

Exercise of the week – Step ups

Step ups strengthen and tone your lower body whilst giving your heart and lungs a cardiovascular workout. Great for indoor and outdoor training, it is as easy to add them to your gym routine as your morning power walk.

Beginner

Use a gym step, first step on a flight of stairs or low wall. Stand facing the step. Bring your right foot up onto the step, then your left. Return your right foot to the ground, then your left. Keep the abdominals activated and the body upright and ensure your whole foot makes contact with the step and the ground each time.

Intermediate

Use a higher step, bench or wall and add hand weights. As before step both feet up, then down. When performing a higher level step up ensure you activate the glutes (buttocks) to stabilise the knee joint and don't get tempted to lean forward as this places your lower back under pressure. You can do 15 with your right leg leading, then 15 with your left leg leading or alternate legs.

Advanced

Add a lunge and a kick! 1. Start in a lunge position facing the step with your right foot in front 2. Bring your left foot forward to step up onto the step 3. Bring your right foot up and kick into the air 4. Return your right foot to the ground 5. Return your left foot to the ground in the back position of the lunge. Start with the other leg in front as well to balance your kicks and lunges.