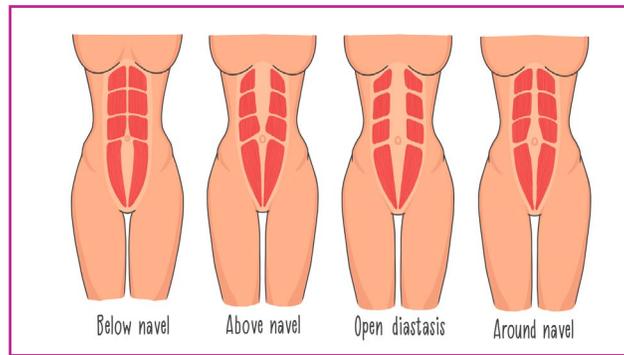


# Improve Your Diastasis and Core Function in Just 5 Minutes

## What We Will Cover

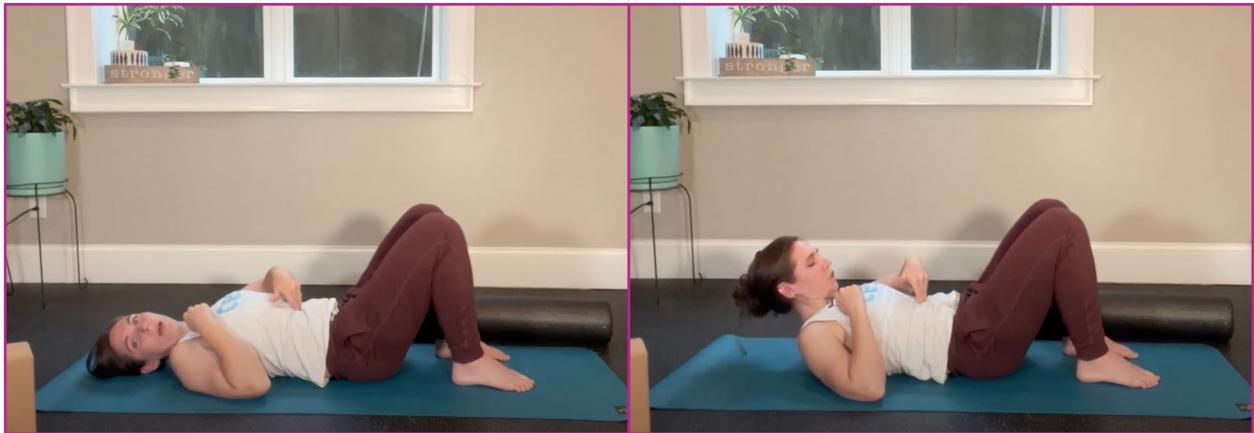
- How to assess and influence a diastasis.
- Diastasis Recti: The thinning of the linea alba (the fascia that connects the muscles on each side of the abs).
- Diastasis can be influenced by:
  - Core engagement
  - Breathing
  - Bracing
  - Rib and pelvis positioning

## Exercise #1: Accessing a Diastasis Recti



- Assess in 3 locations.
  - Top, where the ribs come together
  - Above the belly button
  - Below the belly button
- Assess depth and width.
  - Depth
    - How many knuckles deep?
    - Controlled by lateral abs (particularly transverse abdominals)
  - Width
    - Take fingers sideways and note how many fingers wide between the edges of the rectus abdominis
    - Controlled by the rectus abdominis

Depth: How many knuckles deep?	At Rest		Under Load (small crunch)		Width Pre-Brace	
	Depth	Width	Depth	Width	Depth	Width
Between Ribs and Belly Button						
Above Belly Button						
Between Belly Button and Pubic Bone						



- Assess relaxed, under load (by doing a crunch), and under load with intention.
- Relaxed
  - The relaxed measurement is not as important, but it's helpful to assess and compare to what happens under load
  - Assess depth and width at all three locations
- Under Load
  - Move into a small crunch
  - Assess the depth and width at all three locations
- Under Load with Intention and Cuing for a Pre-Brace
  - Inhale, with your breath going down into your ribs, back, hips, and pelvic floor
  - Exhale, gathering and lifting the pelvic floor to feel your ab muscles knit together toward the midline
  - Do a crunch and assess each spot
  - Did things get better?
    - If yes→need to work on making this a natural habit and progressively challenging it under load
    - If no→need to address the foundations of how you breathe and brace before adding more load

## Drill #1: Skin Rolling

- Bodies will choose the path of least resistance when lengthening and might not like to engage against extra resistance.
- If muscles never lengthen, they don't have a place to contract from. This affects how a muscle can engage.
- When we lose the ability to lengthen well, the body will find the path of least resistance to lengthen from.
  - Limited lateral or back expansion on the inhale can cause the inhale to go all to the front, putting strain on the diastasis



- Come to a comfortable seated position and take a moment to assess how your inhale and exhale feels.
- Gently grab the top layer of skin at your sides near your ribs as best you can.
- Slowly walk your fingers down as your thumb glides over the skin.
- If a spot feels sticky, you can gently tug from side to side or up and down, hold slight tension at the stuck spot until it gives, or hold the tension and do some gentle 360 degree breathing.
- Make sure to roll and pull in all directions.
- Ideally, the tissue should move in all directions.
- Stick to your side, back, and ribs at first, slowly and cautiously working around the midline/diastasis.
- If anything causes discomfort, stop.
- If this feels really hard, you can also use [silicone cups](#) with some lotion or oil to help.

## Reassess Your Breathing and Diastasis

- It can be fun to reassess your breathing on the side you worked on, comparing it to before and also to your other side before you do that side as well.
- Reassess your diastasis with a well-intentioned inhale and pre-brace, then exhale and go into a crunch.
- Did that change what you are feeling in your diastasis?

## Exercise #2: Rib Cage Smash

- Rib mobility and positioning affect how our diaphragm, core, and pelvic floor can function.
- The goal of this exercise is to improve rib cage mobility in all directions and areas to bring better balance to the system and ease of movement for improved core engagement.
- We'll include a hip shift to help close the front of the pelvis and open the back. This can further help with our breathing and bracing.



- Use something a little firm, like a yoga block, so it can apply pressure into your ribs.
- **Caution:** If you have osteopenia or osteoporosis, do not perform this exercise and seek the help of a professional for further guidance on rib cage mobility.
- Lie down on your left side.
- If you like, add a pillow under your head.
- Place the yoga block under the side of your rib cage and the foam roller between your lower legs from knees to ankles.
- Bring your knees up in line with your hips so your hips and knees are in a 90-90 position.
- Shift your top knee forward, reaching through the underside of your hips to make sure you stay in a slight posterior pelvic tilt.
- You should feel the right side of your pelvis rotate up and over the left side.
- Squeeze down onto the foam roller to engage your top leg adductor. This will open up the back of your pelvis and close off your lower abs.
- Try to maintain this form throughout the exercise.
- Reach your top arm forward and think about pulling the shoulder blade up and around your rib cage while keeping your rib cage in place. You should feel a broadening between your shoulder blade and spine. You can rest your hand on something if you need to.
- Inhale through your nose and expand through your right rib cage, your back, between your shoulders, and into your hips and pelvic floor.
- Exhale, using a “haaa” exhale as you melt down over the yoga block and try to keep the spaces open where you just sent your inhale. Try to make this exhale twice as long as the inhale.
- You are trying to use the yoga block to help your bottom ribs come to the midline.
- Maintain this pressure down onto the yoga block as well as the squeeze of the foam roller, and inhale again.
- Repeat for 5-10 breaths.

## Exercise #2: Rib Cage Smash Continued

- Tips
  - Your inhale should be silent and fluid throughout. You can try sliding your tongue back on the roof of your mouth to see if that helps to get more back body expansion
  - Your exhale should also be as effortless as possible, using gravity and the yoga block to help as much as you can
  - Try to make your exhale longer than your inhale, even twice as long! Try a pause at the end of the exhale for as long as you can before you inhale
  - Watch the top side of your waist and make sure it doesn't scrunch as you exhale. When lying on your left side, you're working on closing your left ribs and opening your right
  - If the arm reaching forward doesn't feel good, you can pull your arm back in a rowed position instead
- Now flip over and try the other side. Oftentimes one side is easier.
  - With this side, when reaching the top arm forward, think about your top ribs rotating up and over the bottom. This will help you compress the front side of the rib cage more, as this side is often flared forward
  - When you lie on your right side, if you feel the left side expanding a lot you can:
    - Try to inhale into the yoga block to expand your right chest wall and right lower back
    - Reach your left hand lower to help close your left lateral ribs and open up more of your lower and upper back

### Re-Test Your Breathing and Your Diastasis

- Compare the difference of the inhale and exhale: How much does each side of your rib cage move in both directions, as well as the ease of movement?
- Pre-brace and crunch up, testing each diastasis location
- Did that change what you are feeling in your diastasis?