

# Strengthening Exercises for Runners

## Squats | 3 sets of 10



### How to do it:

Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Lean your chest forward slightly and shift your hips backward as you drop them towards the floor. Try to go low enough that your hips are below your knees, but don't allow your knees to go past your toes.

### Focus

Try to focus on creating a “mind-muscle” connection by consciously thinking about engaging your glutes and squeezing firmly at the top without over exaggerating the movement by arching your back too much.

### Switch it up

Try to do each set with your feet a different distance apart. For the first set, place your feet shoulder-width apart. For the second set, use a wider stance. For the third, use a narrower or staggered stance.



Can't get all the way down? If you feel like you don't have adequate range of motion and can't get as low as you like, holding a small weight in front of your chest can actually help improve your form because it helps shift your center of mass forward, which makes it easier to maintain your weight on your heels.

## Walking Forward Lunge with Same Side Rotation | 30 reps total



### How to do it:

Take a relative large step forward (a lunge!) with either leg. Lean forward over your lunging leg, keeping the back leg straight and your back in line with your back leg. Reach your hands in front of your left knee. Almost all of your weight should be in the heel of the left leg in front – you should be able to lift up the back foot without shifting your body position. In the lunge, rotate your chest toward your lunging leg. Hold for a moment and return to neutral. Then, stand up on your front leg and take a step forward. Each step counts as a repetition.

## Side Lunge with Forward Reach | 3 sets of 10 reps (per leg)



### How to do it:

Stand with feet together and take a step to the left with your left foot, keeping both feet pointing forward. Shift weight to the left heel and shift your hips backward as you drop toward the floor. Don't let your left knee go past your toes. Reach both hands in front of the left knee – this encourages you to lean forward so that you can more easily keep your weight in your heel. Return to standing and repeat.

### Focus

Keeping the weight on your heel should mean you feel this exercise mostly in hamstrings and glutes on the stepping leg. You'll also likely feel a stretch in your hips!

## Bulgarian Split Squat | 3 sets of 10 reps (per leg)



### How to do it:

Start by elevating the right foot behind you on a chair or bench. Keeping your weight in your left heel. Bend your left knee, sinking straight down by dropping your back right knee down towards the floor as well. Make sure your left knee doesn't pass your toes. Lean your chest forward, keeping your back straight and reach both hands in front of your knee. Return to standing. Do some sets where you keep your chest facing forwards and some where you rotate your chest towards your front knee.

### Add some weight

Use both hands to hold one medicine ball, keeping your motion the same as above, or hold a dumbbell in each hand and let both hands hang but your side.

## Single Leg Deadlift | 3 sets of 10 reps (per leg)



### How to do it:

Stand on your left leg with a slight bend in your knee, and as you let your back leg extend out behind you, bend your chest over until it is parallel to the floor. Keep your back flat and hips level as you go. You'll feel a slight stretch to your hamstring on the standing leg. Hold for a moment, then slowly raise back up – squeezing your glutes and hamstrings as you do. Complete the reps for your left leg, then switch legs and repeat.

### Add some weight:

Hold light weight in the same hand as the leg that you are lifting in the air.

## Reverse Step Downs | 2 set of 15 reps (per leg)



### How to do it:

Stand on your right leg on the back edge of a box, ideally about 8-12 inches high, or a bench with your heel at the edge. Lean your chest forward at a 45 degree angle, and slowly step backward with your left leg until you can lightly tap the floor with your toe. Then stand up, staying balanced on one leg. Your goal is to barely tap the floor and keep all the weight on the leg on the step. Don't plant your back foot or shift your weight onto your back leg.

### Switch it up

Instead of stepping your foot straight back, step it diagonally behind the other leg until you're in a curtsy position.



### Make it tougher

When standing up, drive your back knee forward and up to your chest – so if you're standing on your right leg and tapping down with the left foot; on the way up, drive the left knee up to your chest while you stand on the left foot only.



## Towel Slides/Back Lunges | 2 sets of 15 reps (per leg)



### How To Do It

Lightly rest your left foot on top of a towel while the right foot is planted on the floor. Keeping as much weight as you can on the front right leg, sliding the towel backwards with your left foot as far as you can go. As you slide your foot backward, lean your chest forward and reach your hands in front of the front knee. The most important part is to keep as much weight as possible on the front leg and as little as possible on the back leg.



### Switch it up

Instead of sliding your foot straight back, slide it diagonally behind the other leg until you're in a curtsy position.

## Single Leg Bridges | 3 sets of 10 reps (per leg)



### How to do it

Lay on your back with your left knee bent and lift your right leg up straight. Then push through your left heel and lift your hips up, keeping your hips level and your back straight (not arched). Complete the reps for the left leg, then switch legs and repeat. If you find you're using your straightened leg to help, you can raise it up in the air to ensure you're only using the bent leg when lifting your hips into the bridge.

### Make it tougher

You can advance this exercise by starting with your back/shoulders resting on a bench or chair. This will elevate your upper back, meaning you will have to push through a greater range of motion.

