



BIRD DOGS: CORE STABILIZATION



Extension-Based Core Strength with Bird Dogs!

Program built by Dr. Jennifer Prewitt, PT, DPT, OCS

- 1. Start on hands and knees with your hands directly underneath your shoulders and your knees directly underneath your hips.**
- 2. Pull your belly button in toward your spine (to activate your core). Breathe normally. Slowly lift one leg behind you and then raise the opposite arm.**
- 3. Slowly return the leg and arm to center.** NOTE: Ideal pace is 3 second lower and 3 second lift. **NOTE: You should be trying to keep your back flat. I'll often say to imagine that Thanksgiving Dinner is on your back while you do this exercise and we don't want you to spill it.**
- 4. Repeat on the other side.** Alternating is preferable to performing one side at a time as it mimics the alternating stabilization that occurs with walking and everyday activities.
- 5. Recommendation.** Start with 5 each side. Progress to 3 sets of 5. Ideally 3-5x per day. **NOTE: This exercise puts significant pressure on your wrists and knees. Do not perform if you have wrist or knee pain.**

Why is this Important?

Bird Dogs help **activate your core** (abdominals) **and your glutes** (buttocks) at the same time. Often when we injure our backs, we are using our back muscles too much and our butt muscles too little. Bird Dogs does a great job at teaching the body how to keep the core stable and activate the buttocks at the same time to **help restore healthy and injury-reducing movement patterns.**

Why is this Exercise Called Bird Dogs?

- Sometimes called "Bird Dogs", sometimes "Pointer Dogs", the exercise earned its name because it is similar to the posture that a hunting dog adopts to "point out" game (typically a bird of some kind) to its hunter/ owner.