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The Dead Bug Exercise

Targets: Core muscles, especially the transverse abdominals and spinal erectors

Benefits

When you think of abdominal work, you probably think of working your abs for the purpose of looking good in a swimsuit. But your abs are a key component of your total core musculature, which actually includes all the muscle groups spanning between your hips and your shoulders. These muscles work together to transfer movement between your upper and lower body, and they help stabilize the spine, preventing your spine from moving in ways it shouldn't. As a result, a strong, stable core helps to promote coordinated, athletic movement while simultaneously protecting your lower back from injury.

The Dead Bug is an excellent exercise for promoting core stability while improving contra-lateral engagement. This exercise helps teach you to effectively move opposing limbs in tandem while keeping your core stable and your back protected.

Think for a second about sports like tennis or basketball—how athletes need to extend opposing limbs as they jump, stretch, or reach for the ball. A strong, stable core makes these types of movements possible. But it's not just athletes who need this type of back-protecting core stabilization. Anyone who's ever accidentally tripped on a rough sidewalk or been knocked off-balance after knocking into a misplaced chair knows that it doesn't take much to lose control of your core.

The dead bug is a beginner-friendly movement that helps you grow accustomed to contra-lateral limb extension while keeping your core stable and protected. This movement encourages the deep, stabilizing the muscles of your back, abdominals, and hips to engage, preventing your back from twisting or arching during the exercise. You'll end up improving side-to-side coordination that can effectively transfer to athletic performance, while also improving deep core strength that can reduce the risk of low-back injury. The dead bug is also an excellent option for individuals who aren't quite ready for the more well-known plank exercise. Both movements are designed to help promote core stabilization, but the plank can be challenging for individuals without much core strength, or those who have low back pain. The dead bug can help improve the core stabilization necessary to do the plank while simultaneously adding the challenge of contra-lateral limb movement to the mix.

Safety and Precautions

Overall, the dead bug is a safe exercise for most individuals. As with any strengthening movement, the primary risk of injury takes place when you sacrifice proper form in an effort to "gut out" a series of repetitions.

If your form starts to suffer, it's likely because your muscles are tired and it's time to wrap up your set. Doing more repetitions with poor form won't help your efforts to get stronger, and may, in fact, lead to injury, particularly of the low back.

First and foremost, slow down and pay attention to form—make sure your low back isn't arching and your torso isn't rocking back and forth as you move. Second, if you have a known low-back injury, don't push yourself to perform the movement if it causes pain. Muscle soreness or fatigue is one thing, but sharp or jabbing pains, or any type of discomfort that makes you think, "I won't be able to move tomorrow," is what you want to avoid.

Talk to a trainer or physical therapist for options if the dead bug simply isn't working for you.



Williams, Laura. "Strengthen Your Core Stabilizers with the Dead Bug Exercise." Edited by Michael Lau, *Verywell Fit*, Verywell Fit, 4 Oct. 2019, www.verywellfit.com/how-to-do-the-dead-bug-exercise-4685852.



Toni



Damian



Michael



Abby



Sabrina



Sami

Recipe of the Month: Green Chile Turkey Burgers

Directions

1. Place the ground turkey, green chilies (drained), sliced green onions, shredded pepper jack, cumin, garlic powder, and salt in a large bowl. Mix the ingredients until well combined. Divide and shape the mixture into five patties.
2. Cook the burgers in a skillet, on a grill, or using an indoor grill like a George Forman, until they are cooked through (internal temperature of 165 F) and well browned on the outside. Cooking time will depend on the method, size, and thickness of your patties.
3. Serve each patty on a bun with a slice of tomato, a couple slices of avocado, and a smear of mayonnaise.



Ingredients

- 19 oz. pkg ground turkey
- 4 oz. can diced green chilies, drained
- ½ tsp ground cumin
- ¼ tsp garlic powder
- ¼ tsp salt
- 2-3 green onions, sliced
- 2 oz. pepper jack cheese, shredded
- 5 hamburger buns
- 1 large tomato
- 1 large avocado

Get to know your trainer: Damian

Damian is a native of Uruguay, he is involved in Muay Thai and has a passion for sports. He attended the Fitness Institute International, from which he graduated with honors. He also earned his CPT through the National Strength and Conditioning Association. He is fluent in Spanish, Portuguese, and English. He enjoys working with clients of all ages and backgrounds. He believes every session is an opportunity to strive for improvement of his knowledge to better serve his clients.

Try a free session with Damian today! (954) 421-2116

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