



Hip Hip Hooray! It's Spring Time!



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The rain has finally eased up, and we are all itching to get out and stretch our legs. If your bucket list includes a half or full marathon, whether you like dashing through paint or are feeling more like a warrior this summer, hip strength is something you shouldn't take for granted. The ski season and winter months may not have left you properly prepared for your summer running routine. Running can be an excellent way to encourage good heart health, but running by itself does not do enough to give you comprehensive leg strength for proper muscle balance throughout the leg. Mixing in a few intentional hip exercises is an excellent way to cross train and avoid injury.

The hip muscles are essential for increased power when you push off in your stride. They also help you maintain a stable pelvis, which can decrease excessive movement in your low back. The hip muscles also play a role in controlling the force being transmitted through the knees. Without proper hip strength, you may find yourself susceptible to tight iliotibial bands (ITB syndrome), knee pain, low back pain, or heel pain.

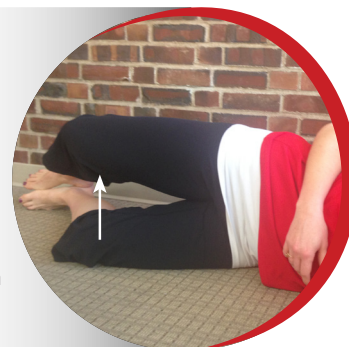
Clam shell exercises are a great way to integrate core control in the deep rotating muscles of the hip and glute medius, which helps to provide a stable platform for your spine. Monster walks can help to build strength in glute medius. This is an important muscle group for many reasons. Weakness here is commonly associated with a substitution pattern of the tensor fascia late muscle, whose tendon is most commonly referred to as the (troublesome) IT band. Tightness of this muscle tendon can be a precursor for knee pain. Side step ups are a fun way to mix a little balance practice into your hip program. Using a step with a handrail available to grab as needed can really test your control. Good balance can help if you prefer to run off the beaten path or assist you to react quickly on high-traffic city paths.

If you begin to experience pain when you run or when performing any of your normal activities, it is best to consult your physical therapist at Therapeutic Associates for a comprehensive assessment. Find our clinic in your neighborhood at: www.therapeuticassociates.com/Locations

CLAMSHELL

While lying on your side, position knees so they are bent with feet together and in line with hips. Keeping lower abdominals tight, slowly raise the top knee to form the clam shell opening. Lower knee back down and repeat.

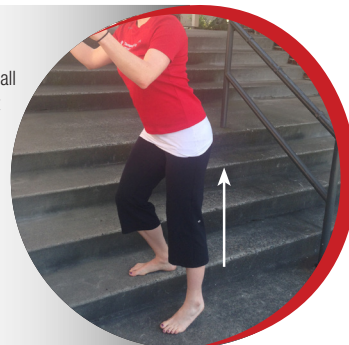
Perform 3 sets of 15 repetitions on each side. Do 3 times per week.



SIDE STEP UPS

Standing parallel to a staircase, small step stool or thick book, place right foot on first step. Shift body weight to your right leg and step up, straightening your right leg. Lower back down slowly maintaining level hips until left foot reaches ground.

Perform 3 sets of 15 repetitions on each side. Do 3 times per week.



MONSTER WALKS

Using a Thera-Band resistance strap or Thera-Band resistance tubing with a protective cuff, wrap tubing around your ankles. Keeping feet straight forward and knees slightly bent, step out to the side, moving 5 steps to the right and then 5 steps to the left.

Continue alternating for 3 minutes. Increase up to 5 minutes when no longer feels difficult. Do 3 times per week.

