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Core and Balance Training is Essential to Athletic Performance

Every athlete wants to get the most out of his or her training and reach their full athletic potential. One of the most important factors in maximizing athletic performance is core strength. An athlete with a strong core is a strong athlete; it's that simple.

Let me explain to you just what the core is and why core strength is so very important for any athlete. The core is comprised of nearly 30 different muscles that basically wrap around your body in the area between your hips and ribcage. There are a couple ways to think about this in easy terms. First of all think of your body in two halves, the lower half and the upper half. The core area is between the two and can be thought of as a 'bridge' that connects them. In order for the upper and lower body to work together requires that connection. Another visual is to think of the rebar in a foundation. Imagine that your core area is just like the foundation of a house. When not trained, it is a foundation without its rebar and one likely to weaken and cause problems, while a conditioned core is a strong and sturdy foundation with rebar.

Basically, the core is fundamental to all body movement. Whether you realize it or not, you hardly make a movement without engaging your core whether it be walking up the stairs or bending down to pick something up. Your core is involved, providing you with balance and stability. The strength, or weakness, of your core will dictate how easy or difficult these movements are.

So, what does this have to do with your athletic performance? Absolutely everything. When you are moving through your sport of choice you are using your body in its most functional state, in other words, as a whole. You are using your lower body and your upper body together; you're jumping, throwing, twisting, hitting, running, the list goes on and on. Your core is the basis for all of this movement and once again the strength or weakness of that core will dictate the ease in which you move on the field or court. Athletes are also very often in unstable environments, like landing on one foot or throwing or hitting from an awkward position. I cannot honestly think of a sport where this stability and balance does not come into play. Your balance comes from your core; strong core equals good balance.

Here are some examples: Think of the volleyball player jumping and spiking. The spike is literally being performed in mid air; can a situation be less stable? The power for that spike must come from the core!

Think of the shortstop that runs to catch a grounder and then must jump, twist and throw all at the same time, again, ALL core!

Think of the tennis player who runs across the court and then smashes a return to the opposite side, ALL core!

I could go on and on with every single sport and just about every position but hopefully you get the idea. If you do not train for core strength and balance you will never realize your full potential. More and more athletes are training this way and if you ignore this vital aspect of athletic training you will be out-played.

Fortunately, core training is not difficult or time consuming and it does not require expensive equipment. It has been my experience that athletes are downright thrilled to be doing something other than 'lifting' anyway. Core training is innovative, challenging and creative; heck, it's fun! Of course when the athletes and coaches see the results, which come quickly with this type of training, the excitement really builds.

If I sound passionate about core training, I am. I see the results first hand every day. Hundreds of athletes that I have trained enjoy incredible results and it is very exciting. If you're routine does not involve core training, well, that needs to change. Improve your core and improve your game, guaranteed.

Barry Lovelace is the creator of [Core Power for Baseball](#), a hot selling baseball specific training program guaranteed to improve your game.