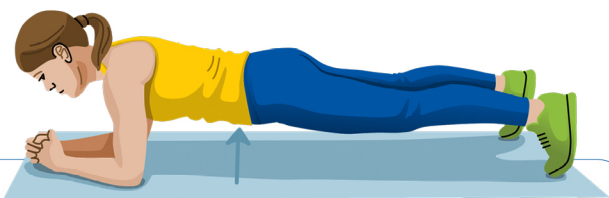


# Core strength exercises for horse riders



## Plank

**Why:** This beginner move is a great place to start getting your core working.

**How:** Adopt a press-up position but rest on your forearms rather than your hands. Keep your back straight and engage your abs and glutes. Hold for as long as you can without coming out of the position. You could start with 10 seconds, then try 20 or 30 seconds, eventually aiming for a minute.

**Level up:** Spend longer in this position and try moving your feet closer together, as this makes it harder to maintain stability.



## Glute bridge

**Why:** A strong core needs strong glutes.

**How:** Lie flat on the floor with your legs bent. Keeping your weight in your heels, push your hips upwards as far as you can go, before pausing and returning to the start position. Repeat this exercise 10 times.

**Level up:** Hold the glute contraction at the top of the movement or try with one leg extended in the air.



## Dead bug

**Why:** They're hard to get wrong and are a safe way to test how strong your core is.

**How:** Lie on your back with hands vertically above you and feet up so your knees are at 90°. Straighten one leg until your heel is an inch from the floor and, at the same time, lower the opposite arm so it's parallel to the floor. Return to the start position and repeat with the other leg and opposite arm. Repeat this exercise 10 times, straightening both legs for one rep.

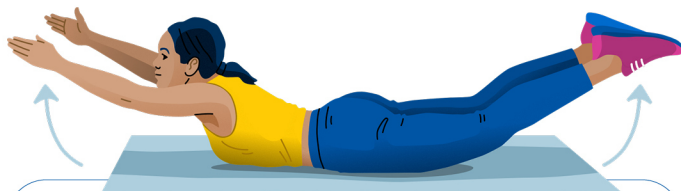
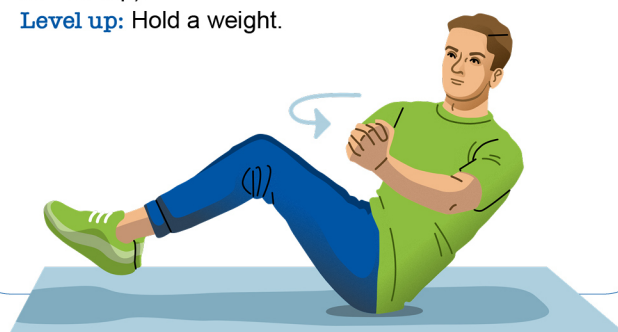
**Level up:** Hold light weights or use ankle weights.

## Russian twists

**Why:** Helps to strengthen your rotational movement.

**How:** Sit on the floor with your knees bent. Clasp your hands together and lift your feet off the floor. Twist at your torso, turning from side to side and moving the weight across you. Repeat this exercise 10 times (moving left to right and back again counts as one rep).

**Level up:** Hold a weight.



## Supermans

**Why:** Strengthens your glutes, core and lower back.

**How:** Lie on the floor on your front with your legs straight and your arms extended. Keeping your head in a neutral position, slowly lift your arms and legs around six inches off the floor – or until you feel your lower back muscles contracting. Lift your belly button slightly off the floor to contract your abs. Hold the position for three seconds – and don't forget to breathe. Lower your arms, legs and belly back to the floor. Repeat this exercise 10 times.

**Level up:** Raise alternate arms and legs to improve your coordination.

## Flutter kicks

**Why:** You'll be working your core stabilisers, but in a position that's safe for your lower back.

**How:** Lie on your back with your arms by your side. Engage your core and raise your legs slightly off the floor. Lift your left leg higher than your right leg, then lower your left leg as you lift your right leg. Keep a controlled movement at all times. Do this exercise for 30 seconds.

**Level up:** Cross your legs, left over right and right over left, in a scissor motion instead of up and down.

