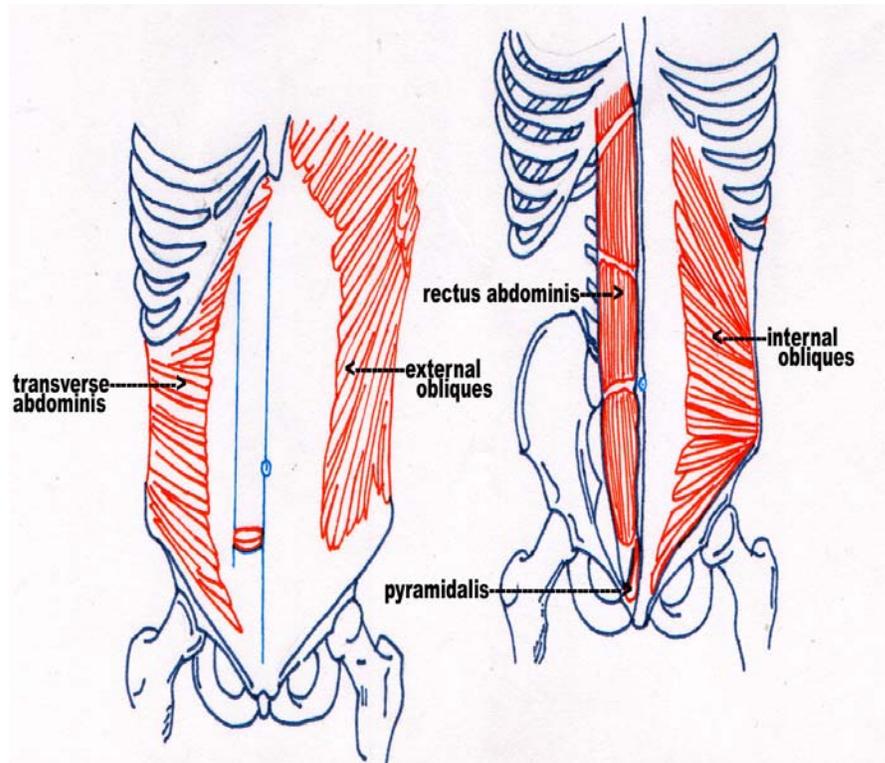


Training the Internal Oblique Muscles with Aquatic Fitness

The Internal Oblique, a muscle pair and part of the abdominal group, allows for lateral flexion (side bending), minimal rotation and assists with exhalation for breathing. Training this muscle group should be part of every workout since it works closely with other muscle groups to promote core and postural support for the body.



The Internal Oblique lies below the External Oblique muscle pair and above the Transverse Abdominis. The muscle fibers run in a diagonal pattern upwards and downwards from the iliac crest on both sides of the body so that when one side is contracted (strengthened) the opposing side is expanded (stretched). The functional Range of Motion is 30 degrees from the anatomical (upright) position of zero.

The Internal Oblique can be used in both cardio

and strengthening segments of a regular work out at all levels. Cuing for good alignment and performance to bring the ribs to the hip is essential to allow everyone to work at their personal best to achieve good lateral movement.

At a beginner level a simple cardio move to introduce safely would be a side to side rock movement using the arms for balance in opposition to the leg lift. This rocking movement helps develop muscle memory for maintaining a vertical position when walking or to assist recovery from a side slip to prevent a fall. For beginner strengthening, cue the participant to lean to one side and slide the hand down towards the ankle on the same side.



Add a noodle or dumbbell for extra resistance. This move brings the rib cage down in side flexion towards the hip bone. For optimal strengthening repeat the move for sufficient repetitions on one side to isolate the oblique on that side rather than swinging back and forth as for cardio. Repeat to the opposing side to balance both sides of the body. Ideally try 3-5 sets of approximately 8-25 repetitions (in total) for oblique exercise targeting. With the below exercise, remember to not bend the elbow and push with the arm (which uses the triceps). Instead, hold the arm straight and flex or crunch at the waist to engage the obliques. The noodle is drag and added resistance for the exercise.

For an intermediate level a side to side jump-kick can be used for cardio and heart rate elevation. The jump move can remain on one side for strengthening in shallow water (stay in a neutral working position - or under the water). Jump and touch the hand towards the ankle and crunch at the waist. Again try approximately 8-25 repetitions on each sides (or a combination of all the exercises to make 3-5 sets)



An Advanced Exercises Option for deep water work is to perform the “pendulum prayer” (side to side) adding diamond legs to disengage the hip flexors. External rotation of the hips (or putting the soles of the feet together in a diamond position) will disengage the strong hip flexors or the Iliopsoas muscles. Be sure to control on the way down (against buoyancy) rather than just use momentum to initiate the action.



Check out our DVD039 – Awesome Abdominal DVD (however, most programs do review many ways to train posture, balance and abdominals)