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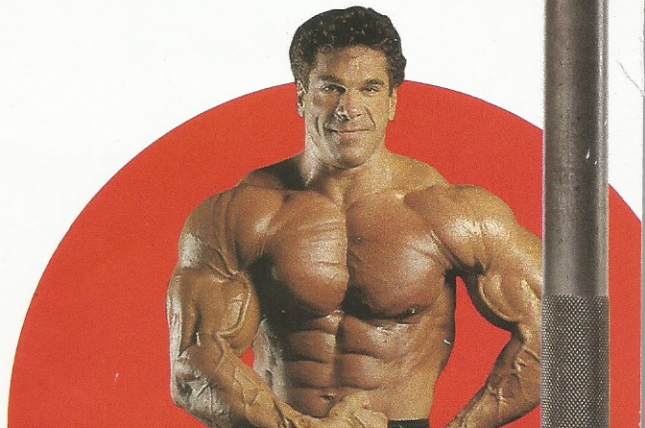
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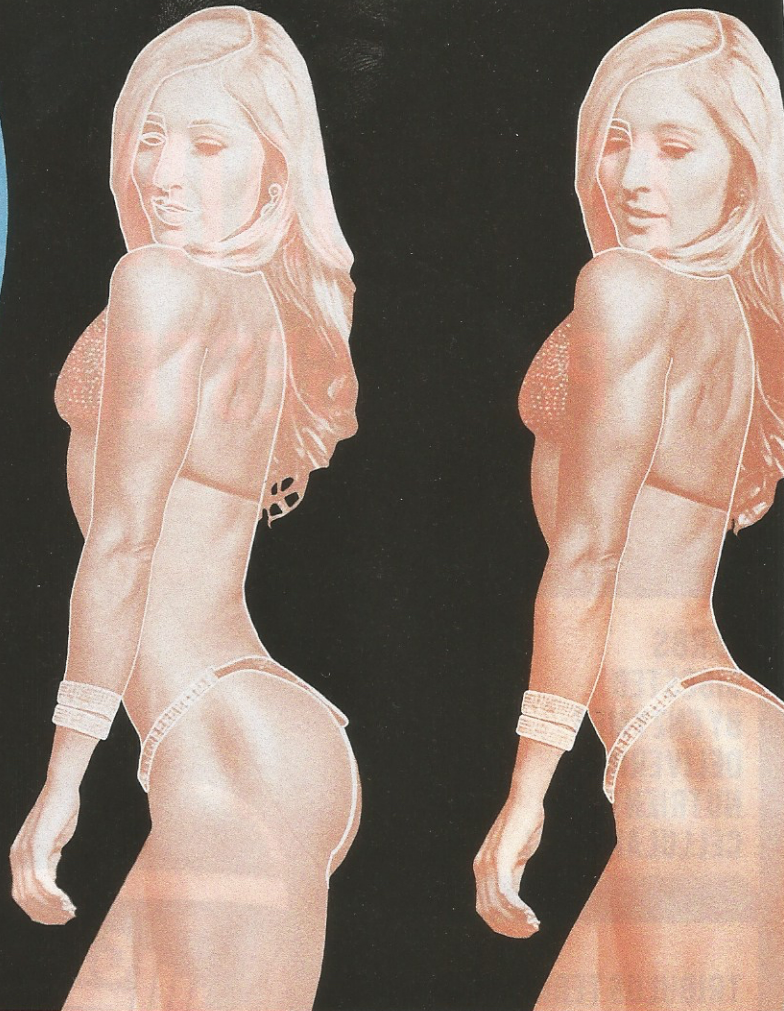
GLUTE GUIDE

Build strength, tone and performance in the "Crown Jewel" of all the gluteal muscles: the Gluteus Maximus.
Ft. Stephanie Stoven @littlemissfitspo

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Pete Holman, CSCS, has a Master of Science Degree in Physical Therapy. He is an inventor of functional exercise equipment, including the Nautilus Glute Drive and TRX Rip Trainer, and a former US National TaeKwon-Do champion and team captain.



THE GLUTES HAVE ARGUABLY BECOME THE NUMBER ONE TALKED ABOUT AND MOST CONSISTENTLY TRAINED MUSCLE GROUP IN THE HUMAN BODY.

Fitness models, bodybuilding competition pros and Hollywood "A-listers" are incorporating glute training into their programs in hopes of having Instagram worthy "peaches". However, the importance of glute training doesn't come from the "selfie" generation; it comes from longtime strength coaches, physical therapists, and corrective exercise specialists. Prominent strength coaches, like Mike Boyle, perform glute activation exercises prior to every workout with their athletes. Famous spine researchers, like Dr. Stuart McGill, say that improper glute firing is a major contributing cause of low back pain. In my own experience as a Physical Therapist and strength coach, I have had patients that suffered from chronic low back pain and, no matter how much soft tissue work and stretching I gave them, until I strengthened their glutes they failed to improve. Regardless of why you

train your glutes, we can state with relative certainty that the following two things are true: 1) proper glute activation is imperative for sports and daily life, and 2) those that have well-developed glutes are the envy of gyms around the world.

Now that we understand the importance of glute training, the question becomes "What is the best way to train the glutes for strength, tone, and performance?" Well, guess what? You're in luck! In this four-part series on glute training, we are going to break down the three gluteal muscle groups (gluteus maximus, gluteus medius and the external rotators), share with you the best exercises for developing each group, and finish off the series with an article focused on recovery so you can continue to keep your backside functioning like a Burlington Northern caboose throughout your lifetime.

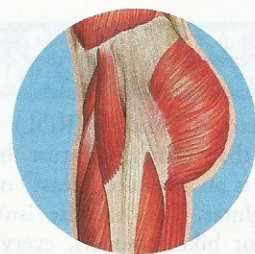
You can't start talking about the glutes without mentioning the "crown jewel" of them all: the gluteus maximus. The gluteus maximus originates off the posterior 1/3rd of the iliac crest, dorsal surface of the sacrum and coccyx, and inserts on the iliotibial tract and gluteal tuberosity of the femur. The gluteus maximus extends and laterally rotates the thigh and assists in raising the trunk from a flexed position (i.e., the concentric phase of a Deadlift). The gluteus maximus fires when going from a seated to a standing position (like getting out of a low car), when climbing stairs or running, or, my personal favorite as a former US National TaeKwon-Do champion, performing a mule kick! A well-developed gluteus maximus gives volume and profile curve to the backside and is the largest and most powerful of the gluteal muscle groups. The "actions" of the gluteus maximus (extension and external rotation), give us insight into what types of movement patterns will best strengthen and tone this muscle group. Although there are many exercises designed to target the gluteus maximus, the following can be

EXERCISE #1 HIP THRUST

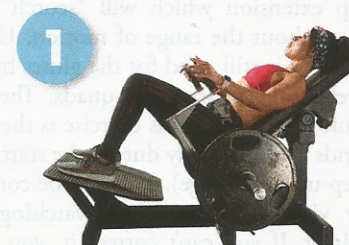
The Hip Thrust is to glute training as dollar cost averaging is to financial security: **IMPERATIVE!** I remember in graduate school having a teacher that promoted glute bridges like they were the “second coming”. He programmed them for low back pain, for hip pathology, for patellofemoral dysfunction, and even for ankle sprains. It wasn’t until the “Glute Guy” Bret Contreras came along in the mid-2000s and thought to elevate the back off the ground and load up the movement pattern that the simple and effective Glute Bridge exercise got “**SUPER-SIZED**” into the modern-day Hip Thrust. The Hip Thrust is a Glute Bridge with the upper back elevated off the ground. The elevated back position allows for a greater range of motion than the typical Glute Bridge exercise. Greater range of motion means more time under tension, and more time under tension means more **GAINZ!** Additionally, by elevating the back, it puts the hips in a position to hold weight and progressively overload the movement pattern. This move can be performed using barbell resistance, elastic resistance, or dumbbell resistance. In fact, there are even several machines on the market that make setting up the Hip Thrust easy as cake (check out my latest invention, the Nautilus Glute Drive).

To perform the Hip Thrust, you will need a flat bench or soft plyo-box (approximately 17”high), a barbell, dumbbell, or elastic bands for resistance, some type of padding (Airex foam pad or barbell pad) for your lap, and a safe and clear working environment. Once you have all the gear:

1. Place your upper back (base of the scapula) on the bench
2. Place a pad on your lap and the resistance on the pad
3. Place your knees at a 90-degree angle
4. Tuck your chin towards your stomach (this helps fire the anterior core and puts the pelvis in a slight posterior tilt to prevent arching of the low back which can cause injury)
5. Thrust your hips upwards towards the ceiling until your torso is in line with your thighs
6. Pause at the top for 1-3 seconds and concentrate deeply on squeezing the glutes



I recommend performing 3-4 sets of 15 reps with an isometric pause at the top of the range of motion and using somewhere between 50% to 60% of your one rep max weight. This exercise is notorious for people loading up tons of weight, but most of the research shows that the greatest hypertrophic changes are facilitated by using higher volume and less load. Additionally, there is less risk of low back injury with lighter loads.



VERONICA MALLOY USING NAUTILUS GLUTE DRIVE

considered three of the **BEST** because of their efficiency, effectiveness and “bang for their buck” when it comes to glute max training.

The final thing to consider while performing these exercises, which can be done twice weekly, is the “mind-muscle” connection. If you are thinking about your “To-Do List” instead of concentrating on maximally squeezing the glutes on every rep, I guarantee you will not get the results you desire. Deeply concentrate on your glutes like a Samurai would concentrate in battle, block everything else out, envision the muscle fibers overlapping as you squeeze at the top range of motion. “Instead of thinking about doing one set of 15 reps, think about doing 15 sets of **ONE REP**” and make every rep count like it was your last! You can also refer to the Mind Muscle Connection Department within this issue for more tips on maximizing your mind-muscle connection during your workouts.

EXERCISE #2 ROMANIAN DEADLIFT

The Romanian Deadlift (RDL) is more technical than the Hip Thrust, but once mastered is an absolute “beast” of a drill for the glutes. This exercise isn’t just a favorite for bikini models, every serious Olympic lifter and powerlifter has this move in their program because of its crossover to Olympic lifts, squats, and deadlifts. The key to performing a proper RDL is “grooving” a hip hinge pattern. The hip hinge occurs when the pelvis drifts slightly back as the torso fulcrums, or “hinges” around, the hips. I like to have my clients and athletes practice the hinge with a wooden or PVC dowel. This allows for proper rehearsal without load and gives you a chance to learn the mechanics of the motion prior to loading. Learning this pattern will improve glute max activation and protect the spine while performing the RDL. It is important for the knees to remain slightly flexed throughout the hinge and for the hips to shift slightly backwards (do not just bend over at the waist). Once you have the hip hinge down, you can perform the RDL with a light bar. Make sure to use a squat rack or boxes to

set the bar on as the bar will travel just past the knee caps towards the floor on descent. If you go too low, your back will flex and be susceptible to injury. Let’s now take a look at the set-up and movement progression for the RDL:

1. Start with the bar resting against your thighs to “Start Position”
2. Squeeze your lats and brace your core (this will help protect your spine)
3. Slightly flex your knees and hips dropping into the “Power Position”
4. Slide the bar down your thighs as you shift your hips back (just like the Hinge Drill)



5. Stop at the “Bottom Position” (bar just below knee caps), ensure that your spine is in neutral and your shins are vertical
6. Ascend back towards the “Start Position” (initiate movement by contracting the glutes)

I recommend performing 3-4 sets of 12-15 reps starting with 50%-60% of your one rep max weight. However, you MUST learn this movement first and demonstrate competency prior to loading up with weight. Most of my clients I work with either start with a 35lb or 45lb bar for several sessions prior to adding weight.

EXERCISE #3 HIGH STEP-UP

The final exercise in the glute max series is the High Step-Up. Remember, the glutes extend the hips, so by going into deep hip flexion, as can be seen on this exercise, the glutes are targeted in a stretched out and weak position. To stand up on the box, the glutes are then forced to go into a long arc hip extension which will “scorch” them throughout the range of motion. Using a low box is still good for the glutes but will preferentially target the quads. The main fault I see during this exercise is the pelvis tends to tilt laterally during the start of the step-up (see image). This can be corrected by videoing yourself or watching in a mirror. If you can’t correct it, you might have weak lateral core stabilizers and need to do Side Planks and/or Suitcase Carries to strengthen the core. Following is the proper High Step-Up set-up:

1. Find a box that is high enough that when your foot is placed atop it, your thigh is at a horizontal angle (see “start position”)
2. Brace core and drive through heel of top leg (don’t bounce off the floor with the down leg; instead, lift yourself up with the up leg)
3. Keep head and chest tall with your spine in neutral
4. Stack your up leg knee over your foot (don’t allow the knee to collapse towards the midline)
5. Finish the move by keeping the majority of the load on your up leg and squeeze the glute, making sure your hip is extended at the top of the motion (you can use the opposite leg for balance)
6. Descend down slowly using the up leg glute to control the descent

I recommend performing 3-4 sets of 12-15 reps starting with 50%-60% of your one rep max weight. This exercise is surprisingly challenging (especially for larger individuals) and will challenge your cardiovascular condition as well as your glutes.

Follow this program religiously and prepare yourself for the next installment of this series, available in the Winter 2019 Iron Man Magazine Issue, in which we build lateral curves in the glutes to round out the backside by focusing on the gluteus medius.



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- PETER MOLLO



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