

## DIASTASIS RECTI SELF-CHECK

*Diastasis Recti* is a separation in the middle of the abdominal (belly area) muscles. It can occur because of pregnancy, hormone changes, abdominal surgeries, or very weak abdominal muscles.

It can have a great impact on back posture and on pelvic floor disorders such as urinary incontinence. Because very weak abdominal muscles will allow the internal tissues of the torso to "hang" out, there is an imbalance of the pressure within the torso. This can have an effect on back pain and on the support of the pelvic organs such as the bladder, vagina, and rectum.

If you have a Diastasis Recti, it can be corrected with exercise in most cases. Do not attempt more aggressive abdominal strengthening exercises until it is corrected. Your therapist will give you exercises that are appropriate for you.

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You can monitor your progress with this self-check:

Lie on your back with knees bent.

Put 4 fingers above navel.

Lift head and shoulders off the floor.

It is considered normal if you feel

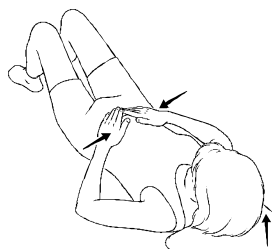
No gap between the 2 sides of the muscles, or

A small gap, 1 - 2 fingers wide.

If you can feel a gap or a bulge that is more than 2 fingers wide, you have *Diastasis Recti*.

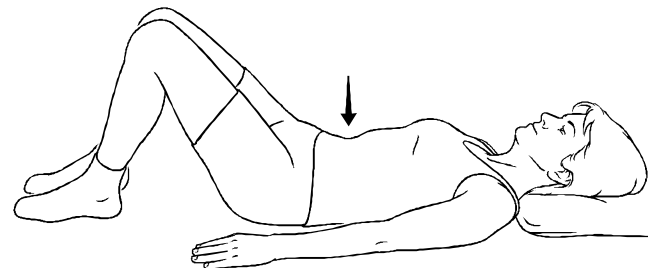
Some people may have separations that are high, low, or in the middle of the belly. You can do this self-check at the navel and a few inches above and below.

**TRANSVERSE ABDOMINALS - 2**  
Diastasis Recti Correction With Hands (Hook-Lying)



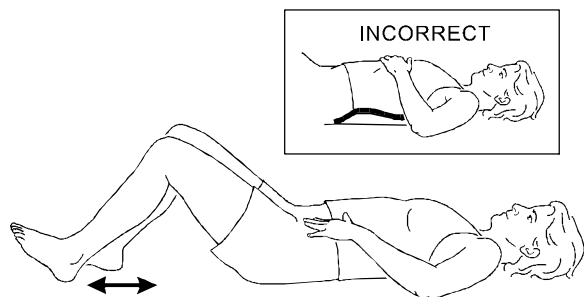
Spread hands wide on lower abdomen. Inhale. In one fluid movement: Pull in navel, push abdomen muscles together, exhale, raise head toward chest, and hold for 3 seconds. Return, rest for 3 seconds. Repeat 10 times. Do 3 times a day. Can bring abdominals together by wrapping towel around torso instead of using hands.

**TRANSVERSE ABDOMINALS - 5**  
Isometric Hold (Hook-Lying)



Slowly inhale, and then exhale. Pull navel toward spine and hold for 5 seconds. Continue to breathe in and out during hold. Rest for 5 seconds. Repeat 10 times. Do 4-5 times a day. Do in a variety of positions: SITTING, STANDING, LAYING DOWN, HANDS & KNEES.

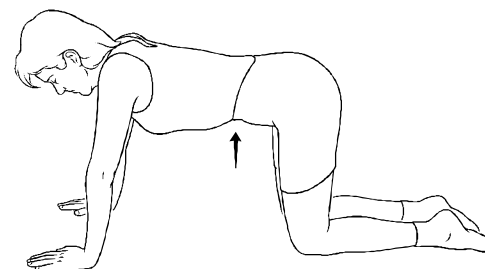
**LOWER TRUNK - 7 Heel Slide: 4-10 Inches**  
Sagittal Plane Stability



Tighten lower abdominal muscles (pull belly button to spine). Slide heel down. Be sure pelvis does not tip forward or backward. Do 15 times. Restabilize pelvis. Repeat with other leg. **DO NOT HOLD BREATH**

Do 1-2 sets, 1-2 times per day.

**TRANSVERSE ABDOMINALS - 7**  
Isometric Hold (Quadruped)



On hands and knees, slowly inhale, and then exhale. Pull navel toward spine and hold for 5 seconds. Continue to breathe in and out during hold. Rest for 5 seconds. Repeat 10 times. Do 1-2 times a day. This can be progressed to a plank exercise where you are on your forearms and knees or toes.