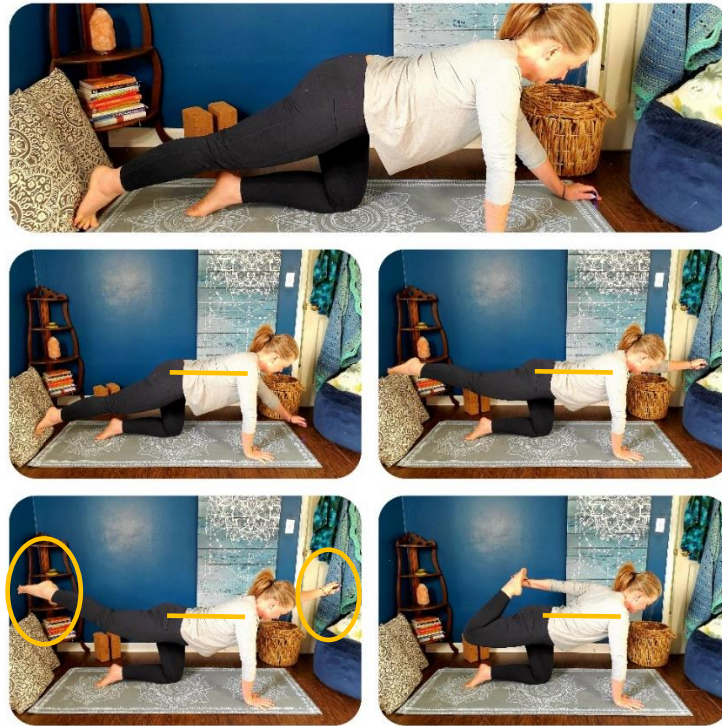


Bird Dog for a Strong Core

Purpose: Create stability through the torso to support the spine.



Instructions:

1. Start on all fours with the hands directly under the shoulders and the knees directly under the hips. The spine should be in neutral (a normal low back curve). **The goal is to keep the shoulders and the hips stable and level through each progression. Note the yellow lines. If you cannot keep the hips and shoulders level, do not progress until you can.**
 - a. Progression #1: Slide the right hand and left foot out to the ends of the mat. Hold for 3 breaths. Repeat on the other side. If this is too challenging, slide one limb at a time, rotating through each limb.
 - b. Progression #2: Slide the right hand and left foot to the ends of the mat and lift off the ground a few inches. Hold for 3 breaths. Repeat on the other side.
 - c. Progression #3: Slide the right hand and left foot to the ends of the mat and lift off the ground and lift until they are parallel with the ground. Hold for 3 breaths. Repeat on the other side.
 - d. Progression #4: Slide the right hand and left foot to the ends of the mat and lift them until they are slightly above parallel with the ground. Hold for 3 breaths. Repeat on the other side.
 - e. Progression #5: Repeat progression #4 and add movement to the foot, hand, or both simultaneously. Make small circles. Slowly make them larger if you can maintain stability. Make the circles in both clockwise and counterclockwise motions. Note the yellow circles in the photos above.
 - f. Progression #6: Slide the right hand and left foot to the ends of the mat and lift off the ground to slightly above parallel with the ground, bend the knee, then reach back to hold the foot for a gentle stretch. Hold for 3 breaths. Repeat on the other side.

Note: Additional progressions for beginners include doing Bird Dog at the wall focusing on just the legs or the arms, then progressing to a countertop, then a chair or step stool.