

The Core Challenge

Training Tips from Simon Burden, Active Interest

The Cisco Euro Challenge is an event designed to test competitors mentally and physically over different terrain for two days and three nights. So, we have teamed up with health and fitness consultancy Active Interest to ensure that you have the strength, aerobic fitness, flexibility and nutrition you will need to complete the challenge.

You won't know which physical exercises await until the event itself. However, all the potential challenges will require a strong core. The 'core' is a term that's often used, but little understood. The core isn't just one muscle or one part of the body, the core actually consists of a number of different muscles that stabilise the spine, pelvis and shoulder and create a solid base of support. The muscles of the core are pivotal in human movement and make it possible to; stand upright, move on two feet, control movement, generate powerful movements of the limbs, transfer energy, shift body weight and prevent injury in the back and extremities.

The objective of core stability and strength is to maintain a strong foundation and to transfer energy from the centre of the body out to the arms and legs. All movements start from the core of the body and never from the limbs alone. So, for powerful, rapid muscle contractions to occur in the limbs, the spine and pelvis must be solid and stable and the more stable the core, the most powerful the extremities can contract.

To strengthen the core you first have to activate and engage the deep lying muscles. Practice 'engaging' the core by standing upright, pulling the belly button in to the spine and flattening the stomach for up to 30 seconds. You will feel the deep lying muscles in the abdomen twinge. Keep breathing!

Be sure to contract the core before starting all exercises

Bridge

These exercises target the glutes (backside) and lumbar musculature

Supine Bridge

Lie down, arms by side
Lift hips, squeeze glutes (backside)
Hold for up to 30 seconds
Lower slowly, rest for 30 seconds, repeat 3 times



Progression

Take 1 leg away
Change leg
Repeat 3 times

WaterAid's vision is of a world where everyone has access to safe water and sanitation.

Supine Bridge on swiss ball

Put your shoulders and head on Swiss ball; feet on the ground, knees bent, hip- width apart.

Squeeze the glutes, lift hips until there is a straight line running through the body
Hold for 30 seconds and lower under control.
Repeat 3 times



Progression

Lift 1 leg and hold for 5 secs
Change legs
Repeat 3 times

Plank

These exercises target the entire core. Be sure to relax shoulders and let the core take the strain!

Lie face down
Push up onto elbows and toes. Relax shoulders
Pull belly button into spine, squeeze glutes.
Keep back flat, in a straight line from head to heels. Look forward.
Hold for up to 1 minutes. Rest for 1 minute and repeat 3 times.



Progressions

Same exercise, resting elbows on swiss ball
Roll ball out for 3 secs
Same exercise, resting elbows on swiss ball
Feet on BOSU ball
Roll ball out for 3 secs



Side plank

Rest on elbows
Raise hips up so body is in a straight line
Raise arm for balance
Pull belly button into spine
Hold for up to 60 secs



Low back extensions

Superman

Lie face down
Arms and legs stretched out
Raise arms and legs off the ground six inches
Hold for 10 secs
Rest for 10 secs
Repeat 5 times

Swiss ball extensions

Strengthens functional muscles of lower back, reducing back pain and improving posture.
Place ball underneath you, with thighs on ball
Push bodyweight through wall
Lower entire body as one unit down on a count of 3
Raise body
Do 12 times
Rest 1 minute
Repeat 3 times



T- Press Up

Strengthens entire core, including external and internal obliques
Get into press up position
Lower yourself as doing a press up
Push up, rotate to the left
Lower yourself
Push up, rotate to the right



Lunge with twist

Lunge forward with right leg
Bent front leg
Drop back knee to 90 degrees
Pull belly button into spine and hold medicine ball out in front
Rotate toward front leg
Do 12 on each leg
Repeat 3 times

