

# HEXACORE™ TRAINING PROGRAM

*for*

## Diastasis Recti



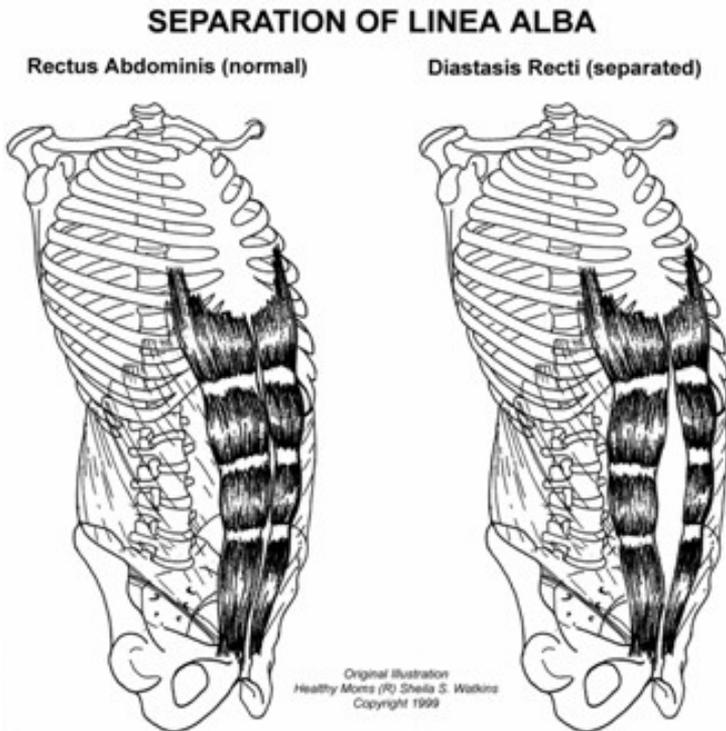
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# What is Diastasis Recti?



The word “diastasis” is Greek, meaning “to separate.” So, a *diastasis recti* is a separation of the rectus muscles. Your rectus muscles are basically your six-pack. There is a left and right set of rectus muscles. They are connected in the middle by a center line, called the linea alba. Separation of the muscles from the center line results in a relative thinness in the middle, which may appear as a bulging area with any type of straining, even such as sitting up from lying position. Also, the separation may cause a rounding out of the abdomen, losing the flat look.

# What Causes Diastasis Recti?

Diastasis recti can occur in both men and women. There is a strong genetic component as to who is most prone to diastasis. Also, repeated stretching or tension on the abdominal muscles, can cause diastasis. Examples include:

- Pregnancy
- Obesity
- Improper weight training
- Chronic cough due to COPD

## Should I Be Concerned if I Have Diastasis Recti?

Diastasis recti is NOT a hernia. There is no hole through which organs can get entrapped. There is no pain associated with diastasis. There is generally no medical need to address diastasis recti.

In situations with very wide diastasis recti, there may be associated back pain. This is because the CORE is disrupted. Your core includes the abdomen and the back muscles. Any imbalance in your core can cause pain and/or injury.

If you have an abdominal wall hernia within a diastasis, your surgeon may recommend closure of the diastasis in addition to the hernia repair as an advanced method to repair the hernia. This may improve results from the hernia repair.

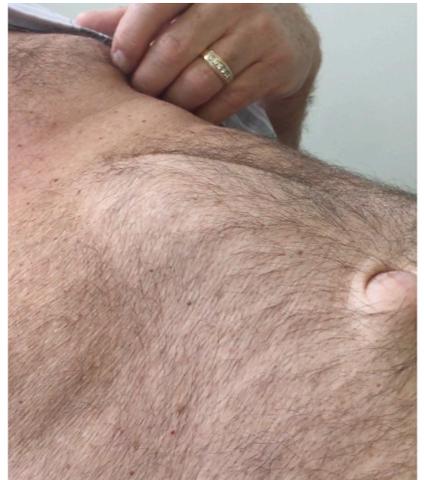
## **WOMEN with Diastasis Recti**

The most common cause for diastasis among women is pregnancy. As the rectus muscles are stretched out away from the center line, they may not recoil back to the middle after delivery. Some are more genetically prone to this effect than others. This is more often seen with large or multiparous (e.g., twins, triplets, etc.) pregnancies or after the second pregnancy. The diastasis may be localized around the belly button or extend from the upper abdomen to the lower abdomen. Some refer to this as the “mommy pooch.”



## **MEN with Diastasis Recti**

Among men, diastasis tends to be mostly in the upper abdomen. The chances may increase in size with age. It seems that the genetic predisposition to such a body change is stronger when it occurs in men. The result is a barrel type or rounded look to the upper abdomen, as opposed to a flat abdomen. Also, you may see a triangular mound that can bulge when straining or trying to sit up.



# What Exercises Can Help with Diastasis?

Specific types of exercises that focus on core training are most beneficial to help reduce the size and risk for widening of a diastasis. These exercises focus on strengthening the transversus abdominis, the “inner girdle” of the abdomen. By engaging the transversus abdominis, you can help return the rectus muscles toward the center line.

## What Exercises Should I Avoid?

- Any exercises that require lying backward or extending over a large exercise ball.
- Yoga postures that extend the abdomen, e.g., cow pose, up-dog, belly breathing, backbends.
- Abdominal exercises that involve flexing of the upper spine off the floor, e.g., crunches, oblique twists, bicycles, roll-ups, roll-downs.
- Pilates and Reformer exercises that use the head float position, upper body flexion, double leg extension, planks, 100's.
- Any exercise that causes your abdominal wall to bulge out upon exertion
- Lifting and carrying very heavy objects
- Quadruped exercises without adequate abdominal support



# HEXACORE™

## TRAINING PROGRAM

### for Diastasis Recti

-- 6 steps --



#### 1 Core Contraction

Sit upright and place both hands on your abdomen. Inhale to expand your abdomen. Feel your hands move out. Exhale and contract your abdominal muscles. Imaging pulling those muscles all the way to your spine. Maintain this contraction for 30 seconds, while continuing to breathe (don't hold your breath). Then do 10 small extra squeezes before your relax your muscles.



## 2 Seated Squeeze

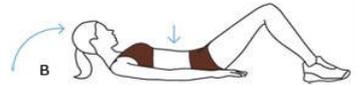
Sit similar to Step 1. Rest one hand on your upper abdomen and the other below your belly button. Inhale to expand your abdomen. Exhale and contract your abdominal muscles. This time, draw the muscles even more deeply toward your spine. At this starting point, contract your abdominal muscles a bit more toward your spine. Hold for 2 seconds. Return to the starting contracted position. Repeat 10 times.

## 3 Head Lift

A-Lie on your back with knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Inhale to expand your abdomen. Exhale and contract your abdominal muscles toward your spine.



B-With your abdominal muscles contracted, tuck your chin and raise your head off the floor.

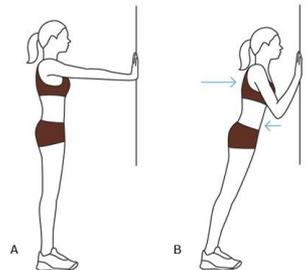


Hold for 2 seconds. Return your head to the floor. Repeat 10 times.

## 4 Upright Push-Up

A-Stand arm's length from a wall and place your palms flat against it. Inhale to expand your abdomen. Exhale and contract your abdominal muscles toward your spine.

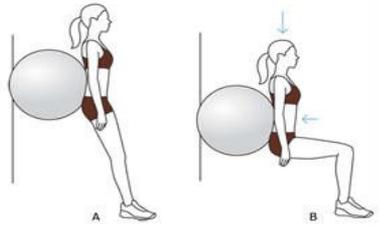
B-With your abdominal muscles contracted, do a push-up against the wall, keeping your elbows close to your sides. When pushing back up, contract your abdominal



muscles even more deeply toward your spine. Repeat 20 times.

## 5 Squat Against the Wall

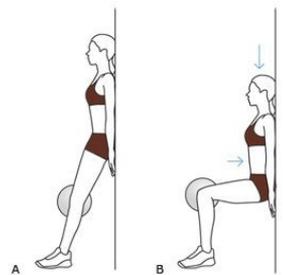
A-Stand with a large exercise ball between your back and the wall. Step forward and place your feet hip distance apart. Inhale to expand your abdomen. Exhale and contract your abdominal muscles toward your spine.



B-With your abdominal muscles contracted, bend your knees to lower into a squat. Then, straighten your legs to stand and contract your abdominal muscles even more deeply toward your spine. Repeat 20 times.

## 6 Squat with Squeeze

A-Stand with your back against the wall. Step forward. Place a small exercise ball or firm pillow between your knees. Inhale to expand your abdomen. Exhale and contract your abdominal muscles toward your spine.



B-With your abdominal muscles contracted, bend your knees to lower into a squat. Then, squeeze the ball with your thighs while contracting your abdominal muscles even more deeply toward your spine and hold for 2 seconds. Repeat 20 times before standing.

# Why **HEXACORE**<sup>TM</sup>?

The HEXACORE philosophy was built around the focus of core training and support for both men and women. It is promoted by Dr. Shirin Towfigh, Board-certified surgeon and hernia specialist. She treats patients with all sorts of abdominal wall pathologies. As a result, she is an expertise in the medical and surgical importance of a restored core.

Using the HEXACORE Training Program, you can confidently follow expert recommendations to restore your core toward normalcy. The series of programs focus on a variety of core-based problems, including diastasis, inguinal hernia, ventral hernia, and sports hernia. The goal of the training programs is to prevent core disruption and injury while providing regimens to improve outcome after surgery that is focused on restoring the core.

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