# Foundations of Weight Training: Part 3

* Consult with your doctor before embarking on any fitness program.

**Part Three of "Foundations of Weight Training" focuses on basic exercises for the legs and buttocks.** Building these areas of the body will help improve balance and stability, and boost metabolism. In addition, the muscles of the legs assist the heart in pumping blood from the feet.

**This training begins with two primary movements that must be learned in order to execute the remainder of the exercises.** Use these primary movements as a warm-up prior to a leg workout.

**Primary Movement 1: The Hip Hinge**

This primary movement allows you to employ the powerful muscles of the glutes, hamstrings and lower back so that you can safely lift objects. Conversely, the act of sitting causes these same posterior muscles to lose their strength and flexibility.

* You will need a long dowel or a broom stick for this exercise.

1) Stand up straight and align the dowel with your back, one hand behind the neck and the other hand in the lower back. Note that the back of the head, the middle of the upper back, and the tailbone are in contact with the dowel. The end of the dowel should not extend below the tailbone.
2) Now stand against the wall and take one step away. Stand with the feet shoulder width apart with relaxed knees. **This is the starting position.**
3) Bend forward from the waist, allowing the hips to go backward until they touch the wall. The upper torso should be almost parallel to the floor.
4) Return to an upright position by pushing pelvis forward, reversing the hinge movement.
5) Repeat Steps 3) and 4).

Tips:

- The back of the head, the area between the shoulder blades, and the tailbone must remain in contact with the dowel during both phases of the movement.



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| | • Knees should be relaxed (slightly bent) throughout the movement.<br>• Weight moves from the middle of the foot to the heel during this movement. Weight must not move to the toes.<br>• After conquering the hip hinge with the dowel, move away from the wall and practise this primary movement in the centre of the room. |

**Primary Movement 2: Bracing the Core**

Stabilizing the core is essential when learning to execute compound exercises such as the squat.

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|  | 1) Facing a mirror, stand with your feet hip width apart. Allow your arms to fall gently to the sides, with palms facing the mirror.<br>2) Now take a deep breath in and allow the navel to extend outward.<br>3) Briefly exhale and stiffen the abdominal muscles. Continue breathing with the abdominals engaged. **You are now bracing your core.**<br>4) Keeping your core braced, lift the right leg in front of the body. The pelvis should remain immobile. Return the leg to a standing position. See image for proper alignment.<br>5) Repeat with the left leg. Try to isolate the movement so that the leg moves freely from the hip joint without altering the alignment of the pelvis.<br><br><u>Tips</u>:<br>• Practise breathing while bracing the core. Avoid holding your breath.<br>• Learn to move each leg freely while bracing the core. Keep the pelvis immobile.<br>• Keep the sternum lifted, with muscles engaged between the shoulder blades. |


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## The Leg Exercises

Do 12-15 repetitions of each exercise to complete one set, then rest 30-45 seconds before doing a second set.

**1) Squats**

The squat is one of the primary exercises of resistance training. As a compound exercises, it targets the quadriceps (the front muscles of the upper thigh) and the buttocks.

1) Stand with your feet slightly wider than your hips. Toes should point slightly out and the palms of the hands should face toward the body.
2) With a braced core, take a deep breath in while bending the knees and pushing the hips back. Make sure to lift the chest and to keep the shoulders square as you lower yourself until your thighs are almost parallel to the floor. See images.
3) Exhale and push through your heels to come up, extending both the hips and the knees until you return to your starting position.

Tips:

- The knees must remain in alignment with the second toe.
- The weight of the body must be distributed evening on both feet.
- The ankles must not collapse in.



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**2) Weighted Hip Thrusts**

This exercise targets the posterior muscles of the upper leg, especially the buttocks. A barbell is usually used, but any weighted object will suffice, including a small, weighted suitcase. This exercise can also be done without weight.

* A horizontal bench is required for this exercise.

1) Begin by sitting on the floor with your upper back against the bench, your knees bent, and your feet flat on the floor. If using a free weight, place a rolled towel or a small pad in the crease of your hips, then place the weight on top. Hold the weight firmly while executing this exercise.
2) Inhale deeply in the seated position and lift the pelvis slightly off the floor and place the shoulder blades near the top of the bench.
3) Exhale and brace the core while squeezing the glutes and pushing the hips up. This motion will force the shoulder blades on top of the bench. The torso should be parallel to the floor at the end of the movement. Hold this position for two seconds.
4) Inhale and slowly return to the seated position.

Tips:

- Ensure that the knees are in alignment with the feet throughout the exercise.
- Maintain spinal alignment, especially the lumbar region of the back.

**3) Calf raises**

1) Stand with the feet hip width apart. The weight of the body should be directly in front of the shins. Take a deep breath in.
2) Exhale and push through the balls of the feet until your heels are off the floor and your calf muscles are fully contracted. Pause in this position for two seconds.
3) Slowly lower your heels to the starting position.
4) Repeat.

Tips:



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| | • Make sure that the weight is directed over the second toe. Do not allow the weight to move<br>• Keep the weight centred in front of the shins throughout the exercise. Avoid rocking back and forth on the feet.<br>• Do this exercise slowly, especially when lowering the heels.<br>• Do the full range of motion; go all the way up to a full contraction with each repetition. |

**4) Back Lunges**

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|  <br>  | 1) Stand with feet about hip width apart.<br><br>2) Inhale and take a big step backwards with the right foot and slowly lower the right knee to the floor while keeping the torso vertical.<br><br>The pelvis should be located between the two legs when lowering the knee. The chest should be lifted.<br><br>3) Exhale and drive the right foot into the floor, stepping forcefully back to the starting position.<br><br>4) Repeat with the other leg for the next repetition.<br><br><u>Tips</u>:<br>• Keep the pelvis in a neutral position. The area in front of the hips must remain flat.<br>• The chest must remain lifted, with the shoulders square.<br>• The front knee should be about 90 degrees when the other knee is in contact with the ground. If you can barely see your toes beyond your knees, then your knees are aligned correctly.<br>• Keep the back knee aligned with the back foot. |


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