



Step Up

BY BILL HALL

Here's an exercise that looks easy but can be a challenge for athletes with poor balance. The Step Up will not only improve your balance and coordination but also strengthen glutes, quadriceps, and hamstrings. As you repeat this movement, you will become aware of balance differences between the left and right sides of your body. Step Up will strengthen your legs for uphill running and the push movement for your pedaling stroke, and will force you to use your core for proper balance and posture.

Let's check out STEP UP!

1. If you perform this exercise at home, you will need a stair. If you are at a fitness center, ask for an aerobic "step class" platform. The appropriate-sized platform will keep your knee just below your hip when you place your foot on the step and will allow you to step up straight without turning your foot or twisting your knee.
2. Before stepping, place your feet at waist width, chest forward, with your belly button drawn in toward your spine. Extend your arms out to your sides for balance, at shoulder height. When you master this movement, you can use dumbbells, a ball, or any other piece of resistance equipment for a new challenge.
3. Start your step with your dominant leg. Place one foot on the step. As you move upward, anchor your heel on the step and push, using your glutes and quadriceps. Make sure you keep your belly button drawn in toward your spine during the step-up. Finish at the top with a slight forward lean, placing your weight into your abdominal core.
4. Stepping down must be performed slowly to ensure proper negative (eccentric) movement. Remember to stabilize your lower spine with abdominal draw-in (belly to spine) and land toe-to-heel.
5. Focus on stepping and landing softly. Check for a level belt and shoulder line. Attempt to keep your feet in a straight line with your knees.

Bill Hall is a AAI/ISMA Certified Personal Trainer and Team Z's Strength and Conditioning Coach. He is an Advanced Personal Trainer for Country Club Fitness at Westwood Country Club in Vienna, VA. Bill began the sport of triathlon with Team In Training and Team Z. As a Team Z coach, Bill is responsible for developing and maintaining the strength training programs of Team Z athletes. Bill holds a Master's Degree in Health Promotion, is certified as a Kid's and Youth fitness trainer, and works with a variety of athletes from beginner to advanced. Bill's clients include those with weight loss goals, tennis players, golfers, triathletes, and runners. Contact Bill via e-mail at hobbit08@aol.com (yes, that's his favorite book)

TRITHIS: 2 SETS, 10 REPETITIONS, 2 DAYS PER WEEK

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Attempt to keep your feet in a straight line with your knees.