

# TRANSVERSE ABDOMINIS

A MUSCLE LAYER OF THE ANTERIOR AND LATERAL ABDOMINAL WALL WHICH IS DEEP TO THE INTERNAL OBLIQUE

The transversus abdominis (TA) is a muscle layer of the anterior and lateral (front and side) abdominal wall which is deep to (layered below) the internal oblique (IO). It is thought by most health professionals to be a significant component of the core. Without a stable spine (with proper contraction of the TA) the nervous system fails to recruit the muscles in the extremities efficiently, and functional movements cannot be properly performed. The TA and the spinal stabilizers (e.g. multifidus) as well as the pelvic floor are designed to work in tandem.

While it is true that the TA is vital to back and core health, the muscle also has the

effect of pulling in what would otherwise be a protruding abdomen (hence its nickname, the “corset muscle”).

Training the rectus abdominis muscles alone will not and can not give one a “flat” belly; this effect is achieved only through training the TA. Thus to the extent that crunches tend to “flatten” the belly, is owed to the tangential training of the TA inherent in such exercises.

## Exercises

TA is activated by gently drawing the lower abdominal towards the spine. Adding arm and leg movement will increase the difficulty. Make sure you keep breathing!

