

Three conditioning exercises to support your hips

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(HealthDay)—To support your hip joints, you need to strengthen the muscles that support them. This can help prevent or relieve hip pain and guard against injury.

Appropriate exercises target muscles of the thighs and the glutes. Here are three to add to your fitness regimen.

Note: Before conditioning, always warm up with five to 10 minutes of easy [exercise](#), like walking or riding a stationary bike.

Hip abduction exercises primarily work the outer thighs. Lie on your left side, top leg straight but not locked, bottom leg bent. Slowly raise the straight leg to make a 45-degree angle with the floor. Hold for five seconds, then slowly lower. Do three sets of eight to 12 reps, then switch sides and repeat.

Hip adduction exercises primarily work the inner thighs. Lie on your left side with both legs

straight. Cross your top leg over the lower leg, placing the foot flat on the floor. Raise the lower leg six to eight inches off the floor, hold for five seconds, and then slowly lower. Do three sets of eight to 12 reps, then switch sides and repeat.

Prone hip extensions primarily work the glutes.

Lie flat on your stomach on a firm surface and place a pillow under your hips. Bend your right leg so that your calf makes a 90-degree angle with your thigh (the sole of your foot is parallel with the ceiling). Keeping your head, neck and upper body relaxed, raise the bent leg straight up (your thigh lifts off the [floor](#)) without jerking your hips. Slowly lower your [thigh](#) to a count of five. Do three sets of eight to 12 reps, then switch sides and repeat.

Follow these tips to make the exercises even more effective:

- Wear ankle weights during your workout. Depending on your ability, start with a 2- to 5-pound cuff on each ankle.
- Do these exercises two or three times a week, but never on consecutive days.
- Always stretch after strengthening to improve your range of motion and avoid soreness.

More information: The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons has more information and a downloadable [hip conditioning plan](#) with illustrations of these and other exercises.

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