

A Leg Day Workout

By Steve Payne, Contest Prep Coach & co-owner House of Payne Personal Training
 Demonstrated by Nicole Spizzirri, CPT & Bikini Competitor, @NikkiFit_atl
 Photographs by Valerie Payne, V.Payne.Photography

think most would agree, Leg Day is one of the toughest days in the training schedule. For some it's because they need to be pushed outside their comfort zone, for others it may just be the anticipation of knowing it will be hard or exhausting and then there are those who haven't made the changes they want because they just like to do the exercises they like and avoid the ones they don't like. Maximizing your efforts to create shape and train by engaging the muscle can make the difference in obtaining the results you want. Challenge yourself. In the workout below for example, you

can see we begin with warm up stretches and then focus on slow controlled movements, isolated pauses, and a full range of motion. Make the mind/ muscle connection the focus of the workout, pushing as heavy as possible but still keeping good controlled form as you do all the sets and reps. Strive to do your best to make the muscles work rather than worrying about how much weight you lift. Sometimes increasing the intensity by changing the pace of the reps or the amount of rest time between sets can be just the subtle change your body needs as you work towards being your best!

WARM UP	SETS	REPS
1. Cardio of choice	5 minutes	
2. Wide stance bend with rotational twist	3	20 seconds @ leg
WORKOUT	SETS	REPS
3. Squats - bar, wide stance	5	12
4. Bulgarian split squats - smith machine, single leg behind on step bench 2-3 blocks high	5	15
5. Inverted leg presses - two legs, close stance, feet at top, super slow (8 counts down/ 8 counts up)	4	12
6. Hamstring curls - lying, two legs	4	20
7. Steps ups - bodyweight, all on one leg then the other	3	15
8. Straight leg deadlifts - machine, pauses (squeeze 5 counts at top of movement)	3	12
9. Walking lunges - dumbbells	3	15
10. Hip lifts - smith machine, weighted, super slow (8 counts down/ 8 counts up)	3	12
COOL DOWN STRETCHES	SETS	REPS
11. Figure four stretch	3	20 seconds @ leg
12. Quad/ hip flexor stretch	3	20 seconds @ leg

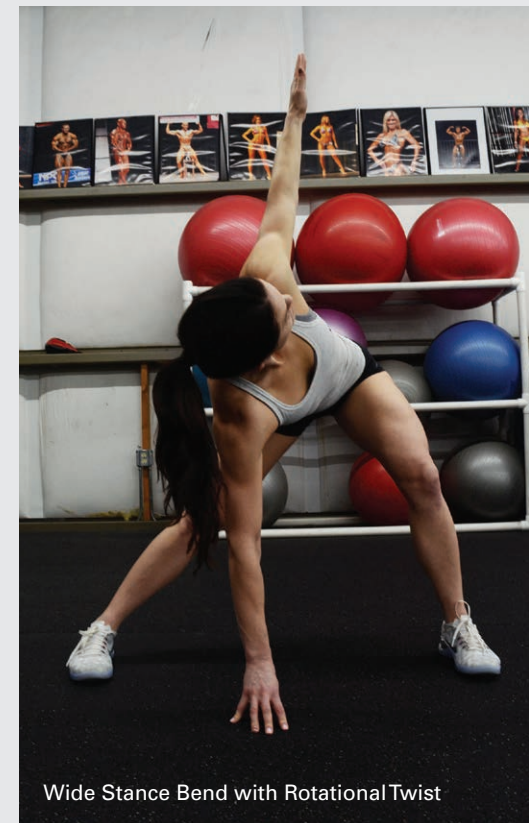
Before starting any exercise program, consult with your physician.

WARM UP

1. Do 5 minutes of the cardio of your choice

2. Wide Stance Bend with Rotational Twist

- From a wide stance upright position, bend forward from the hips.
- As you gently twist your upper body, place the hand closest to the floor on the ground for stability and allow the opposite arm to reach towards the ceiling.
- Hold the stretch for 20 seconds.
- Repeat on the other side.



Wide Stance Bend with Rotational Twist



Squats

WORKOUT

3. Squats

- Place the bar across your traps with feet positioned in a wide stance. (Toes pointing in same direction as your knees and when in the lowered position, your knees should be over the ankles.)
- Slowly lower the body until the thighs are parallel to the floor.
- Make sure you keep eyes looking eye level of above, shoulders over knees and hips over ankles.
- Drive through your heels to insure you are engaging your glutes.

4. Bulgarian Split Squats

- Place smith machine bar across traps and one foot behind you on a step bench 2-3 risers high.
- Keeping your eyes and up chest up, bend the knees lowering the body until both of the knees are at 90 degree angles.
- Make sure to keep your body upright and weight evenly distributed between the front and rear legs.
- Squeeze the glutes and drive through the heel of the front foot as you return to your starting position.



Bulgarian Split Squats



Inverted Leg Presses

5. Inverted Leg Presses

- From the seated position of the machine, place your feet in a close footed stance with your feet at the top of the platform.
- Bend the knees lowering the weight towards your chest with a super slow pace for both the eccentric and concentric directions.
- Make sure you drive through the heels as you press up.



Hamstring Curls

6. Hamstring Curls

- On the lying leg curl machine, position your body so that your knees are lined up with the pivot point of the machine and the ankle pad is behind your ankles.
- Lift the weight by pulling the feet towards the glutes, then return to your start position.
- Keep the hips pressed into the bench, keeping the hamstrings engaged.
- Inhale as you lift up, exhale as you lower the weight.

8. Straight Leg Deadlifts

- Using the deadlift machine, place feet approximately hip distance apart.
- Hinge at the hips and lower the weight to just past your knees.
- Keep your eyes up and back flat.
- Raise back up to the starting position, squeezing the glutes at the top of the movement.



Straight Leg Deadlifts



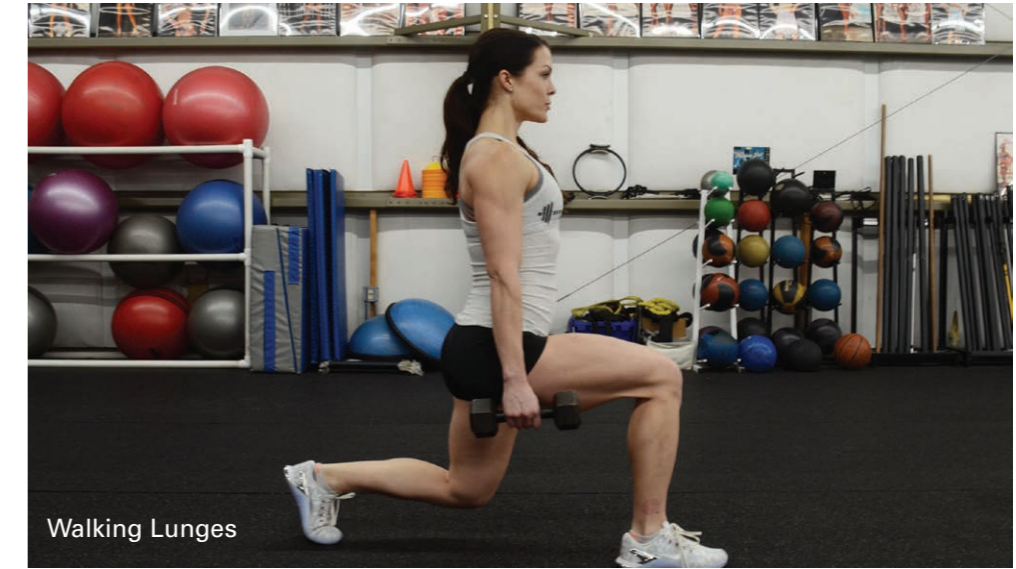
Step Ups

7. Step Ups

- Using a step bench hip height, place the heel of one foot on the bench.
- Keep chest up as you drive through the heel to step up onto the bench.
- Make sure you do not lean forward but rather use the glutes and hamstring muscles to lift and lower the body.
- Return to the starting position.
- Do not use momentum or bounce off the ground as you perform all of the repetitions.

9. Walking Lunges

- Stand holding the dumbbells by your side.
- Take one step forward making sure your step is long enough it allows both knees to simultaneously reach 90 degree angles.
- Keep your core tight, and eyes looking eye level or above.
- Driving through the heel of the front foot, continuing to a standing position.
- Repeat using the other leg and continue alternating to complete your set.



Walking Lunges

10. Hip Lifts (not pictured)

- Placing your upper back on a bench and the smith machine bar on your lap, lower and lift the hips.
- Your feet should be flat on the floor and hip distance apart.
- Make sure you get a full range of motion and squeeze the glutes at the top of the movement.



Figure 4 Hamstring Stretch

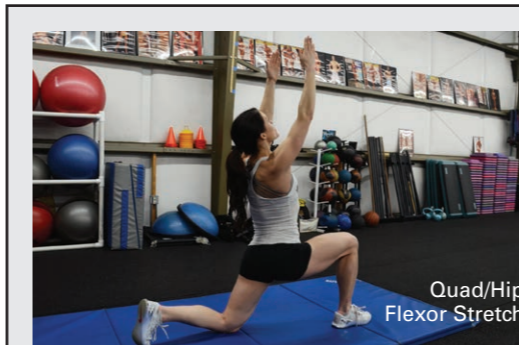
COOL DOWN

11. Figure 4 Hamstring Stretch

- Lay on your back on the floor with knees bent and feet flat.
- Place one ankle across the opposite knee to create the figure four.
- Use your hands to reach behind the leg of the foot on the floor and gently pull towards the chest.
- You should feel this stretch in the glutes and hamstrings.
- Hold for 20 seconds then repeat using the opposite leg.

12. Quad/Hip Flexor Stretch

- Take a knee on the floor making sure both legs are at 90 degree angles.
- Allow the legs to lean slightly forward.
- Next reach back with the upper body and your arms reaching towards the ceiling.
- You should feel this stretch in the quads and hip flexors.
- Hold for 20 seconds and repeat on the other side.



Quad/Hip Flexor Stretch