

Fitness Tip: Exercises to Build Strong Glutes and Why they are so Important

The gluteal muscles—namely the gluteus maximus, gluteus medius and gluteus minimus are essential to lower back health and improvements in athletic performance. Strong functional gluteal muscles can help you avoid and recover from injury in your lower back, hips, knees, and ankles by creating proper alignment throughout the entire body, also known as good posture. Gluteal muscles are one of the most important muscle groups activated during the propulsion phase of walking, running, and jumping. The stronger the gluteal muscles the more power one can generate, and allow for proper alignment so unnecessary force won't be placed on knees and ankles. Therefore, minimizing the risk of injury during ballistic movements. Here are some great exercises you can add to develop stronger gluteal muscles:

Glute Bridge

Equipment needed: none

Action: Lie in a supine position with the knees bent and the feet flat on the floor. Place the feet hip-distance apart. Tighten the core and move into a slight posterior pelvic tilt. Exhale, contract the glutes and press the hips up and away from the floor. Inhale and lower the hips to the starting position. Complete 12 repetitions; rest and repeat for a total of two to four sets. Progression: Add weight onto hips.



Side-lying Hip Abduction

Equipment needed: none

Action: Come to a side-lying position on the floor with the legs extended and the hips neutral. Rest your lower arm under the head for support and align the head with the spine. Exhale and raise the top leg while keeping the foot flexed. Inhale and lower the leg with control. Complete 12 repetitions and then repeat on the opposite side. Perform six sets total (three per leg).



Step-up

Equipment needed: Platform such as an aerobic step, stairs or a park bench

Action – Upward phase: Stand facing a platform with your feet directly under your hips. Place your right foot on the platform and push off with your trail leg (left foot). Keep the torso upright and the foot, ankle and knee aligned while stepping up. **Downward phase:** Shift your weight forward slightly and load your right leg. Step backwards with your left foot and then your right foot to return to the starting position. Complete 12 repetitions and then repeat on the left side. Alternate lead legs for a total of six sets (three on each leg).



Front Squat

Equipment needed: Two dumbbells or something heavy like a backpack filled with canned goods, a container of cat litter or dog food.

Action: Rest a dumbbell on the front edge of each shoulder and stand tall with the feet a little wider than hip-distance apart or hold the backpack and bag in front of you. Inhale and tighten the core as you shift your weight back into the heels while bending at the hips, knees and ankles. Lower down into a squatting position while driving the hips back and keeping the chest lifted. Exhale and press your feet into the floor while straightening the legs to return to a standing position. Complete 10 repetitions, rest and repeat for a total of two to three sets.



Lunge Jumps

Equipment Needed: none

Action: Assume a split stance with the right foot forward and the left foot back. Lower down into a lunge and then immediately push off the floor to jump upward while switching your foot position. Complete 16 repetitions total, alternating legs with each jump. Rest and repeat for a total of three sets.

