific regimens are completely flawed and inaccurate. For instance, it was in the 1970's that NASA research scientist Kenneth Cooper in his book "Aerobics" touted that all human beings need to be out running or doing cardiovascular type exercises every day. After decades of running and pounding the pavement we have seen that

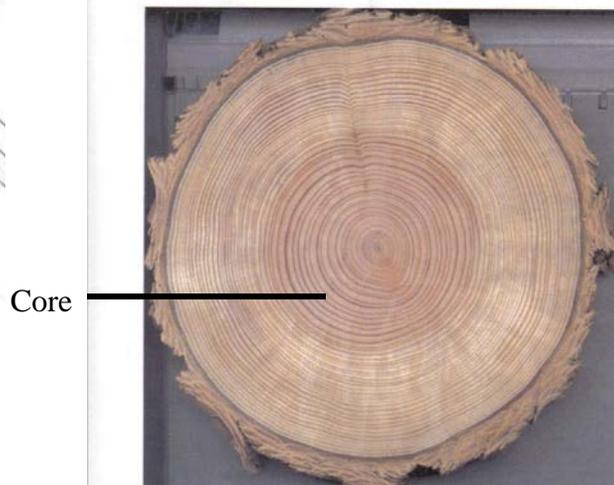
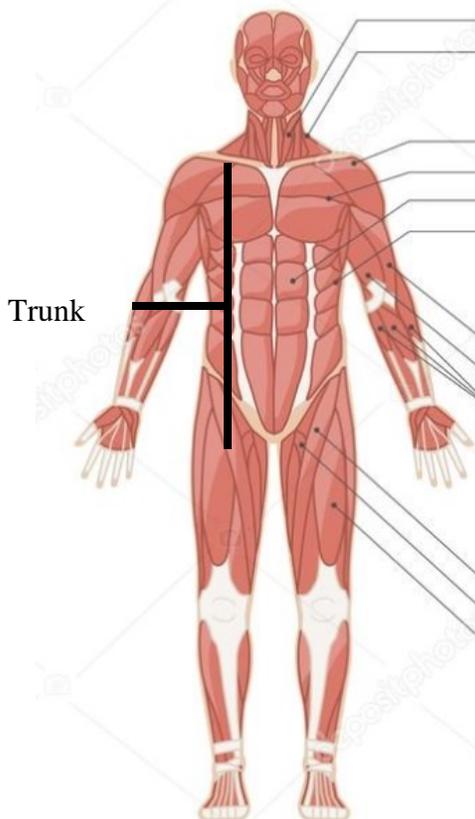
people who are cardiovascularly fit die at about the same rate as those who are not cardiovascularly fit. Myth exposed.

Now we can see how the entire belief that every individual needs to strengthen the core is a completely outdated and errant myth as well. This type of movement neither protects the back from injury nor cures the back from injury despite decades of core strengthening routines. Another myth exposed.

The first errant belief system is the entire definition of what the core is in the first place. It seems that those with little or no anatomical training are the ones leading the charge on what is right and wrong. The core and the trunk (or torso) are two completely different areas of the body and have been confused by editors of national fitness and glamour magazines while being hailed by personal trainers and medical doctors.

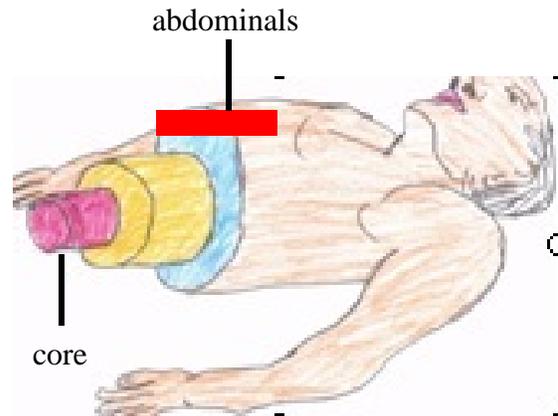
By and large when someone is doing abdominal exercises they are exercising muscles in their trunk and not their core. The trunk can be defined as the area from the pubic bone to the collar bones. These muscles include the pectoralis muscles (major and minor), rectus abdominis, internal obliques, external obliques and transverse abdominis muscles. These muscles are located on the outside of the trunk and have nothing to do with the core of the body. The lower trunk muscles (abdominals) can be seen as moving longitudinal along the linear outer flank of the body. While they are one to two layers thick (the internal obliques are underneath the external obliques) they are in no way even close to the core of the body. When engaging in sit-ups or other types of movement you are doing trunk exercises and not core exercises.

The trunk of the body is like a section of a cut tree. The trunk contains many layers of different tissues. The core of a tree is the deepest and oldest part of a tree and the deepest and oldest part of the human body as well. The abdominal muscles are on the outside of the trunk much like the bark of a the tree.



As we developed in the womb our inner core developed first and we then built layers around this core, just like in a tree.

The core is not necessarily an area that needs or wants to be tightened. The core of the human body consists of many fundamentally important systems of the body like the central nervous system, cranial sacral fluid system and the kundalini energy channel. The life force of the human body moves through its central core and a tight and hard core is not only unnecessary it could be dangerous. A tightened core can hamper many of the important systems that are at work deep within the body.



Regretfully, Westerners attempting to create a six-pack abdominal region in their outer trunk muscles will inevitably negatively affect the core of the body. The diaphragm will be negatively affected as will the psoas and other core stabilizers. Interestingly, most of the seven billion people on the planet are not engaging in core or trunk strengthening exercises daily and they seem to be doing okay. A tightened outer trunk offers little health benefits and may lead to other health issues like labored diaphragm activity and could even cause back pain.

There are three important concepts to remember.

One: Your core and your trunk are not the same. These are entirely different areas of the body with entirely different functions.

Two: The current trend to core exercises is a complete mistake. It is like calling a Ford a Chevy and visa versa. If you are doing sit-ups you are doing trunk exercises.

Three: Many people who obsessively exercise their trunk muscles may also be negatively impacting the center of their body which is called the core. A tight core is not only unnecessary but can be dangerous.

Resources

**Pilates is Not Yoga
The Core Myth
Backs Do Not Just Go Out**

The Psoas Muscle

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