

TRAIN THE **WHOLE CHAIN**

Knee pain is usually not a knee problem. Your knee sits in the middle of a chain, and when the muscles above and below it are strong, they take their share of the load. This is what I train, from the ground up, with my favorite exercises for each muscle group.

01 FEET AND CALVES

They meet the ground first, so they're your first shock absorbers.

- 1 **Knees-Over-Toes Calf Raise**
Bent knee, for the soleus ▶ [WATCH](#)
- 2 **Single-Leg Straight-Leg Calf Raise**
Straight knee, for the gastrocnemius ▶ [WATCH](#)

02 TIBIALIS

Tibialis anterior is the front of your shin and slows you down on stairs. Tibialis posterior holds your arch up.

- 1 **Tibialis Raises**
Heels planted, toes up toward your shins ▶ [WATCH](#)
- 2 **Lacrosse Ball Calf Raise**
Ball between your feet, for the tibialis posterior ▶ [WATCH](#)

03 QUADS

They control how your knee bends and help your kneecap track where it should.

- 1 **Poliquin Step Up**
Short range. Targets the VMO above the inside of the knee ▶ [WATCH](#)
- 2 **Bulgarian Split Squat**
Mid range. Single-leg strength with a hip flexor stretch ▶ [WATCH](#)
- 3 **Slant Board Squat**
Full range. A deep squat, knees over toes ▶ [WATCH](#)

TWO WORDS WORTH KNOWING

ECCENTRIC is the lowering half of a rep, when the muscle lengthens under load. **CONCENTRIC** is the lifting half, when it shortens. Strong knees need both.

04 HAMSTRINGS

They protect the knee from the back side. Train both halves of the rep.

- 1 **Nordic Curl**
Eccentric: the slow lowering ▶ [WATCH](#)
- 2 **RDL**
Eccentric: hinge and lower under control ▶ [WATCH](#)
- 3 **Banded Hamstring Curl**
Concentric. At a gym, use a seated or lying curl ▶ [WATCH](#)

05 HIPS

They decide where your knee points when you step, squat, or land.

- 1 **Side Lying Hip Abduction**
Glute med, the part PT usually covers ▶ [WATCH](#)
- 2 **Weighted Hip Flexor Raise**
Hip flexors, the front of the hip ▶ [WATCH](#)
- 3 **Copenhagen Plank**
Adductors, the inner thigh ▶ [WATCH](#)

06 LOW BACK AND GLUTES

The top of the posterior chain, and the engine behind every step.

- 1 **Back Extension**
Glutes, hamstrings, and low back in one movement ▶ [WATCH](#)
- 2 **Hip Thrust**
Heavy glute work ▶ [WATCH](#)
- 3 **Feet Elevated Glute Bridge**
The at-home version ▶ [WATCH](#)

HOW TO USE THIS Keep working through the guide you downloaded. When you want more, pick 3 to 5 exercises from this page, do them today, and feel the difference. Two to three sets each, with slow, controlled reps. Pain during an exercise should stay at 3 out of 10 or less.

Want this laid out week by week, with every session filmed? [See the Strong Knees System](#)

I'm a strength coach, not a physical therapist or a doctor, and this page isn't medical advice. If your knee locks, gives out, or swells after every session, get it looked at in person first.