

## **Butty enhancing exercises** <sup>[1]</sup>

Dear Alice,

My name is Emily. I was wondering if you know of any exercises or something that could help me have a thicker and bigger butt, that doesn't involve surgery. If you could help me out, that would be great! Thank You.

— Emily

### **Answer**

Dear Emily,

The thicker, stronger, well-defined butty is in, and there's growing interest among people who want to boost what they already have. Genetics play a definite role in the shape of a person's body, but it helps that the gluteus maximus (i.e., one of the muscles that forms the butt) is the bulkiest of all of the skeletal muscles in the body.

Your butt muscles, or "glutes," include the gluteus maximus, gluteus medius, and gluteus minimus. Of the three, the gluteus maximus is the biggest and most noticeable. Place a hand on each butt cheek, and that's where the maximus is. The medius and minimus aren't as noticeable — both are located around your ilium, the large bony part of your pelvis. Together these three muscles help you move your thigh out to the side of your body, and rotate and extend your leg behind you.

Because the butt is more than one muscle, a variety of exercises help to strengthen and shape your glutes. Exercises that use compound movements — movements that involve more than just one muscle group — are good to increase the size, shape, and leverage of your butt. For example, squats and lunges incorporate many muscles, such as the hamstrings and quadriceps, along with the glutes.

Before starting your exercises, consult with a personal trainer or exercise physiologist — available at a local gym, sport and recreation center, or university fitness center — who can explain and demonstrate proper form, alignment, and weight. An exercise professional can also help you better achieve your goal by taking into consideration your current fitness level and

health status. Similarly, before starting a strength-training regimen, consider the following guidelines:

1. Warm up for at least 5 to 12 minutes by walking briskly outside, walking/jogging on a treadmill, riding a bike, or little by little when using any other piece of cardiovascular equipment.
2. Slowly stretch to increase blood flow to your muscles, enhance flexibility and range of motion, and decrease risk of injury — especially the part of your body you're working on.
3. Sip water to stay hydrated.
4. Make sure your body is fueled with food. If you've eaten a meal, wait about 2 to 3 hours before you exercise. If you've had a light snack, allow at least one hour.
5. Consult with a trainer or exercise physiologist to ensure correct lifting form. Keep your head aligned with your spine, shoulders, and back, with your chest up and abs tight.
6. Do each exercise 2 to 3 times a week, starting off with no or little resistance, and remember to breathe.
7. Incorporate plenty of fresh fruits, veggies, lean sources of protein (e.g., tuna or chicken), nuts, healthy fats (e.g., fish, avocado, and peanut butter), and complex carbohydrates, such as whole wheat bread, brown rice, potatoes, and oatmeal.

The Routine You don't have to do all of these exercises each time. To work the whole booty, do three or four of the exercises listed below and vary the mix from routine to routine. This way, your body does not become accustomed to just one particular form of movement.

- *Squats*: Stick your butt out, bending slightly first at the hips (3 to 4 count), then at the knees, going down until your upper leg becomes parallel to the floor. (The idea is to simulate sitting back in a chair.) Your knees are not to extend past your toes. Aim for a 90-degree angle between your thigh and your shin. Do 8 to 12 repetitions per set, depending on your fitness and experience level.
- *Plie squats*: With your legs in a plie-position — legs apart a little wider than your hip width, toes slightly turned out, and hands on hips — squat down to no farther than a 90-degree angle, making sure that your knee does not extend past your toes. Unlike the regular squat, you don't bend forward at the hips, just straight down. Do 8 to 12 repetitions.
- *Static lunges*: Stagger your legs, one in front of the other, far enough apart so that your front knee does not go past your toe, forming a 90-degree angle (upper leg parallel to the floor) as you lunge forward. Allow your back knee to bend down to assist in lowering the body; it should approach, but not touch, the floor. The idea is to drop the back knee while the front leg stabilizes the back leg and the body. Switch legs and repeat. Start off doing 8 to 12 lunges per leg. As you advance, you can work up to 20 lunges per leg.
- *Hamstring curl*: This is performed using a machine at the gym. Lying face down, position your body on the machine with your knees just below the edge of the pad and your ankles under the rollers. Knees need to be slightly bent. Press down with your hips as you slowly curl your heels towards your butt. Do 8 to 12 repetitions.
- *Leg extensions*: Using the machine that resembles a chair, place your legs under a pad and lift your legs until they extend to form a straight line. Start with minimal weight, and be careful not to hyperextend your legs out to a straight line. You don't want your knees to lock. Do 8 to 12 repetitions.
- *Walking up the stairs/ walking on a treadmill, on an incline, or up a hill*: Walking uphill uses

all leg muscles, including the glutes. When walking on a treadmill, pick a speed that you are able to walk on a grade/incline of at least 2 percent; gradually work your way up in grade as your fitness level increases. For walking up stairs, similar to stairs at a stadium, use long strides, allowing your lower body to do the work while your upper body acts as a stabilizer; keep your abs tight and pump your arms. When walking down stairs, be careful not to allow all of your body weight to come down at once; this incorporates your lower body as well and protects your knees.

With a consistent, enjoyable routine, and music with a motivating beat, you can tighten and work those glutes into a booty that will shake and shimmy.

Alice!

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