

## Gluteus Medius Exercises

**Hip Hike** – Stand sideways on a step, box or bench at least 4” high, with one leg held free of the bench. It helps to do this exercise facing a mirror, with belt-line or waist-line visible. Keep both hips squared forward and shoulders level. Keeping your standing leg (the one on the bench) straight (no knee bending!), raise your free hip directly upward and then drop the leg down so that your beltline alternately tilts up and down. To increase the difficulty of this exercise, add ankle weights to each leg or hold dumbbells in each hand. This exercise is one that many physical therapists use to help correct what is known as “Trendelenburg gait” in which the affected hip goes into hip joint adduction during each weight-bearing phase (step) of a walking gait. The femur (thigh bone) tends to ride upward, causing a pronounced limp or waddle.



**Forward Straight Leg Raise** – Lie on one side with bottom leg bent (the one closest to the floor) and top leg extended in front of the body at a right angle to the torso. Keep a slight bend in the top knee, with hips stacked, and avoid shifting the body backward as you lift the leg up. Keep the heel higher than the toe in order to maximally recruit the glutes. Add a ski boot or ankle weights when the weight of the leg becomes too easy. Perform the same number of sets and repetitions on both legs. For greater comfort extend the arm along the

floor and rest your head on it for support.

**Bridges** – Lie on your back with R ankle resting on L knee, L foot flat on floor about two feet from your buttocks, and arms on the outside of either hip for balance. Exhale and press down on the L foot to raise hips off the floor. To ensure that hips stay parallel (i.e. one does not drop to the floor as you lift) place your hands on each hip socket and concentrate on keeping the pelvis level. Repeat same number of sets and repetitions to the other side. A variation is to extend the non-working leg into the air (as pictured, black and white) for a mild hamstring stretch at the same time. You can also position a bench a few feet from your buttocks and rest both heels on the bench, then unweight one leg and lift hips upward with the other. For maximum bodyweight challenge, try placing both feet on a ball and allow the ball to roll in closer to the body as you bridge the hips upward until your torso forms a straight line from shoulders to knees.

