

Build Stronger Legs with Just 3 Key Movements

You do not need a complicated leg workout to build stronger, better-looking legs. A great lower-body routine should train the major muscles from your hips to your ankles while keeping the workout simple enough to repeat consistently.

This lower-body plan is built around three powerful movements:

Bulgarian Split Squat
Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift
Single-Leg Standing Calf Raise

Together, these exercises train your quads, glutes, hamstrings, inner thighs, calves, and lower-back stabilizers.

1. Bulgarian Split Squat

The Bulgarian split squat is one of the best exercises for building strong legs and glutes. Because each leg works on its own, it also helps improve balance, stability, and side-to-side strength.

What it trains:

Quads, glutes, inner thighs, hips, and stabilizers.

How to do it:

Place one foot behind you on a bench or low platform. Step your front foot forward far enough that your front shin stays mostly vertical as you lower. Lean slightly forward, lower under control, then drive back up through your front foot.

Form tips:

Keep your front knee tracking in line with your toes.
Do not let your knee cave inward.
Lower slowly and stay controlled.
Stop before your form breaks down.

2. Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift

The Romanian deadlift is one of the best exercises for building the back of the legs. It teaches you how to hinge at the hips, which is important for strong hamstrings, glutes, and lower-back support.

What it trains:

Hamstrings, glutes, inner thighs, and lower-back stabilizers.

How to do it:

Hold dumbbells in front of your thighs. Keep a soft bend in your knees. Push your hips back as the dumbbells slide down close to your legs. Lower until you feel a stretch in your hamstrings, then drive your hips forward to stand tall.

Form tips:

Keep the dumbbells close to your body.

Do not turn the movement into a squat.

Keep your back flat.

Lower for 2–3 seconds.

Stop the movement if your back starts to round.

3. Single-Leg Standing Calf Raise

Standing calf raises are one of the most effective ways to train the calves because they allow the calf muscle to work through a full stretch and full contraction.

What it trains:

Calves, ankles, and lower-leg stability.

How to do it:

Stand with one foot on a step, plate, or low platform so your heel can drop below your toes. Hold a dumbbell in one hand and use the other hand for balance. Lower into a deep stretch, pause, rise as high as you can, pause again, then lower slowly.

Form tips:

Use a full range of motion.

Pause at the bottom.

Pause at the top.

Do not bounce.

Move slowly and deliberately.

Simple Lower-Body Workout

Do this workout twice per week with at least 48 hours between sessions.

Workout A

Bulgarian Split Squat

3 sets of 8–10 reps per leg

Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift

3 sets of 8–10 reps

Single-Leg Standing Calf Raise

4 sets of 10–15 reps per leg

Workout B

Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift

3 sets of 10–12 reps

Bulgarian Split Squat

3 sets of 10–12 reps per leg

Single-Leg Standing Calf Raise

4 sets of 12–20 reps per leg

How Hard Should You Train?

Each set should feel challenging, but you should stop with 1–3 good reps left in the tank. You do not need to train to complete failure to get results. Clean, controlled reps beat sloppy reps every time.

How to Progress

Start with a weight you can control.

When you can complete all sets at the top of the rep range with good form, increase the weight slightly.

Example:

Week 1: 3 sets of 8

Week 2: 3 sets of 9

Week 3: 3 sets of 10

Week 4: increase weight and return to 3 sets of 8

Small improvements repeated over time create real results.

Before You Start

Warm up with 5 minutes of easy cardio, then perform one light practice set of each exercise before your working sets.

Remember

The best workout is not the one with the most exercises. It is the one you can do correctly, consistently, and progressively.

Train hard. Move well. Stay consistent.