

Celebrating What's Behind You...Literally!

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This edition of the Island Voice is focused on the concept of celebration, and so I was asked to write an article that would cohesively fit into the celebration theme. Hmm... double hmmm. My mind was a big fat blank. Celebrate fitness?? Most people just do not celebrate the first anniversary of their gym membership, nor do they celebrate the successful completion of push ups. This was going to be quite a task for me. I happen to love and adore fitness, but then I am probably weird and okay, maybe a slight bit obsessive. I am a person whom when they go on vacation the first thing my husband and I do is locate a gym and analyzes the facility, we actually think this is fun. Okay, onto the subject of celebration. So here I am sitting, wait a minute I am sitting! And what am I sitting on? Yes, it's my fabulous dependable Gluteus Maximus! Everyday when I go to get up out of bed there they are assisting me, they help me go up the stairs and they provide cushioning when I have to sit on a hard surface. Not to mention I do believe that they helped in catching my husbands attention! I herby celebrate the Butt!



The tush has many fine attributes and quickly I shall review them. Number one, it can be very aesthetically appealing to both men and women when dressed in a fine pair of jeans. But most of all it is the true powerhouse of the body, and a major component of our ability to move functionally through our daily activities. Technically the muscles of the Gluteal region are the Gluteus maximus, Gluteus medius, Gluteus minimus, Piriformis and a bunch of other muscles that you probably could care less about. For the sake of simplicity, I will now refer to this collection of muscles as “the glutes”. The Glutes are responsible for extending the thigh, such as straightening up from a bending position and walking up stairs. Also it is worth mentioning that the sciatic nerve exits from the lower region of the glutes, hence the origination of the phrase “a pain in the butt”!

Recently I read an article written by one of my favorite fitness experts, Michael Boyle (www.michaelboyle.biz). The article is titled “Addanasstomy” and for the sake of

diplomacy, I will leave the pronunciation up to the reader, but I think you get the picture! One of the statements he makes is “in fitness we are always trying to lose something. The truth is we need to lose a little in the front and gain a little in the back.”

I call this the Big G-Little B (read as big gut –little butt) syndrome. This particular syndrome may ultimately lead to significant back pain. Back pain expert Stuart McGill refers to this as gluteal amnesia, whereas loss of strength in the glutes via lack of use causes the muscles of the glutes to suffer from extreme forgetfulness and thereby contributing significantly to an inability of the muscles of the Core to adequately support the spine.

So what is the solution for Big G-Little B syndrome? My first recommendation is obvious, clean up your diet and try to eat foods that do not have ingredients that look or sound like “phosphotrimecadiclatate”. Even the spell check on my computer nearly had a stroke over that word! Second try to incorporate some simple exercises into your daily routine. I know y’all have heard this a billion times, but really TAKE THE STAIRS! Think of stairs as something like a crossword puzzle for the glutes, make them think! Some of my favorite exercises for the glutes are squats, lunges, bridges and for the ultimate in hip/core strengthening a single leg deadlift (SDL) performed using the kettlebell. The functionality of the SDL can not be underestimated in its ability to correct weakness, tightness and left-right asymmetries within the Core. I realize that most readers have no idea what I just said, but then that’s another article, so stay tuned. The following are two exercises that you can do at home, the office or the gym. These exercises require nothing more than your own body weight and maybe a chair, good luck.

How to Squat:

Place your feet, shoulder width apart, approximately one foot length away from the seat of a chair that is average in height. Lower your body down to the seat of the chair by bending at the knees and pushing your rear behind you as if you are going to sit in a chair! As your butt touches the seat of the chair push back up and return to standing. Keep head forward, back straight, chest high, arms relaxed, and feet flat on the floor; equal distribution of weight through forefoot and heel. Knees should point in the same direction as feet throughout movement. This is the general concept of a squat. Squatting is also what we used to do as kids when we were playing with our toys on the floor. Its one of the most natural movement patterns in life. TIP: Try to concentrate on using your butt to do the lifting, not the front of your legs (quads).

How to Lunge:

Stand with your feet pointing forward, and check to make sure your posture does not appear “ashamed” (bent over and looking at the ground). Stand tall. Take a step forward by “lunging” with the first leg. Land on heel then forefoot, lower the back leg by bending at the knee (drop the back leg) until the knee of rear leg is almost in contact of the floor. Return to original standing position by forcibly pushing backwards with the front leg, concentrating on using the butt to do the pushing. Repeat by alternating lunge with opposite leg. A long lunge will emphasize the Gluteus Maximus while a short lunge emphasizes your quads.



Lunge



Squat

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