

# SPECIAL NEEDS PARENTING: caring for you



*Every disability has a possibility*



# Coping with the physical strain of taking care of your special needs child

- Attending to the needs of a child with disabilities can be physically exhausting and place extreme pressure on the carer's body.
- While it will remain a physical challenge, with the correct advice and guidance preventing injury, as well as muscle and/or skeletal conditions can be achieved.



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# Muscle and skeletal conditions

Muscle and skeletal-related injuries could result in the following:

- Lower back pain, possibly caused by muscle spasms and/or disc lesions
- Sciatic nerve injury
- Rotator cuff injuries ( shoulder )
- Carpal tunnel syndrome



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# Possible causes of injury:

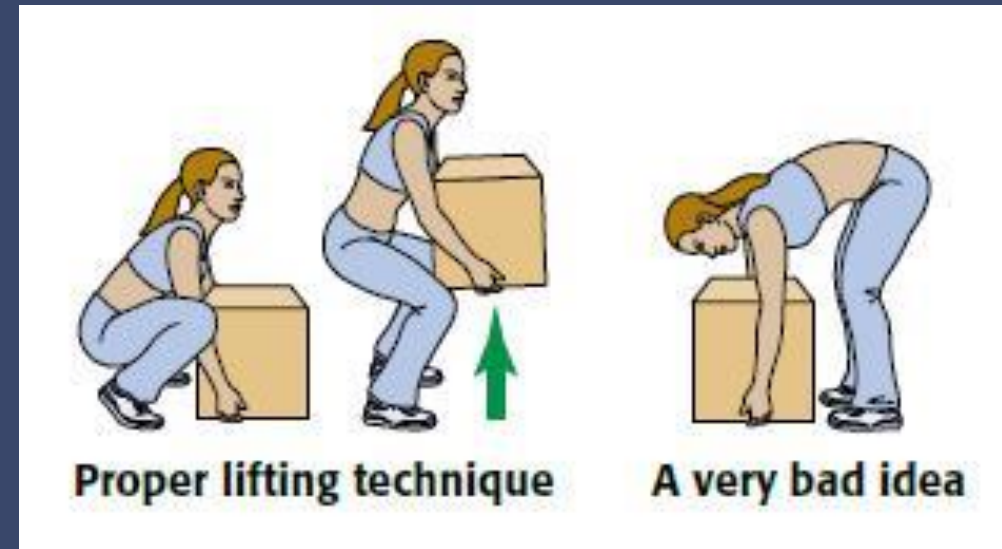
- Compromised strength as your body tries to accommodate your growing child
- High-risk actions/positions which would ordinarily not be performed (e.g. carrying a non-mobile, 25kg child on your hip for extended periods of time, lifting the child into and out of the bath every evening)
- Continuous repetition of these same high-risk actions



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# Cause and prevention:



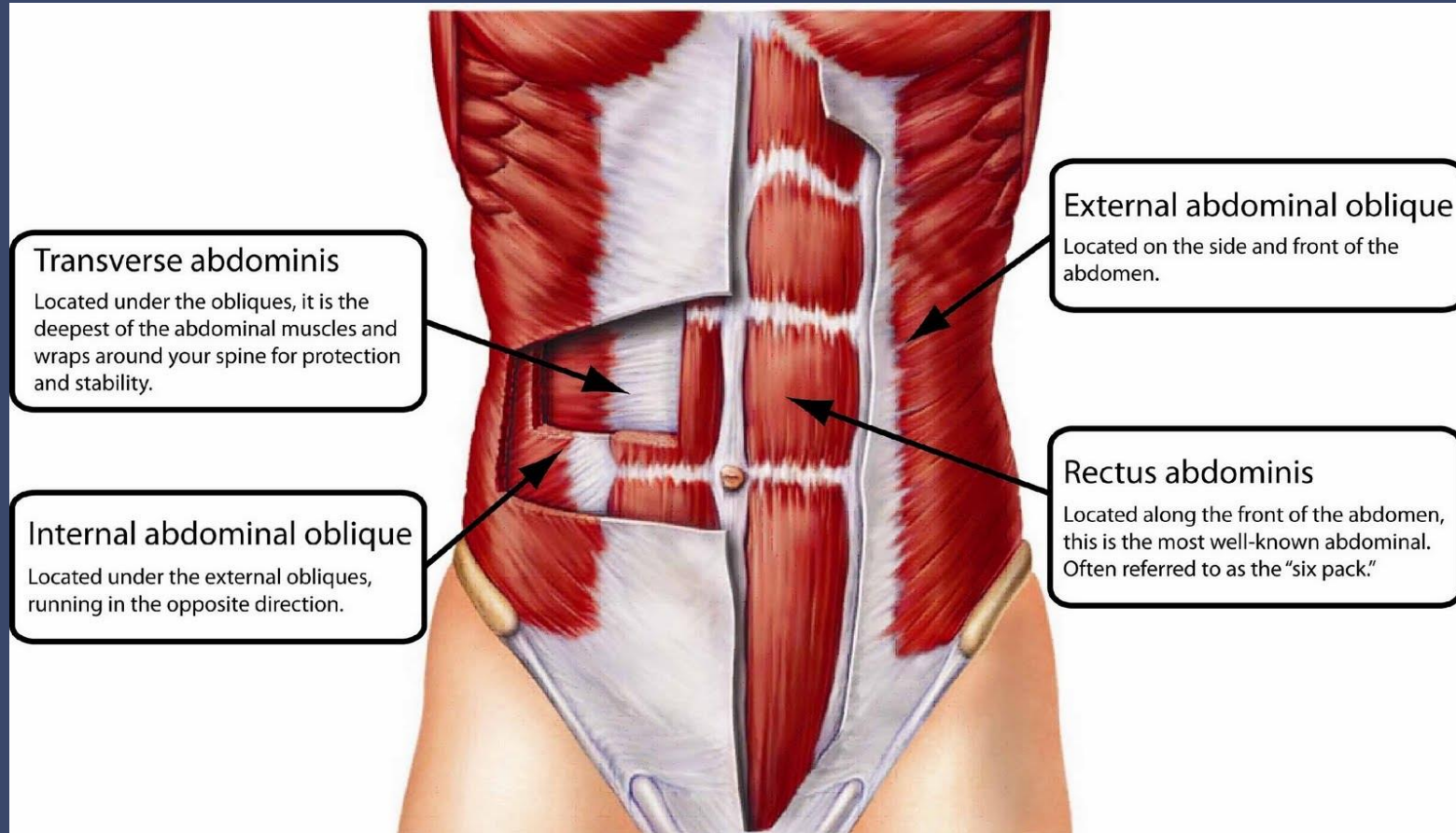
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# Transverse abdominus muscle

- Referred to as the corset in Pilates, the transverse abdominus muscle is the deepest abdominal muscle which extends from the belly button up to the rib cage
- Transverse abdominus wraps horizontally from the back of the body to the front. The TA function is to maintain tone of the abdominal organs and to interplay with many core components – the spine and the muscles surrounding the spine and other abdominal muscles.
- Your core is the essential originator of the most body movements, as well as being the determinant for the quality of an individual's posture, aligning the trunk if the muscles all have their proper tone.
- Because of this structure, protecting the core is a good way to help with lower back pain.



# Abdominal structure :



# Most common high-risk actions :

- Bathing your child
- Transferring child to and from bed/bath/chair/vehicle



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# Preventing injury - Points to remember :

- Always centre your movement from your core when moving your child
- Keep back straight, avoid uncomfortable positions and never rotate your back when you move
- Keep the child as close to your body as possible
- Always go down or up to the child's level
- Make the area as comfortable as possible and think out of the box



# Bath time tips :

- Use a bath mat to prevent sudden, strained movement should you or your child slip
- Make use of a bath chair where possible
- Keep toiletries close by and prepare all necessities beforehand
- Place a cushion under knees when kneeling next to the bath
- Raise the bath , if possible
- Make sure not to rotate your hips when transferring child
- Ensure that the water level is not too high
- When warm enough, dry child before taking out of the bath (to prevent slipping)

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# Bedtime tips :

- Ensure the bed is at a comfortable height
- “Log roll” the child onto his/her side first
- Keep your knees comfortably bent
- Use a slip-sheet movement where possible
- Wear comfortable clothes
- Make sure equipment is always at its highest functional level



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# Transferring to and from vehicle :

- Make use of a small step-ladder if car is too high
- Hold your child as close to your body as possible
- Keep the child in a sitting position
- Position pram or wheelchair before hand



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# Prevention is better than cure

Suggested exercises to maintain strength :



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