

Buns of Steel

_____ One of the most prominent aspects we witness leading to improper movement, movement dysfunction, and mechanical pain as a result is inactive glutes. In contrast, perhaps the most beneficial facilitator we see contributing to an overall better and safer pattern of movement quality is ACTIVE glutes. This muscle serves as a prime mover in any exercise where stretching and / or squeezing them is possible, thus the activation of such a large muscle group is critical to the success of our athletes and those looking to reduce their prevalence of mechanical pain. This post will serve as an informative source describing the mechanisms of the glutes and how they can lead to movement dysfunction, in addition to serving as a guide for athletes, how they can activate their glutes, reduce their pain, and improve their performance.

One of the main things we see in athletes moving load is the favoring of a certain side. For example, an individual swaying to one side as they perform a squat. This simply stems from the creation of a dominant side in which they use more musculature than the opposing side. This idiosyncrasy can stem from many things, but the participation in a sport growing up and / or currently is a great example. The majority, if not all of athletic movement and sports is hip extension, which is impossible without a contraction of the glutes. Take a baseball player who always bats from the right side of home plate. Over and over again they drive their right back foot forward with aggressive hip extension, and thus the contraction of primarily their right glute. Over time, this creates a stronger side in that individual's body and may result in a movement dysfunction when it comes to something later on, like squats. Now let's break it down. This baseball player begins to squat: they descend with their stretch reflex / creating tension with mostly their right side, as they get to the bottom of the squat and accelerate up their right side leads the movement as it has taken on the majority of the load / tension all the while swaying to

that side until the exercise is completed. So, what's wrong with this? The load placed on the areas of the dominant side of the body. This can create tight ankles, knee pain, hip pain, and quadratus lumborum (back) pain if not more. Now we know that this imbalance / glute dysfunction leads to tightness, which then leads to mechanical pain. So, how do we fix it?

ACTIVATE THE GLUTES - both of them! There are plenty of exercises concerning such which we will diagnose in a moment, but for now, let's discuss the benefit of such activation. After doing such, this right side dominant athlete will be able to create a sense of balance, and thus a better squat resulting in less pain. In the end, this better squat will lead to what we all want, BUNS OF STEEL! There are many times in which activating the glutes are critical, that being any time prior to which they will be used. Glute activation should be a staple in one's warm-up, especially when they will be a prime mover for the exercise that day, which is basically every day. Such exercises consist of squatting, deadlifting, pressing, olympic weightlifting, and a wide array of other movements relating to such when tension needs to be created and hip extension / athletic movement is being performed. In addition, to further strengthen the glutes and eliminate imbalances, accessory work can be implemented to further facilitate the process. Isolateral (one side at a time) exercises are recommended for those looking to overcome an imbalance as it will assist the weaker side in gaining strength to the level of the dominant side.

One critical piece of equipment for isolating, strengthening, and activating the glutes is a mini band. At Reignited Fitness, we have plenty of these. The band will create a greater amount of resistance, and thus require greater activation from the glutes. For starters, ten exercises will be listed. They are as follows: glute bridges with mini band, side shuffle, standing abductor lift, monster walk, banded squats, standing kickbacks, clamshells, single-leg banded glute bridge,

lying kickbacks, and quadruped banded hip extensions. *Please see the link at the end of this post for a more in-depth description of these exercises.* These are the basics, but they are proven to work. A good goal would be to implement 10 reps of each, or pick 5 and do 20 reps, or just shoot for a total of 100 reps from any or many of the exercises listed to implement into your warm-up. How will you know that it's working? When your buns are sore the next day! In addition, when you experience a relief from the pain in your ankles, knees, hips, and lower back. Take the pressure off of these areas and let your BUNS OF STEEL do the work! If you would like more ideas for the strengthening and activating of the glutes, just ask your coaches at Reignited Fitness!

Explanation of Exercises Noted Earlier:

The 10 Best Glute Activation Exercises for a Stronger, Tighter Butt. (2017, October 20).

Retrieved December 13, 2017, from <https://yurielkaim.com/best-glute-activation-exercises/>