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How strong are your glutes?

Ensure your glutes are firing you effectively with our easy test and conditioning exercises.

by Mark Bailey



One Question Site Survey
IT TAKES ONLY SECONDS TO ANSWER BELOW

How likely are you to purchase a Windows 10 PC in the next 12 months?

SELECT ONE ANSWER

- Definitely will
- Probably will
- May or may not
- Probably will not
- Definitely will not

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ah... achilles heel

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Test your upper legs and glutes

Strong glutes hold your pelvis steady as you run and power you forward, but they are often weak or misfiring in runners. 'Glutes function as hip extensors, pulling the leg through when you run, to produce forward motion,' explains performance scientist Ian Pyper of the English Institute of Sport (eis2win.co.uk). They're also shock absorbers. 'Every stride puts huge force through the legs and because the hip joint is a ball and socket, it is very vulnerable without strong glutes.'

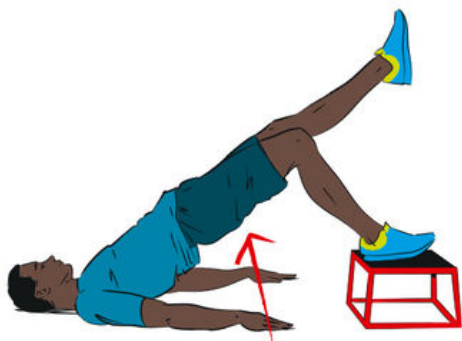
Created by Runner's World on January 5, 2016

01/

01

1

Test yourself: Bent-leg single-leg hip lift



YOUR SCORE
(reps per leg)

Attention required: 0-19

Average: 20+

Good: 30+

Excellent: 50+

Illustration: Lizzy Thomas

Lie on your back, place your right heel on a 30-40cm box, then bend your right knee to form a right angle between your upper and lower leg. Now lift your left leg straight out in front. Push down into your right heel and raise your hips until there is a straight line between your knees and shoulders. Lower and repeat, counting your maximum reps, then repeat with the other leg. 'This tests for glute and hamstring strength endurance and any muscle imbalances,' says Pyper.

02/

02

2

Improve: Double-leg hip lift

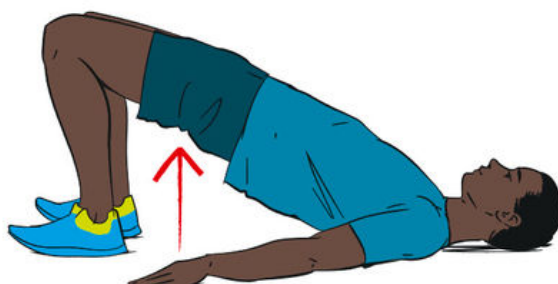


Illustration: Lizzy Thomas

A: Lie on your back, feet flat on the floor, legs bent and knees above your ankles. Place your hands by your sides for balance.

B: Raise your hips until there is a straight line between your knees and shoulders. Lower and repeat. Do 3 x 20 reps. (If your test score indicated a muscle imbalance, you can also train your weaker leg with single-leg hip lifts, keeping one leg straight out in front as you lift.)

03/

03

3

Improve: Swiss ball hamstring curl

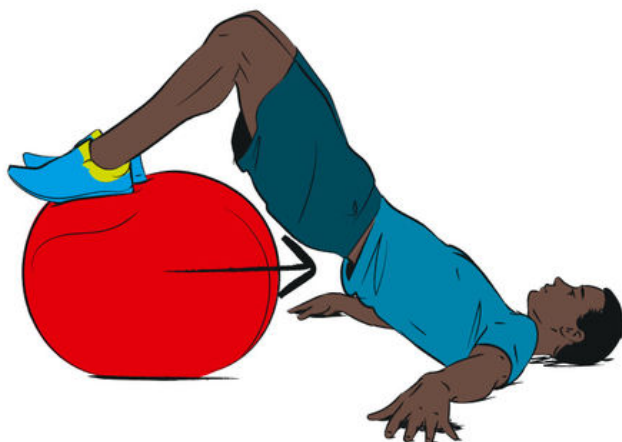


Illustration: Lizzy Thomas

'This builds glute strength and the balance element boosts your form,' says Pyper. 'Go slowly through the eccentric (lowering) phase to develop your balance and strength.'

A: Lie on your back with your feet resting on a Swiss ball and your arms flat on the floor for balance.

B: Use your legs to roll the ball towards you, but don't let your hips sag. Do 3 x 12 reps.



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