



BOTTOMS UP

With summer's swimsuit-and-shorts season soon upon us, leading personal trainer Michael Garry shares his smartest, swiftest secrets to a shapelier backside.

From the iconic Monroe wiggle to the slo-mo *Baywatch* beach booty, and on to the Kardashian keister, society's focus on the female backside is a pervasive cultural classic, and the perking up of the posterior a body goal shared by many. Sadly for some, summer's unforgiving fashion favourites – tight white jeans, skimpy skirts and bikini bottoms – will soon place a renewed focus on our rears. Fortunately, toning up our tail-end is a relatively quick and easy task – and more importantly, improves overall body fitness, too.

Get the glutes

The main muscles we need to work on for boosting our backsides are the gluteal muscles, often simply referred to as our 'glutes'. The gluteals are a group of three muscles which make up the buttocks: the *gluteus maximus*, *gluteus medius* and *gluteus minimus*. All three are needed for hip function, including extension and rotation of the hip joints. As its name suggests, *gluteus maximus* is indeed the largest muscle here, and largely makes up the shape and look of our bottom and hips. The other main contributing factor when it comes to the design of our derrière is the *panniculus adiposus*, the fatty deposits in the subcutaneous layer beneath the skin, which directly relates to a saggy bottom. Exercise in general (and not only of the gluteal muscles) helps with overall fat loss, which in turn leads to a reduction in the subcutaneous fat storage on our backsides. Those who are leaner, fitter and sportier will have a better-defined derrière than those with a higher fat composition.

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Clearly though, we can't rely on exercises and weight training alone to help shift fatty deposits and resculpt the body. Watching what we eat is key for shedding overall body fat. Plenty of high-quality protein is important for creating good body definition, as we can't build muscles without protein. The best forms of protein include eggs, lean meats (unprocessed), chicken, fish, dairy produce (including yoghurt and kefir), nuts, seeds, beans, lentils, chickpeas and soy products, such as tofu. All are good additions to summer salads and a lighter way of seasonal eating. But as well as a renewed focus on protein, we can also speed up the amount of fat we burn by revving-up our metabolism.

Backside beauty

The good news is that we don't need specialist equipment or fancy gyms to make a big difference to the strength and tone of our glute muscles. The bottom-firming exercises pictured here are ideal for both fat-burning and bum-boosting. According to leading fitness trainer Michael Garry (*michaelgarry.london*), 'The walking lunge, done correctly, is a truly great glute exercise and one I give to all of my clients. When we lunge, the hip extension causes the glute muscles to fire up, and using a nice long, deep stride makes the hip dominant here, placing focus on the glutes and hip adductors – the muscles of the inner thigh.'

It helps to squeeze your glutes as hard as you can while doing exercises such as lunges to keep your muscles engaged and working. It's also a good idea to vary the range of motion (and weight, if using dumbbells for extra intensity), so with squats and lunges you can vary these by going deeper (with thighs parallel to the floor) or stopping half way.

Other bottom-boosting exercises include simple shape-shifters such as squats, step-ups and the glute bridge (see opposite). Michael is quick to point out that while specific exercises are useful, keeping exercise functional is also important. 'Most people find it hard to keep up with mat exercises, whereas if we can keep movement functional and incorporate it into everyday life, there's a much greater chance of success.' Some of Michael's favourite functional moves include adding a sporting activity into the exercise mix, such as running, skating, cycling, hill walking (or uphill on a treadmill), as well as running up the stairs or taking them two at a time. Sprinting is also an excellent way to fire up the glutes – and sprinting uphill is the best technique of all (attempt this only if you're a regular runner or with a running coach to avoid injury). As well as looking better

Wellbeing HEALTH

1 LUNGES

Engage your core, keep head back and your hands high for stability. Lunge forward, keeping front knee over front toes, dropping down to a 45-degree angle. Stride forward, repeating on alternate legs, 10-20 times each side.



2 SQUATS

Stand with your head forward and chest held up and out, feet shoulder-width apart. Sit back and down as though sitting into a chair. Repeat 20-50 times.

3 JUMPING SQUATS

A more dynamic move. As above, but spring up from the seated position with a jump in the air, landing lightly back into a seated position. Repeat 20-50 times.

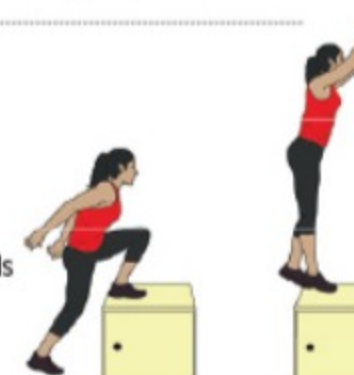


4 GLUTE BRIDGE

Lie on the floor with knees bent and feet flat. Keep your arms at your side, with palms facing down. Engage core and lift hips from the ground until hips and shoulders form a straight line. Hold for a couple of seconds before releasing. Repeat 10-20 times.

5 STEP UPS

Keep your core tight and use your arms for extra momentum to propel you up on to the step or stair, alternating the feet. Gradually increase the number of repetitions each side and add in dumbbells as you get stronger for extra impact. Repeat 20-50 times on each leg.



on the beach, the benefits of having strong glutes is that they're by far the largest and most important set of muscles in the body. By strengthening these, your posture, performance and overall strength will also all dramatically improve.

Stretching out the hamstrings following any activity is important, not only to prevent muscle stiffness but also to improve the bottom's shape. A combination of hamstring and glute exercises helps improve the appearance of cellulite, as both work to plump up the muscles under the fat, which smooths skin texture and supports the subcutaneous fat and loose skin. Developing these muscles over time will create better muscle definition between the hamstrings and the glutes, resulting in a more toned, lifted, perkier and rounded rear end. 🍑

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