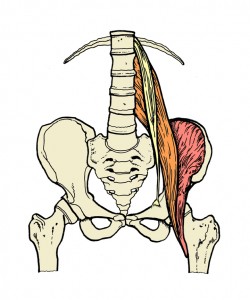
**[](http://blog.corewalking.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/34-72-dpi-.jpg)**[**Walking, The Psoas and The Diaphragm**](http://blog.corewalking.com/walking-the-psoas-and-the-diaphragm/)

  According to the body’s design, every breath we take should tone and massage the co**nt**ents of the trunk between the base of the ribs and the base of the pelvis. The diaphragm, a dome shaped muscle at the bottom of the ribcage, is the essential muscle of breathing. At the base of the pelvis a group of muscles called the [**levator ani**](http://blog.corewalking.com/yoga-and-proper-pelvic-placement-mula-bandha/) support the weight of the organs and help control elimination.  The [**psoas muscle**](http://blog.corewalking.com/psoas-major/) originates on the bottom vertebrae of the thoracic spine and on the top four vertebrae of the lumbar spine. It moves down across the front rim of the pelvis and then moves backwards to insert onto the back half of the inner thigh. As one of the body’s main flexors and one of only two muscles that connect the lower and upper body the psoas is largely responsible for walking. The [**rectus abdominus**](http://blog.corewalking.com/the-six-pack/), otherwise known as the six-pack, runs from the front of the pelvis to the rib cage and sternum directly across from the psoas. These four sets of muscles essentially house the contents of the abdomen. Their placement and tone goes a long way to determining the efficacy of many of our essential functions.

We find an endless array of reciprocal relationships in the body. The pelvic floor and the diaphragm have one of these relationships. In good posture these two structures are level and this is important because they work synergistically. With each inhalation, the diaphragm and pelvic floor should lower fractionally and with each exhale they should rise back up. That top and bottom balance is countered by a front and back dynamic that exists between the psoas and the rectus abdominus. In this relationship with every inhale the psoas settles backwards into the bowl of the pelvis, and the rectus abdominus moves forward allowing for the abdominal contents to be pressed down by the diaphragm.  Exhaling brings everything back to the beginning.  As you will see below based on the placement of our organs when these structures all move well we are creating the ultimate environment for health.

If everything moves as designed, [every breath we take](http://blog.corewalking.com/walking-and-breathing/) tones, massages and stimulates everything between the diaphragm and the base of the pelvis.  Your kidneys live to either side of the psoas. The abdominal aorta moves through the diaphragm and splits into two arteries that follow the path of the psoas into the leg. The bladder and reproductive organs sit in front of the psoas and the stomach and intestines plug into the middle of all this. The large intestine wraps around the small intestine, under the diaphragm and in front of the psoas along the path of the side body.

With every step you take a whole host of muscles spring into action. The psoas is drawn down and back through the inner thigh as that leg extends backwards pulling the pelvis back and the lumbar spine is pulled forward. Your rectus abdominus counters that for tone while other abdominal muscles get involved to aid in the natural rotation that moves naturally up through the spine.  As you switch legs the same thing happens on the other side of the body creating a continual rotation through the spine initiated by the psoas. Imagine a washing machine and how it wrings dirt out of your clothes as it works through the wash cycle. When the legs, pelvis, and spine move in harmony with your core muscles, this same action is created in your trunk. The organs all move; toxins get worked out, and healthy tone settles in to organs that are never stagnant. Finding a healthy walking and breathing pattern involves all of these structures and creates a profoundly healthy and supportive environment for the body.