



Move...your body

Move...to flow

Move...to live

SomaFocus

I still have my eyes on the prize: I want to be that old lady onstage shaking her hips and singing her greatest hits.
~Christina Aguilera

Move your hips

Our hips support the weight of our upper body and allow us to sit, stand, walk, run, jump, and dance! The joints that comprise our hips, ball-and-socket joints, are relatively unstable because they allow a greater range of motion in different directions. The reproductive organs are located in this area, along with the sacral chakra, Svadhisthana, the seat of the self, which contributes energetically to creativity, reproduction, sensuality, and our embodied experience. Instability and reduced mobility of the hip joints contribute to issues with the feet, ankles, knees, legs, lower back, and spinal alignment, and energetic imbalances related to the sacral chakra may create feelings of guilt and shame. Mobilizing the hips affects how easily we move through our everyday experiences, both physically, mentally, and emotionally.

Deliberate, focused movement of the hips maintains and even increases strength and flexibility, improves circulation and energy flow, and reduces discomfort from some musculoskeletal issues. You will need a chair, mat, rug, or other comfortable surface. If you have difficulty with balance, hold onto a wall or another stable structure during the standing exercises. These exercises strengthen and increase the flexibility of the muscles that act on the hip joint, as well as increase joint mobility. If you suffer from a serious back condition, consult your healthcare provider before attempting these movement exercises.

Do most of the movement exercises one side at a time. Take note of any differences in discomfort, ease, tension, agility, and flexibility between the two. Notice the adjustments you make with your hips and upper body to maintain balance and keep your spine upright while doing the standing exercises. You will discover that maintaining proper hip alignment causes you to engage your abdominal muscles.



...these hips are free hips...

~Lucille Clifton

MINDFUL MOVEMENT

Make working out the centre band of core and hips a priority during any training session. As a sportsman, it's the key to any movement and the source of most of your power.

~Andrew Luck

Movement

1. **Flexion:** Lie on your back, arms by your sides, palms facing down. Bend both knees and place feet on the floor hip width distance apart. Engage your abdominal muscles by pushing your navel to your spine. Lift right foot off the floor and bring right knee to chest, then lower foot back to the floor. Alternate between lifting right and left knee to chest. (Tip: push sacrum into the floor to lessen strain on your lower back.) Do 10 repetitions on each side.
2. **Extension:** Lie face down, forehead on the mat, arms by your sides, palms facing down, legs extended. Engage abdominal muscles by pushing navel to spine. Lift right leg off 2 inches off the mat hold 5 seconds then lower leg. Hipbones remain in contact with the mat. Alternate between lifting right and left leg. Do 10 repetitions on each side.
3. **Abduction/Adduction:** Sit on the floor, knees bent soles of feet on the floor. Place hands a few inches behind your buttocks and lean back. Open both knees out to the sides (abduction) then bring knees back to center (adduction). Do 10 repetitions.
4. **Medial/Lateral Rotation:** Sit in a chair, with feet firmly planted on the surface below. Place hands on thighs palms down. Extend right knee, lifting lower leg, ankle, and foot, toes pointed upward. Keep upper leg in contact with the chair and move toes from a 12 o'clock position toward a 3 o'clock position rotating the entire leg to the right (lateral rotation) in the hip socket. Move toes from a 3 o'clock position to a 12 o'clock position rotating the entire leg to the left (medial rotation) in the hip socket. Do 10 repetitions. Return the leg to the neutral position and bend the knee to place the foot on the surface below. Repeat on the other side.

Did you know?

The bones that make up our hip joint, the femur of the leg and the three bones that form the pelvis, create a ball-and-socket joint that allows for 9 different movements at the joint.

These exercises are not intended to be painful. If you experience pain, stop and see a health professional for further evaluation.

CHALLENGE

5. **Horizontal Abduction/Horizontal Adduction:** Sit in a chair with feet firmly planted on the floor. Place hands on thighs palms down. Extend right knee, lifting lower leg, ankle, and foot. Keep toes pointed upward and move entire leg to the right 45° (horizontal abduction) then to the left (horizontal adduction). Do 10 repetitions. Return the leg to the neutral position and bend the knee to place the foot on the surface below. Repeat to the other side.
6. **Circumduction:** Stand with feet hip-width apart, toes pointed forward, hands on your hips. Extend right leg to the front, keeping ball of foot in contact with the floor. Draw an arc on the floor with the ball of the foot by moving the leg clockwise, to the front, side, and back. Return to starting position, standing on both legs. Extend right leg to the back, keeping ball of foot in contact with the floor. Draw an arc on the floor with the ball of the foot by moving the leg counterclockwise, to the back, side, and front. Return to starting position. Do 10 repetitions on each side.
7. **Hip Circles:** Stand with feet hip-width apart, toes pointed forward, hands on hips. Bend knees and circle pelvis clockwise 10 times. Repeat 10 times in the opposite direction.
8. **Pelvic Thrust:** Stand with feet hip-width apart, toes pointed forward, hands on hips. Bend knees and push pelvis forward, then backward. Do 10 repetitions.
9. **Butterfly:** Sit on the floor, knees bent, with soles of feet on the floor. Open both knees out to the sides and bring soles of feet together. Place hands on top of ankles, hinge forward at the hips, directing torso toward inner thighs. Hold this position for at least 90 seconds. Focus on your breath. To come out of Butterfly, sit up, place hands on outside of knees, and push knees together.

Challenge

10. Repeat the **Circumduction** exercise with your foot lifted 45° off the floor. Point your toes to engage the lower leg and foot muscles. Keep your spine upright. Do 10 repetitions on each side.



I make music for the hips, not the head.
~Norman Cook

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