

## Top 10 Exercises to Strengthen Your Hips and Decrease Injuries

Benefits of hip strengthening - Your hips and glutes (buttock muscles) play a crucial role in helping you run. Hip muscles are critical to an athlete's success and many injuries can be drilled down to poor hip strength. If you neglect hip health, you put yourself at greater risk of an injury. That is why the addition of a specific hip strength training program is helpful.

This soccer specific hip strength training program can help develop and improve lower limb stability, strength and muscular balance, help reduce the risk of injury and assist in the development of muscular strength, power, speed and agility. All are critical elements to the game of soccer.



### Figure Four Knee Lift

- Lie on stomach with your knee hanging off the side of the table.
- Contract buttock muscles and lift knee up as high as possible. This will probably not be very high, as many people are very weak in this muscle group. Make sure your hips stay flat on the table. Do not rotate your trunk
- Hold for 3 seconds
- Repeat 12-15 repetitions on each leg
- Repeat for 2-3 sets on each leg

### Fire Hydrant Leg Lift

- Keeping one knee on the ground, lift the other leg up and out to the side in a slow and controlled motion
- Hold for 3 seconds
- Repeat 12-15 repetitions
- Keep your core tight and do not over-arch your back
- Repeat for 2-3 sets one each leg



### Single Leg Bridge

- Lift your hips up in the air, concentrating on contracting your glute muscles (think pushing through your heel)
- Keeping one leg straight with toe pointed, do not lift the leg higher than opposite (bent) knee
- Hold for 10 seconds
- Repeat 12-15 repetitions
- Repeat for 2-3 sets on each leg



### Ball – Hamstring Curls

\*This is an excellent, but difficult exercise.

- With feet on the ball, bridge hips up, keeping core tight
- Slowly bend knees, pulling ball towards you
- Hold for 3 seconds and then extend legs to starting position
- Repeat 12-15 repetitions keeping hips up in bridge
- Repeat 2-3 sets

\*To make this exercise more difficult you can bridge with one leg in the air, and curl with opposite leg only.



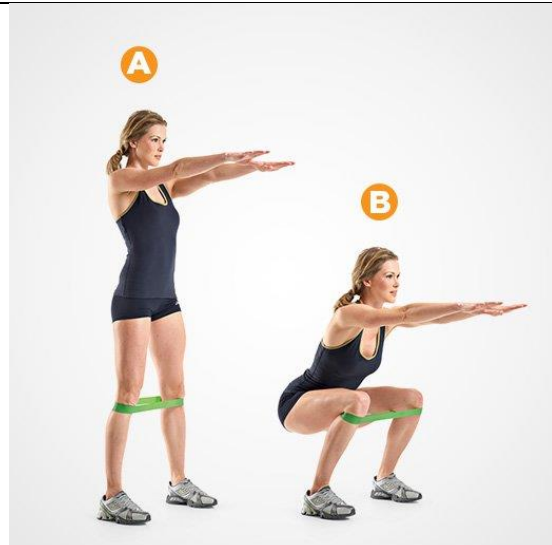
### Side Step with Band

- Wrap a Thera-Band around both ankles
- Keep knees straight, but not locked
- Side step down the hall 15-20 steps and then return Stay facing the same direction
- Perform four continuous sets without stopping

### Squat with Band

\*Form is extremely important with this exercise. Push knees out against the band. Do not let the knees pinch in.

- With band just below knees, push legs out against the band
- Slowly squat down, as if sitting in a chair, pushing buttocks backwards
- Do not let your knees pinch in
- Hold for 3 seconds and return to standing
- Repeat 12-15 repetitions
- Do 2-3 sets



### Single Leg Dead Lift

\*This can be done with or without weights.

- Keeping that knee slightly bent, bend forward at the hip, extending your free leg behind you for balance. Continue lowering until you are parallel to the ground
- Hold for 3 seconds and then return to the upright position.
- Repeat 12-15 repetitions on each leg
- Repeat 2-3 sets

## Hip Thrusters

\*You can use a bench or chair for this exercise

- With shoulders resting on a chair, raise hips up until you are parallel to the floor
- Hold for 10 seconds
- Repeat 12-15 repetitions
- Do 2-3 sets

\*You can increase the difficulty of this exercise by holding a weight in your lap



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## Walking Lunges

- Take a large step forward and lower your body toward the floor. Both legs should be bent at a 90-degree angle at the bottom of the lunge
- Push off front leg to rise back up to start, and repeat on the other side
- Do 20 walking lunges
- Repeat 2-3 sets

\*You can increase the difficulty of this exercise by holding dumbbells in each hand

## Side Lunges

- Stand with your feet approximately shoulder-width apart.
- Shift your weight to one side and drop your hips down and back, keeping your knee over your toes and your weight over your bent leg.
- Hold for 3 seconds
- Return to the starting position and repeat to the other side.
- Do 20 repetitions
- Repeat 2-3 sets

\*This exercise can be made more difficult by adding dumbbells

