

BOAT

This very challenging posture works your transverse abdominals – the deep core muscles that keep you upright, help you balance, and enable you to do just about any movement safely, with the proper technique. Use this pose to strengthen your core and improve muscle efficiency in full-body movements.

TARGET AREAS

• core • hips • spine

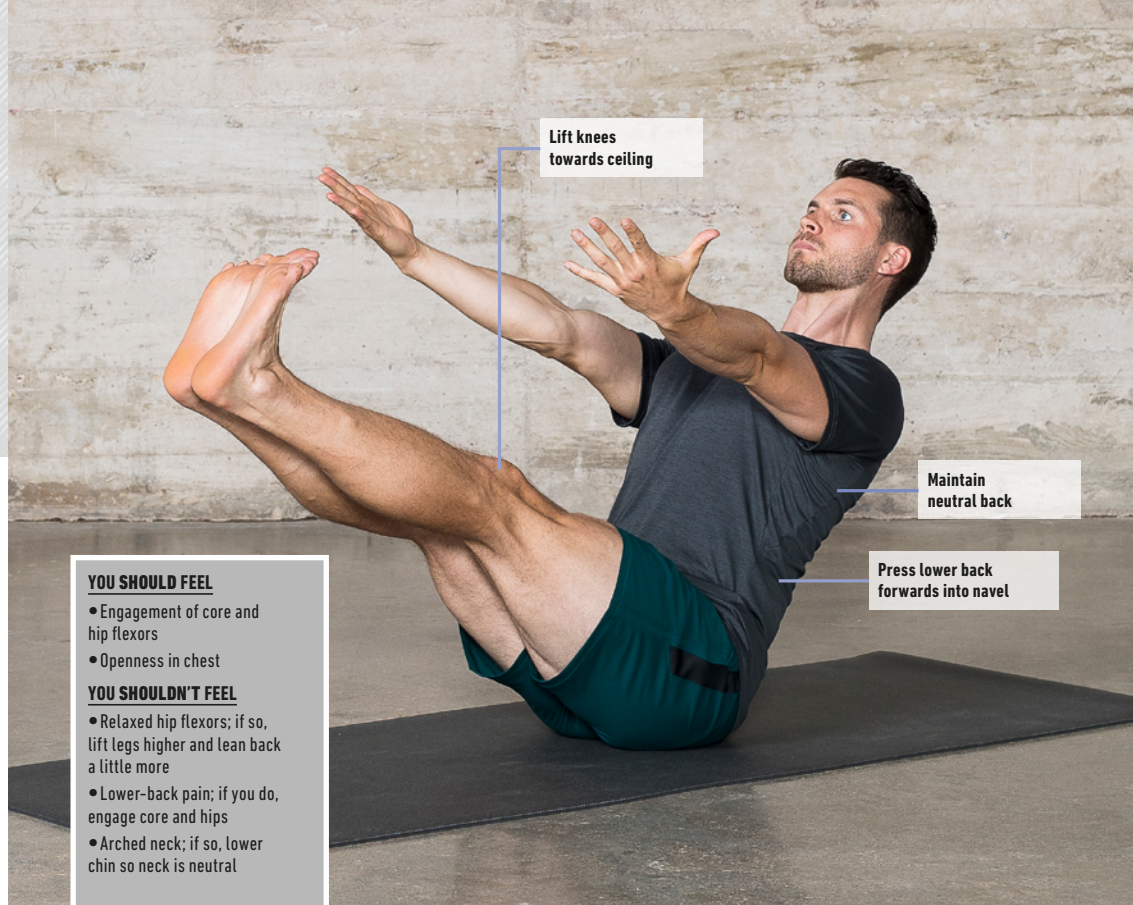
BENEFITS

• Improves balance postures, squats, and back bends • Prevents lower-back pain • Strengthens core • Improves posture • Reduces risk of knee and hip injury

1 Sit on the floor, bend your knees, and place your feet flat on the floor, with your heels 45–60cm (1½–2ft) away from your hips. Lightly grip your knees with your hands, sit as upright as possible, and lean back slightly.



2 Keeping your chest lifted and your torso still, squeeze your hip flexors and abdominal muscles towards each other to engage your core. Let go of the knees, and reach the arms forwards and up, palms up.



YOU SHOULD FEEL

• Engagement of core and hip flexors
• Openness in chest

YOU SHOULDN'T FEEL

• Relaxed hip flexors; if so, lift legs higher and lean back a little more
• Lower-back pain; if you do, engage core and hips
• Arched neck; if so, lower chin so neck is neutral

3 Continue to engage your abdominal muscles and hip flexors firmly, and slowly lift your feet off the floor and straighten the legs. Pull the sternum towards the ceiling while keeping the spine neutral. Hold the posture, inhaling as you lengthen the spine, and exhaling as you tighten the core.

PRO TIP

While you are still holding your knees, use a mirror to ensure that your chest is lifted and spine is a straight line. When you lift your hands, notice the intense core engagement required to maintain the straight spine.

NOT THERE YET?

If you are unable to extend your legs without your chest caving in, keep legs bent, lightly rest feet on the floor, or keep hands lightly wrapped around knees for support.

