

**EXERCISES**  
**FOR THE LOWER ABDOMINAL MUSCLES**  
**THE EXTERNAL OBLIQUES AND RECTUS ABDOMINIS**

This is a progression of exercises to strengthen and learn to control the lower abdominal muscles. These muscles affect pelvic tilt and the appearance of the abdomen.

Once you can correctly perform the easiest level, you can progress to the next level and omit the previous exercise.

Do not progress to the next level until you can move your leg without your back arching for 10 repetitions of the exercise. Your back may not be flat against the floor but it should stay in a constant position and not move or arch. You should also be able to keep your abdomen flat. Do not hold your breath. To break that pattern, breathe out when moving the second leg.

**Position:** Lie on your back with hips and knees bent and feet on floor. Place finger tips on the side of the abdomen just above the pelvis and below the rib cage.

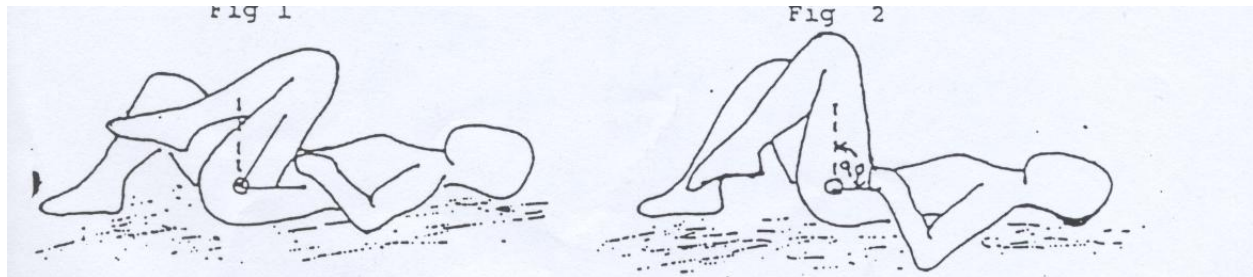


**Method:** Pull abdomen up and in, as if to tuck under your ribs. Your stomach will be flat or concave. The arch in your back should be reduced.

**Level 1A** (Fig 1): Lift one foot off the floor so as to bring knee toward the chest. Bring the knee far enough to be pointing toward head. Tighten your abdominal muscles and lift the other leg. STOP IF YOUR BACK ARCHES. Lower one leg at a time to the starting position.

**Level 1B** (Fig 2): Lift one foot off the floor until the thigh is vertical and the hip angle is 90 deg. Tighten your abdominal muscles and lift the other leg to the same position. Lower one leg at a time to the starting position.

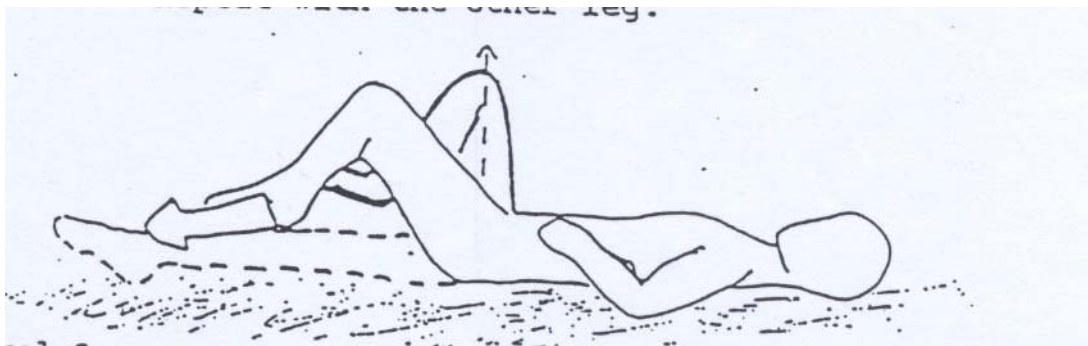
Repeat by starting the sequence with the other leg.



## Level 2

**Position:** Assume starting position as in Level 1

**Method:** Lift one foot off the floor until the thigh is vertical.  
Then lift the other foot to the same position while holding the stomach up and in and keeping the back still.  
Hold one leg in this position, while touching the other foot to the floor and sliding the leg out so the knee and hip are straight.  
Then slide the leg back to the starting position.  
Be sure to keep your abdomen flat, your pelvis and back still while moving the leg.  
Repeat with the other leg.



### Level 3

**Position:** Assume starting position as in level 1

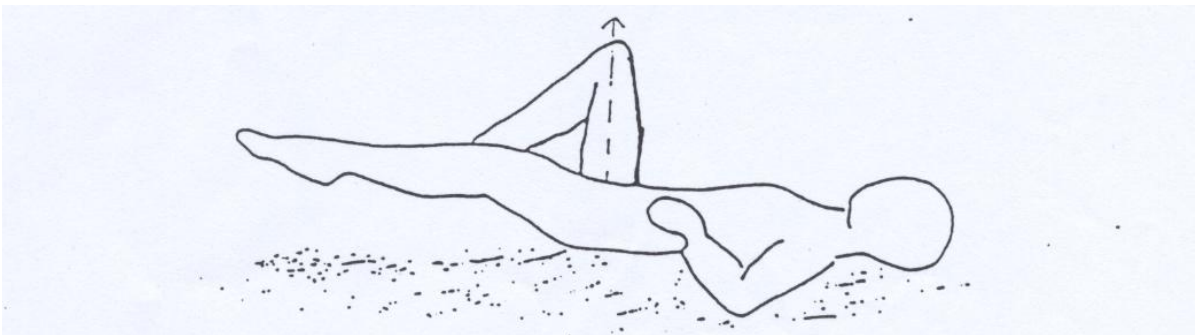
**Method:** Bring both knees toward your chest until the thighs are vertical and hips are at 90 degrees.

Hold one leg in this position and straighten the other leg out.

Set it down on the floor before returning the leg to the starting position.

Be sure to keep your abdomen flat, your pelvis and back still while moving the leg.

Repeat with the other leg.



#### Level 4

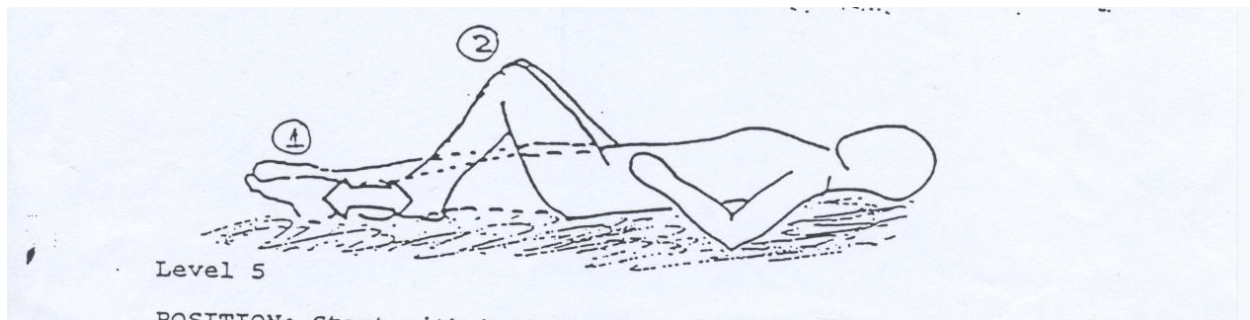
**Position:** Start with both legs out straight.

**Method:** Tighten “lower” abdominal muscles to tilt the pelvis backward and to reduce the curve in your back. The tightening should also make your abdomen flat.

Slide both legs with heels on the floor so as to bring both knees toward chest.

Return to starting position by sliding both legs.

Be sure to keep your abdomen flat and your pelvis and back still during the leg movements.



## Level 5

**Position:** Start with both legs out straight.

**Method:** Tighten “lower” abdominal muscles to tilt the pelvis backward and reduce the curve in your back.  
Lift both heels off the floor by bending both hips and knees as you bring your knees to your chest.  
Return to the starting position by reversing the movement, and keeping both heels off the floor.  
Be sure to keep your abdomen flat and your pelvis and back still during the leg movements.

