

# Quadriceps



## LEGS GIVE YOUR BODY SYMMETRY

**P**owerful legs are the foundation of an impressive physique. Strong, defined legs give your body symmetry and show off your overall strength.

So, why is there so much “leg avoidance” in weight training? It may be because leg exercises are not always considered easy or fun, so many people prefer to focus on their upper body (the “gotta have big arms, big chest” syndrome).

But by neglecting the legs, you can actually slow your progress in other areas. Your body tends to want to grow proportionally. Train your legs hard and we know you’ll be surprised by the upper-body growth that is stimulated as a result.

Another great thing about working legs: if you work them, they’ll grow. That may sound obvious, but many people who

make slower gains with their upper body find that getting their legs to develop is a quick process.

Training legs with intensity will also elevate your heart rate and allow you to burn fat more efficiently.

## 1 barbell squats

The squat is one of the most efficient exercises for developing mass and power in your legs.

It is also an effective compound exercise that employs many stabilizer muscles to complete the lift.



START/FINISH



MID-POINT



**Starting Position:** To reduce the chance of lower back injury, we recommend using a weight belt for this exercise. Rest a barbell on the upper portion of your back, not your neck. Firmly grip the bar with your hands almost twice your shoulder width apart. Position your feet on a heel raise so that the balls of your feet are resting on the floor and your heels are elevated. Your feet should be about shoulder-width apart, with your toes pointing slightly outward and knees over the toes.

**The Exercise:** Keeping your back as straight as possible and your chin up, bend your knees and slowly lower your hips straight down until your thighs are parallel with the floor. Once you reach the bottom position, press the weight up from your heels. Inhale on the way down and exhale on the way up.

### TIP DON'T LEAN...

forward or curve your back. This will stress your back and decrease the emphasis on the quads. Keep your back as erect as possible.

# Quadriceps

## 2 leg presses

This is a terrific mass-building exercise to add size to your thighs. It can be less stressful than squats to the lower back and allows you to use fairly heavy weights.



**Starting Position:** Sitting on a leg-press machine, position your feet together against the crosspiece about shoulder-width apart and toes pointed slightly outward. Grasp the handle grips or sides of the seat.

**The Exercise:** Bend your knees and lower the weight as far as possible without changing the position of your hips. Do not lower the weight so far that your hips start to curl up off the seat. Pause briefly, then slowly push the weight back up using your heels, not your toes. Do not lock your knees at the top, but rather take the weight to just before lock. Then begin to lower the weight again in a slow and deliberate fashion.



**TIP** LOWER THE WEIGHT ONLY TO...  
the point just before your hips and pelvis start to "curl up." Allowing your pelvis to curl up off the seat puts a lot of pressure on your spine and increases the chance of back injury.

# eps

“When there is a change in the shape of the body, there is a change in the disposition of the soul.”

## 3 leg extensions

When you give it all you've got, this exercise defines and shapes the front of the thigh, especially the muscles right above the knees.

**Starting Position:** Using a leg-extension machine, sit in the seat and hook your feet under the padded bar. Adjust the pad and/or the seat so that your knees hang off the end of the seat and the footpad rests on the lowest part of the shins and right above the ankle. The pad should not be on your feet or in the middle of your shins. Grasp the handles on the machine or the edges of the seat to keep your hips from lifting up as you perform the exercise.

**The Exercise:** Extend your legs until your knees are straight, making sure you remain seated flat on the machine. Raise the weight all the way, lock and hold briefly, then slowly lower the weight back to the starting position. It's important to get the full range of motion and feel the contraction in your muscles all the way up and all the way down.



**TIP** ALTERNATE THE POSITION... of your feet to work the various areas of the quadriceps. Try pointing your toes and flexing your feet, and tilting your toes toward and away from each other.



**TIP** DON'T "CHEAT"... by letting your hips come up off the bench during the exercise. Lighten up on the weight if necessary.



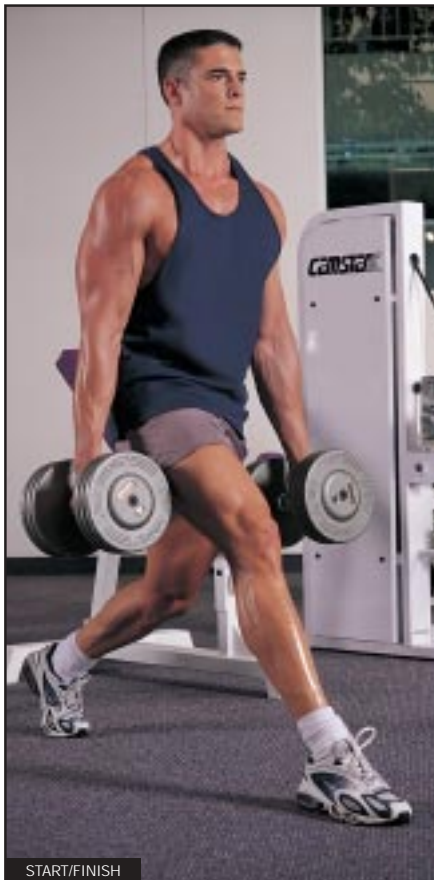
# Hamstrin

## 4 dumbbell lunges

This exercise works the glutes, quads, inner and outer thighs and hamstrings. You can perform it in a stationary position, or you can “lunge-walk” across a large, uncluttered area.

**Starting Position:** Hold a dumbbell in each hand and pull your shoulders back. Lift your chest up and look straight ahead. Position your right leg forward in a long stride. Your foot should be far enough in front of you so that when you bend your right knee, your thigh and lower leg form a right angle.

**The Exercise:** Slowly bend your knees, lowering your hips so your rear knee just clears the floor. Pause briefly in this position, then slowly straighten your legs and raise your body back up to a standing position. Complete a full set, then switch legs and repeat. Alternatively, you can switch legs and move forward across the floor with each repetition.



**TIP** PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO...  
the angle formed by your thigh and lower leg. Your knee should be directly over your ankle. Don't let your knee stray over your toes. Your knee and toes should be pointed in the same direction. This can cause severe strain to the tendons of the knee.



# ngs

“The only true measure of your success is how close you come to 100% of your capabilities.”

## 5 straight-leg deadlifts

A terrific exercise to stretch your hamstrings and work your glutes and lower back.

**Starting Position:** Grasping a barbell using an overhand grip, stand up straight with your hands and feet shoulder width apart.

**The Exercise:** Keeping your legs nearly locked, bend forward at the waist until your upper body is almost parallel with the floor, keeping your back straight and your eyes looking straight ahead. The barbell should be hanging at

arm's length below you. Continue to look straight ahead and keep your back straight as you use the muscles in the back of your legs to return to the starting position.



**TIP** DON'T HUNCH YOUR BACK... or lean backwards as this can increase your risk of injury. Keep your back fairly straight throughout the exercise. Looking straight ahead of you will help you to keep your back straight.



# Hamstrings

## 6 lying leg curls

This exercise isolates and adds mass to your hamstring muscles.



**Starting Position:** Lie face down on a leg-curl machine and hook your heels under the roller pad. Your legs should be stretched out straight so that the pads rest on the back of your ankles. Grasp the handles under the bench for support.

**The Exercise:** Remaining flat on the bench, curl your legs up until your hamstrings are fully contracted. Release and lower the weight slowly back to the starting position. Concentrate on using a full range of motion.



**TIP** TRY POINTING YOUR TOES TO...

intensify the burn in your hamstrings.



# Calves

“The mind determines what is possible, but the soul surpasses it!”

## 7 seated calf raises

Do these to develop the soleus muscle of the lower calf (the “V shaped” part of the muscle which descends down to the Achilles tendon), and the medial and lateral heads of the gastrocnemius (the upper calf muscle).

**Starting Position:** Sit on the seated calf-raise machine and place your toes on the bottom crosspiece, hooking your knees under the crossbar pads so that the pads rest on the lower part of your quads. Slowly lower your heels as far toward the ground as possible.

**The Exercise:** Press up on your toes until your calves are fully contracted. Flex hard at the top, then slowly lower the weight back to the starting position. Try not to rock back and forth, but instead keep the calves working with a steady, rhythmic motion.



**TIP** TRY SLIDING YOUR HIPS...

forward on the seat so that the pads are resting a little further back on your thighs. This will isolate the soleus muscle even more.



# Calves

## 8 standing heel raises

This is a fantastic exercise for developing the overall mass of the calves.

**Starting Position:** Stand with your toes on the block of a standing-calf-raise machine and your heels hanging off the end of the platform. Hook your shoulders under the pads and straighten your legs, lifting the weight clear of the support.

Do not hunch, but rather keep your body straight. Keeping your legs straight, lower your heels and the weight as far as possible toward the floor.

**The Exercise:** Rise up on your toes as far as possible. Hold the contraction briefly, then slowly lower the weight back to the starting position.



**TIP** TRY VARYING THE AREA OF...  
emphasis in your calf muscles by pointing your toes in or out, keeping your knees and toes aligned.

