Hamstring Exercises

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Hamstrings. Get huge hams!
Common exercises
Leg Curls.
This movement isolates the hamstrings completely. Lie face down on the pads with your knees at the edge of the pad and your heels curled under the round pad.
With your legs extended, grasp the edges of the bench or the handles and use your hamstring strength to slowly flex your legs. Move your feet in a semicircular arc forward and upward as far as possible.
Keep your torso pressed against the bench. Don't lift your hips. Avoid partial leg curls.
To intensify the workout, you can do the lifts with one leg at a time. There is also a standing variation of this exercise.
Squats.
Squats are the single best bodybuilding movement. Extremely good for the lower body, especially the quadriceps, buttocks, lower back, and hamstrings.
Squats are also highly anabolic because they intensely stress the entire cardiovascular system. They improve your metabolism.
Get under the bar placing the middle across your shoulders with your head in front of the bar. Hold the bar near the plates to balance it.
After straightening and lifting the weight off the rack, step back a foot or two. With your feet slightly wider than shoulder length and your toes angled outward, tense your back to keep your torso straight. Let your eyes focus on one spot about head level so that you keep your head up as you do your reps.
Keep your torso as straight as possible. Slowly bend your legs and lower your body so that your knees travel forward over your toes. A full squat position is reached when your upper legs are parallel with the floor. Without bouncing, slowly push up to starting position. Remember to keep your head up and your torso as straight as possible. Don't let your upper body lean forward or you will strain your lower back.
To help with balance, you can put a 2 X 4 inch board under your heels.
For comfort, many bodybuilders use a pad around the bar. Also, to reinforce your lower back and prevent injuries to the abs or back, some bodybuilders wear a tightly clenched lifting belt.
Deadlifts.
This is one of the best exercises for building terrific back muscles and all-over body power. Stress is directly placed on the spinal erectors, buttocks, quadriceps, forearm flexors, and trapezius muscles. Secondary groups stressed are the back and hamstrings. Load up a barbell with heavy weight lying on the gym floor.
Take a shoulder-width grip on the bar and with toes pointing straight ahead and shins touching the bar, set your feet shoulder width apart.
Keeping your arms straight, flatten your back and dip your hips to correctly assume the pulling position where your shoulders are above the level of your hips and your hips are above the level of your knees. Straighten your legs and extend your torso to lift the barbell from the floor to your upper thighs.
You should be standing erect with the bar across your upper thighs and your arms extended down at your sides. Slowly reverse the movement along the same arc and return the barbell to the floor.
You should wear a lifting belt with heavy weight. You can reinforce your grip on the bar with lifting straps.
You can also reverse your grip on the bar (holding one palm inward and one palm outward). Or you can use a heavy pair of dumbbells. You can also do this with stiff legs… but be sure not to use really

heavy weight.

More Hamstring Exercises

Leg Press.

The squat is hands-down the best exercise for your legs. However, the leg press machine runs a close second. Most machines require you to lie on your back and push the stack over your head. This can be dangerous because of the great pressure build-up in your head.

(If you have high blood pressure, etc. avoid this exercise). Many leg presses are set at a 45 degree angle to reduce this problem. If possible use these machines.

The advantages the leg press machine has over regular squats are:

1. Better Isolation,
2. You can load up the machine with more plates without the fear of losing balance or slipping, and
3. Less stress is placed on the back, buttocks, and knees.

Dumbbell Lunges.

This exercise is considered a very "shaping" movement. If properly performed, these are very powerful quad-builders.

They also strongly build the hamstrings. So, they work the whole upper leg more than leg extensions or the leg press machine.

Holding the dumbbells at your sides, take a large step forward (lunge) with one leg, keeping the weight on the front leg. Try to keep the rear leg as straight as possible while lunging. Lift back up, bring your legs together and lunge with the other leg. You can also do these by holding a barbell behind the head.

Hack Squats.

After your thigh foundation is developed, hack squats can really add some width to your thighs. Perform hacks while your back is lying against an angled platform with the weight stacked on top or the sides.

Extend your legs to the starting position. Slowly lower the weight so that your legs make a right angle. Hold the position for a moment and without bouncing push the weight back up.

List of even more hamstring exercises...

Front Squats
Dumbbell Squats
Jumping Squats
Jefferson Squats