

Health, fitness, lifestyle

TAYLAKFITNESS LEGS EXERCISE GUIDE

Workout because you love your body, not
because you hate it.

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STRETCHING AND WARMUPS



Don't forget to warm up and cool down!

Dynamic stretching and static stretching are two different types of stretching techniques.

Dynamic Stretching:

Dynamic stretching involves active movements, typically incorporated into warm-up routines before engaging in more intense physical activity. It helps joint range of motion, blood flow and reduced risk of injury.

Here are examples of dynamic stretches:

- Leg Swings: Swing one leg forward and backward in a controlled manner.
- Arm Circles: Rotate your arms in circular motions to warm up the shoulder joints.
- High Knees: March in place, lifting your knees towards your chest.
- Hip Circles: Rotate your hips in circular motions to improve hip flexibility.
- Jumping Jacks: Perform jumping jacks to engage multiple muscle groups and elevate your heart rate.

Static Stretching:

Static stretching involves holding a stretch for an extended period, typically 15-60 seconds. It aims to improve overall flexibility, relaxes the muscle and elongate muscles. Static stretches are often performed after a workout during the cooldown phase.

Here are examples of static stretches:

- Hamstring Stretch: Sitting or standing, reach toward your toes, holding the stretch.
- Chest Opener: Clasp your hands behind your back and straighten your arms to open up your chest.
- Quad Stretch: Stand on one leg, bringing your heel towards your glutes, and hold the stretch.
- Calf Stretch: Place one foot behind you, keeping the heel on the ground, and lean forward to stretch the calf.
- Triceps Stretch: Bring one arm overhead and reach down your back, gently pulling on your elbow with the opposite hand.

Static stretching helps relax muscles, improve flexibility, and enhance overall range of motion. It's beneficial for

HYPEREXTENSION

Back Extension (Hyperextension) for Glutes

- Position yourself on a back extension machine (hyperextension bench), ensuring your hips are aligned with the pad
- Secure your feet under the foot rollers, and place your feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart, with toes pointing outwards (this angle helps activate your glutes more effectively)
- Keep your hands behind your head or crossed over your chest
- Adjust the machine so your hips are just above the padding, allowing for full movement with good form
- Engage your core, keeping your spine neutral throughout the movement

Form

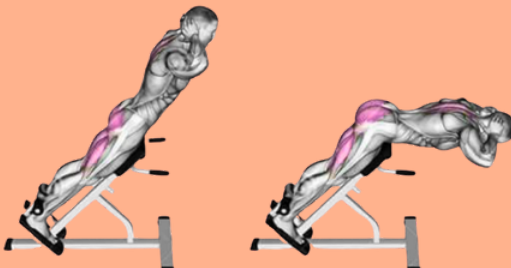
- Lower your torso slowly toward the floor, keeping your back straight (avoid rounding your spine)
- As you reach the lowest point, focus on pushing your hips forward and using your glutes and hamstrings to raise your upper body back up
- Squeeze your glutes at the top and hold for a brief second before lowering back down
- Ensure you're not arching your lower back excessively — the movement should come from your hips and glutes, not your lower spine
- Feet placement with toes pointing outwards will increase the stretch on your glutes and encourage them to work more during the extension phase

Adding Weight

- For added resistance, you can hold a plate or dumbbell at your chest or behind your head
- Choose a weight that allows you to perform the movement with control and proper form — don't sacrifice technique for heavier weight
- As you rise, focus on engaging your glutes and hamstrings, especially when lifting the added weight

Tips

- Keep your core tight throughout the exercise to protect your lower back
- Focus on pushing your hips forward as you raise your torso, using the glutes rather than relying on your back muscles
- Exhale as you rise, and inhale as you lower
- Keep small, controlled movements — only extend as far as your lower back and glutes can handle without discomfort



SINGLE LEG GLUTE BRIDGE

Single-Leg Glute Bridge

Setup

- Lie on your back with one knee bent and foot flat on the floor
- Extend the other leg straight out at about a 45° angle
- Keep arms by your sides, palms down
- Core braced and spine neutral

Form

- Drive through the heel of the grounded foot
- Lift your hips while keeping the extended leg in line with your torso
- Squeeze your glute at the top
- Pause briefly at the peak
- Lower hips slowly and under control
- Keep hips level — avoid twisting or dipping to one side

Tips

- Keep your extended leg active and steady
- Push evenly through your heel for max glute engagement
- Don't overarch your back — ribs down, core tight
- If you're new, start with bodyweight before adding resistance
- Perfect for warming up or finishing off a glute workout



JUMPING SQUAT

🔥 Jumping Squat

Setup

- Stand with feet shoulder-width apart
- Keep your chest up and core engaged
- Hands can be in front of your chest or by your sides for balance

Form

- Lower into a squat by bending at the hips and knees
- Keep knees tracking over your toes
- Explode upward into a jump, pushing through your heels
- Swing arms naturally for momentum
- Land softly, absorbing the impact by bending your knees
- Reset into a squat position and repeat

Tips

- Land softly and quietly to protect your joints
- Keep your chest lifted and back straight throughout
- Control your descent — don't crash into the squat
- Focus on explosive power during the jump
- Use as a warm-up, plyometric move, or conditioning drill



BODYWEIGHT SQUAT

Bodyweight Squat

Setup

- Stand with feet shoulder-width apart
- Toes slightly turned out (about 10–15°)
- Keep your chest up and spine neutral
- Core engaged and arms extended forward or clasped at chest for balance

Form

- Push your hips back as if sitting into a chair
- Bend your knees and lower down until thighs are parallel to the floor (or as low as comfortable)
- Keep knees tracking in line with your toes
- Press through your heels to return to standing
- Squeeze your glutes at the top

Tips

- Keep your chest lifted and avoid leaning too far forward
- Don't let your knees collapse inward — drive them slightly outward
- Keep your weight in your heels, not your toes
- Perform slowly and with control for better muscle engagement
- Great as a warm-up, for mobility, or high-rep endurance sets



PISTOL SQUAT

🔑 Pistol Squat (Single-Leg Squat)

Setup

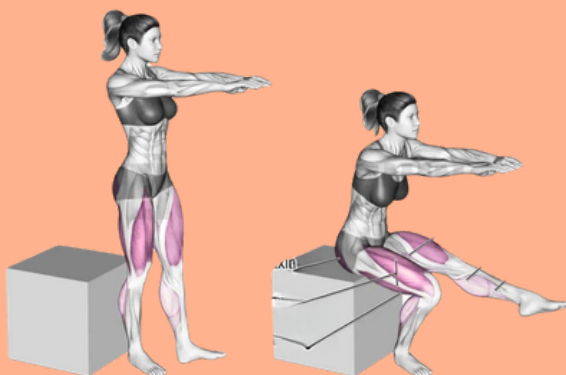
- Stand tall with feet hip-width apart
- Shift weight onto one leg, lifting the other leg straight in front of you
- Extend arms forward for balance
- Keep your chest up and core tight

Form

- Push hips back and bend the supporting knee to lower into a squat
- Keep the extended leg off the ground and straight ahead
- Go as low as your mobility and balance allow (ideally until your hamstring touches your calf)
- Press through the heel of your grounded foot to return to standing
- Maintain control and balance throughout the movement

Tips

- Start by using a box or bench to squat onto if you're building up strength
- Keep your back straight — avoid collapsing forward
- Focus on controlled descent and avoid bouncing at the bottom
- Work on ankle mobility and hip stability to improve form
- Use a counterweight (like a light dumbbell) for balance if needed
- Build strength with assisted versions: holding onto a TRX, doorframe, or using a wall for support



BULGARIAN SPLIT SQUAT

Bulgarian Split Squat

Setup

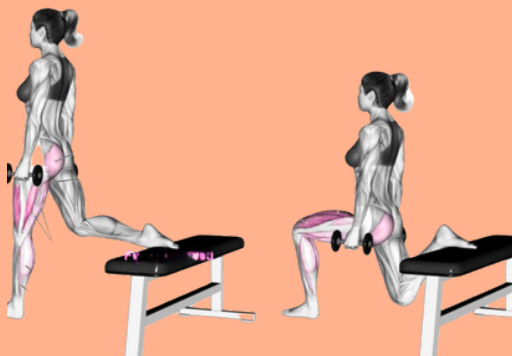
- Stand about 2–3 feet in front of a bench or elevated surface
- Place one foot behind you on the bench — either top of foot down or toes tucked, whichever feels better
- Front foot should be far enough forward so your knee stays over your ankle when you lower
- Keep your torso upright and core engaged
- Hands on hips, holding dumbbells, or in front of you for balance

Form

- Lower your back knee toward the ground by bending your front knee
- Keep your front knee tracking in line with your toes
- Drop down until your front thigh is parallel to the floor (or deeper if mobility allows)
- Push through the heel of your front foot to rise back up to the starting position
- Keep your chest lifted and avoid leaning too far forward

Tips

- Focus on the front leg doing all the work — the rear leg is just for balance
- Avoid pushing off the back foot
- Maintain a vertical shin for more glute emphasis, or let the knee travel forward slightly to target quads
- Keep hips square and don't let your knee cave inward
- Use a pad or mat under your back knee if you're going deep and want comfort
- Great for unilateral strength, correcting imbalances, and improving athletic performance



QUAD SEATED LEG EXTENSION

🔑 Seated Leg Extension (Machine)

Setup

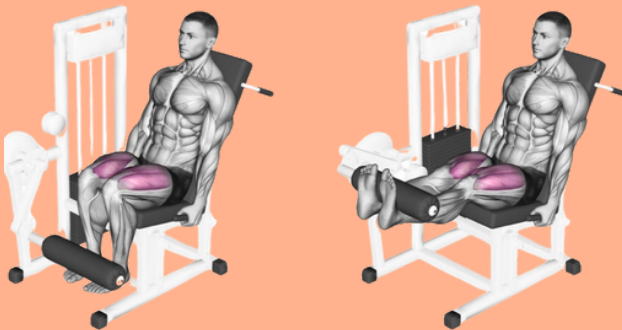
- Sit on the machine with your back flat against the pad
- Adjust the backrest so your knees align with the machine's pivot point
- Place your shins behind the padded lever — it should sit just above your ankles
- Grip the handles or seat edges for stability
- Set the desired weight and engage your core

Form

- Extend your legs by contracting your quads
- Lift the pad until your legs are nearly straight (but don't lock out your knees)
- Pause and squeeze your quads at the top
- Lower the weight slowly and with control
- Keep your upper body still throughout the movement

Tips

- Use a controlled tempo — avoid swinging or using momentum
- Don't hyperextend or snap your knees at the top
- Adjust the range of motion based on your comfort and knee health
- Excellent for quad isolation, especially after compound lifts
- Can be used for muscle building, pre-exhaustion, or rehab



DUMBBELL GOBLET SQUAT

Dumbbell Goblet Squat

Setup

- Hold a dumbbell vertically by one end, close to your chest (like a goblet)
- Keep elbows tucked in and pointing down
- Stand with feet shoulder-width apart or slightly wider
- Toes slightly turned out for better hip mobility
- Engage your core and keep your chest up

Form

- Push your hips back and bend your knees to lower into a squat
- Keep the dumbbell close to your chest throughout
- Descend until your thighs are parallel to the ground (or lower if mobility allows)
- Knees should track in line with your toes
- Press through your heels to return to standing
- Squeeze your glutes at the top

Tips

- Keep your torso upright — the front-loaded weight helps with posture
- Use a controlled tempo to avoid bouncing at the bottom
- Don't let your knees cave inward — push them slightly outward
- Great for building strength, mobility, and reinforcing squat mechanics
- Ideal for beginners, warm-ups, or high-rep leg finishers



LEG PRESS (OPTIONAL SINGLE LEG)

🔑 Leg Press (Machine)

Setup

- Sit on the machine with your back flat against the pad
- Place your feet shoulder-width apart on the platform
- Adjust foot position based on your target:
 - Higher targets glutes/hamstrings
 - Lower emphasizes quads
- Grip the handles for support
- Unlock the safety handles (if your machine has them)

Form

- Bend your knees to slowly lower the platform toward you
- Keep your feet flat and heels pressed down
- Lower until your legs are at a 90° angle or just before your lower back starts to lift
- Press through your heels to extend your legs, but don't lock your knees at the top
- Lower back down under control and repeat

Tips

- Keep your knees aligned with your feet — don't let them cave in or flare too far out
- Maintain contact with the seat and backrest at all times
- Use a full range of motion without compromising form
- Control the movement — no bouncing or jerking
- Great for loading the legs safely and effectively, especially when squatting is limited



ABDUCTOR MACHINE

Abductor Machine (Outer Thigh / Glute Focus)

Setup

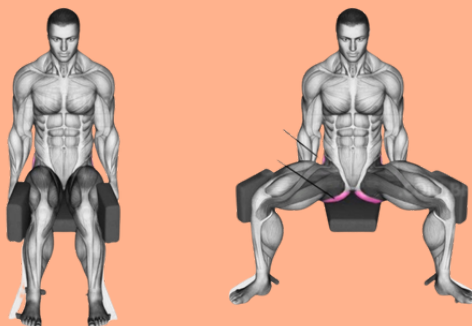
- Sit down and rest your back flat against the pad
- Place your feet flat on the footrests
- Position your thighs against the outer pads
- Adjust the starting position so the pads are close enough to allow a full range of motion
- Grip the handles or side supports for stability
- Engage your core before starting

Form

- Push your legs outward against the resistance
- Open your thighs wide, squeezing the glutes at the end range
- Pause briefly at the widest point
- Slowly return to the starting position — resist the inward pull

Tips

- Focus on controlled movement — no bouncing or swinging
- Keep your torso still and avoid leaning back too far
- Squeeze your glute medius (side glutes) at the peak of the movement
- Great for glute activation, hip stability, and shaping the outer hips
- Use as a warm-up, finisher, or part of a lower body workout



ADDUCTOR MACHINE

🔗 Adductor Machine (Inner Thigh Focus)

Setup

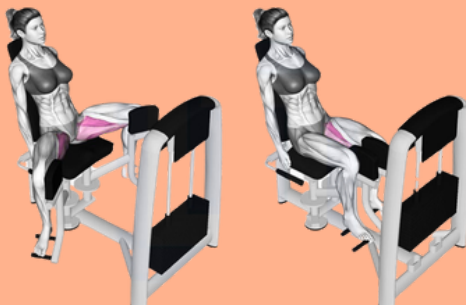
- Sit on the machine with your back flat against the pad
- Place your feet flat on the footrests
- Position your inner thighs against the pads
- Adjust the width of the starting position so you feel a stretch but not discomfort
- Grip the handles or sidebars for stability
- Engage your core before starting

Form

- Press your thighs inward to bring the pads together
- Squeeze your inner thighs at the peak of the movement
- Pause briefly at the top for extra engagement
- Slowly return to the starting position with control — don't let the weights slam

Tips

- Use a controlled tempo to fully engage the adductors
- Keep your back and hips stable — avoid leaning forward or arching
- Focus on squeezing the inner thighs instead of rushing reps
- Helpful for improving hip stability, athletic performance, and groin strength
- Can be used for warm-ups, accessory work, or injury prevention



SEATED HAMSTRING CURL

🔑 Seated Hamstring Curl (Machine)

Setup

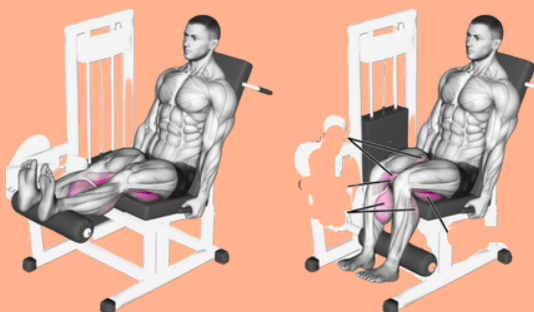
- Sit on the machine with your back flat against the pad
- Position your ankles under the padded lever (adjust to fit your legs)
- Set your knees just in front of the machine's pivot point
- Grip the handles or sides for stability
- Adjust the seat so your knees are aligned with the machine's axis and you feel comfortable

Form

- Engage your core and press your legs downward slightly to maintain a stable position
- Curl your legs toward your glutes by flexing your knees and squeezing your hamstrings
- Hold the contracted position for a brief second at the top
- Slowly lower the weight back to the starting position under control, resisting the pull

Tips

- Keep your hips flat and avoid lifting your torso during the curl
- Use a controlled tempo — don't let the weight slam down
- Focus on hamstring engagement by squeezing at the top of the movement
- Great for isolating the hamstrings and improving posterior chain strength
- Adjust the leg pad placement to match your body for optimal comfort and efficiency



LYING HAMSTRING CURL

Lying Hamstring Curl (Machine)

Setup

- Lie face down on the machine with your hips aligned to the pivot point
- Position your ankles under the padded lever (adjust to your leg length)
- Place your feet hip-width apart
- Grip the handles or sides of the machine for stability
- Ensure your body is flat on the bench, and adjust the pad to sit just above your heels

Form

- Keep your core engaged and press your torso into the bench for stability
- Curl your legs upward by bending your knees, bringing your heels toward your glutes
- Squeeze your hamstrings at the top of the movement
- Slowly lower the weight back to the starting position with control
- Maintain steady and controlled movements throughout

Tips

- Keep your hips pressed down to prevent lifting off the bench during the curl
- Avoid jerking or using momentum – control the descent
- Focus on fully contracting your hamstrings at the top of the movement
- Great for hamstring isolation, building strength, and improving muscle endurance
- Don't let your knees rotate or shift; keep them aligned with the machine



REVERSE LUNGE

Reverse Lunge

Setup

- Stand tall with feet hip-width apart
- Keep your chest upright and core engaged
- Place your hands on your hips, at your sides, or hold dumbbells by your sides for added resistance

Form

- Step one foot back into a lunge position, lowering your back knee toward the ground
- Keep your front knee aligned with your toes — don't let it extend past your toes
- Lower until your front thigh is parallel to the ground or as low as comfortable
- Push through the heel of your front foot to return to standing
- Step the back foot forward to meet the front foot, then repeat on the opposite leg

Tips

- Keep your upper body upright and avoid leaning forward
- Maintain balance by ensuring your knee and foot are aligned in each lunge
- Focus on slow, controlled movement to activate your muscles more effectively
- You can add dumbbells, a barbell, or kettlebells for extra resistance
- Ideal for improving unilateral strength, correcting imbalances, and enhancing coordination



ROMANIAN DEADLIFT (RDL)

🏋️♂️ Romanian Deadlift (RDL)

Setup

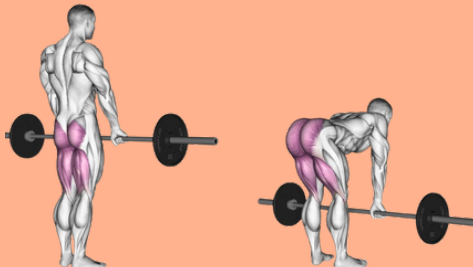
- Stand with your feet hip-width apart
- Hold a barbell or dumbbells in front of your thighs with a neutral grip (palms facing toward you)
- Engage your core and keep your back straight
- Slight bend in your knees to start (don't lock them out)

Form

- Push your hips back, not down, while keeping the barbell or dumbbells close to your legs
- Lower the weights by hinging at the hips, maintaining a flat back and slight bend in the knees
- Lower until you feel a stretch in your hamstrings (usually just below knee height)
- Reverse the motion by pushing your hips forward to return to standing
- Squeeze your glutes at the top, locking out your hips without overextending your back

Tips

- Keep a neutral spine throughout the movement — avoid rounding your back
- Focus on hinging at the hips, not bending at the waist
- Engage your hamstrings and glutes to lift the weight — don't rely on your lower back
- Keep the weights close to your body, as this improves form and reduces strain
- Ideal for building posterior chain strength, especially hamstrings, glutes, and lower back



HACK SQUAT

Hack Squat (Machine)

Setup

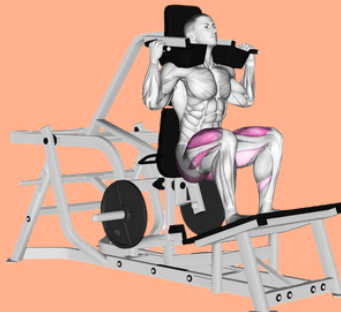
- Sit on the machine with your back flat against the pad
- Position your feet shoulder-width apart on the platform (feet slightly lower for more quad activation or higher for more glute/hamstring focus)
- Adjust the backrest so your body is at a comfortable angle
- Place your shoulders under the shoulder pads and secure your feet on the platform
- Grip the handles (if available) for balance and stability
- Unlock the safety bar (if applicable) to begin the movement

Form

- Slowly lower your body by bending your knees and hips, keeping your back pressed against the pad
- Lower until your thighs are parallel to the ground or as deep as comfortable
- Keep your knees aligned with your toes and avoid letting them cave inward
- Press through your heels and extend your legs to return to the starting position
- Fully extend at the top without locking your knees, maintaining control throughout

Tips

- Focus on a controlled descent — don't let the weight drop quickly
- Keep your chest up and back pressed firmly against the seat for stability
- Adjust foot placement for either more quad emphasis (feet lower) or hamstring/glute activation (feet higher)
- Avoid locking your knees completely at the top to protect the joint
- A great alternative for those who find barbell squats hard on the lower back



HIP THRUST

Hip Thrust 🍎

Setup:

- Sit on the ground with your upper back resting against a bench or sturdy platform.
- Roll a barbell (or use a dumbbell/bodyweight) onto your hips. Use a bar pad or towel for comfort.
- Feet flat on the floor, knees bent, and heels about hip-width apart.

form:

- Brace your core and drive through your heels to lift your hips upward.
- At the top, your body should form a straight line from shoulders to knees.
- Squeeze your glutes hard at the top! Hold for a second or two.
- Lower your hips slowly and repeat.

Tips:

- Chin tucked: Keep your head in a neutral position (don't look up) to avoid arching your back. ✅
- Feet placement: Too far = hamstrings take over. Too close = quads take over. Aim for 90° at the knees at the top.
- Heels down: Push through them, not your toes.
- Glutes, not momentum: Focus on squeezing, not bouncing the weight.
- Controlled movement: Both on the way up and down. No rushing. ⌚



SINGLE LEG HIP THRUST

Single-Leg Hip Thrust 🍌🍌

Setup:

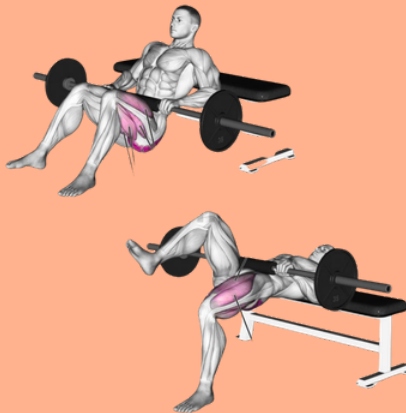
- Sit on the ground with your upper back resting against a bench or sturdy platform.
- Plant one foot flat on the floor with your knee bent at ~90°.
- Lift the other leg off the floor — you can keep it straight or bent.
- Brace your core and keep your hips square.

Execution:

- Drive through your planted heel to lift your hips toward the ceiling.
- At the top, your shoulders, hips, and knee should form a straight line.
- Squeeze your glute at the top and hold for a moment.
- Lower your hips slowly with control.
- Complete all reps on one side, then switch legs.

Form Tips:

- Hips level: Don't let one side dip or rotate — keep everything square.
- Chin tucked: Protect your neck and avoid arching your lower back.
- Heel drive: Push through your grounded heel — don't lift it.
- Slow & controlled: No bouncing — focus on time under tension. ⌚
- Start bodyweight: Master form before adding dumbbells or tempo.



BACK SQUAT

Back Squat 🏋️♀️

Setup:

- Set the barbell on a squat rack at mid-chest height.
- Step under the bar and rest it across your upper traps (high-bar) or rear delts (low-bar).
- Grip the bar slightly wider than shoulder-width and squeeze your shoulder blades together.
- Unrack the bar by standing tall, then take 2–3 steps back.
- Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, toes slightly turned out.

form:

- Take a deep breath and brace your core.
- Push your hips back slightly and bend at the knees to lower into a squat.
- Keep your chest up and spine neutral — aim for thighs parallel or lower.
- Drive through your heels to stand back up, keeping knees tracking over toes.
- Exhale at the top, then repeat.

Form Tips:

- Knees out: Don't let them cave inward — track them over your toes.
- Chest proud: Avoid leaning too far forward or rounding your back.
- Heels down: Keep your weight centered — no coming onto your toes.
- Breath & brace: Inhale before you descend, exhale as you rise.
- Use safety bars or a spotter when lifting heavy for safety ✅



CABLE PULLTHROUGHS

Cable Pull-Throughs

Setup

- Set up a low cable pulley on a cable machine with a rope attachment
- Stand facing away from the machine with your feet shoulder-width apart
- Grab the rope with both hands and step back slightly, creating tension on the cable
- Position your hips back (like you're about to do a deadlift) while keeping a slight bend in your knees
- Keep your core engaged, chest lifted, and shoulders back

Form

- With your arms straight, hinge at the hips and pull the rope between your legs by pushing your hips back (don't squat)
- Keep your back flat and your chest open as you lower your torso until you feel a stretch in your hamstrings
- Engage your glutes and hamstrings to pull the rope forward and return to standing position
- Squeeze your glutes at the top of the movement and hold for a second before repeating

Tips

- Keep your core tight and avoid rounding your back
- Focus on pushing your hips back (not squatting down) as you lower the weight
- Exhale as you pull the rope forward, inhale as you lower
- Ensure your knees stay soft, but don't bend too much



FRONT LUNGE

Front Lunge 🏋️

Setup:

- Stand tall with feet hip-width apart, holding dumbbells at your sides or a barbell on your shoulders.
- Keep your chest up, core engaged, and shoulders back.

Form:

- Step forward with one leg, lowering your hips until both knees are bent at about 90°.
- Ensure your back knee is close to touching the ground, while the front knee stays behind your toes.
- Keep your torso upright and avoid leaning forward.
- Push through the heel of your front foot to return to the starting position.
- Alternate legs or complete all reps on one side before switching.

Tips:

- Knee tracking: Keep your front knee in line with your toes, not letting it cave inward.
- Chest up: Avoid leaning forward or rounding your back.
- Stride length: Step out far enough to get a deep lunge but not so far that it compromises your balance.
- Glute focus: Push through the heel of your front foot to engage your glutes.
- Controlled movement: Lower slowly to avoid using momentum and put more focus on the muscles. 🕒



CABLE KICKBACKS

Cable Kickback 🍎

Setup:

- Attach an ankle strap to the low pulley of a cable machine.
- Strap it around your ankle, then step back slightly so there's tension on the cable.
- Hold onto the machine or a stable surface for balance, and stand upright with a slight bend in your knees.

Form:

- Shift your weight onto your non-working leg and slightly hinge forward from the hips.
- Keeping your knee straight, extend your strapped leg backward, driving through your heel.
- Squeeze your glutes at the top and pause briefly.
- Slowly return the leg to the starting position without letting the cable pull you forward.
- Repeat for the desired reps, then switch legs.

Tips:

- Control the movement: Don't let the weight swing — keep it slow and steady. 🐢
- Squeeze your glutes: At the top of the movement, fully contract your glute to maximize activation.
- Neutral spine: Keep your back straight and avoid rounding or arching.
- Leg height: Keep the kickback in line with your body — no need to go too high.
- Focus on your glutes: Keep the motion coming from the hips, not your lower back.



STEP-UPS

Step-Ups (Single Dumbbell) 🏋️

Setup:

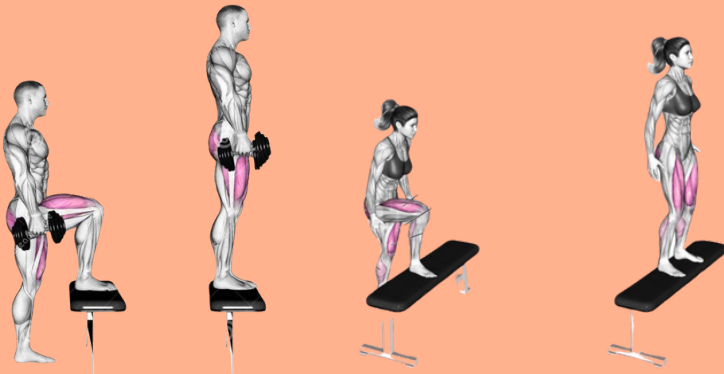
- Stand facing a stable bench, platform, or step, with feet hip-width apart.
- Hold a single dumbbell in one hand, letting it hang naturally by your side.
- Use your other hand (non-dumbbell hand) to hold onto something for balance, like a wall, railing, or a stable surface.

Form:

- Step up onto the platform with your dumbbell-holding leg, pushing through the heel of that leg.
- Drive your body upwards, bringing your other leg up to stand fully on the platform.
- Step back down slowly with the same leg, maintaining control.
- Alternate legs or complete all reps on one leg before switching.

Tips:

- Knee alignment: Keep your knee in line with your toes as you step up, avoiding any inward collapse.
- Full foot placement: Ensure your entire foot is on the platform to engage your glutes and quads properly.
- Upright posture: Keep your chest up and avoid leaning forward, especially while holding the dumbbell.
- Slow descent: Focus on lowering with control to maximize muscle activation.
- 🔄
- Engage the glutes: Drive through the heel of the working leg to engage the glutes more effectively.



SMITH MACHINE BACK SQUAT

SETUP:

- Stand inside the smith machine with the bar resting on your upper back (not your neck)
- Place feet shoulder-width apart, slightly in front of the bar, toes slightly turned out
- Grip the bar just outside shoulder width
- Unrack the bar and stand tall to stabilise

FORM:

- Lower by bending hips and knees, sitting back into the squat
- Keep chest up and core engaged
- Squat to at least parallel (or as low as feels comfortable)
- Push through your heels to stand back up
- Repeat with control

TIPS:

- Knees track in line with toes, don't let them cave in
- Keep weight through your heels for better glute focus
- Move slowly on the way down 🐢
- Don't rush to add weight, focus on form first
- Stay controlled throughout the full movement

