

## FITNESS CORNER

# THE CORE OF THE MATTER

We've all been trained to work our "abs" to look thinner and because everyone is supposed to do crunches! But the truth is our core is so critical to our entire body's health, performance and level of pain and the abs are just a component of a larger, sophisticated piece made up of also the glutes, hips, sides and back muscles (think spinal stabilizers). And a strong core isn't just so we can look good, but it's instrumental to our balance, how we move, sit and more.

Pain in the back and other body parts could be a warning sign that key stabilizer muscles are imbalanced, inflexible or unconditioned to do their job well. In this modern society where many of us sit for prolonged periods for work, school or in flight, it is crucial that we're aware of our core's role in everything we do and that we work hard to maximize its strength now and as we age.

A flexible and strong core is necessary for:

- Less injury and pain overall
- Better day to day life performance (shoveling, carrying groceries, navigating slippery terrain)
- Improved athletic performance and efficiency
- Balance
- Looking tighter
- Posture

The absolute best way to get a strong core is through full body, functional fitness that trains the core to work well

in conjunction with the entire body. Crunches will give you abdominal endurance and some strength in the front region, but planks, Pilates, loaded squats, kettlebells and other exercises introducing instability and imbalance will get the job done much more efficiently and effectively as they work the entire core (and they are likely more fun, too!).

If you have questions about how to get on the right track, do some research and work with a trainer who will design a plan that is right for you.

To your core health!



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# The Forum

## NEWSLETTER INFO

### NEWSLETTER

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### NEWSLETTER PUBLISHER

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## Apple Cake

- 3 medium apples, peeled & thinly sliced
- 1/4 Cup plus 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 tablespoon plus 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 3 cups flour
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 4 eggs, beaten
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 1/4 cup orange juice
- 1 tablespoon vanilla

Combine first 3 ingredients, tossing well. Set aside. Combine flour, 2 cups sugar, baking powder, and salt in a large mixing bowl. Combine next 4 ingredients; add to flour mixture, mixing well. Pour 1/3 of batter into a greased and floured 10 inch tube pan. Top with half of the thinly sliced apples, leaving a 1/2" margin around center and sides. Repeat layering, ending with batter on top. Bake at 350° for 1 hour or until a wooden pick comes out clean. Cool in pan 10-15 minutes; then remove from pan. Let cool completely. Sprinkle with powdered sugar, if desired.



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## A DESCENT OF WOODPECKERS

# NATUREWATCH

by Jim and Lynne Weber



*Ladder-backed Woodpecker  
(adult male)*

Known for creeping up tree trunks and drilling into wood to nest and find food, woodpeckers are arboreal birds having a vertical posture, rounded wings, a chisel-shaped bill, short legs with strong claws, and stiff tail feathers. These features enable them to climb, prey on insects, and feed on nuts and fruits.

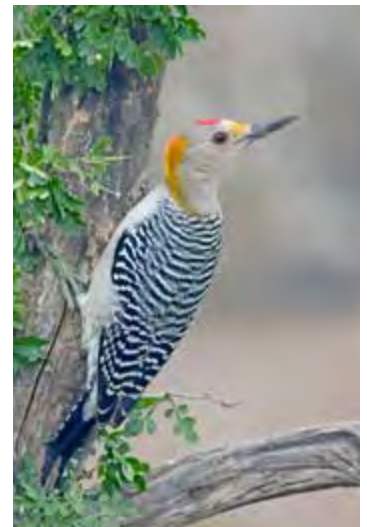
A woodpecker uses its tail for support as it moves up a tree trunk. Stiff, pointed tail feathers reinforced with longitudinal ridges also have small barbs that curve inward towards the tree, allowing the bird to use its tail as a brace. Its feet are 'zygodactyl', meaning two toes facing forward and two toes facing backward, which helps support it when clinging to vertical surfaces. While all woodpecker bills are chisel-shaped, differences in curvature are based on the hardness of the species of wood it excavates as well as the hammering force it uses. Tongues are also specialized in that they are barbed, sticky, and extremely long for the bird's head, which reduces the amount of excavation required for foraging.

One of the most common and noticeable species of woodpecker in our area is the Ladder-backed Woodpecker (*Picoides scalaris*), which has a black and white barred back, spotted sides, and a face marked with black lines. The males also sport an extensive reddish crown, while the female's crown is black. While it can nest in several types of trees, it most often nests in tall cactus in the western part of the state, giving it the old name of 'cactus woodpecker.' Ladder-backed

woodpeckers feed on beetle larvae from small trees, but will also eat prickly pear cactus fruits (tunas) and forage on the ground for insects. When gleaning for insects in trees, the larger male probes and pecks on trunks and larger limbs with his stouter bill, while the female more often concentrates on gleaning bark surfaces on higher branches and outer twigs.

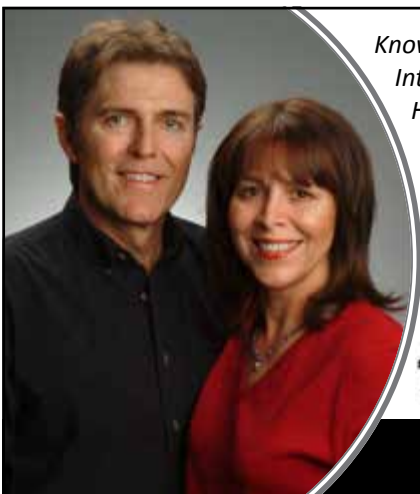
The Golden-fronted Woodpecker (*Melanerpes aurifrons*) also has a black and white barred back, but a creamy white to pale yellow breast, a golden orange nape, and a small red cap on the male. A bird found west of the Balcones Escarpment, in flight they show white wing patches, a white rump, and a black tail, often calling as the glide from tree to tree. They feed on insects, nuts (especially pecans), berries, acorns, and a wide variety of other food items, and only sometimes cache food in bark crevices.

East of the Balcones Escarpment, the Red-bellied Woodpecker (*Merlanerpes carolinus*) has a similarly patterned black and white barred back, barred central tail feathers, and a namesake small reddish patch or tinge on the belly that is often hard to spot. The males have a solid red crown and nape, while the females only have a red nape. Common in open woodlands, suburban areas, and parks, these woodpeckers are often seen hitching



*Golden-fronted Woodpecker  
(adult male)*

*Continued on Page 4*



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# The Forum

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along branches and tree trunks, sometimes wedging large nuts into bark crevices and whacking them into manageable pieces using their pointed beaks.

All woodpecker species use simple calls and drumming against tree trunks to communicate. While the drumming is not a sure-fire way to identify a particular species, it can help you locate an individual bird, and maybe even a flock or descent of woodpeckers!

Send your nature-related questions to [naturewatch@austin.rr.com](mailto:naturewatch@austin.rr.com) and we'll do our best to answer them. Check out our blog at [naturewatchaustin.blogspot.com](http://naturewatchaustin.blogspot.com) if you enjoy reading these articles!



*Red-bellied Woodpecker (adult female)*

## Forest Creek Animal Hospital

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**Questions? Contact:**

Kim Flasch: [kim.flasch@colinshope.org](mailto:kim.flasch@colinshope.org)

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# got news?

Submit your news at:  
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## INDIAN MEAL MOTHS



Indianmeal moths can be found in dogfood, birdseed, cereals, dried fruit, nuts, powdered milk and candy. Adults are small with grayish wings tipped in copper. Larvae are creamy yellow to yellow-green to pink and often crawl along pantry walls. Spun pupal cases are often found along corners and edges of wall areas.

To eliminate a pantry pest problem, the first step is to locate and remove all infested items. Removing infested items is the easy part; finding the infestation is not always so simple. Begin with the oldest food items, usually in the back of the pantry. Inspect everything, including unopened food items since these can also be a source. If you find an infested item, do not stop your inspection, more than one item may be infested.

Throw away infested items. If you don't feel that you can throw away food, place the infested food in a zip-top plastic bag and place it in the freezer for about 5-7 days or spread the infested food item on a baking sheet and bake at 250 degrees for 4-6 hours to kill any insects. Once all the insects are dead, you can sift the food item or pick out the insects. Of course, you can always just leave the insects in the food and get a little more protein with your meal!

It is extremely important to find the source, and not all pantry pest infestations come from the pantry. Check rooms for items such as dried, decorative peppers, dried flowers, potpourri or rice heating packs.

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600. Check out my blog at [www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com](http://www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com)

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