

# How to Do Step-Up and Step-Down Exercises

Step-up and step-down exercises help strengthen your quads, glutes, and hamstrings.

Here's how to do them.

Let's start with the step-up exercise.

You can use a single-step footstool to do these exercises...

or anything else that's solid and provides about one step's height...

like a dictionary, a yoga block, a case of soup cans, or the first step on a staircase.

If you're not steady on your feet, hold on to a chair, counter, or wall.

To exercise your right leg, keep your back straight and step up with your right leg.

Try not to push off your left leg as you step up.

Focus on using the strength of your right leg.

Now lift your left leg onto the step...

and then step back down to your original position, lowering the left leg first.

Do this exercise 8 to 12 times, and then switch legs...

so you'll step up with your left leg, by using the strength of your left leg, and then lift your right leg up onto the step.

Then you'll reverse the movement by lowering your right leg first, so that your left leg keeps doing all the work.

When you step up, check that your knee is in line with your middle toe.

If this gets easy, add more challenge by letting the non-working leg dangle off the step, instead of touching down on the step.

Okay, here's how to do the step-down exercise.

For this one, start with both feet on the step.

Then, slowly step down in front of the step with your left leg, allowing your heel to lightly touch the floor.

As you step down, try to keep your knee in that same straight line with your middle toe.

Lift your left leg back to the starting position, with both feet on the step.

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Do this exercise 8 to 12 times, and then switch to the right leg.

When you're ready for more challenge, you can touch the heel on the floor in the same way, but when you lift the leg back up, just lightly tap it on the step.

Some soreness or discomfort may be expected...

but stop doing an exercise if you have increased pain.