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ORTHOPAEDIC SECTION

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Biely S, Smith SS, Silfies SP

Clinical Instability of the Lumbar Spine: Diagnosis and Intervention

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ARTICLE SUMMARY

The purposes of this article were to suggest an operational definition of “clinical instability” and to examine the literature for the current best evidence for identifying those patients who would best respond to stabilization exercises as the primary intervention. The authors provide a discussion of segmental versus clinical instability of the spine. Theories related to dysfunction in a particular stabilizing subsystem, and evidence regarding the most common signs and symptoms associated with clinical instability of the spine are discussed. A three phase stabilization progression is discussed based on evidence from several studies. Specific exercises for each phase are described in detail, including the focus of each stage of progression.

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