



Mind Body Vault offers exercises for injury prevention, with a focus on the core and spine.

As horse lovers, we know all too well, and have a much more literal appreciation for the mainstream motto: “you’ve got to get back into the saddle.” We equestrians have a wholehearted understanding that we have signed up for a sport in which there is always going to be an element of unpredictability. Horses, no matter how trustworthy and disciplined, have a reactive nervous system of their own, so it is best to be prepared for it all.

In this sense, the physical preparation for an equestrian athlete is two-fold. Not only must we be fit for the demanding skills that we plan to execute with our equine partners - the coordination required to sit any gait, the balance to remain in harmony through instant changes in direction and pace, the strength and finesse to maneuver with grace and ease atop or alongside our equine teammate - these athletic skills may be second to none.

We must be prepared for these expected skills and demands, and, as riders we must - perhaps even more importantly - be well adapted for the unexpected spook, buck or bolt... an equestrian body is one that must be primed for movement in all directions!

The two exercises highlighted in this article will help with injury prevention specifically for the back via the mechanism of strengthening the core (the area of our body between the hips and shoulders). The core is the foundation from which our strength stems, and stability in these key muscles, along with a healthy and well-balanced spine, is the pathway to life-long health and vitality, as well as optimum performance for life and sport.

Our approach at Mind Body Vault is about making health and fitness accessible, easy, and fun for riders across disciplines. The featured exercises each use equipment you can grab out at the barn, and we recommend doing just that! Include these movements as part of your warm-up or cool-down to keep your body well adjusted for the demands of your equestrian lifestyle.



Exercise 1. Seated Thoracic Rotation

Equipment: Whip, broom, shovel (any sort of rod, pole or “stick”); sitting on a mounting block or stability ball

Description: Sitting upright on an elevated surface place the equipment behind your neck while draping your arms over. Keeping your core engaged slowly twist your upper body to the right and left returning to the center in between each repetition. This exercise is focused for the mid back. The balance between mobility and stability through your mid-back can not only help with-back pain but also helps riders stay level on turns and circles.

Modification: Don't twist or torque each direction as far.

Note: Make sure the movement does not come from the lower back but remains focused on the mid and upper area of the spine.



Exercise 2: Trotting Horse (aka “dead bugs”):

Equipment: Water Bucket or Ball

Description: Laying on your back, bring your knees up to a 90-degree angle, extending your arms straight up palms facing each other. Place the bucket in between your arms and knees and, alternating sides, slowly extend your opposite arm and leg out hovering over the ground and return to your starting position. This exercise challenges your core and coordination.

Modification: Don't extend your leg out and instead leave your leg bent and tap your heel to ground each repetition

*Of course, if you have a pre-existing injury or already experience chronic pain or soreness in your back, it is best to consult your doctor or health care professional.

For more exercises like these, check out the links below. Including access to our video series and 85-page ebook containing complete workouts designed specifically for riders!

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Written by CRM

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Mind.Body.Vault proprietors Mari Inouye and Ali Divita are recognized as two of the top vaulting athletes in the United States. Having been to five of the most recent World Equestrian Games, competed several times at the prestigious CHIO Aachen, plus multiple international (CVI) competitions and World Cup Events we have lived the life of successful equestrian athletes and now we want to share our competitive secrets with you. For more information, visit www.themindbodyvault.com and follow on Facebook and Instagram.