# Love your Bum?

Bums, we all have them and many of us spend a lot of time looking at them and wanting to tone them. Why other than vanity should we have nice strong glutes? The hip is basically the link between the trunk and the lower limb. Everyone has had the importance of good core strength drilled into them over recent years but without a good strong bum, you have a significant energy leak in your kinetic chain. Basically, if your bum is not strong enough to cope with forces applied through the hip and leg, this results in poor mechanics of the trunk or legs, often leading to pain and injury.



So exactly what are the best exercises for training your glutes? Unfortunately, this is not a straight forward question to answer and will be different for everyone depending on their strength and the brains ability to activate their glutes.

Most of us spend a significant amount of time sitting on our bums and a whole lot less time exercising them. This increase in sedentary activity, often associated with commencement of full time work can result in weakness and wasting of the glutes. The brain however is very good at cheating and when we then perform activity and exercise which would generally require good glute activation and control, the brain will look for ways to subtly change our loading and movement patterns to find other willing muscles to take over. This sounds OK on the surface, unfortunately however, this generally results in muscles and tissues of the body being forced to work and absorb more force than they were deigned to cope with, resulting in overload and injury.

There are many exercises which can be great for strengthening the glutes, so where to start? Unless you are training the glutes for purely aesthetic reasons, the exercises that you choose should be as functional as possible. What this means is that you want to train the muscles with exercises that replicate the movements and loads that hips and legs need to undertake in the sports and daily activities that you undertake. Obviously, this can mean very different things for different people.

While their can be benefit from any exercise that activates your butt muscles, your bum is designed to work when you're in a weight bearing position with your foot on the ground. Any glute training program should be aiming towards incorporating functional weight bearing training as a core principle, 2 perfect examples and squats and lunges. At times however, when your brain has learned to cheat very well, it is necessary to start with something a little lighter or less complex and work up to these exercises.





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If the most vigorous exercise that you undertake over the week is a brisk walk, then gently body weight squats and lunges are likely enough.  If you preform sports and exercises requiring more explosive power, then heavier weighted squats and lunges as well as plyometric exercises like box jumps are probably more what you should be aiming for.  So, love your bum and make sure that your training incorporates a good focus on strength and control of the glutes!

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