The "Cohen Core"

A strong core is essential to fast efficient running and successful racing. Here is a fairly simple yet challenging routine that develops a strong core to assist you in your cross country running.

All exercises are performed on your back keeping your neck straight. Once the routine is started, do not lose body position. Progress from exercise to exercise maintaining proper form.

1. **6 crunches** (hips at 90 degrees, knees at 90 degrees).

2. **6 leg extensions** (slowly extend your legs fully and then pull them back in)

3. **6 bicycle kicks** (leg is drawn to chest and then completely extended--alternate legs).

4. **6 straight leg raises** (point your toes, lock your knees and slowly raise your legs to 90 degrees at the hips.

5. **6 right obliques** (twist your left shoulder towards your right knee, keep hips and knees at 90 degrees).

6. **6 left obliques**.

7. **6 crunches** again.

All exercises adapted from Declan Connolly, PhD. Dr. Connolly is head of the human performance lab at UVM and founder of Vermont Fit.

Following the completion of the Cohen Core take a rest and then progress to the "Bridge Set". For this exercise spend a set amount of time in each of the 3 positions. I suggest starting with 20 seconds for those individuals who do not have sufficient strength to hold the positions in proper form. Again, as in the core, progress from position to position, maintaining proper postural control. Do not lose by or allowing the hips to sink or touch the floor/ground.

As your strength and control increases, increase each exercise time accordingly.

1. **Right Side Bridge**: Place your right arm on the ground underneath your shoulder so you can lift yourself up and rest on your elbow. Point your hand at 90 degrees to your body. Put your feet on top of each other and keep your body straight from head to toe.

2. **Left Side Bridge**: As above but on left side.

3. **Center Bridge**: Assume a push up position except place your elbows on the floor with your arms running directly underneath your body.