

# Exercise and The Spine

## Purpose of Cross Training

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Cross-training refers to training in different ways to improve overall performance and to reduce the risk of overtraining and overtaxing musculoskeletal tissues, especially muscles. Cross-training in spinal exercise programs to the combining of exercises to work various parts of the body. Walking on a treadmill for example, is excellent for developing neuromuscular coordination and endurance. It requires prolonged use of the large muscle groups in the legs. The same individual may lift weights in order to build muscle and increase lower extremity and core strength, in a way that that walking cannot provide.

Cross training can be achieved by using different exercises and/or by incorporating different types of equipment to achieve the same goals. For example, aerobic fitness can be improved on a stationary bike or an elliptical trainer. Both devices offer leg muscle training with resistance but the actions are different, requiring a unique pattern of muscle recruitment (firing pattern).

Cross training will improve your spine and core strength by keeping various muscle groups rested and conditioned. Muscles repair and remodel during periods of rest, a time also referred to as the recovery period. Cross training allows for tissue to rest and recover. It reduces the incidence of injury while maximizing strength and flexibility. Cross training also adds variety to exercise sessions thus reducing the risk of becoming bored and "burned out".