

# Tight or Weak Hip Flexors?

HERE'S YOUR GO-TO GUIDE



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# Common Hip Flexor Issues



Tight hip flexors are a common issues across the globe. People in yoga studios are stretching out their hip flexors, runners are blaming a short stride and injuries on these muscles, and your clients are probably asking you about their own tight hips after sitting all day for their job.

It's important to understand exactly what it means to have tight hip flexors so you can help your clients. They may genuinely have tight muscles in the hips that need stretching, but they may also need to strengthen the hip flexors or related muscles, like the glutes or core.

Many of these issues arise from muscle imbalances in the surrounding anatomy. Hip muscle action heavily influences muscles such as the glutes, hamstrings, and lumbar spine. With so many other muscle groups contributing to improper biomechanics, it is important to address the hip joint and the surrounding anatomy.

Let's dig into common hip flexor issues and causes, plus how you can use corrective exercise to prevent or address problems with these muscles.

## What Exactly Are Hip Flexors?

First, help your clients understand what the hip flexors are, what they do, and how you know when they're tight. The term hip flexors refers to a group of muscles in and around the hips that help move the legs and the trunk together, such as when you lift your leg up, bending at the hip.

The hip flexor includes the following:

- **Iliopsoas muscle.** The iliopsoas is actually two different muscles that help stabilize the lower back: the psoas muscle and the iliacus muscle. The psoas muscle runs from the lumbar spine (lower back), through the pelvis, and attaches to the femur (thigh bone). The iliacus muscle attaches the pelvis to the femur and is used to rotate the thigh.
- **Rectus femoris muscle.** The rectus femoris attaches the pelvis to the knee. It is also the quad muscle that is used when performing squats or lunges.
- **Sartorius muscle.** Also running from the pelvis to the knee, the [sartorius muscle](#) is used to flex the knee and leg.
- **Pectineus muscle.** More commonly known as the groin muscle, the pectineus is used in hip flexion. It is also used for thigh rotation and adduction.

Together these muscles produce flexion, the movement and tightening of muscles that allows for flexing of the hip joint. They also help to stabilize the spine.

## Common Hip Flexor Issues

Lots of factors play a role in hip pain. The most common hip flexor issues are strains, labral tears, and stress fractures. When a hip flexor experiences excessive tightness or stiffness, a strain is more likely to occur. A tight hip can create an immense amount of hip pain and lead to more serious injuries.

The first step to successfully fixing hip flexor issues is to determine what the actual issue is. You will not be able to rehabilitate an injury unless you determine where disruption is in the kinetic chain. The next step is to design a program for the actual issue at hand. Then implement the stretches, exercises, and foam rolling into your client's current program.

## Tight Muscles

The hip flexor muscle demonstrates its main function when a client bends at the waist or raises their knee upward. These types of hip flexion movement patterns occur in both athletes and sedentary clients.

Every athlete performs running motions, bringing their knee upward. Sedentary clients find themselves sitting a lot in a position where the body bends at the waist. When these movements occur, the hip flexor muscles shorten. The longer the hip flexors remain in a shortened or contracted position, the tighter they become.

When a client stretches a tight hip, it could cause a strain depending on the extent of the hip flexor tightness they have built up. This can lead to more serious [hip issues](#) and even knee injuries. Maintaining hip and knee strength, mobility, and flexibility will help clients avoid injury.

Hip issues usually contribute to knee injuries and vice versa. The body is a kinetic chain where everything connects and affects each anatomical part. Knowing this will help you quickly determine the issue at hand.

## Hip Injury

The more severe the injury, the higher the grade of tear.

- Grade I: The client's hip still functions properly, but they experience a small amount of pain in the groin area.
- Grade II: The hip does not function properly but can tolerate some weight; the hip gives out every so often.
- Grade III: The client is unable to tolerate any weight at all; it is unlikely your client will be able to walk. These types of tears coincide with stress fractures and you should recommend your client to see an orthopedic doctor immediately.

## Tendonitis

Overuse of the hip also causes hip tendonitis. To differentiate between tendonitis and strains you need to discover the location of pain. If pain in the front of the hip worsens when the knee lifts towards the chest, it is most likely a strain. If pain occurs in the leg or even the back, it is most likely tendonitis.

Hip tendonitis slowly gets worse over time, whereas a strain or tear is usually immediate pain. Every client should be stretching on a routine basis to help prevent hip stiffness and to alleviate any pain that might occur in the hip joint.

## Labral Tears

The acetabulum, which is known as the hip socket, is where the femur sits in the pelvis. Labral tissue covers this socket and can become irritated through excess rubbing and overuse of the hip joint. If this tissue tears it is known as a labral tear. Clicking or popping often accompanies labral tears, which cause pain in the hip and groin

area. The structure of a client can also influence these types of issues, but injury and overuse are the common cause of these complications.

## Causes of Weak or Tight Hip Flexors

Repetitive movement or overuse within the hip joint is a major aspect to hip flexor pain. Weak or tight hip flexors cause hip flexor injuries. It is important to understand what contributes to the weakness or tightness the hip flexors experience. If a client experiences direct damage to the hip it can cause a hip flexor injury, but overuse is the biggest reason for hip flexor tightness.

### Excessive Sitting

Hip flexor tightness can come from excessive sitting and bad posture. If your client is sitting a lot throughout the day, their hip flexors remain in a flexed position for an extended period. The iliopsoas shortens, making the flexors tight, which leads to inactive hip flexor muscles. When muscles are inactive, they will atrophy and become weaker. Weak hip flexors will lead to more hip flexor strains.

Picture a client who sits all day long and suddenly stands up. The entire time they were sitting their hip flexors were in a flexed position. In this flexed position the hip flexor muscles contract and shorten. When your client stands up, the hip flexor muscles stretch and elongate quickly, possibly even more than the muscle can withstand. As the hip flexor quickly extends beyond the muscles' threshold, it creates micro-tears in the muscles.

Stretching routinely will help prevent this, but you must know that any form of overstretching can also be detrimental to the hip flexor muscles. If your client stretches too much, they can create micro-tears in the muscles as well.

### Piriformis Muscle

The piriformis is a common muscle responsible for a lot of hip issues. The piriformis muscle is the muscle in the body that sits underneath the gluteus maximus. It is a small muscle unable to withstand the same stress larger muscles can. Many clients have piriformis syndrome that amplifies hip flexor issues.

With excessive sitting the glutes become underactive and weak causing the piriformis to compensate. It is a strong, but small muscle that cannot undergo the same activities the glutes can. Therefore a client will experience pain in the hips, which can be alleviated through consistent hip flexor and [piriformis flexibility exercises](#).

### Runners

Some athletes are also more prone to tightness. Runners use the hip flexors, especially the iliopsoas, to lift the leg up with each stride. This repeated shortening of the muscle isn't compensated for by a lengthening movement. Runners often end up with tight hip flexors for this reason.

### Weak Core

Having a weak core can also be an issue that contributes to tight hip flexors. Because these muscles are connected to and stabilize the spine, they often take over when the core is not strong. This can lead to tightening and pain.

## Signs You Have Tight Hip Flexors

The obvious sign, of course, is that these muscles just feel tight. You try to stretch them and they don't move much. But there are other signs too. Tight hip flexor muscles can impact several other areas of your body, so you might have:

- Tightness or an ache in your lower back, especially when standing.
- Poor posture and difficulty standing up straight.
- Neck tightness and pain.
- Pain in the glutes.

You can also do a test to evaluate tightness. Lying on your back on a table or bench, pull one knee up toward your chest and hold it there. Let the other leg relax downward over the edge of the table. It helps here to have someone hold that leg for you so you can do it slowly.

If your hip flexors are fine, you should be able to fully extend the thigh so its parallel to the floor and bend the knee to 90 degrees without the thigh rising. Any difficulty with these movements indicates tight hip flexor muscles.

Are you passionate about helping others reach their potential? Learn how to individualize and progress each client towards their health and fitness goals with [ISSA's Personal Trainer Certification](#) course! Get started today!

# Corrective Exercise Techniques for Hip Flexor Issues



Corrective exercise helps personal trainers address postural and movement dysfunctions and prevent injury in clients, such as with the hip flexors. If a client experiences pain in the lumbar spine or glutes, you must consider tight hip flexors as the problem area. Implement corrective exercise into a client's program to help improve hip mobility and hip flexibility and to relieve pain in the hip joint.

To design an effective corrective exercise program to address hip flexor issues, start by dedicating the beginning movement prep of each workout to exercises that target these specific areas. Incorporate a combination of stretches, movement prep exercises, and foam rolling throughout the workout.

### **Movement Prep**

Some movement prep exercises to include before the main workout are glute bridges, bird dogs, single-leg squats, dead bugs, and mountain climbers. For the post-workout stretches, incorporate flex focus stretches like a lying hip flexor stretch. You want your clients to perform extension type stretches as well, like a quad stretch or kneeling hip flexor stretch.

### **Foam Rolling**

Foam rolling the upper thigh and hip flexor region will serve as a self-massage and get rid of any muscle knots. Have your client foam roll all the surrounding muscle groups as well. Often the issue is the other tight muscle groups that pull on the hip flexors. It can also be inactive muscles that do not stimulate properly. If you help your client release these muscles through foam rolling, they will experience immediate relief.

### **Securing the Trunk**

Pelvic stabilization helps keep the hip muscles and hip joint in place to function properly. The pelvis is responsible for supporting the entire body and transferring weight from the upper body to the lower body. Numerous muscles attach to the pelvis making it able to perform many movements in the kinetic chain.

The psoas major is the strongest hip flexor muscle in the body and attaches the hip to the pelvis. Targeting the pelvis, hip, and glute muscle groups can help improve your client's hip mobility and stability.

Implement the following corrective exercises into your client's program to help with hip flexor issues. Not only will these techniques and exercises help relieve pain, but they will repair and strengthen the hip region.

## **Stretches for Tight Hip Flexors**

Having tight hip flexors can cause injuries, pain, and restricted mobility, so it's worth taking a few minutes per day to stretch them out if you have tightness. Here are some stretches to try, for you or your clients:

- **Foam roll.** [A foam roller](#) can be useful in stretching and loosening hip muscles. Get into a forearm plank position on the ground with the roller under the front of one hip. Let the other leg stay out to the side, off the roller. Roll up and down for about 30 seconds, focusing on points that feel especially tight.

- **Pigeon pose.** Borrow this move from yoga to stretch out the flexors. On your hands and knees, pull the right knee forward. Bend it under your chest and stretch out the left leg behind you. Lay down on top of your bent knee as much as you can. With tight muscles, it may take some time before you can do this fully, so take it slowly.
- **Butterfly stretch.** Sit on the floor with the bottoms of your feet pressed together. Let the knees fall outward to stretch the hips. For an extra stretch, gently push down on your knees.
- **Low lunge.** Perform a deep lunge with the right leg forward. Gently let the left knee rest on the ground and straighten that leg as much as possible. Put your palms flat on each side of the right foot, then raise the left arm up above your head and lean to the right. Hold a few seconds and repeat on the other side.
- **Garland pose.** This pose is a good hip opener. To perform it, stand with your feet slightly wider than your hips. Your feet should be pointing slightly to the sides. Bend your knees and lower your body to the ground. Keeping your heels pressed to the ground, place your hands in a praying position. Your elbows will rest on your inner knee.
- **Cow face pose.** In this position, you are seated with your right leg crossed over your left leg as much as possible. Your right thigh is rotated outward at the hip joint. Your right foot is lying on its side, the ankle bone touching the ground. Repeat with the left leg on top.

Yoga provides many advantages for clients who struggle with hip pain or stiffness from tight muscles. Consider these [yoga poses for tight hip flexors](#) to help open the hips and help strengthen weak hip flexors.

## Exercises to Strengthen Hip Flexors

Moves that strengthen the hip muscles, the glutes, and the core will all be useful in preventing tightness in the hip flexors as well as injuries. These moves can improve strength and provide a good stretch at the same time:

- Glute bridges
- Single-leg squat
- Mountain climbers

The next three sections break down these exercises in detail—proper form, benefits, variations, and more.

And if you're truly interested in the fine details of movement and form and helping people avoid or recover from injuries, check out [ISSA's Corrective Exercise Specialist certification](#) course. You can get started right away online!

# Build Strength with Glute Bridges



The glute bridge exercise is an excellent way to target the posterior chain. It's an exercise that plays an important role in activating the glutes and helps set the foundation for strong, stable hips.

Here you'll explore glute anatomy, glute activation, and how to do the glute bridge exercise. Plus, there are a few glute bridge variations to shake up your workouts.

## Anatomy of the Glutes

The glutes are important muscles. Although [many clients train their glutes for aesthetic purposes](#), the gluteal muscles play a significant role in both day-to-day functions and athletic performance.

The glutes are comprised of three muscles:

- Gluteus maximus
- Gluteus medius
- Gluteus minimus

They are attached at different angles and depths within the body and have additional attachment points (gluteus maximus: sacrum and coccyx, gluteus minimus: sciatic notch), but all three muscles originate on portions of the ilium and insert near the greater trochanter <sup>(1)(2)(3)</sup>.

The gluteus maximus is the largest glute muscle and is responsible for most of the shape of the buttocks. It plays a major role in hip extension and supports the lateral rotation of the leg <sup>(1)</sup>.

The gluteus medius is positioned between the gluteus maximus and gluteus minimus. It is responsible for the abduction and medial rotation of the leg <sup>(2)</sup>.

And finally, the gluteus minimus is the smallest and deepest glute muscle. Like the gluteus medius, it is responsible for the abduction and medial rotation of the leg <sup>(3)</sup>.

All three work together to stabilize the pelvis and play a huge role in walking, sitting, running, etc.

## Glute Activation

Ensuring the activation of the muscles is an important component of success. This can be a challenge with the glutes because tight hip flexors and other [muscle imbalances](#) can contribute to weak glutes or discourage the glute muscles from firing the way they should.

The glutes play an important role in many movements and are essential in athletic performance but if the glutes aren't firing, other muscles must take over to support the movement.

The first step in glute training is often [corrective exercise](#). Static and dynamic movement assessments should be used to determine if there is a [pelvic tilt](#) or other dysfunction in the kinetic chain impacting glute activation. Then, using the proper exercises, you can activate and strengthen the glute muscles.

## The Basic Glute Bridge

Your client will begin lying on their back with a mat between their body and the floor. They will bend the knees and place the bottoms of their feet hip-width apart on the floor. The head and neck should be in alignment with the rest of the spine and the arms should rest at the sides of the body. Keeping the upper back pressed into the ground, the client will raise their hips toward the ceiling, squeezing the glutes at the top while pausing for a few seconds before slowly lowering the hips back down to the ground.

## Glute Bridge Variations

Horizontal loading exercises are ideal for building the glutes. The glute bridge is a good example of that. Plus, the glute bridge has several effective exercise variations for added challenge or to change up a workout.

### 1. Single-Leg Glute Bridge

The starting position for the single-leg glute bridge is the same as the basic glute bridge (lying on back, knees bent, bottoms of the feet on the floor, head and spine in alignment, etc.). Lift one foot a few inches off the floor, keep the hips square, and push the pelvis toward the ceiling. Squeeze the glutes for a few seconds at the top and slowly lower back down to the ground. After completing the appropriate number of reps, switch to the opposite side of the body.

### 2. Banded Glute Bridge

Just like the single-leg glute bridge, the starting position for the banded glute bridge exercise is the same as the basic glute bridge. The client will position a resistance band around their legs, slightly above their knees (ensure the [resistance band](#) is the appropriate tension for your client's fitness level). Raise the hips while pressing the knees outward (keeping tension on the band) and squeeze the glutes at the top before slowly lowering the butt back down to the starting position.

### 3. Barbell Glute Bridge

Beginning in the same starting position as the basic glute bridge, the client will rest a padded barbell (weighted appropriately for the client's fitness level) across their hips just above their pubic bone, keeping a firm grip on the barbell with both hands. With the spine in alignment and the chin tucked, the client will press the hips up and squeeze the glutes at the top and lower back down to the ground.

### 4. Glute Bridge with Hamstring Curl

If clients can execute the glute bridge with proper form and want to add in a hamstring challenge, this is the exercise for them. The client will start in the same position as the basic glute bridge; however, the heels will rest

on top of sliders. When the client reaches the top of the glute bridge, they will use their hamstrings to pull their heels toward their butt, push them back out and then slowly lower the pelvis to the floor.

As with all exercises, proper form is essential. Before adding weight, ensure clients are properly executing the basic glute bridge. They should be able to feel these exercises in the glutes (not in their back), focus on mind-muscle connection, and squeeze the butt (but not hyperextending the lumbar spine) at the top.

Learn even more about glute activation and [become the go-to glute expert with ISSA's Certified Glute Specialist course](#). Learn the best activation techniques, common dysfunctions, and how to amp up your personal training career. Get started today!

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# Build Strength with Mountain Climbers



There is one thing that nearly everyone in the world of physical exercise appreciates—the perfect combination of simplicity and versatility within an exercise. Why spend hours targeting individual muscle groups when there are exercises that are far more time- and energy-efficient? Mountain climbers fall into this category.

## Mountain Climber Basics

The mountain climber exercise is a simple body-weight exercise that targets many different [muscle groups](#).

Here's the correct technique:

- Start in the high plank position with your hands under your shoulders and your feet hip-distance apart.
- Engage your core and create a straight line from your head through toes (you do not want a rounded back, high hips, etc.).
- Drive your right knee towards your chest and tap your toes on the ground.
- Push your right knee back and land in the original position.
- Repeat the same process for the left side—maintain balance and core stability. That's one rep.
- Repeat the alternating process—speeding up to a running motion.

Although mountain climbers can be referred to as a full-body exercise, there are specific muscle groups that it targets. You must use good form to work each of these muscle groups.

### Core

Be sure to keep your abs tight during the exercise. This will build up [core strength](#)—used in nearly all movement of the body.

Muscles targeted:

- Upper, middle, and lower abdominals
- Obliques
- Lower back muscles

### Shoulders & Arms

Along with the core, arms and shoulder create stability while in the high plank position. They also help to maintain a straight line from head to toe.

Muscles targeted:

- Deltoids
- Triceps

### Upper & Lower Legs

The lower half of the body is responsible for the movement. It may be tempting to focus solely on this region on the body. Don't forget about the previous muscle groups as they allow for smooth lower body movement.

Muscles targeted:

- Glutes
- Quads
- Hamstrings
- Hip flexors
- Shin muscle (only worked with toes pulled toward shins the whole time)

## Benefits of Mountain Climbers

The mountain climber exercise presents many unique benefits for both trainers and clients. Functionally, trainers can incorporate this exercise into a wide variety of workouts including cardio, high-intensity interval training (HIIT), weight loss, fat burning, and more.

As a trainer or coach, adding mountain climbers can create a more well-rounded workout. Rather than hammering out 50 pushups, 100 squats, and 10 sprints, you can combine the effort into one exercise. This saves time and energy.

### Easy to Individualize

Mountain climbers are also very easy to modify for different fitness levels and restrictions. There is no such thing as “graduating” from the exercise. You can always ramp it up!

### Versatile

You can use mountain climbers all throughout a workout:

- Main part of the workout
- Substituted in as a functional “rest” period during the workout
- Supplementation to a cardio workout such as running or swimming
- Part of warm-up or cool-down
- Included in a multi-stage body-weight circuit with crunches, jumping jacks, etc.

### Efficient

They require no equipment and very little space—you don’t even need a gym. Plus, a short session works clients hard!

## Variations for Everyone

Mountain climbers can be beneficial to people of all ages, fitness levels, and abilities. The basic mountain climber is the moderate version of the exercise. Unable to do it? Too easy? No problem! Here’s a look at some modifications to increase or decrease the difficulty.

## **Inclined Mountain Climbers (Easier)**

Add a sturdy object under your hands so your upper body is higher than your lower body (medicine ball, bench, dumbbell, etc.). Depending on the angle, your front toes may not tap the ground. This position decreases the stress on the upper body muscle groups.

## **Twisted Mountain Climbers (Similar to original)**

Instead of bringing your knee straight forward, bring it diagonally across your chest towards the opposite elbow. This twisting action will target more of the obliques and abdominal muscles.

## **Banded Mountain Climbers**

Attach a resistance band around your two feet and continue with normal mountain climbers. The band tension will increase as your feet separate with one driving forward and one staying back. The tension will increase the workload on the hip flexors and quads. Great for sprinters and all other activities that rely heavily on knee-drive!

## **Suspended Mountain Climbers**

Put your feet through the two straps hanging from a door or other object above. Your feet should always be at least a few inches off the ground. Assume the high plank position with your feet in the straps and do normal mountain climbers. This variation will increase the workload on the upper body. It will also be much more of a cardio workout compared to other versions.

And there are still many other versions of the mountain climber exercise. This is a great place to start, though! Ultimately there are a number of goals this exercise accomplishes. It has many benefits all contained in one package.

If you are looking to learn more about corrective exercises and how to program them best into a client's program, check out [ISSA's Corrective Exercise Specialist](#) course. You will learn corrective exercises that correspond with the most common movement dysfunctions. This will allow you to address hip flexor problems and many other common issues that will arise in your fitness career.

# Advanced: Single-Leg (Pistol) Squat



The single-leg squat (also known as the pistol squat) isn't easy! Not everyone can do this exercise correctly. Those that can, have typically spent time training specifically to be able to complete the movement.

Although sometimes challenging, [unilateral movements](#), like the single-leg squat, are great exercises to help reduce asymmetries in the body and minimize injuries. So, whether your client is focused on balancing out both sides of the body or just looking for a new way to push their limits, it's worth giving this one a try.

## The Single-Leg Squat (Pistol Squat)

The single-leg squat isn't a beginner exercise. Clients should have a decent level of strength, flexibility, balance, and mobility before attempting it. They should also be able to perform a proper bodyweight squat (two legs) before progressing to a single leg.

Single-leg squat form:

- To begin, the client will shift their weight to one leg, [engage their core muscles](#) and raise the opposite leg off the floor, in front of them.
- Extend both arms out straight in front of the body.
- With the chin up, spine straight (torso leaning slightly forward), and the hips back, the client will slowly lower themselves into a squat.
- The toes and kneecap (patella) remain pointed straight ahead throughout the entire movement.
- The elevated leg does not touch the ground throughout the exercise.
- The client will lower their body until the hips are close to the heel of the balancing foot.
- Slow and controlled, keeping the patella pointed straight ahead and the core engaged, the client will press back up to the starting position.

## How to Progress to a Single-Leg Squat

Again, it's important for the client to be able to complete a proper bodyweight squat (two legs) before progressing to a single-leg movement. They should have decent hip, knee, and ankle mobility and the balance for movement on one leg. Once they have mastered a bodyweight squat, you can progress them to the exercises below.

### 1. Assisted Single-Leg Squat

The client will perform a single-leg squat, through the full range of motion, utilizing equipment that supports their bodyweight, when needed.

- Clients can use resistance bands, suspension bands, a pole, or anything else similar that is anchored in front of them and provides bodyweight support throughout the full range of motion.
- The client will firmly grip the support equipment securely anchored in front of them and lift one leg off the ground.
- As they are balancing on one leg, they will engage their core, keep the chin up, and hinge at the hips.
- The client will slowly lower into a squat until the hips are close to the heel of the balancing foot.

- Watch for knee valgus (knee starts to cave in toward the midline of the body). The patella should point straight ahead, in alignment with the toes, throughout the entire squat.
- Once they've reached the bottom, they will press back up to the starting position using their leg strength.
- They will hold the support equipment throughout the movement and utilize their arms to support them anytime it is needed.

## 2. Partial Single-Leg Squat

For this progression, you will need to have jump boxes, benches, or chairs of a few different heights. The equipment should be stable and gradually decrease in height until reaching the lower calf/ankle height of the individual.

- Beginning with the highest bench, chair, or box, the client will start by standing in front of the platform.
- They will engage their core muscles, raise their arms to the front, shift their weight to one leg and raise the opposite leg in front of them.
- Keeping the knee of the standing leg pointed straight ahead, they will slowly lower themselves until their glutes lightly touch the top of the platform (do not rest or sit on the platform).
- Without resting or sitting on the platform, the client will slowly press back up to the starting position.
- As the client progresses, replace the platform with a lower bench, box, or chair and repeat the process until the client masters the movement at each height.
- The client should be able to complete several repetitions correctly before lowering the height.
- Continue reducing the height of the platform until the client reaches full range of motion (full pistol squat).

## 3. Single-Leg Squat

Once the client has mastered full range of motion, they should be ready to remove the platform and perform a full range pistol squat without any support.

# Tips for Success

The following list includes a few pointers to help your clients master this move:

- Movements should be slow and controlled throughout the entire exercise!
- If the knee caves (knee valgus) during the movement, you will want to incorporate exercises that strengthen the glute muscles to help hold that knee in position during the single-leg squat.
- If a client has knee or ankle issues, you may want to consider a different unilateral exercise or ensure they have medical clearance from a medical professional.
- To help perform the full range of motion, focus on ankle mobility (ankle dorsiflexion)
- Perform several repetitions properly before progressing.
- Do not bounce at the bottom of the squat. Use control and strength to rise back up!
- Don't forget to breathe.
- Proper form is IMPORTANT!
- The arms out in front of the body help counterbalance the body weight.
- Don't forget to do the exercises on both sides.
- Want to make it harder? Add weight!

It won't be easy. It will take time. But, it will be worth it. Aside from being the envy of everyone in the gym, accomplishing personal challenges with commitment, work, and resiliency is a huge part of life. Mastering this exercise will put your clients in an elite group of people. Good luck!

## Become an Elite Trainer

You can take your training career to an elite level as well! The first step in becoming an elite personal trainer is to take the courses required. With the ISSA, this is the personal training course, the nutrition course, and another specialization of your choosing, such as Corrective Exercise or Glute Specialist. Once each one is complete, you must pass the associated certification exam. This garners you your personal training certification, nutrition specialist certification, and certification in another area of your choice. Pass all the exams and you will receive your Elite Fitness Certification.

What are the benefits of going Elite?

1. You become a well-rounded fitness professional
2. You are recognized as a highly qualified personal trainer
3. You are one step above your competitors
4. You have a broader client base
5. You can offer a combination fitness training package
6. You offer more value to the elite athlete
7. You can do more than personal training

Ready to get started? Enroll in [ISSA's Elite Trainer certification](#) program today. Take your personal training career to the next level and join some of the nation's top trainers. This puts you one step closer to becoming the best of the best!