

5 Moves to Grow Your Glutes



WRITTEN BY COACH DANNY MATRANGA CSCS

What Do the Glutes Do?

The gluteals are a fascinating group of muscles.

The gluteus maximus is the largest muscle in the body when you account for the total surface area.

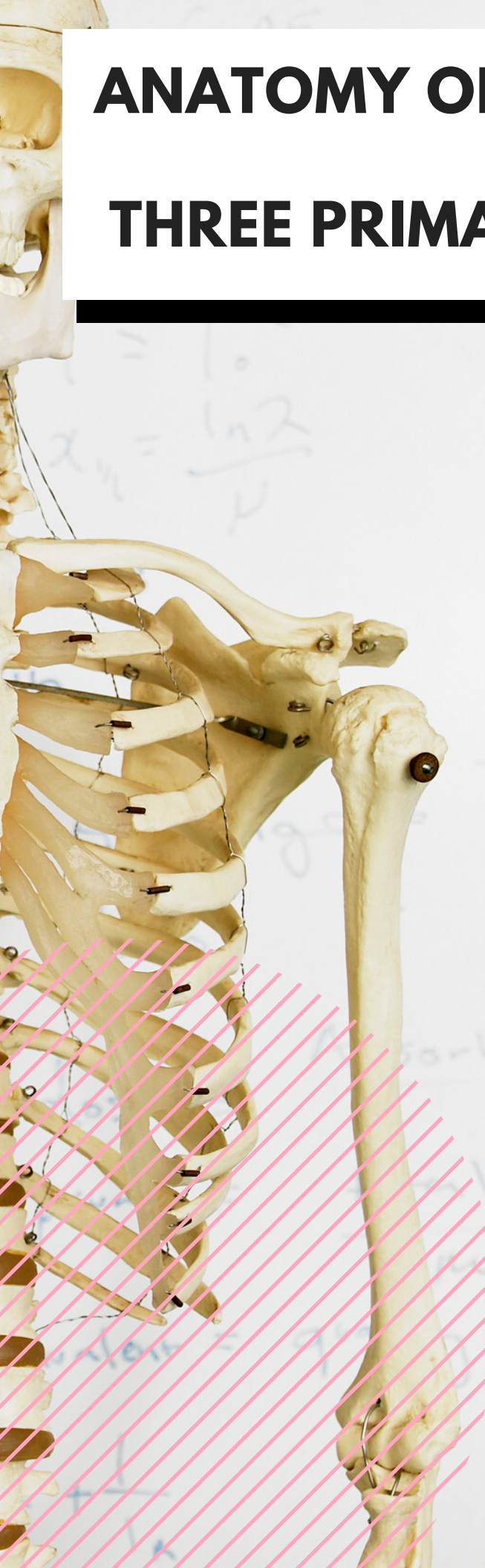
The glutes are primarily known for their role as the primary hip extensors. The glutes also play a role in hip abduction, hip external rotation, and posterior pelvic tilt.

The glutes can act to move the hip in several different planes of motion, one must take an approach rich in variety when training them in order to maximize hypertrophy (muscle growth).

The principles of changing the angles one uses to train a muscle is something many trainees do when training the muscles of the back, shoulders, and chest, just to name a few – and the glutes are no different.

To maximize the development of your glutes variety is a great tool - I will share my FIVE favorite exercises with you shortly!

ANATOMY OF THE GLUTES: THREE PRIMARY MUSCLES



1. The gluteus maximus: This is the largest muscle in the body from a volume standpoint. The glute “max”, as its often called, is the primary extensor of the hip. It is divided into upper and lower portions.

- **Origin:** Attaches to the superior gluteal line of the ilium, the posterior surface of the sacrum and the side of the coccyx and the length of the sacrotuberous ligament.

- **Insertion:** Attaches to the iliotibial tract and the deeper fibers are inserted into the gluteal tuberosity of the femur

2. The Gluteus Medius: This is one of the two smaller muscles of the gluteal complex. It inserts on the outer surface of the ilium between the iliac crest and posterior gluteal line. It works to abduct and rotate the hip.

- **Origin:** Outer surface of ilium between posterior and middle gluteal line

- **Insertion:** Posterolateral surface of greater trochanter of femur.

3. The Gluteus Minimus: The baby of the three gluteal muscles. This little guy exists just underneath the gluteus medius. This muscle also assists in abduction. It plays a secondary role in internal rotation of the thigh as well. While it is a gluteal muscle, due to its smaller architecture it is not a focal point of the program.

- **Origin:** Outer surface of the ilium, between the anterior and inferior gluteal lines, and the edge of the greater sciatic notch

- **Insertion:** Anterior surface of the greater trochanter of the femur



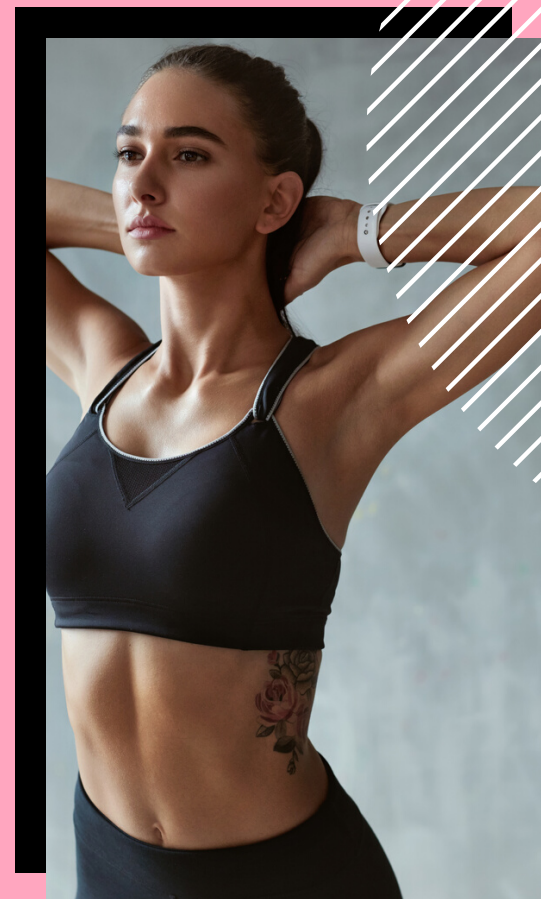
When it comes to growing and developing your glutes, there seems to be a ton of confusion. Many "influencers" promote crazy band and bodyweight workouts. Powerlifters often promote the basics, squats and deadlifts. And many strength coaches tout the effectiveness of lunges and hip thrusts.

Here is the truth - THEY are all right (a little bit). There is no one way to build your glutes, and everybody is different. I have found a variety of techniques to be highly beneficial over my years coaching and regularly do different things with different people.

That being said, I have my favorites.

My FIVE Favorite Glute Movements

1. The Barbell Hip Thrust
2. The Romanian Deadlift
3. Walking Lunges
4. Bulgarian Split Squats
5. Banded Glute Work



Exercise Number One: The Barbell Hip Thrust

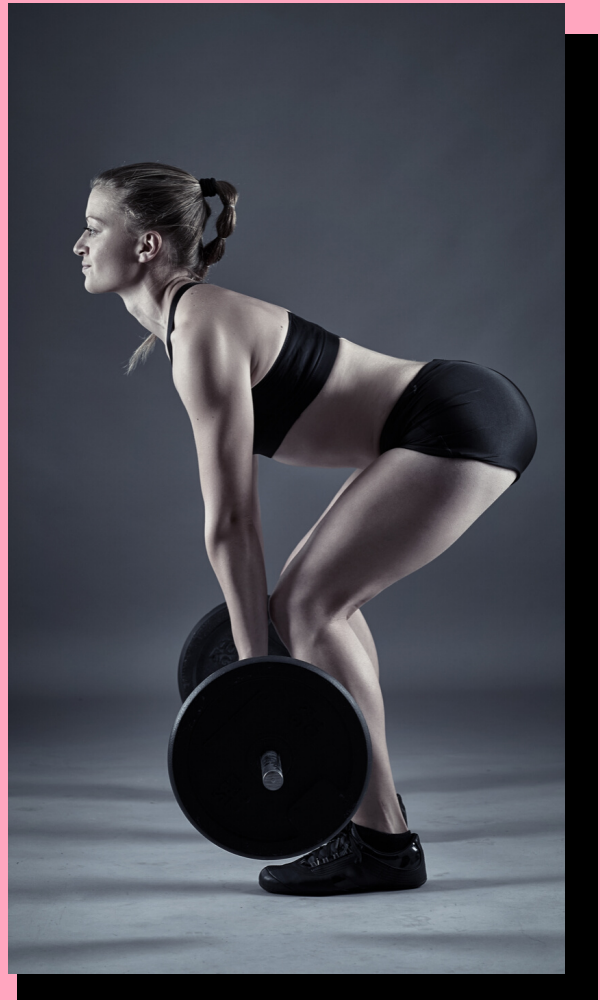


The hip thrust was a "no-doubter" at number one on this list. This has absolutely been the single best exercise for helping MOST of my clients build their glutes. While some clients do better with squats than deadlifts, and others do better with deadlifts than squats, I have found almost everyone responds well to barbell hip thrusts. The reason for this is that the hip thrust loads the **GLUTES OPTIMALLY**. The line upon which the bar moves is **DIRECTLY** aligned with the direction the glutes best exert force. This is a recipe for success.

Two more reasons I love the barbell hip thrust, in addition to it's effectiveness are:

1. You can get strong and overload it easily.
2. It's very safe without a coach or spotter.

Couple the reasons above with the fact that the hip thrust has tons of variations and you have yourself a solid movement pattern to make the base of your lower body training. If growing your glutes is your goal, which if you are reading this, i'd bet it is, **THE THRUST IS A MUST!**



Exercise Number Two: The Romanian Deadlift

Named after its country of origin, the Romanian Deadlift OR "RDL" is a fantastic lift for targeting your glutes.

Unlike the conventional deadlift, the RDL does a better job of loading the glutes and hamstrings eccentrically.

Eccentric contractions are vital for optimizing muscle growth.

This is not to say that conventional deadlifts are BAD for glute growth, in fact its quite the opposite. The romanian deadlift just highlights and expands upon all the ways the deadlift is great - but allows a lifter a bit more versatility.

While this movement, like the hip thrust primarily works the gluteus maximuz, doing it in a single leg manner can really incorporate the gluteus medius as it acts to assist in stablitzing the pelvis.



Exercise Number Three:

Walking Lunges

Walking lunges are far and away the exercise that made the most difference in my OWN glute development.

The glute has to work particularly hard during the walking lunge if these are done with a wider stride.

This exercise comes in at number three because it is hard to progress for a variety of reasons:

- 1. many lifters struggle with stability.**
- 2. many lifters struggle to grip dumbbells.**

These two factors considered, I still love walking lunges. Particularly when done with a wide stride and done for DISTANCE rather than weight.

While I often load up walking lunges, I prefer to load up hip thrusts and RDL's and use bodyweight walking lunges as a means to tack on some added volume and hit the glutes in a lengthened position!





Exercise Number Four:

Bulgarian Split Squats

The Bulgarian Split Squat is fantastic for developing a good set of glutes.

Much in the same way the walking lunge does a fantastic job of targeting the glutes, so does the split squat - and for many of the same reason.

The primary difference between the two is the position of the posterior (back) leg. In a BSS the rear foot is elevated. This presents a unique opportunity to target the glutes.

Learning the torso forward can create additional stress on the gluteal tissues - a must for optimizing growth.

My clients always did better loading the BSS with dumbbells rather than barbells.

Despite my stance on walking lunges (preference to higher reps and bodyweight), I like to load the BSS up fairly heavy and aim for about 6-10 reps/set.





Exercise Number Five: Band Work

The first four exercises are fantastic for creating mechanical tension and driving the muscle damage necessary to create an environment for muscle growth.

However, none of them are as good at driving metabolic stress (another avenue that can lead to muscle growth) as band work.

Band work includes, but is not limited to:

- Banded bridges/thrusts
- Banded walks
- Banded abductions

All of these variants done for high reps or times are great at stimulating metabolic stress and can be a valuable, low-impact glute building tool.

I often have clients who want to build their glutes do band work 5-6 days/week.

WRAPPING THIS ALL UP!

If your goal is to grow your glutes, knowing My five favorite exercises will only get you so far.

In fact, you might even find that these exercises are not optimal for you - I doubt that will be the case, but it is possible. I am just being honest.

There are **THREE** things that are **PARAMOUNT** for you to consider as you select the exercises you will use in your glute building program.

1. Can you **FEEL** it in your glutes.
2. Can you **IMPROVE** (get stronger or do more) on a regular basis.
3. Can you recover from it enough to do it often (1-3x/week).

If you are doing exercises that hit on these three things, getting stronger, and eating enough, I have no doubts you will see great results in your glute training!

Thanks for reading,

Coach Danny Matranga, CSCS

ABOUT COACH DANNY



Danny has been personal training in-person and online since 2013. After his high school athletic career ended, he continued to pursue his passion for health and human movement. He worked as a personal trainer the entirety of his tenure at university, where he achieved his bachelor's degree in kinesiology. He holds over a dozen certifications and specializations, from NASM, ACE, NCI, FAS, including the NSCA's prestigious CSCS. Having trained over 10,000 individual sessions and worked internationally with clients online.

Danny has bridged the gap between academia and application. It's one thing to be some guy on Instagram who posts workouts; it's a whole different thing entirely to be an "in-the-trenches-coach."

He now spends a great deal of his time educating trainers online and in person at various workshops - all while remaining extremely involved in his in-person and online coaching business.

If you are interested in working with coach Danny, both his one-on-one coaching and online programs can be found at:

www.coachdannymatranga.com