Milton & Forham
CHIROPRACTIC CLINICS



Glute Stages for Back Pain

A three-stage home programme

Weak or switched-off glutes are often linked to lower back pain. Many people doing glute exercises are working their hamstrings or lower back instead. Work through these three stages in order, once a day, and only move on when you can clearly feel your glutes doing the work.

Jasper Hulscher Clinic Director, Milton and Forham Chiropractic Clinics

STAGE 1: Switch your glutes on



1 - GLUTE SQUEEZE

Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat. Place your hands on your buttocks. Squeeze your glutes as firmly as is comfortable, hold for 5 seconds, then relax.

10 squeezes, 2–3 sets. You should feel both sides go firm under your hands.



2 - BALL HIP LIFT

Lie on your back. Place a small ball in the crease of one hip and hold it there by drawing that knee towards your chest. Keep the other foot flat, with the heel close to your buttock. Push through that heel and lift your hips a little. Hold for 3 seconds, then lower slowly. **8 lifts each side, 2 sets**. Holding the ball stops your lower back arching, and keeping the heel close switches the hamstrings off, so your glute does the work.

Move on when: you can clearly feel your glutes working, on both sides, on every rep.

STAGE 2: The glute bridge, done right



3 - GLUTE BRIDGE

Lie on your back with your knees bent. Bring your feet close, so your fingertips just touch your heels. Push through your heels, not your toes. Gently flatten your lower back, squeeze your glutes, then lift your hips until your shoulders, hips and knees are in a straight line. No higher. Hold for 3 seconds, then lower slowly. **10 bridges, 3 sets**.



4 - BRIDGE WITH BAND

As above, with a resistance band just above your knees. Gently push your knees out against the band as you lift. **10 bridges, 3 sets**.

Move on when: you feel it in your glutes, not in the back of your thighs or your lower back.

STAGE 3: Single-leg bridge



5 - SINGLE-LEG BRIDGE

Set up as in Stage 2, then lift one foot off the floor. Push through the heel of the foot that's still down and lift your hips into the same straight line. Hold for 2–3 seconds, then lower slowly. Start with your weaker side. **8 each side, 3 sets**.



6 - CHECK: KEEP YOUR HIPS LEVEL

Don't let the hip on the lifted-leg side drop. If it drops or wobbles, go back to Stage 2 for another week. That's not failing; it's building a proper foundation.

Progress safely

Move up a stage when you can do all the sets with good form, you feel it in your glutes, and your back is no worse the next day. For most people, that takes 1–3 weeks per stage. A mild ache in your glutes is normal. Sharp pain, or back pain that's getting worse, is not: stop and drop back a stage.

When to get help

Get your back assessed if the pain spreads down your leg, you have numbness or tingling, or things aren't improving after a few weeks. If you have numbness around your groin or buttocks, or changes in your bladder or bowel control, seek urgent medical help straight away.

Scan to watch the video

Link to video:
https://youtu.be/bqCsj8dNq0A

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