

Pelvic Floor and Diastasis 6 Part Course

Part 6: Diastasis Exercises

Things to address in a diastasis

- Tightness in the lateral abs affects their ability to contract and can contribute to a bread loaf appearance or rectus dominant abdominal engagement. (Side breathing exercises from the pelvic floor section are amazing for decreasing tightness in the transverse abdominals and improving their function.)
- Rib cage mobility on the inhale and exhale, both relaxed and forced.
- Midline pressure management and rib cage movement with a small crunch.
- Imbalances in abdominal muscle function as well as side to side imbalances.
- The pelvis can drive rib cage positioning, and vice versa. Look at the kinetic chain.
- Check in various loaded positions.

Step 1: Lie on your back and use your phone or a mirror to see your rib cage.



Inhale



Relaxed exhale



Forced exhale

Inhale

- Does the ISA expand on your inhale?
- How much do your ribs move?
- Does your diaphragm pull down below your ribs?
- Do they move equally side to side?

Exhale (try relaxed and then forced)

- Does the ISA narrow on your exhale?
- Do they move equally side to side?
- Are you able to relax and exhale without using your abs?

Step 2: Add in a small crunch, assessing ISA. Do your ribs widen or narrow?



Widen



Narrow

Widen with the crunch or a forced exhale?

- Internal oblique dominant pattern
- The IOs pull open on the rib cage and widen a diastasis

Narrow with the crunch or a forced exhale?

- External oblique dominant pattern
- More likely to have a diastasis below the belly button

How even is your rib cage from side to side? Does one side stick out more?

Step 3: Small crunch, assessing pressure management. Issues not naturally resolving on their own can be due to poorly managed pressure during movement.

Try a small crunch while bringing your ribs in and down.

- What happens to your abs?
 - Do they bulge or distend out the front?
 - Does your lower belly pooch?
- Iso holds with varied cuing (depending on what the person needs) can be useful here to work on rewiring.
 - The goal is to make sure your abs flatten as you crunch up, with no bulging or distention.
 - Cues: Improve rib cage expansion on the inhale, widen rib cage or narrow rib cage with crunch, flatten lower abs.
- Use props: Elevate head and shoulders with pillows, squeeze block between knees.

Half-Kneeling Rotations with a Band



Concentric

Eccentric

- Hips level, pull back on the front foot to help find your hamstring and think of sitting down into the front hip
- Slight forward lean as you drop your tailbone down
- Brace abs and do a tiny rotation through your rib cage over your front leg
 - Lumbar spine and pelvis shouldn't move to isolate the movement to your thoracic spine
 - Belly button should stay pointed straight ahead to incorporate the lower TAs
- Concentrically work the contralateral external obliques and ipsilateral internal obliques to rotate over your front leg
- Eccentrically work those same muscles as you slowly rotate away from your front leg
- Maintain equal tension throughout the entire range of motion in both directions
- Switch the direction that the band is pulling, or turn around to work the opposite obliques