

Hip Strength Exercises

THE BEST EXERCISES TO PREVENT MOST RUNNER INJURIES

Coach Oliete · 3 times a week, before or after practice · Rest 30 to 45 seconds between sets

Your hip and glute (butt) muscles keep your pelvis level and your knees lined up every time your foot lands. When they are weak, your hips, knees, and IT band take extra stress. Strong hips are one of the best things a runner can build. Start with the no-equipment exercises. Add the band and step exercises when you have the gear.

Why it matters beyond injury prevention: Strong hips help prevent more than hip pain. They lower the risk of runner's knee, IT band pain, shin splints, and low back pain because your legs stay lined up when you land. They also give you a stronger push-off for hills and sprints, and help you hold good form when you are tired late in a race.

NO EQUIPMENT NEEDED

Glute Bridges 3 sets of 15, hold 2 sec	Lie on your back with knees bent and feet flat. Squeeze your glutes and lift your hips until your body makes a straight line from shoulders to knees. Hold, then lower slowly.
Single-Leg Bridges 3 sets of 8, each leg	Same as a glute bridge, but with one foot lifted off the floor. Keep your hips level so one side does not drop.
Clamshells 3 sets of 15, each side	Lie on your side with knees bent and stacked. Keep your feet together and lift your top knee like a clam opening, without rolling your hips back. Lower slowly.
Side-Lying Leg Raises 3 sets of 15, each side	Lie on your side with your bottom knee bent and top leg straight. Lift your top leg up with your toes pointed forward, not up. Lower slowly.
Fire Hydrants 3 sets of 12, each side	On your hands and knees, keep your knee bent and lift one leg out to the side, then lower it. Keep your back flat and do not lean.
Reverse Lunges 3 sets of 10, each leg	Step one foot back and lower until both knees are bent about 90 degrees. Push through your front heel to stand back up. Keep your front knee over your toes, not caving in.
Single-Leg Reach 3 sets of 8, each leg	Stand on one leg. Hinge forward at the hips and reach toward the ground while your other leg goes straight back. Keep your back flat, then stand up. Hold a wall at first if needed.

WITH EQUIPMENT

Equipment needed: a loop (mini) resistance band and a sturdy step, stair, or box.

Band Side Walks 3 sets of 15 steps each way	Put a loop band just above your knees. Get in a small squat and step sideways, keeping your toes forward and the band tight the whole time.
Band Monster Walks 3 sets of 15 steps forward + back	With the band above your knees and in a small squat, take wide diagonal steps forward, then backward. Do not let your knees cave in.
Banded Bridges 3 sets of 15	Do a glute bridge with the band above your knees. Push your knees out against the band as you lift your hips.
Step-Ups 3 sets of 10, each leg	Put one foot on a sturdy step or box about knee height or lower. Push through that heel to stand up tall, then step down slowly. Do not push off with the bottom foot.
Hip Hikes 3 sets of 12, each leg	Stand sideways on a step on one leg with the other foot hanging off. Keep both knees straight. Let the hanging hip drop a little, then lift it back up using the side of your standing hip.

Tip: You should feel these in your glutes and the side of your hip. If you feel it mostly in your lower back, slow down and squeeze your glutes harder. If your hip hurts during or after running, tell Coach Oliete.

Disclaimer: Coach Oliete is not a doctor, and this sheet is not medical advice. Only you (the runner) or a doctor can judge whether these exercises are safe for you to do. If you are unsure, check with a doctor first.