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GET BEHIND THIS GREAT
GLUTES WORKOUT

BY **WENDY CARVALHO-ASHBY** AND **KEVIN ASHBY**
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **SUSAN TO**

POP CULTURE HAS influenced a growing trend (literally and figuratively) in the direction of gluteus focused training. Celebrities such as Jennifer Lopez, have motivated an obsession among many to inundate trainers with requests for programs on how to build the perfect set of glutes. With all of this esthetic drive to achieve the perfect posterior, what are the correct exercises?

A dysfunctional or weak gluteal complex leads to poor performance and pain, while its associated inefficient biomechanics ultimately result in poor functional ability in an athlete. Here are five exercises for getting your glutes stronger and more activated, allowing you to strut your stuff with less risk of injury.

The gluteus group is composed of three muscles — gluteus maximus, medius and minimus that assist in ensuring the pelvis acts as a shock-absorbing buffer for the spine and upper body from the impact of the lower limbs with the ground. Any

injury to the pelvic joints coupled with weak/deactivated gluteal muscles may cause low-back pain, or other lower limb injuries such as shin splints or Achilles tendinosis. The gluteus medius muscle is a common source of low back pain in athletes. Weakness in the gluteus medius has implications all the way down the kinetic chain. Runners, skaters or skiers involved in a sport where time is spent on one leg with poor dynamic pelvic stability, will have reductions in their stride length and may adapt a shuffling gait pattern to reduce the reaction force at ground contact and the muscle control required to maintain pelvic stability.

The best exercises for activating the gluteus medius are side lying abductions of the hip, while single leg squats and single leg deadlifts activated both gluteus medius and maximus.

Standing on one leg places more demands on the gluteus medius than standing on both legs and single-limb exercises performed on unstable surfaces may place greater demands on the gluteus

medius. The last two exercises in the workout activate the gluteal muscle groups; the single-leg side hop and single-leg wall press to squat utilizing a stability ball. Weight-bearing exercises produce more activation of the gluteal muscle group than non-weight-bearing, and adding dumbbells is a practical progression. Perform these exercises in a pain-free range of motion, and consult with a fitness or health-care professional before starting a new rehabilitation or conditioning program.

WARM-UP

5-10 minutes, then proceed to completing 1-3 sets of 10-15 reps of the exercises.

1. Side-Lying Abduction of the Hip

- On the floor, lie on your side with hip in neutral position and knee in full extension.
- Lift top leg to approximately 30 degrees of hip abduction.
- Return to start.
- * You may add tubing or banding to legs for added challenge.

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2. Single-Leg Squat

- Stand with knee and hip of dominant leg flexed to approximately 30 degrees and hands on hips.
- Lower body to sitting position and reach opposite hand to touch outside of dominant leg.
- Return to start.
- * You may add an unstable surface such as bosu for added challenge.

3. Single-Leg Deadlift

- Stand with knee and hip of dominant leg flexed to approximately 30 degrees and hands on hips.
- Activate core muscles, and bend forward reaching middle finger of the opposite hand to shin of stance leg.
- Return to start.

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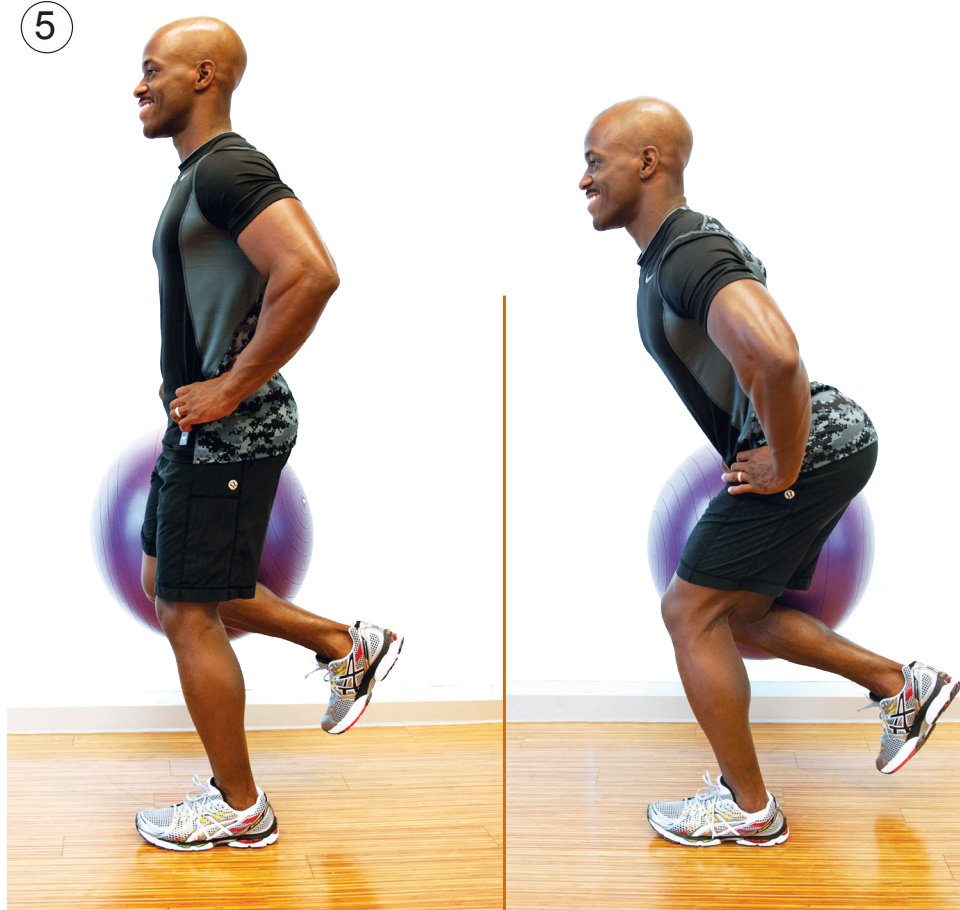
4. Single-Leg Side Hop

- Stand with knee and hip of non-dominant leg flexed to approximately 30 degrees and hands on hips.
- Jump sideways landing softly with knee flexed onto dominant leg.
- * (Jumping distance is approximately half of body height)

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5. Single-Leg Wall Press to Squat

- Stand next to a wall, holding stability ball.
- Assume a single-leg stance by flexing hip closest to ball/wall to 60 degrees and knee to 90 degrees.
- Maximally push hip, knee, leg against stability ball for five seconds.
- Proceed to a single-leg squat while maintaining isometric contraction of hip muscles against ball.
- * Do not contract opposite hip muscles.
- * Keep trunk in vertical alignment and pelvis level throughout exercise. ■



Chiropractors Wendy Carvalho-Ashby and Kevin Ashby of Endurance on 8th Health Centre in Calgary are actively involved in the natural bodybuilding community and are the Western Canadian Directors for International Drug Free Athletics (IDFA).