



# HOW TO TONE YOUR LEGS

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## Introduction

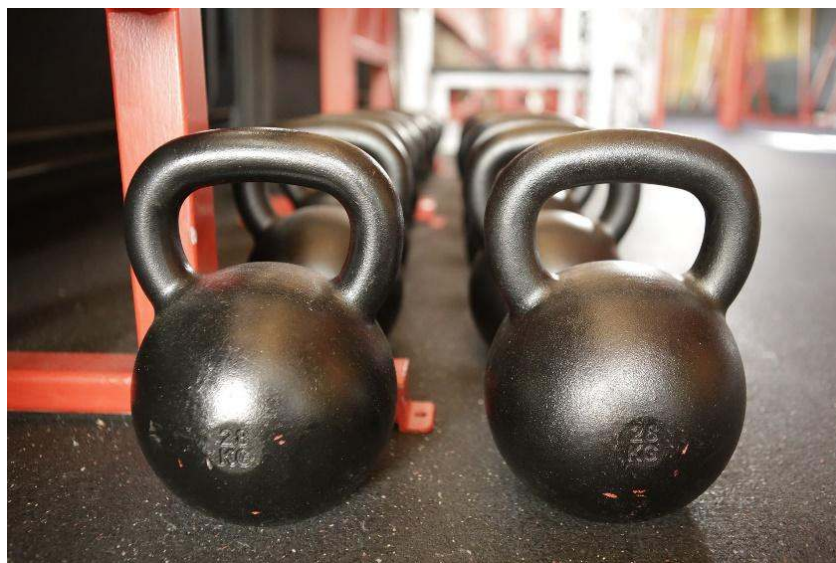
Do you love your legs? So many people don't. They hide them year-round, even in the summer, under long pants and skirts. They wear long shirts and sweaters that cover their backside and thighs. And swimsuit season is not their favorite time.

From thigh gap to cellulite and everything in between, legs tend to be a struggle for many. The good news is that toned legs are in your near future.

The benefits of toning your legs are many. In addition to being able to wear clothing that fits the season – that means shorts in warm weather – it also means feeling more strong and confident. Toned legs are strong legs. They look great with bare feet and cutoffs, or heels and skirts.

Toning your legs means that you never have to worry about hiding your legs again. Instead, you'll get compliments on them, and inquiries about how you have such great legs.

For both men and women, it's nice to be able to wear more revealing clothing. But it's important to not forget that just about any leg toning exercise you perform strengthens your muscles as well, including your glutes and your core muscles. You'll have better posture, your clothing will be more flattering on you, and you'll feel more confident.



As you tone your legs, you also improve your strength and mobility. That means you may no longer experience those painful pops and clicks in your hips, ankles and knees. And your flexibility may improve, which is always fun to experience.

Many people, especially women, worry about becoming bulky when they do strength training. Let's talk about that next.

## **The Difference Between Toned and Bulky**

To make sure we're on the same page... bulky muscles are those that you might see in a weightlifting magazine. They bulge. There is little fat over the muscle and you can often see the definition of the muscles.

Toned muscles are muscles that are ready for action. You haven't made them bigger, what you have done is improve their appearance.

There's a big difference in how a person achieves toned muscles versus how they build and bulk their muscles.

To achieve bulkiness, you need:

- Genetics – Regardless of time and effort, some people just cannot bulk up. In fact, most people (and most women) are genetically unable to get bulky.
- Heavy weights – To achieve increased muscle mass, aka bulk, you have to lift heavy weights. You have to work toward maximum weight effort and you have to do it often.
- Hours in the gym – Bulk doesn't come easy. It requires a commitment to time in the gym every day, and we're not talking about quick high intensity training sessions. We're talking about strength training major muscle groups on a regular basis.

To achieve toned legs you need:

- Light dumbbells (5-20 pounds) or body weight are good for many movements.
- Less than 20 minutes, 3 times a week.
- No gym; you can do these movements in your home.

The bottom line is that with a few minutes each day, you can have toned legs. If you want to build muscle and add bulk, then you're going to need heavier weights, a gym membership, and the right genetics.

## **How to Use This Guide**

This guide is divided into three categories. The categories include beginner, intermediate, and advanced. It's divided this way so you can approach your toned legs program with confidence.

There's something for everyone. Each exercise is modifiable, meaning you can make it easier or harder, depending on your strength, mobility, and needs.

Each movement also includes instructions on how to perform it, necessary equipment, tips on success, and guidelines on reps and rounds.

## Beginner Toned Legs Exercises

Beginner movements are movements that most everyone can do. They are movements that don't require heavy weights, and in many cases they don't require weights at all. With each movement, stand up and try to work through the steps. Get the feel for it before you add it to a workout.

### #1 Squat

#### Equipment Required:

- None
- You can add weights to make it more difficult

#### What Does It Tone?

- Quadriceps
- Hamstrings
- Glutes
- Calf muscles

#### How to Perform the Movement

Stand with your feet about shoulder width apart. Your toes will be pointed slightly outward and away from your body. Push your rear end back as if you're sitting in a chair, and bend your knees. Your squat is at full depth when your hips are lower than your knees.

If you can't get to that point due to mobility limitations or injury, consider squatting to a target like a box, the edge of a chair, or even the side of the bathtub in your hotel room.

Perform five sets of 10-20 squats. Rest in between each set.

#### Tips

Push your knees out throughout the movement. This will protect your knees from injury, and will make your legs work harder.

Make sure your knees are tracking over your toes.

Hold your arms overhead to help your back stay upright and vertical. It's easy to lean forward when you squat, and holding your torso upright also works your legs more and strengthens your core.

The movement is completed when your hips are open and you're standing up. Don't shorten the movement by not completely opening up your hips and standing all the way up.

Bodyweight squats are a great movement. If you want to take it up a level, you can perform:

- Weighted squats – Squat holding dumbbells or kettlebells in each hand.
- Goblet squats – Hold a kettlebell between both of your hands and position the kettlebell in front of your face. You can brace your arms against your body to hold the kettlebell.
- Squat Tabata – Perform as many squats as possible in 20 seconds. Rest for ten seconds. Repeat this 8 times for a total of a 4-minute HIIT squat workout. Try to maintain the same number of squats each round.



## #2 Lunge

### Equipment Required:

- None
- You can add weights to make it more difficult

### What Does It Tone?

- Glutes
- Hamstrings
- Thighs
- Calf muscles
- The core muscles in your back and abdomen

### How to Perform the Movement

The lunge is another basic movement like the squat, but don't let the word "basic" fool you. Both the lunge and the squat are powerful exercises that can change how your legs look and feel. Starting with your feet under your hips, step your right foot forward about two feet.

Lower your knee of your left leg until it touches the ground. Make sure this movement is controlled so you don't slam your knee into the ground. Using the strength of your front leg, stand up and bring your feet together. That's one repetition.

Now step forward with your left leg and lower your right knee to the ground. Stand. Bring your feet together. That's another repetition.

Perform 15 reps on each side. Repeat 3x for a total of 45 reps on each side.





You can make this more difficult by:

- Holding dumbbells in each hand
- Holding dumbbells overhead
- Holding a kettlebell in front of you

### **Tips**

Make sure you're warmed up before performing this movement or any of the other movements. Go for a 400-meter jog, do jumping jacks in your living room, or perform 10-20 slow squats. Open up your hip and ankle joints. Get blood flowing to your muscles before you start asking them to do work.

Keep your back upright as you perform this movement.

Make sure your knee doesn't cave in to the inside of your body, but rather tracks over your toes. If you take too large of a step, or too small of a step, forward, you may have trouble keeping your knee in the right position.

### #3 Good Mornings

The good morning is a simple movement and very powerful. You may not initially feel much of anything when you perform the movement, but you will the next day. Don't overdo it!

#### Equipment Required:

- None
- Dumbbells or kettlebells for weighted good mornings

#### What Does It Tone?

This movement is exceptional for your:

- Hamstrings
- Glutes

#### How to Perform the Movement

Standing with your feet under your hips, bend forward as if you're setting something down on the floor. Your knees will be soft; don't lock them, but also don't bend them too much. A slight bend is all you need.

Keep your back straight. When you feel your back start to curve, this is a sign that you're beyond your limit. The flexibility of your hamstrings and the mobility in your glutes and back will limit you. Don't worry. You'll get stronger and better at these as you go.

The movement starts with you standing up. Now push your rear end back as you bend forward at the hips. Continue bending forward, keeping your back straight, no arch or curve in your spine. You'll feel a pull at the back of your legs. When you lower as far as you can, squeeze your glutes and stand back up.

Perform this exercise in three sets of 25. You will feel like one of those bobbing flamingos, but this is a fantastic exercise for toned legs.



To make this movement more difficult:

- Add dumbbells to each hand, or kettlebells.
- Do one leg good mornings. Using your other leg for balance, you can rest your toe on the ground behind you to keep you from tipping over. Perform 15 on each leg and repeat this three times.

### **Tips**

As you move your way through each set, try to lower yourself just a little bit more. You'll find that you gain flexibility as you go.

Be sure to keep your knees soft.

Keep your spine in neutral position. Your eyes will be looking toward the ground and about two to three feet in front of you.

## Intermediate Leg Toning Exercises

### #1 Mountain Climbers

Mountain climbers are good exercises for flexibility, mobility, and of course for toning. Initially, they can feel a little awkward, but once you get the hang of it, you'll do fine.

#### Equipment Required:

- None. However, if you're working out on a hard floor, you might appreciate a yoga mat to prevent you from sliding, or you could work out with bare feet.

#### What Does It Tone?

- Calves
- Quads
- Hamstrings
- Glutes

#### How to Perform the Movement

Standing, take a large step forward with your right leg. Lower yourself toward the ground so that your right hand is on the outside of your right foot. Your left leg will be straightened behind you and the knee of your right leg will be bent. Your left hand will be on the ground in front of you. Your hands are helping to balance you and support your weight.

The knee of your left leg does not touch the ground. However, you want to be able to lower yourself to the ground as close as you can. This may require you to stretch your right foot out a bit further ahead of you and to adjust your stance.

Your right knee is bent and generally angling out over your right foot. Do not bounce in this movement. It should be controlled. Hold the movement for a count of ten then take your right leg back behind you so that you're in a plank position. Now bring your left leg up and place it just inside your left hand. Hold for a count of ten.

Repeat this movement 10 times on each side, for a total of 20.

To make this movement harder:

- Hold for a count of 5 on each side and increase the speed of the transition between feet.
- Don't hold the position at all. Switch your feet quickly so that your breathing and heart rate begin to increase and your legs get really warm. Feel the burn.

### **Tips**

Don't overextend your knee. Your front leg should be at about a 90-degree angle.

If you want to get some mobility work out of this, as you're holding the position, push your hips to the floor. You might also experiment with pressing your front leg away from your body so you get a good hip opener. But be careful and don't force anything.

## #2 Dead Lift

The dead lift is one of the foundational movements in weightlifting, but you don't have to have a barbell to get toned legs. You can use your own body weight or smaller weights. The key to this movement is good form. You can hurt your back if you don't perform the movement correctly.

### Equipment Required:

- Dumbbells or kettlebells

### What Does It Tone?

- Glutes
- Hamstrings
- Low back
- Quads
- Calves

### How to Perform the Movement

Before you use weights, perform the movement without them so that you get the feel of it first. Standing with your feet under your hips and a dumbbell or kettlebell in each hand, bend your knees and push your rear end back. Lower until the weights are about mid-shin, or they're resting lightly on the floor.

Your back should be neutral, no curve in the spine, and your eyes should be focused on the ground about two feet in front of you. This focus keeps your head and neck in line with your spine. Now, without using your back to lift the weights, press your feet into the ground and use your legs to stand up.

If the weights are too heavy for you, you may feel them pull your spine forward in a curve. Don't let this happen. Use lighter weights. This is why this is an intermediate movement. People tend to hurt their backs with the deadlift if they allow their back to curve.

This is not a back or core strengthening movement, it's a leg strengthener and toner. Yes, you will strengthen your back muscles, but that's not the focus of the movement.

The movement is complete when you're standing up straight and your hips are fully open. Repeat this movement 25-50 times in two to three sets, for a total of 50-150 – depending on your ability. You can build up to three sets of 50, so don't overdo it!

### **Tips**

Keep your eyes on the ground ahead of you as you stand.

Neutral spine! No curving or arching allowed.

Lighter weights and more reps are the way to begin this movement. As you get stronger, you can increase the weight. You may eventually work your way toward a barbell. Have fun! It can be really empowering to lift heavy weights and the dead lift is the strongest movement for most everyone. It's not uncommon for a female to be able to deadlift 150 or more pounds, and for men to lift twice that. Your legs are your strongest muscles!



### #3 Calf Raises

These are great to do while you're waiting in line or even while you're sitting at your desk. While the best way to do them is as described, you can perform calf raises just about anywhere.

#### Equipment Required:

- Steps
- Dumbbells

#### What Does It Tone?

- Calves





## **How to Perform the Movement**

With both feet standing on the bottom step (so you don't have far to fall if you lose your balance), raise up on your toes. Now lower your heels so they dip below the level of the step. You'll feel a stretch both at the top and the bottom of this movement.

Perform 25 calf raises. Rest for two minutes, perform 25 more, rest two minutes, and complete 25 more.

You can also perform the top portion of this movement while standing on the floor. Simply raise up on your tip toes and lower back down to the floor.

To make this movement more difficult:

Add weight. Hold dumbbells in your hands. The more weight you add, the more difficult the movement.

## **Tips**

Balance can be an issue for some people. If you need to, hold onto something so that you don't tumble and twist an ankle.

## Advanced Leg Toning Movements

Congratulations! You're working your way up to the more challenging movements. These movements often add a cardio element to leg toning. Ready? Let's surge ahead!

### #1 Jumping Squats

Okay, so you've done the squat, this extra "jump" really takes this movement up a notch.

#### Equipment Required:

- None

#### What Does It Tone?

- Everything the squat tones, plus your cardio system gets a great workout

#### How to Perform the Movement

At the bottom of your squat, push up hard and fast so that you get air between your feet and the ground. When you land, you'll land with your knees bent and you'll lower quickly back to the bottom of your squat. If you can do 25 of these unbroken (without stopping), you're a rock star! Try three sets of 25.

#### Tips

Don't lose good form when you do these. You still need to make sure your back is upright and that your knees track outward.

Use your arms for momentum, balance, and to keep your back straight.

Smile!

## #2 Jumping Lunges

### Equipment Required:

- None, trust me, your body weight will be enough!

### What Does It Tone?

- Everything that the lunge tones, plus your cardio system

### How to Perform the Movement

Instead of standing up from your front leg, you'll spring up. Instead of landing with your feet together under you, you'll switch feet in the air and land in a lunge on the other side. The trick? Not losing your balance. Like the squat, see if you can do 25 unbroken. Perform three sets of 25.

### Tips:

- Control the movement. You still don't want to slam your knee into the ground.
- Use your arms for balance.
- Watch your knee on your front leg. Don't go beyond a 90-degree angle.

### #3 One Legged Squat

The one-legged squat is a difficult movement. You may need to modify it in the beginning, and gradually work up to being able to perform this movement without modifications.

#### Equipment Required

- Chair or sturdy box (that you can put your weight on)
- A pole to hang onto is another option for modifying this movement

#### What Does It Tone?

- Everything that a squat tones

#### How to Perform the Movement

**Squatting to a chair** – Stand right in front of a chair, bench, box or other low object and reach one leg straight out in front of you. Now sit back onto the object as slowly as you can. Reach your hands toward your toe that's sticking straight out in front of you. You might even touch your toe; this puts you in proper position to stand back up using the strength of your foot and leg that's on the ground.

Keeping the movement controlled, alternate legs and perform this modified one legged squat 10 times on each side.

**Squatting with a Pole** – The next level up from squatting to a chair is to use a pole for balance. With the pole positioned in front of you, hold onto it and let it help you control your balance and the movement as you again straighten one leg out in front of you. Lower your body onto the other, so that your hips are at or below the level of your knee. Stand back up. Switch legs and repeat. Perform 10 on each side, alternating legs.

**Squatting with a Counterweight** – For many, pistols or one-legged squats are easier with a counterweight. Standing, straighten one leg out in front of you. Hold the weight out in front of you, and lower your body down into a squat on your other leg. Lean forward a bit and use your amazing leg muscles to stand back up. The counterweight puts your torso in proper position to help you stand back up.



**Aided with Your Other Leg** – Rather than put one leg out in front of you, place it behind you with your toe touching the ground. Now use as much strength as you can with your opposite leg and lower yourself into a squat. The toe behind you helps you maintain balance and it helps you control the movement. As you get stronger, you can use less and less of that back leg.

**Rolling Squats** – Sit on the ground. Bend one leg with your heel tucked up against your rear end. Your other leg will be straight out in front of you. Now roll onto your back and roll forward with momentum enough that you can plant your foot and stand up on that bent leg.

**Unaided One-Legged Squat** – Once you feel like you're ready, try a one-legged squat. This is without a bar to hold onto, a box to squat to, or momentum from a roll. Lower your body down, hold your hands out in front of you, (you can touch your toe if you'd like) and stand back up. Alternate legs.

## **Tips**

Like the squat, it's important to watch the tracking of your knee to make sure it doesn't rotate inward.

Unlike the squat, your back will not be upright, but rather you'll be leaning forward.

There you have it! Nine movements with an abundance of modifications to make them easier or more difficult. Work your way through these movements and you're going to have amazing legs. If you want to take your leg toning program up a level, try some fat burning cardio movements. Simply add them to your weekly routine to not only help shape your legs but to also burn fat.

### **Fat Burning Cardio Ideas to Consider:**

- Dancing
- Running
- Jump Rope
- Kickboxing
- Spinning
- Hiking
- Swimming

There are probably dozens more ways that you can get a good leg workout while shaping your legs. Try integrating two or three leg toning movements into your day at least three days a week. Combine it with your cardio and you'll be showing off your legs in no time.



## **6 Diet Tips for Slimmer Legs**

If you're trying to get slimmer legs, the exercises in this ebook will help them to become more toned over the next few months. However, did you know that what you eat can be equally as important as the time you spend in the gym? Here are some diet tips that will help you to get slimmer legs for summer.

### **1. Check your calorie allowance**

To get slimmer legs, you essentially need to get rid of any excess fat which is surrounding them. In order to do this, you should look into reducing your calorie intake or at least checking that you're not consuming too many calories. You can do this by using an online calculator or app such as MyFitnessPal. It will be calculated based on your gender, height, weight, age and fitness levels.

### **2. Find foods that speed up the fat burning process**

Some foods are better at helping you to lose weight. Drink green tea each morning if you want to boost your metabolism and burn fat even quicker. Garlic, ginger, soy and grapefruit are good foods for helping you to burn the excess fat, not only on your legs but on your entire body.

### **3. Cut down on carbs and fats**

You need to have some fats in your diet, but these shouldn't be in the form of junk food or sugary foods and drinks. Good fats include nuts, avocado, cheese (in limited quantities) and olive oil. As well as limiting the amount of fats you eat, you should avoid stodgy carbs such as white bread, fries and pastries.

### **4. Drink water**

Drinking plenty of water will help you to tone your entire body, and this is particularly important as you get older. Water will help your skin to retain its elasticity, which is one of the most vital parts in helping your skin to appear more toned.



## **5. Eat protein**

Protein will give you more energy to work out at the gym, and as a result, you'll be able to work your legs harder and make them slimmer in less time.

## **6. Cut out sugar**

Once you start looking at the sugar content in many foods, you'll be surprised how you ever managed to consumed so much of it. Cutting out sugar will immediately help your body to burn fat quicker overall, since you won't be slowing it down by feeding it with sugar.



## **Conclusion:**

### **A Guide to the Muscles of Your Legs**

If you want sexy, toned legs, it's important to know about the different muscles in your leg, and then you'll need to know how to work each of these muscles.

Below, you'll learn just that. First, you'll get an explanation of where each muscle is and what it does. After that, you'll get a suggestion of some exercises to do to strengthen these muscles.

This is, however, only part of the battle when you want toned legs. The other key to having toned legs is to lower your body fat enough to uncover the muscle you've worked so hard to get. You can't spot reduce fat from certain areas, so you'll have to lose overall body fat to get the toned look you want. Being toned is simply having a low enough body fat to see your muscles. To lower your body fat you'll need to consume fewer calories than you need. Burning calories by exercises will also help you lose body fat.

**Glutes-** Your glutes are your gluteal muscles, or as you probably know them, your butt. They're not considered your leg technically, but they're listed here because they're at the top of your leg and they're one of the strongest muscles in your body. There are many exercises you can use to strengthen your glutes, but some of the best are squats, deadlifts, lunges, and cable kickbacks.

**Quadriceps-** Quadriceps, or quads, are the muscles in the front of your thigh. There are 4 muscles that work together to extend your knees. These muscles can be strengthened by doing squats, deadlifts, and lunges.

**Hamstrings-** Hamstrings are the muscles in the back of your upper leg, or the back of your thigh. They help your knees bend and extend. They also help your hips extend as well. To strengthen your hamstrings you should do squats, Romanian deadlifts, glute ham raises, and prone (lying) leg curls.

**Adductors-** Adductors are the inner thigh muscles. You can feel these if you squeeze your legs together. Most gyms have adductor/abductor machines, and these are perfect to work your adductor muscles. If you don't have access to these try side leg lifts. For more resistance, you can add exercise bands.

**Calf Muscles** ( Gastrocnemius and Soleus) To work both of your calf muscles, do calf raises, weighted calf raises, and seated calf raises.

**Gastrocnemius** – This muscle is the top calf muscle. It gives your foot power to push off the floor. It helps you walk, run, and jump.

**Soleus**- This is the calf muscle that is under the gastrocnemius, and it helps your gastrocnemius move your foot.

**Tibialis anterior**- This muscle is on the front, lower part of your leg. It runs along the shin bone. It pulls your foot upward and gives more stability to your ankle. To work this muscle you can do the opposite of a calf raise. You will be lifting your toes instead of your heels. This works well if you alternate between doing a calf raise and then doing a toe lift.

If you will work your leg muscles using the exercises in this ebook, you'll have strong leg muscles that will show once you lower your body fat percentage using a healthy diet and exercise program to stay in a calorie deficit.

Soon, you will have strong, sexy, toned legs and all of your hard work will show.