

Musings & Movement

January 2023 Notes

In Gratitude to Glorious Glutes

In today's culture, we spend more time sitting and less time moving, which creates muscular atrophy. Maintaining a firm body shouldn't be about appearance or how your jeans fit, but the health and mobility of the body.

The booty is a major foundation, playing a vital role in our ability to walk, stand, and sit.

When glutes stop working, the hip flexors become tight, causing challenges with our spinal alignment and even injuries. The booty is a stabilizer, keeping the integrity of our hip joint.

When strong, the back doesn't have to endure the brunt of your movements. Strong glutes also prevent knee pain. If your pelvis isn't stable, the body sways when moving, pressuring knees and ankles to compensate.

The Movement

The Bridge

A solid and easy glute exercise is The Bridge.

1. Begin lying face up on your back.
2. Bend your knees, keeping your feet flat on the floor and your arms by your sides.
3. Contract your abdomen, engaging your core.
4. Press your heels into the ground.
5. Squeeze your glutes.
6. Lift your hips towards the ceiling, keeping your glutes squeezed.
7. Your body should form a straight line from your knees to your shoulders.
8. Keep a fist-distance space between your chin and chest for neck alignment.
9. Keep your shoulder blades on the ground.
10. Hold for 30 seconds (or longer).
11. Repeat.

Or...

The Glute Bridge March

1. Follow steps 1-9 above.
2. Lift your right knee toward your chest.
3. Pause.
4. Lower your right foot.
5. Repeat with your Left leg.
6. Alternate legs for 10 or 20 reps.

Here's a chart for some other bridge variations:



The Musings

Writing Prompt: Write five sentences from five different experiences or moments in your life. Keep these as diverse as possible. You can capture an image. You can jot one or two words. You can make a list.

Now circle words or experiences or images that seem to be the opposite of one another.

How are these words or experiences or images in conversation with each other? How are they in relationship to one another? In other words – what is their bridge?



The Movements

Chair Pose & Butt Kicks

Chair Pose is also referenced as Utkatasana and Fierce Seat. The chair pose engages legs, upper back, lower back, hamstrings, hips, glutes, and feet. It's a pose that improves core strength and helps relieve stiffness, along with improving balance and improving blood flow. Yes. It feels the perfect pose.

1. Stand with your feet hip width apart.
2. Exhale and bend your knees, moving your hips back as if sitting in a chair.
3. Make sure you can see your toes.
4. Inhale and raise your arms above you, near your ears, or out in front of you.
5. Relax your shoulders.
6. Press your feet evenly into the earth.
7. Engage your glutes.
8. Hold for five to ten breaths.
9. Return to standing (also known as Mountain Pose/Tadasana)

Butt Kicks – This movement helps strengthen the hamstring and lower aspect of the glute. Butt Kicks also stretch your quads, and can be used as drills for speed and coordination. The aspect we focused on, however, is how Butt Kicks encourage you to not over-stride, how each footfall keeps you connected to the ground directly beneath you. This feels like a good reminder to be gentle with ourselves, to stay grounded, to not over-stride in a way that can knock us off balance.

As you practice this exercise, don't over-reach or overstretch your knees. Instead, maintain gentle kicks in the butt. You don't need to make this a cardio or impact movement.

Here's a link to Butt Kicks with good form:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oMW59TKZval>

The Musings

Writing Prompt: Where is your seat of power in your body?

Write about ways you want to kick yourself in the butt in a non punishing, but sweet and loving way. Not over-striding.



Some Extra Booty Comments

The Too Tight Booty

Our booties were not meant to stay clenched ALL THE TIME. Many of us walk through life with butt-gripping (and jaw-clenching) habits when we feel tension or stress. Tension in the glutes handicaps our breath. Yes. This is a flight or fight or freeze experience.

Try to take a deep breath while purposely clenching your glutes. The diaphragm cannot do its job when the booty cheeks are tight.

So yes, a tight booty could prevent you from breathing well.

And the booty and the neck are two of the most common areas we carry tension and stress in our bodies. To say someone/something is a pain in the neck or a pain in the butt (we prefer “piriformis”) is an accurate statement.

The Movement

Figure Four Stretch

First, if you can inhale deeply, you're relaxing your glutes. Good sign.

The Figure Four Stretch targets the glutes and hip rotators.

1. Lie on your back.
2. Place feet flat on the floor.
3. Cross your left foot over your right quad.
4. Lift your right leg off the floor.
5. Grab onto the back of your right leg (not the shin as you don't want to overstretch the tendons in the knee)
6. Gently bring your right leg towards your chest.
7. Hold at the point you feel tightness, at least five seconds.
8. Release.
9. Repeat on the other side.
10. Repeat for 10 to 20 reps OR you can hold the stretch longer (30 seconds) if you desire.



Rebecca recommends the following long list of stretches as examples for glute health. The only thing she'd advise concerns the first stretch, **Recline Knee to Chest**: Move your grasp to the back of the thigh instead of on top of the knee or shin. The patellar tendon can become strained if too much pressure. My own philosophy is to stay mindful while stretching, never pushing on or near a joint.



Link to Stretches: <https://www.cosmopolitan.com/health-fitness/a29513914/best-glute-stretches/>

The Musing

Writing Prompt: Often in the fitness industry, when working our glutes, we'd yell to clients or participants in Group X, "Squeeze your butt like you're holding the winning lottery ticket." We know money motivates. To combine the image of a future firm fanny with a lottery win seemed, well, a win-win.

- What motivates you?
- If you must clench something, what must you hold onto?
- What could you let go of?
- How does holding and letting go feel – emotionally and in your body?
- Consider listing things you clench and things you let go of. Are there some things on both lists?

The Movement

The Booty Shimmy during Belly Dancing

The booty shimmy helps increase range of motion and flexibility in the spine and hips, helps strengthen your core, and is a great way to relieve stress. The movement also improves balance and coordination.

This video is a bit different than the one Gayle demonstrated in class, which had grounding in belly dance, but we do love the way it celebrates the booty:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aHRfTjbp8uQ>

The knee movement that Gayle shared was more up and down (versus side-to-side in the above video). Either way, shake, shake, shake, and shimmy.

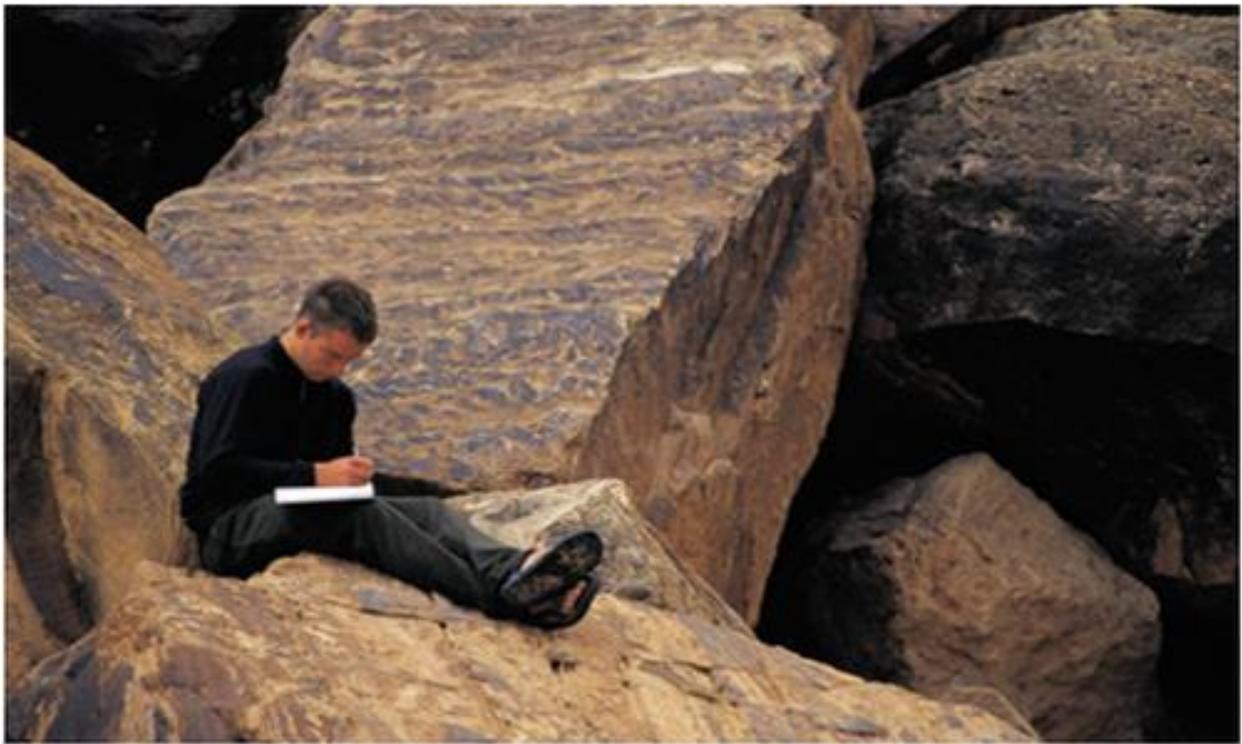
The Musing

Writing Prompt: Moving our hips, especially the booty shimmy, seems challenging for so many. But the movement begins in the knees. Are there things in your life that feel too challenging?

Are you making tasks harder than they need to be?

What could you make easier?

What tools do you have within you to shift obstacles into do-able tasks?



Fun Booty Terms to Learn

Dead Butt Syndrome

Gluteal Amnesia

An extra link for some extra glute love and care:

<https://www.womenshealthmag.com/fitness/a19983280/best-butt-exercises/>



Next Class: Feb 2nd at 11 am MST.

Register Here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/musings-movements-tickets-385223492837?aff=erelexpmlt>