

Exercise Guide for a Sublime Appearance!

I like to split leg exercises into five groups:

- Buttocks - Gluteus Maximus (Glutes)
- Front Thigh - Quadriceps
- Back Thigh - Hamstring
- Calves
- Bits and Pieces

Buttocks (Glutes) & Front Thigh (Quadriceps)

Bottomline is: Whether you are a pear or an apple - You need a round bum to look good. That means **squats** are for you!

The front thigh is important as well and by doing squats you are covering the quadriceps as well.

As I mentioned above: I only changed to squats about 3 month ago. I used leg press machines before and was able to do the whole pile of weights. I could press more weight than the average guy can lift - and look at the legs! They are all right, but they don't look like 'great legs' and the bum didn't change a bit during that time.

So squat it is! There are more theories about how to do squats right than people doing them. You might hear a lot of controversial comments about deep squats like I am doing them. I never saw them taught to women by any of the gym instructors I observed, and they don't usually don't do them themselves - probably don't even know how to do them.

There is **one** really **good reason** why I'm recommending them: This movement represents all the lifting movements in daily life. Every single tissue you pick up from the floor should be picked up in a proper squat. And to reach the floor you have to be able to go deep down. **Deep Squats are the best way to keep your spine healthy and your bum and legs strong.** If you are learning the correct technique you will automatically incorporate this posture into your daily life.

I don't understand why women are so scared of them. This may be a bit sexist, but it is usually us ladies doing housework and shopping, don't we? That means lifting stuff all the time.

Hamstring

Exercising the hamstring is very important as well. It is called '**hamstring curl**'. It helps to keep the floppiness at bay and gives depth to the back of the thigh. The cross section of the upper leg has to be oval rather than round. The biggest muscles are in the front to stretch the leg (Quadriceps), and in the back to bend the leg (Hamstring). Smaller muscles are sitting high up close to the hips to adduct and abduct the legs. That means that the upper leg is mainly shaped by the big muscles in the front and the back.

Calves

Ah well, and then there are the calves. They are nasty buggers - very hard to train and reluctant to respond. Nevertheless, the bottom bit of the leg is the first thing that gets visible under a skirt - so a woman got to do what a woman got to do: **Calf exercises** are a must for shapeless or fat lower legs. I recently started an experiment on training the calves and with it the ankles because I felt they might need a bit of special convincing.

Bits and Pieces

There are smaller muscles attached to the pelvis on the inside and the outside of the leg called leg **adductor and abductor muscles**. They are responsible for the side movement of the leg. Squats cover those as well so guys usually don't do them - too girlie. Well, they usually don't have problems with wobbly bits between the legs and saddlebags. I won't have an exercise guide for those as the machines for those exercises are differing from gym to gym. If you want to incorporate them into your training plan, get an instructor to explain them to you and stick with the Three/12 Rule. I will cover them in the 'No Gym' section, though. As you won't be able to do heavy squats at home they are good additions to the leg training.

Another exercise is called **deadlift** which helps for the upper bum, lower back and covers those bits mentioned above as well. It is coming from the weightlifting corner and needs quite a bit of technique, about which there are a lot of different opinions around. It basically is like a squat only that the weight is not on your shoulders but in your hands and hence in front of you. What needs a bit more bum sticking out - see: Handling Weight - Lifting one big weight from the ground.

Furthermore there are **lunges** of all sorts. I don't like them as they put a lot of strain on my knees - something that usually is blamed on the squats. Additionally they feel very wobbly. I'm talking about stable posture in the 'Handling Weight' section. And lunges are not as stable as the gorilla posture used in squats.

Then there are a lot of different types of **leg press machines** in the gyms. They mainly target the front thigh (Quadriceps) and a bit the bum. They all have a chair and a plate to put the feet on. Sometimes it's the chair that is sliding back when you are pressing against the plate, while sometimes the plate is moving away from you. I used those and they are all right. You will have to get an instructor to get them explained to you. I used them for a while but didn't find them effective enough, because I needed the bum more than the legs - so I decided for the squats. If you don't feel comfortable with squats at all, then do leg presses instead and stick with the Three/12 Rule.

Numbers, Numbers, and a few things more!

It's time to get started now. So here is the number of sets and repetitions and whatever else you need to know.

Muscle size:	Glutes, Quadriceps and Hamstring are big muscles Calves are smaller but a bit special
Number of exercises:	3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Squats for Glutes, Quadriceps • Hamstring Curl • Calves
Order:	Work from big to small muscles, meaning in the above order.
Importance:	High - for all of them If you are short of time and want to skip some sets then: Firstly consider what else you are doing within the next couple of days. If you have planned for cardio sessions like power walking then cut back on calves, if you are going to go on the cross trainer cut back on squats and Hamstring. Secondly consider your best bits. If you have great calves cut back on those. If you have a round bum cut back on squats. Thirdly consider how well you trained each muscle in the recent past and cut back on the best trained one.
Number of sets:	These differ with each exercise and will be listed in the exercise description. If in doubt stick with the 'Three/12 Rule'.
Number of repetitions:	These differ with each exercise and will be listed in the exercise description. If in doubt stick with the 'Three/12 Rule'.
Duration:	40 - 45 min
Breathing:	weight up breath out weight down breath in
Progress:	This differs with each exercise and will be listed in the exercise description. If in doubt stick with the 'Three/12 Rule'.
Train together with:	Tummy, Shoulders
DON'T train with:	Chest, Back, Arms