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The Posterior-chain Workout

The anatomical term “posterior” refers to the backside of the body. Thus, the phrase, “posterior chain,” refers to the muscles of the backside of the body, specifically the low back, gluteals, hamstrings and calf muscles.

Posterior-chain exercises involve contracting and lengthening the muscles in a chain-like manner. This is important for athletic movements that require strength, flexibility and fluidity to properly jump, rotate, lift or land. While isometric exercises should not be eliminated, training the chain (as opposed to each muscle in isolation) is vital for human movement-inspired workouts.

Training the chain can also help to reduce possible injury caused by weak or improperly functioning muscle groups. In addition, a strong posterior chain contributes to a strong core musculature, which reduces back pain and low-back injury, while also facilitating coordination and strength through the limbs.

This posterior-chain workout incorporates compound exercises, which use two or more muscle groups to execute the exercise. Complete two to three sets of eight to 12 repetitions of each exercise.

Loaded Squats

Loaded squats promote the strength of both the posterior chain and the quadriceps. Squats are a fundamental movement pattern and an integral part of a fitness routine. Loaded squats can use any form of weight including dumbbells, body bar, Olympic bar or other loaded devices.. Be sure that whatever type of weight is used that it is positioned correctly across the upper traps and shoulders and not directly on the cervical spine.

How to Perform: Hold onto your weight and keep the upper body tall and engaged. Lower the hips back, similar to sitting into a chair, while trying to keep the torso and shins parallel to each other. Return to the original standing position and continue the lowering and lifting movement. To regress this exercise, perform squats without the

added load.

Forward Diagonal Lunges


These lunges utilize an athletic-style lunge pattern, which promotes coordination and core stabilization.

How to Perform: Stand tall with feet hip-distance apart. Imagine a clock on the ground and your body is facing 12 o'clock. Step your right foot across toward the 10 o'clock position and lower into a lunge, with the left arm coming forward. Step back to center, feeling the engagement and effort of the hamstrings and glutes to push back to center. Step your left foot toward the 2 o'clock position as the right arm comes forward. Continue to alternate lunges. To regress this exercise, perform forward lunges.

Deadlifts


Deadlifts increase posterior-chain strength while promoting the fundamental movement pattern, the hip hinge. You may use dumbbells or a body bar, kettlebell or loaded Olympic bar to perform the exercise.

How to Perform: Begin by squatting behind a weighted Olympic bar and grasp it with hands just outside the legs. Using the legs, and keeping the back straight and core tight, push upward and lift the weight to a standing position. Slowly lower back to

starting position by bending the knees and flexing at the hips.

Stability Ball Hamstring Curl


This exercise strengthens the posterior chain while increasing core strength and upper-body balance.

How to Perform: Lie on your back and place the heels and lower calf on top of the stability ball. Keep the legs straight and hands on the floor. Lift the hips into a bridge position and draw the knees toward the hips as the ball rolls from the calves to the heels. Slowly extend the legs and repeat the motion. To regress the exercise, perform hip bridges.

Plank Rows

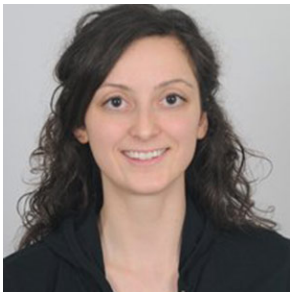

Plank rows stabilize the core musculature while increasing the upper-back strength. Dumbbells or a kettlebell are ideal for this exercise.

How to Perform: Position the body into a full plank with feet shoulder-width apart. Place your hand on the weight and lift the arm off the floor and row the shoulder blade toward the spine. Lower the hand to the floor and repeat. Complete one set on one side and then switch to the other arm. To regress the exercise, perform the rows while standing with a slight hinge at the hips.

Single-leg Glute Bridge

This exercise maximizes lower-body and posterior-chain strength.

How to Perform: Lie on your back and place the feet on the ground. Keep the right leg straight as you lift it into the air. Lift the hips off the ground into a bridge and slowly return the hips back to the ground. Complete a set on the right leg and then switch to the left leg.



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