

These exercises and photos are courtesy of Lynn VanDyke, personal trainer and creator of the [Melt the Fat](#) fitness program.

What's Your Favorite Back Exercise?



Shrugs

Start- Stand with your feet under your hips and knees slightly bent. Hold a free weight in each hand, palms facing your sides.

Go For It- Keep your arms relaxed and elbows extended. Pull your shoulders up to your ears. Pause for one second and lower back to start.

Tips and Techniques

- Exhale as you bring shoulders to the ears. Inhale as you lower back to start.
- You should feel this back exercise in the trapezius. That muscle is located at the bottom of the neck.
- The actual motion is sort of like you are shrugging to someone as you say, "I dunno!"



Bent Over Row

Start- Stand with your feet under your hips and knees slightly bent. Hold a free weight in each hand, palms facing each other, arms relaxed. Bend forward from your hips and keep your back as flat as possible. Your head and neck are in line with your spine.

Go For It-As you pull the free weights up, bend your elbows and keep them close to your sides. Lift the elbows up to the sky. Pause for one second and lower back to start.

Tips and Techniques

- Exhale as you bend the elbows and lift them to the sky. Inhale as you lower back to start.

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-You should feel this back exercise in the lats. The lats are located along both sides of the spine.

It is very important to keep your elbows close to your sides.

Sometimes this exercise is easier to execute when you use a straight bar.



Deadlift

Start- Stand with your feet under your hips and knees slightly bent. Hold a free weight in each hand, palms facing your shins. Bend forward from your hips and keep your back as flat as possible. Look directly at the floor so your neck is in aligned with your spine.

Go For It- Keep your arms relaxed and elbows extended. Very slowly lift your upper body to a standing position. Pause for one second and lower back down to start.

Tips and Techniques

- Exhale as your lift the upper body to standing. Inhale as you lower back to start.
- You should feel this back exercise in the lower back and possibly the back of the thighs.
- It is important to keep your back flat and lift and lower slowly.
- You are only moving and pivoting from your hips. Everything else is stabilized.



Back Extensions

Start- Begin by leaning on either a bench or a stability ball. Allow your upper body to relax over the top part of the bench or ball. Your feet are at the 4 and 8 o'clock position.

Go For It- Place your hands where they are most comfortable. Slowly begin to lift your upper body by extending from your lower back and hips. Pause for one second at the top (as shown in the above picture) and then relax back to start.

Tips and Techniques

- Exhale as you lift the upper body. Inhale as you lower back to start.
- Try to keep your back as flat or straight as possible.

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- Imagine your lower back muscles pulling your entire upper body up.



Reverse Fly

Start-Allow the upper body to lay on a stability ball. Place your feet at the 4 and 8 o'clock position. Hold a dumbbell in each hand, palms facing each other.

Go For It- Begin to pull the arms out and up. You want to squeeze your shoulder blades together. Try to pause slightly at the top before lowering back to start.

Tips and Techniques

- Exhale as you bring the arms up. Inhale as you lower back to start.

-You should feel this back exercise in the middle to upper back. If you are squeezing those shoulder blades together, you should feel it in that general area.

-The motion is sort of like a reverse bear hug. It's the exact opposite of the ball chest fly.

Strong back muscles start with excellent back exercises. Each back exercise should be safe and effective. It should also build your back to become a strong support for your body.

The back stabilizes your spine and creates strength in your powerhouse! Anyone that has played athletics is well aware that almost every movement starts at the core. A strong and healthy back supports basic functions. A great way to erase pain in your back, is you strengthen is safely. Switch your back exercise regularly.

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Pick Your Favorite Bicep Exercise!



Bicep Preacher Curl

Start- Kneel down behind a stability ball. Place your elbows on top of the ball. Move around until you feel the most comfortable. Start with arms almost straightened out. We never want to lock out our elbows or knees in any exercise.

Go For It- Slowly begin to lift the weight towards your shoulders. Pause for a second and slowly lower down to the start position.

Tips and Techniques

Do not arch your back or use momentum to lift the weights up. Only use your bicep muscle!
Inhale as you lower the weights down and exhale as you lift the weights.



Hammer Curl

Start Dumbbell Bicep Exercise - Begin with free weights by your side, palms facing your sides. Your feet are directly under your hips and your knees are slightly bent.

Go For It- Start to lift the weight up towards your shoulders. Once there, pause for one second and slowly lower the weight back to your starting position.

Tips and Techniques

Keep your elbows by your sides at all times during this bicep exercise.
Do not arch your back or use momentum to lift the weights up. Only use your bicep muscle!
Inhale as you lower the weights down and exhale as you lift the weights.

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Curl

Start Dumbbell Bicep Exercise - Begin with free weights by your side, palms facing away from you. Your feet are directly under your hips and your knees are slightly bent.

Go For It- Start to lift the weight up towards your shoulders. Once there, pause for one second and slowly lower the weight back to your starting position.

Tips and Techniques

Keep your elbows by your sides at all times during this bicep exercise.
Do not arch your back or use momentum to lift the weights up. Only use your bicep muscle!
Inhale as you lower the weights down and exhale as you lift the weights.



Concentration Curl

Start Dumbbell Bicep Exercise - Begin by sitting on a stability ball. Place your right elbow on the inside of your right knee. Your arm is lengthened with a free weight facing away from your right leg.

Go For It- Start to lift the weight up towards your shoulders. Once there, pause for one second and slowly lower the weight back to your starting position.

Tips and Techniques

Keep your elbow on the inside of your knee at all times during this bicep exercise.
Do not arch your back or use momentum to lift the weight up. Only use your bicep muscle!
No momentum. Just muscle.
Inhale as you lower the weights down and exhale as you lift the weights.

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- Since we are only doing on arm at a time, don't forget to do the left side!

Each bicep exercise should feel comfortable. On the last rep you will feel fatigued, but still have great form. Never sacrifice form for another rep.

Biceps are used in almost any daily activity. Keeping them strong and healthy will have positive results for you and your life! Remember to change your bicep exercise regularly to avoid hitting a plateau.

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Try Each Tricep Exercise



Overhead Extensions

Start- Hold a free weight between your right thumb and pointer finger. Cup your opposite hand under your right hand. Lift the weight so that your elbows are bent and it is behind your head.

Go For It- Begin to straighten out your arms by lifting the weight up to the sky. Pause for one second, and begin lowering the free weight back to your starting position.

Tips and Techniques

Exhale as you push the weight up and inhale as you lower the weight to the start position of this tricep exercise.

Keep your elbows very close to your head. We don't want any chicken wings!

-Want to add some oomph to this tricep exercise? When you reach the top, kick the bottom part of the dumbbell up to the sky. This is called a kick-up.

- Remember that you are only concentrating on the muscle of your top hand. Switch hands half way through the set OR do another set with the opposite hand. We want balanced body parts.



Tricep Dips Start-

Using a flat bench, sit down and place your hands by your sides. Your knees are bent. **Go For It-** Lift your bottom off of the bench and slowly lower to the ground by bending your elbows.

Lift back up by straightening out the elbows.

Tips and Techniques-

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Exhale as you push back up to the start and inhale as you lower your bottom to the ground.
Keep your elbows very close to your sides throughout this tricep exercise.
More oomph? The further your feet are from the bench, the more difficult this exercise becomes.
You can even go real extreme by placing your feet on a chair or stability ball.
Don't allow the legs to do any of the work. We want to work those tricep muscles!



Tricep Kickbacks

Start- Begin by standing, feet under your hips and knees slightly bent. Bend at the hips until your back is parallel with the ground. Keep your gaze on the ground. You are holding a dumbbell in each hand, palms facing your sides and elbows bent to a 90 degree angle.

Go For It- Begin to straighten out your arms by lifting the weight up to the sky. Pause for one second, and begin lowering the free weight back to your starting position.

Tips and Techniques

Exhale as you push the weight up and inhale as you lower the weight to the start position.
Keep your elbows very close to your side.

-Try to keep your back as flat as possible and your eyes looking at the ground. This keeps your spine in a neutral position.

-When you have finished the set, slowly lift back up to standing as you inhale.



Tricep Skullcrushers

Start- Begin by laying your upper body on the stability ball. Hold one dumbbell between your right thumb and pointer finger, palms facing up. Slide your left hand under the right hand for support. The

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dumbbell is behind your head and elbows are bent at a 90 degree angle. Your knees are hip width apart and your hips are lifted up to the sky.

Go For It- Begin to straighten out your arms by lifting the weight up to the sky. Pause for one second, and begin lowering the free weight back to your starting position.

Tips and Techniques

Exhale as you push the weight up and inhale as you lower the weight to the start position.
Keep your elbows close together.

-Try to keep your hips lifted throughout the tricep exercise. This will help support you and work the glutes/hamstrings.

- Remember to use the opposite hand as your guiding hand as well. So if you do 12 reps with your right hand on top, be sure to do 12 reps with your left hand on top!

- Try to not move your shoulder joints at all. The only joint that should be moving is your elbow. This makes sure the triceps are working and not your chest muscles.

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What's Your Fav Chest Exercise?



Incline Press

Start- Begin by laying on an incline bench. Place your feet and knees so that you are most comfortable. Allow your head to lay back on the bench. This will support your spine and neck. Hold a dumbbell in each hand. Palms facing away from you.

Go For It- Lift the dumbbells up to the sky by extending your arms up. Don't lock your elbows. Pause here for one second and slowly lower the weight back to start.

Tips and Techniques

Exhale as you lift the weights to the sky. Inhale as you lower back to the start of this chest exercise.

Use only your chest and arm muscles to lift the weight. No momentum.

-Try to keep your lower back pressed against the bench.

-This chest exercise can be done on a stability ball as well. Lay so that your upper back is on the top of the ball. Separate your knees until they are hip width apart. Place your feet directly under your knees. Now allow your hips to drop close to the floor. Your upper body should be in an incline position. Follow the instructions above to complete the incline press on the stability ball.



Decline Chest Press

Start- Begin by laying on a decline bench. Place your feet and knees so that you are most comfortable. Allow your head to lay back on the bench. This will support your spine and neck. Hold a dumbbell in each hand. Palms facing away from you.

Go For It- Lift the dumbbells up to the sky by extending your arms up. Don't lock your elbows. Pause here for one second and slowly lower the weight back to the start of the chest exercise.

Tips and Techniques

- Exhale as you lift the weights to the sky. Inhale as you lower back to start.

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- Use only your chest and arm muscles to lift the weight. No momentum.
- Try to keep your lower back pressed against the bench.
- This chest exercise can be done on a stability ball as well. Lay so that your upper back is on the top of the ball. Separate your knees until they are hip width apart. Place your feet directly under your knees. Now roll slightly back until you are in a slight decline position. Follow the instructions above the complete the decline press on the stability ball.



Incline Chest Fly

Start- Begin by laying on an incline bench. Place your feet and knees so that you are most comfortable. Allow your head to lay back on the bench. This will support your spine and neck. Hold a dumbbell in each hand. Palms are facing each other.

Go For It- Lift the dumbbells up to the sky by extending your arms up. Don't lock your elbows. Pause here for one second and slowly lower the weight back to start.

Tips and Techniques

Exhale as you lift the weights to the sky. Inhale as you lower back to the start of this chest exercise.

Use only your chest and arm muscles to lift the weight. No momentum.

-Try to keep your lower back pressed against the bench.

-This chest exercise can be done on a stability ball as well. Lay so that your upper back is on the top of the ball. Separate your knees until they are hip width apart. Place your feet directly under your knees. Now allow your hips to drop close to the floor. Your upper body should be in an incline position. Follow the instructions above the complete the incline fly on the stability ball.



Decline Chest Fly Start- Begin by laying on a decline bench. Place your feet and knees so that you are most comfortable.

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Allow your head to lay back on the bench. This will support your spine and neck. Hold a dumbbell in each hand. Palms are facing each other.

Go For It- Lift the dumbbells up to the sky by extending your arms up. Don't lock your elbows. Pause here for one second and slowly lower the weight back to the start of the chest exercise.

Tips and Techniques

Exhale as you lift the weights to the sky. Inhale as you lower back to the start of the chest exercise.

Use only your chest and arm muscles to lift the weight. No momentum.

-Try to keep your lower back pressed against the bench throughout this chest exercise.



Push Up

Start- Begin in the upper push up position. Your feet are together and your hands are directly under your shoulders. Your back is flat and you are looking at the ground.

Go For It- Slowly begin lowering yourself to the ground. Allow your elbows to bend, but keep your back flat and strong. Pause just above the ground and then begin lifting yourself back to start.

Tips and Techniques

Inhale as your lower your body weight to the floor. Exhale as your lift back up to start.

Be sure to keep your back flat at all times.

If your wrists hurt, move them more forward. It increases the angle of the wrist.

- This chest exercise can be done on a stability ball too. Put a stability ball in front of you. Roll out until the ball is under your thighs, knees, shins or ankles. The closer it is to your ankles, the more difficult. From this starting push up position, allow your elbows to bend and lower your upper body towards the ground. Follow the above tips and techniques.



Knee Push Ups

Start- Begin on all fours. Your knees should be directly under your hips and your hands directly under your shoulders. You should be looking at the floor.

Go For It- Slowly lower your upper body towards the ground. Try to touch your nose to the floor. Pause for one second and lift back to start.

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Tips and Techniques

Inhale as you lower your body weight. Exhale as you lift your body back to the start of the chest exercise.

If your wrists bother you, move them more forward.

Keep your back flat at all times.



Pull Overs

Start- Lay down on a stability ball. Your upper body is supported by the ball. Knees are separated hip width apart and your feet are directly under your knees. Hold a dumbbell between your thumb and forefinger. Extend your arms straight above your face.

Go For It- Keeping your arms straight, allow the dumbbell to lower behind your head. Pause for one second and bring the free weight back above your face (starting position).

Tips and Techniques

Inhale as you lower the weight behind the head. Exhale as you lift it above your face.

Keep your lower back relaxed and try to focus on using only your chest muscles.



Ball Chest Press

Start- Begin by sitting on a stability ball. Gently roll down until you can relax your head on the ball. Place your ankles directly under your knees, and lift your hips up to the sky. Hold a dumbbell in each hand.

Go For It- Lift the dumbbells up to the sky by extending your arms up. Don't lock your elbows. Pause here for one second and slowly lower the weight back to the start of this chest exercise.

Tips and Techniques

Exhale as you lift the weights up. Inhale as you lower back to start.

Use only your chest and arm muscles to lift the weight. No momentum.

-Try to keep your hips lifted throughout the chest exercise.

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Ball Chest Fly

Start- Begin by sitting on a stability ball. Gently roll down until you can relax your head on the ball. Place your ankles directly under your knees, and lift your hips up to the sky. Hold a dumbbell in each hand, palms facing each other.

Go For It- Begin to lift the dumbbells up over the ribcage, palms facing each other. Pause for a second, lower back to start.

Tips and Techniques

Exhale as you lift the weights up. Inhale as you lower back to start.

Use only your chest and arm muscles to lift the weight. No momentum.

-Try to keep your hips lifted throughout the chest exercise.

-Think of this as giving someone a big bear hug. As you lift from the start position, it's almost like a semi-circle motion.

Remember that our arm muscles all work when we perform a chest exercise. That's why it is so important to focus on a proper strength training program and use each chest exercise when appropriate.

Do each chest exercise regularly and switch your chest exercise every 4-6 weeks. .

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Pick Your Fav Hams And Glutes Exercise



Bridge Pose

Start- Start by lying on your back. Hands are wherever they are most comfortable. Bend your knees and separate them hip width apart. Your feet are flat on the ground.

Go For It- Lift your hips to the sky. Press your feet into the floor. Pause for one second and lower back to start.

Tips and Techniques

Exhale as you lift hips up to the sky. Inhale as you lower to the ground.
Keep your knees separated throughout this hams and glutes exercise.

You can do this hams and glutes exercise various ways. You can lift up, pause for one second and lower down. You can lift up and hold for 15 or 30 seconds, then lower back to start. You can place your right foot on your left knee and lift up and down... don't forget to do the opposite side too (left foot on right knee).

You should feel this exercise in your bottom and back of the thigh.



Bridge Pose On The Ball

Start- Start by lying on your back. Hands are wherever they are most comfortable. Bend your knees and place them directly over your hips. Your feet are against the side of the stability ball.

Go For It- Lift your hips to the sky as you press your feet into the ball. Pause for one second and lower back to start.

Tips and Techniques

Exhale as you lift hips up to the sky. Inhale as you lower to the ground.
Keep your knees separated throughout this hams and glutes exercise.

-You can do this exercise various ways. You can lift up, pause for one second and lower down. You can lift up and hold for 15 or 30 seconds, then lower back to start. You can place your right foot on your left knee and lift up and down... don't forget to do the opposite side too (left foot on right knee).

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-You should feel this exercise in your bottom and back of the thigh or back of the knee.



Leg Curl

Start- Begin as shown above. Forearms are on the ground, knees under your hips and right leg elongated. Your head and neck are in line with your spine (look at the ground).

Go For It-Take your right leg and bend it at the knee. Pause for one second and then elongate it back to start.

Tips and Techniques

- Exhale as you bend the knee. Inhale as you elongate it back to start.

-To increase the intensity of this hams and glutes exercise, you can do a few things. Try adding a free weight in the crux of your bent knee. Lift as usual and lower back to start keeping your knee bent. Or try this, elongate your right leg and make it parallel to the ground. Keeping it elongated, lift it to the sky, pause for one second and lower it back to start.

- Remember to do the left leg as well!



One Legged Bridge

Start- Start by lying on your back. Hands are wherever they are most comfortable. Bend your knees and place them directly over your hips. Your feet are against the side of the stability ball. Place your right foot on your left knee.

Go For It- Lift your hips to the sky. Press your foot into the ball as you lift. Pause for one second and lower back to start.

Tips and Techniques

Exhale as you lift hips up to the sky. Inhale as you lower to the ground.
Remember to do the other side. Balance is good!

You can do this hams and glutes exercise various ways. You can lift up, pause for one second and lower down. You can lift up and hold for 15 or 30 seconds, then lower back to start.

You should feel this hams and glutes exercise in your bottom and back of the thigh.

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Ball Rollout

Start- Start by lying on your back. Hands are wherever they are most comfortable. Bend your knees and place them directly over your hips. Your feet are against the side of the stability ball.

Go For It- Lift your hips to the sky as you press your feet into the ball. Keep those hips lifted as you begin to roll the ball away from you. Once you cannot roll it out further, pull the ball back towards you.

Tips and Techniques

Keep your knees slightly bent throughout the hams and glutes exercise. Even in the rolled out position, don't lock your knees.

Feel free to re-adjust your feet as many times as you would like.

-This hams and glutes exercise takes balance as well as strength. I wouldn't recommend it for beginners.

-You should feel this hams and glutes exercise in your bottom and back of the thigh or back of the knee.

Remember that overall body and muscle balance is the greatest achievement. Working with each hams and glutes exercise is essential to creating that balance. Each muscle has a role in movement, function and support. Hams and glutes are no exception.

Using each hams and glutes exercise regularly, eating well and proper cardio will result in a great overall shape. Switch your hams and glutes exercise regularly.

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Choose Your Favorite Quad Exercise



Squat

Start- Begin with your feet directly under your hips and hands by your sides.

Go For It- Keeping the majority of your body weight on the heels, begin to sit down as though sitting on a chair. Keep your back as upright as possible. Go as low as you feel comfortable, pause, and return to start.

Tips and Techniques

Inhale as you squat down. Exhale as you lift back to start.

Don't allow your knees to extend past your toes. If it does, move your body weight back on your heels more.

Only allow the knees to bend to a 90 degree angle. No lower.

Pause slightly at the bottom of your squat. This makes the quad exercise more intense.

-You can add free weights to increase the intensity.

- Go for the quad busting Goddess Pose! Squat down as described above, but hold the squat for 10-30 seconds. Just remember to breathe!

-Try a one-legged quad squat. Place your left foot on your right knee. Squat down as described above. Keep your balance! This quad exercise is **NOT** for beginners.



Jump Squat Start- Begin with your feet separated and hands where you feel most comfortable.

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Go For It- Keeping the majority of your body weight on the heels, begin to sit down as though sitting on a chair. Go as low as you feel comfortable, pause, and then jump up into the air.

Tips and Techniques

Inhale as you squat down. Exhale as your jump into the air.

Don't allow your knees to extend past your toes. If it does, move your body weight back on your heels more.

Only allow the knees to bend to a 90 degree angle. No lower.

Pause slightly at the bottom of your squat. This makes the quad exercise more intense.

-This is not a good quad exercise for anyone that is new to exercising.



Lunge

Start- Begin with your feet directly under your hips and hands by your sides. Take one step forward with your left leg.

Go For It- Take your back knee down so it almost touches the floor. Pause for a second and lift back to start.

Tips and Techniques

Inhale as you lower your back knee. Exhale as your lift back to start.

Don't allow your front knee to extend past your toes. If it does, separate your legs a bit more.

Only allow the front knee to bend to a 90 degree angle. No lower.

-You can add free weights to increase the intensity.

- Remember to do the other leg as well! If we did 12 reps with our right leg in front... we need to do 12 reps with our left leg in front.



Lying Side Leg Raise Start- Begin by lying on one side. Keep your body as straight as possible. Place your hands where they

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feel most comfortable.

Go For It- Begin to lift your top leg into the air. Pause at the top for a second and slowly lower back to start.

Tips and Techniques

- Exhale as you lift your leg into the air. Inhale as you lower it back to start.

This will work the outside of your thigh. This muscle is called the abductor muscle.

This quad exercise typically needs to be done for a longer rep range than most exercises. Don't be afraid to experiment.

-To increase the intensity, hold for a 10 second pause at the top of the lift.

-You can also place a stability ball or a medicine ball on the side of your top thigh. Just having this additional weight to lift over the rep range can tire you out. Another simple way to rev up the intensity level.

- Remember to do the other leg! If you did 24 reps on one side, do 24 reps on the other leg. Balance is a beautiful thing!



One Legged Squat

Start- Begin with your feet directly under your hips and hands by your sides. Lift your left leg so that it is behind you.

Go For It- Keeping the majority of your body weight on the heels, begin to bend the front knee. Keep your back as upright as possible. Go as low as you feel comfortable, pause, and return to start.

Tips and Techniques

Inhale as you squat down. Exhale as you lift back to start.

Don't forget to do the other side.

Don't allow your knees to extend past your toes. If it does, move your body weight back on your heels more.

Only allow the knees to bend to a 90 degree angle. No lower.

Pause slightly at the bottom of your squat. This makes the quad exercise more intense.

-You can add free weights to increase the intensity.

- Keep your balance! This exercise is **NOT** for beginners.

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Adductor Squeeze Start- Begin by laying on your back. Knees are bent to 90 degrees. Place a ball between your knees. **Go For It-** Simply squeeze the knees together. Pause for a second. Release back to start. **Tips and Techniques**

I tend to do this quad exercise faster than other exercises. I will also do it longer. I like to squeeze, and relax as fast as possible and go for about 80 reps.
Experiment with different speeds and reps.

-You want to feel this quad exercise on your inner thighs.

Work those quads! You will soon see that they are the most favorite or hated part of most people's program. How you work them is up to you. Try each quad exercise and choose the one that feels best to start with.

I just want you exercising. Our legs take a beating each and everyday. Make them stronger with each quad exercise and they will reward you in more ways than one.

Oh, how could I forget? To build strength around your knees, I recommend strengthening the muscles around them. Makes sense, right? Quads are the guys right above the knee cap. How awesome would it be to have less knee pain?

Switch your quad exercise regularly.

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