

## **Unstable and Weak Low Back – Strengthening and Stabilising Exercises 5**

### **Abdominal Training**

#### **Curl Up – Beginner (Fig 1)**

The basic starting position is lying on your back – facing up. Keep your hands under the low back, so that you can detect any low back movement, which should be held in neutral throughout. Bend one leg to stabilise the pelvis (this should be the painful leg if you suffer from sciatica).



Fig 1

Leaving your elbows on the floor, lift your the head and shoulders a short distance off the floor. Focus is in the middle back with the neck and shoulders rising as a rigid block, whilst keeping your low back in the neutral position. This position activates your stomach muscles (rectus abdominis) like a traditional sit up but greatly reduces compression of the spine and discs..

**Curl Up - Intermediate (Fig 2)**



Fig 2

This is as the Beginner but this time hold the elbows off the floor. Again do not move the low back.

**Curl Up - Advanced (Fig 3)**



Fig 3

At this stage you will not need to keep your hands under the low back but you should have enough control to do this unaided. Place the backs of your hands on your forehead without any downwards pressure. Lift your head and shoulders as before.

## Common Faults

Two common faults are bringing your chin down to your chest excessively (Fig 4) or sticking your chin out too much.

Care must be taken to avoid these positions. If you find it difficult to hold your head in this position, then place your tongue on the roof of the mouth behind the front teeth, which will help engage stabilising neck muscles.

### Excessive Neck flexion (Fig 4)



Fig 4