

NO MORE BELLY BULGE!

By: Zoe Fackelman, PT

Crunches, sit-ups, crunches with a twist and anything that “jack knifes” the body such as straight leg lifts or holds while lying on your back can worsen your belly bulge particularly if you have spinal alignment, low back pain issues. In addition, if your spinal alignment issues are accompanied by diastasis recti, your belly bulge will worsen.

Diastasis Recti (DR) is the separation of the rectus abdominus (six pack) abdominal muscle from the linea alba (mid-line connective tissue) at the front of the abdomen. DR is the result of excessive intra-abdominal pressure or loading and is common in the later stages of pregnancy, particularly second or subsequent pregnancies. The diastasis (the gap) narrows naturally in the weeks following childbirth, but often doesn't come back together completely on its own, resulting in instability and weakness of the core (your back and abdominal muscles) and a “pooch” stomach. Excessive intra-abdominal pressure also causes hernia and organ prolapse.

The muscles separate as a result of increased pressure, the linea alba is stretched and weakened as it takes all other muscular and fascia support structures along with it. This leaves the front of the abdomen unsupported and unstable. The rectus abdominus is one of four layers of abdominal muscles: the transversus abdominus, the deepest layer, the internal and external oblique, the next two layers that shape the waist, and then the rectus abdominus is on the outside.

Diastasis, “the gap,” is a symptom or a sign something is not working right in your spine and pelvis. It is not the problem in and of itself. It seems like binding or splinting the abdominal muscles and doing lots of abdominal exercises would be the obvious or direct way to deal with the abdominal muscles not doing their job. In fact, correcting the problem has to start with proper alignment of your spine and pelvis. If there is not proper alignment, the back, abdominal and pelvic floor muscles cannot function properly. As a result, there will be continued excessive intra-abdominal pressure that the abdominal muscles cannot withstand pushing the belly further out and down.

So the remedy for DR is not a cure for the “gap” in isolation. It is an approach that properly aligns your body and conditions the entire mid-section to get the core in good working order. When you do this the gap narrows because the pressure pushing on the weak point decreases.

If you are interested in having us help you with your BULGING BELLY, pain

or any other condition then contact us at (585) 396-1400. For more information about Lake Country Physical Therapy and SportsCare, PC, visit us at www.lakecountrypt.com.

Physical Therapy Team: Kristin West, PT, DPT, Robert C. Christakos, PT, DPT and Zoe Fackelman, PT

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