Sculpted Lower Body Challenge

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If you're like most people, the lower body is your least favorite part of your body to work on at the gym.

But it's also one of the most important areas to sculpt and tighten if you want a more well-rounded, aesthetic, and functional physique.

Because think about it - Your lower body consists of the biggest muscle groups.

Skipping that training day is literally the equivalent of half-assing, no pun intended

That's why we've put together this challenging Lower Body Sculpting Challenge that will help you achieve the sleek and sexy legs you've always wanted, regardless of whether you're a man or a woman.

Best of all, most of the protocol involves outdoor training! And so, are you up for the challenge?

Let's get started!

Brief Anatomy

It's a good idea to have at least some understanding of how a car engine works before you try to fix or modify it, right?

Well, the same goes for your lower body and, in fact, any other muscle group.

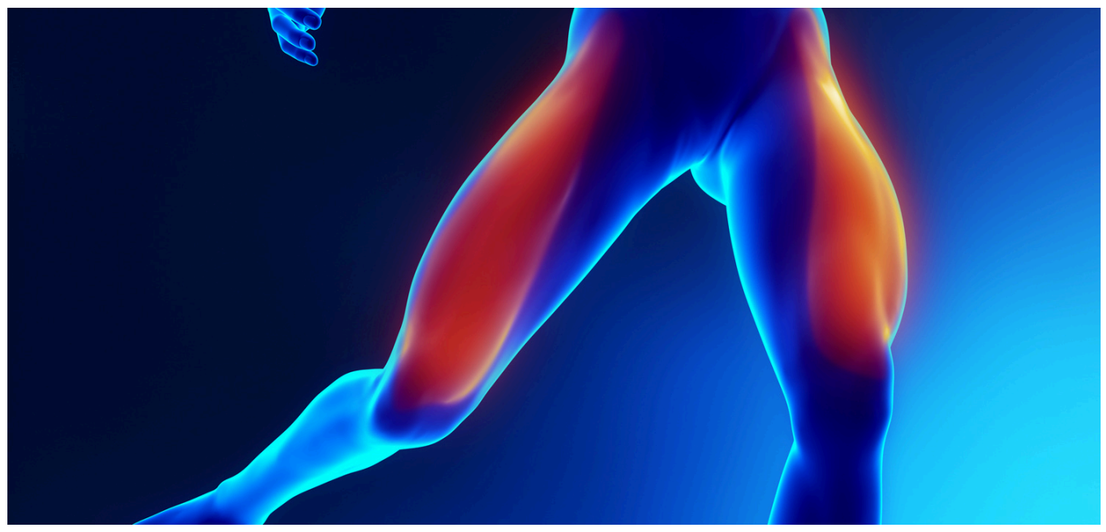
You'll be more successful in this challenge if you know what muscles are involved in each movement and what their functions are.

So let's have a look!





Quadriceps



The quadriceps is a group of four muscles in the front of the thigh that work together to extend or straighten the knee joint.

The quadriceps are made up of four individual muscles: rectus femoris, vastus lateralis, vastus intermedius and vastus medialis.

Its name "quadriceps" simply means "four heads" and comes from the words "quad" meaning 'four' and "ceps," meaning 'heads.'

The main function of the quads is to extend the leg at the knee and also, flex the leg at the hip (i.e. bring the knee up to the chest.)

Hamstrings

On the backside of your thighs, you can find the hamstrings, which are a group of muscles that bend or ‘flex’ the knee, rotate the lower leg, and extend the hip joint.

Because of their knee flexion function, the hamstrings are also referred to as “the biceps of the lower leg.”

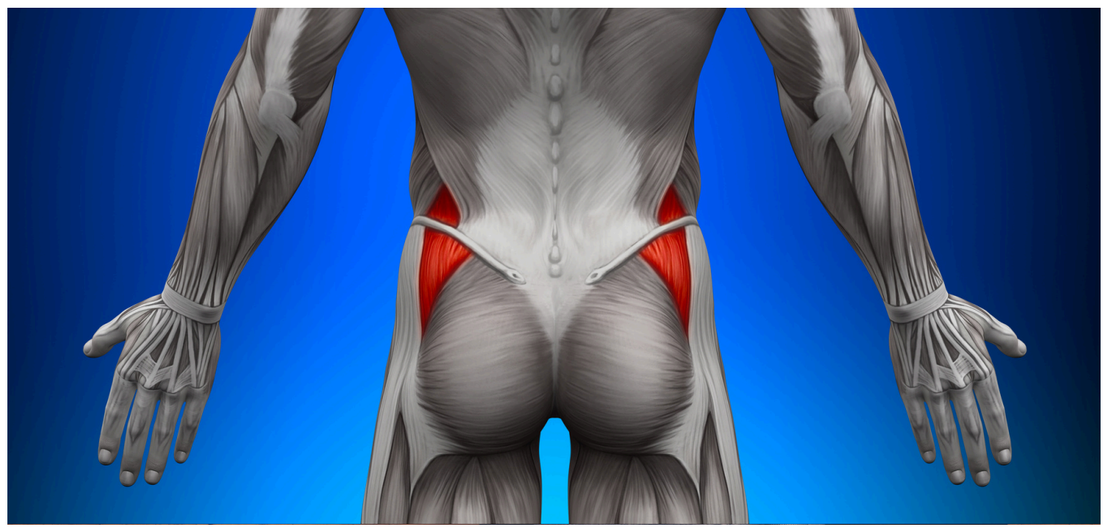
In fact, their anatomical name is “biceps femoris.”

This muscle group is best utilized during hip extension and knee flexion movements, such as leg curls.





Glutes





At third place, we have the glutes, which are the biggest muscle group in the entire body!

Your glutes are made up of three muscles: the gluteus Maximus, medius, and minimus.
The gluteus maximus is the largest muscle in the group and the entire body!
This muscle group is responsible for hip extension, as well as external and internal rotation and abduction of the thigh.
Because of its size and complex functions, the glutes are involved in most lower body movements.
Some of the best movements one can do for the glutes include but are not limited to: Squats, deadlifts, hip thrusts, and hip extensions.

Calves

Last but not least, we have the calves, which are made up of two main muscle groups - The gastrocnemius & the soleus.
The gastrocnemius is a two-headed superficial muscle that gives most of the bulging size of your calves, visible on the outside.

Beneath it, is the soleus, which joins the gastrocnemius to form the Achilles tendon.
The calf musculature helps you move the lower legs, feet, and ankles, by lifting the heel up and propelling you forward.

Besides this main dynamic function, the calves also stabilize the lower body and enable you to stand up straight.
Some of the best movements you can do for the calves include: Sprints, standing calf raises & seated calf raises.





Setting The Goals

When it comes to training your lower body, the fundamental principles of fitness training remain the same. In this challenge, you will aim to: Learn the correct movement patterns, execute the exercises with good form & gradually increase the demand upon the musculature.

So without further ado, let's get to it!

WEEK 1 - BODYWEIGHT

During week 1, you will solely focus on bodyweight exercises, as those are the movements that will allow you to perfect your exercise form and learn the correct movements.

The best part is that you can do these exercises anywhere, including in a home environment!
Let's first have a look at the exercises, sets, and repetitions, and then we'll move on to written explanations for each exercise.

Exercise	Sets	Reps	Rest
Bodyweight Squat	5	15	90 seconds
Bodyweight Walking Lunges	4	12	90 seconds
Bodyweight Hip Thrust	3	12	90 seconds
Bodyweight Calf Raises	5	15	90 seconds

The Squat



This first exercise on the list is without a doubt the most famous movement for the lower body and it has even been dubbed ‘the king’ of lower body exercises!

The squat primarily engages the quads, and secondarily the hamstrings and glutes while the calves stabilize.

Exercise Execution:

1. Stand up straight with feet at shoulder width
2. Open up the toes slightly (so they point diagonally)
3. Distribute weight evenly on both legs
4. Bend knees slightly, out of lockout
5. Place your hands on your shoulders, crossed
6. Look forward
7. Dip your butt down until the legs are parallel to the ground
8. Move up and flex the glutes up top
9. Repeat

The Lunge



Secondly, we have the walking lunge, which is another great exercise that will improve not only your strength but also your balance!

The lunge primarily engages the quads and glutes and, secondarily, the hamstrings.

Exercise Execution:

1. Stand up straight with your feet close to one another
2. Look forward and keep your hands by your sides
3. Take a big step forward and lunge down
4. Avoid hitting your back knee in the ground!
5. Move up and instantly proceed to another step with the opposite leg
6. If you can’t do that, move up, bring your feet together and then take the next step
7. Optionally, you can stay on one leg briefly at the top and flex the glute of that side

The Hip Thrust



Thirdly, we have the hip thrust, which is an exercise that gained quite some traction recently!

This exercise is amazing, mainly because of the fact that it utilizes the primary function of the glutes - hip extension!

Exercise Execution:

1. Lie on a bench/couch with just your upper back - Let your hips hang
2. Place your feet at shoulder width with toes pointing diagonally, slightly
3. Place your hands as you find comfortable
4. Dip your butt down, and then thrust up
5. Flex the glutes up top

The Calf Raise



Last, but not least, we have the standing calf raise, ensuring peak contraction of the bulky chunk of the calf musculature.

Exercise Execution:

1. Stand on an edge, on your toes
2. Dip the heel down slowly
3. Pause at the bottom
4. Push up through your toes
5. Contract the calves up top
6. Pause briefly
7. Repeat

WEEK 2 - WEIGHT TRAINING

As we mentioned early on, the fundamental principles of fitness training don't change, regardless of what muscle group you are training.
In week two of this challenge, you are going to take the movements from week one and realize the principle of "progressive overload."

That is, doing the same movements but at a slightly higher resistance, which is done by... Adding weights!
Remember - You DON'T have to lift really heavy weights. Only lift weights that are challenging but still, allow you to keep flawless exercise form.

Exercise	Sets	Reps	Rest
Barbell Squat	5	10	150 seconds
Dumbbell Walking Lunges	4	10	150 seconds
Barbell Hip Thrust	4	10	120 seconds
Machine Calf Raises	5	12	90 seconds

The Barbell Squat



If you are looking to sculpt your body like a Greek god, there aren't many exercises that are as effective as the barbell squat.

The movement is pretty much the same as the bodyweight squat, but with a twist!

Exercise Execution:

1. Step under a bar and hold it at around shoulder width
2. Place the bar centered in the middle of your trapezius muscles
3. Un-rack the bar and take a step back
4. Step with your feet at shoulder width, toes pointing out slightly
5. Keep your elbows back, and knees slightly bent
6. Look forward
7. Dip your butt down until parallel
8. Move up and flex the glutes up top

The Dumbbell Lunge



Secondly, we have the dumbbell lunges, which are great to overload the lower body!

The added weight will allow you to further feel how stable you are, so again, besides strength, you'll develop superior balance, too!

Exercise Execution:

1. Take a pair of dumbbells and keep them by your sides
2. Stand up straight with feet close to one another
3. Look forward, take a big step and don't bend over
4. Lunge down without hitting your back knee
5. Come up and proceed to the next big step on the opposite leg

The Machine Calf Raise



Last but not least, we have the machine calf raise, which is a marvelous way to put more tension on the calves.

If you want to emphasize the bulky chunk of your calves, this is your go-to movement!

Exercise Execution:

1. Stand on the edge of the calf raise platform with your toes
2. Put the machine pads on your shoulders as comfortably as possible
3. Un-rack the platform
4. Go down slowly, letting your heel dip
5. Pause at the bottom briefly
6. Push up explosively through the toes, contracting the calves up top
7. Hold peak flexion briefly, then repeat

Important Note!

During your weight training sessions, each working set should be challenging and taken close to failure.

Failure meaning, the point where you can't do another rep - But don't reach that point every set, just be close to it, leaving a couple of reps in reserve!

WEEK 3 - SPRINTS

The main principle of supreme muscular development is the utilization of short, power-burst exercises. This is why weight training is the best way to sculpt your body - It consists of 15-20 second sets, during which exertion levels are high, and you are close to failure!

And well, the truth is that we can take that same exercise and apply it to many other exercises.
In fact, when you apply it to running, your general jog becomes a full-on sprint!

By all characteristics, sprints are a muscle-building exercise and what's more to it, is that they're one of the most natural lower body movements. Furthermore, sprints will hammer even the weakest lower body muscle groups, so if you have weak calves, for example, they will certainly come up if you regularly sprint!

This is why, during week 3, you will focus on a couple of sprint sessions!
Let's have a look at the sprint workout!

Exercise	Sets	Duration/Distance	Rest
Light jog	1	5 minutes	40 seconds
60% Speed sprint	1	30 Meters	40 seconds
70% Speed sprint	1	40 meters	50 seconds
Full-On Sprint	4	60 meters	120 seconds

Note: With each session, put a slightly bigger demand on your lower body - You can do this in a couple of ways: Do one more set, increase the distance, decrease the rest time, or simply try to beat your previous time!

WEEK 4 - HIKES & FUN

Now, if you're not oriented entirely towards bodybuilding, you don't necessarily have to do heavy squats 2-3 times a week. In fact, one of the best feelings is when a muscle group becomes highly functional and enjoyable.

So on week four, do your favorite activities that engage the lower body but are also fun, slightly intense, and enjoyable. Go hike. Go cycle. Maybe even go rollerblading or ice skating!
Do something fun, relax, unwind and prepare for your next bout of intense leg training!

When The Challenge Ends



It is important to be noted here that this challenge doesn't really promise unrealistic results in four weeks.

Instead, this challenge was designed to help you see and experience all the movements your lower body is capable of.

When the challenge ends, keep doing these things and make a habit out of them!

In time, the progress will stack up and substantial visual changes will be visible to you!

Last but not least, it is worth mentioning that exercising your lower body will not only lead to better-looking lower body musculature but will also make you feel better and become healthier!

So take this challenge up and smash it!

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