

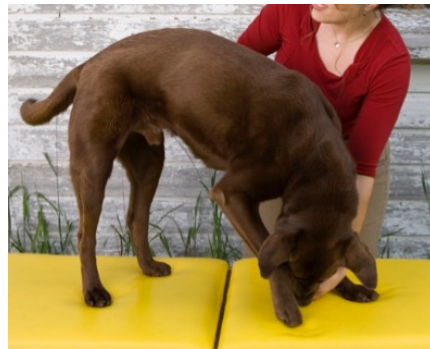
What can you do to build up 'the core' in your dog?

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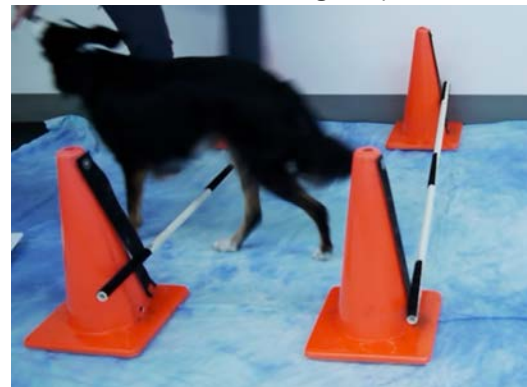
Subsequent to my blogs about 'Don't Sit Pretty', I've been asked to provide alternatives to working the core in dogs. I broke down some of my suggestions into three different categories – Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced. This isn't an exhaustive list, but I did try to present a handful of functional and practical exercises. And no, there is no research into conditioning exercises for dogs. Unfortunately, there is a deplorable dearth of scientific information pertaining to sporting dogs in veterinary medicine. One must also recognize that training the 'core' is just one small part of overall fitness. That being said... here goes!

Core exercises for beginners

Cookies under the chest, at the front feet, at each rear foot.



High stepping (over obstacles or through deep snow, shallow water, or tall grass)



Walking with a theraband or bandage wrapped around the abdomen



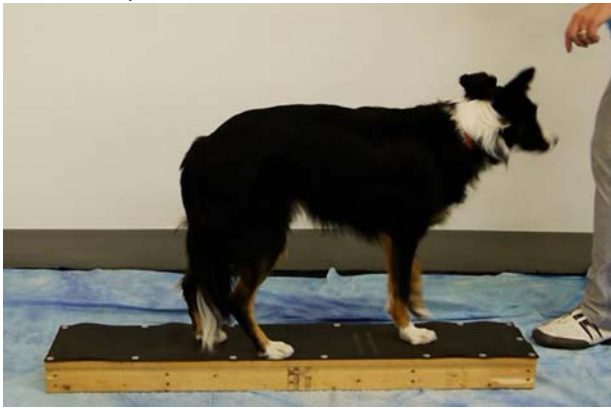
Stool standing (with all feet a bit closer together than normal)



Side sit-ups



Walk the plank



All 4-Legs standing on wobbly surface(s)



3-Leg standing on a stable surface



Core exercises for intermediates

3-leg standing with abdominal tapping



3-leg standing on a wobbly surface



Tug of war, forwards and backwards (straight line)



X-leg standing on a stable surface

(under the body, progressing to away from the body, progressing to wiggling the legs)



Stand and twist



Advanced core exercises

X-leg standing with limbs stretched out on a wobbly surface

(under the body, progressing to away from the body, progressing to wiggling the legs)



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Plank on a solid surface – moving farther apart



Plank on an unstable surface – moving farther apart



Tug of war – aggressive & side to side



General activity that can build the core

- Running
- Trotting
- Hiking (hills)
- Playing Goalie
- Playing soccer
- Wrestling on the ground with another dog

And THAT should be enough to guide you through some functional alternative core strengthening exercises. Be sure to also address global and limb-specific strengthening, power, speed, agility, skill training, reaction times, cardiovascular training, and coordination as well! Have fun!