Challenge Tip #1: Isometric Core Exercise

“Core” refers to the midsection of the body, an area that extends from below the rib cage to above the knees. It is where balance and stability originate. To have a strong core improves overall balance, increases metabolism and brings confidence to your fitness regimen.

A great core exercise that strengthens ALL the core muscles is what I call the “Half Crunch Position.” Begin by sitting on the floor with feet flat and knees bent. Inhale as you lift your arms forward, but keep the shoulders down away from the ears and shoulder blades together. Exhale as you lean back to a half sitting, half lying position. Keep your abdominals tight by pushing down to contract instead of drawing the belly button in to the spine. (The best way to comprehend this is to imagine having to use the bathroom.) You want to try for a 45 degree angle between the line of the spine and the floor and hold this position for a count of five breaths. Exhale as you release, coming forward to your starting sitting position. Try to do 2 sets of 4, resting between sets.

This isometric hold works the abdominals, the lower back, the quads, the hamstrings and the gluteus muscles. Remember to keep good form – shoulders down, blades together, abs contracted and neck relaxed. Breathe naturally, in through the nose, out through the mouth.