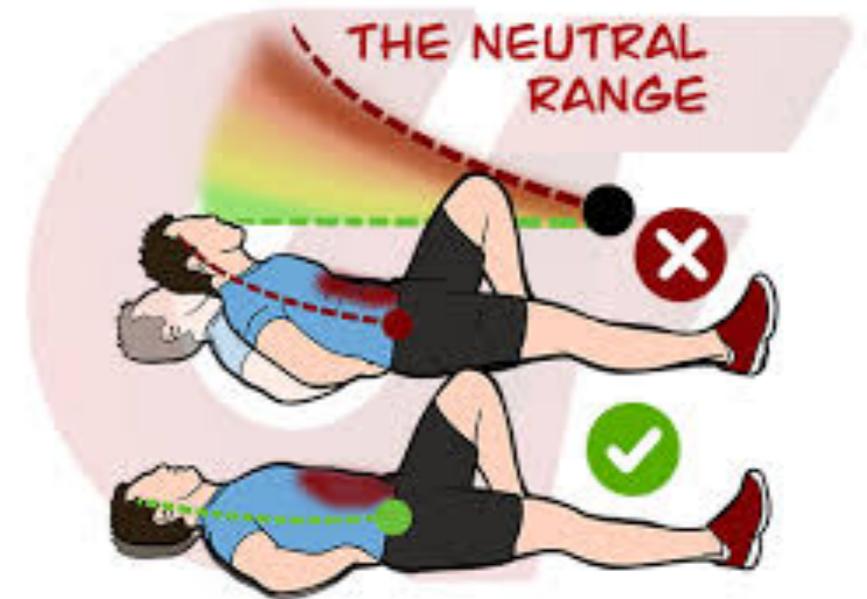


McGill Crunches

Do it Right!
Exercises you Should Do

Types (progression): McGill Crunch features and extended leg to to assure proper spinal positioning which assures less compressive loads on spine. **Performance:** The exercise done is done typically for 10 or more repetitions with a 10 second isometric hold for 1-3 sets. **Form:** Lie down on your back. Extend one leg and bend the knee of the other leg. Put your hands under the lower back to maintain the natural arch of your spine (you can place your hands on your stomach if you find this uncomfortable, but maintain a neutral spine). Pull your head, shoulders and chest off the floor, as though they were all locked together. Lift them up as one unit. Keep your back in neutral position. Don't tuck your chin or let your head tilt back. Hold for 10 seconds. Slowly lower yourself down. Do half of the repetitions with your left leg bent and half with your right leg bent for a total of 10 reps. [See Form](#)



This exercise is one of the cornerstone of core training. Dr. Stuart McGill is considered the foremost authority in the study of low back disorder and he developed this crunch as part of the big 3 core exercises, which also include the sidbridge and birddog. Endurance movements form the backbone of Dr. McGill's recommended core and low-back exercises. Endurance exercises promote spine stability. "True spine stability is achieved with a 'balanced' stiffening from the entire musculature including the rectus abdominis and the abdominal wall, quadratus lumborum, latissimus dorsi and the back extensors of longissimus, iliocostalis and multifidus," explains McGill. His "Big Three" exercises create a stiffness that enhances stability in a spine-sparing way and have been shown to create stiffness and stability that lasts after each session. This is particularly helpful for those who have pain from joint instability due to overload or overuse. **I consider it one of the essential core exercises.** [See: What is the core?](#) I also consider it a foundation exercise and it should be part of a basic fitness routine or as a warm up for advanced exercisers and athletes.