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Health & Fitness

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- ✓ Firm bum
- ✓ Lean legs

JUST 20 MINS!

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5 mind tricks to make fat vanish

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Lower-body

BLAST!

Get a flat stomach, peachy bottom and lean legs with our abs, bum and thighs workout, created for *H&F* by fitness expert and presenter **Ladan Soltani**

WORDS: Joanna Ebbeworth

Hands up those who want a great bottom, trim tummy and sleek thighs? Thought so! As many of us know, these areas can often prove troublesome to slim down and tone up – particular attention and effort needs to be made to get them looking their best. Legs, Bums and Tums classes at the gym are great, but there's something about these 'old-school' classes that seems so conventional and, well, old-fashioned. Is there a newer, better way to target these muscles, we wonder?

The tried and tested ways still work the best,' says personal trainer and Fitness TV presenter, Ladan Soltani. Because the fitness industry always wants to get people interested in exercise, it continually introduces new workouts or fitness gadgets (anyone remember the Thighmaster?) to motivate us. We then forget about or ignore the exercises that have always been around, such as basic leg raises, thinking of them as boring, traditional and even ineffective. But the reason they've been around for so long is because they did, and still do, really work.' Moves such as squats, lunges and sit-ups should form the foundation of any lower-body workout – they might seem basic but they really do hit the spot!

I've also incorporated variations and twists into this workout so you can exercise in a new and different way to shock your muscles into action for great results,' says Soltani. Each of the moves challenges lots of muscles in different areas of the body at the same time. I call them my bargain 'three for one' moves – so you'll get results even faster,' she says. For example, the hip abduction engages your inner and outer thighs, bottom, obliques and abdominals all in one move.' This workout also features single-leg squat and lunge exercises – as opposed to ordinary squats and lunges that use both legs – because they work multiple muscles, including your core, as you try to maintain stability and balance.

And there's a jumping plyometric exercise that will help activate and stimulate your muscles and nerves, burn calories, increase your

cardiovascular fitness and build bone density.

HOW TO DO IT

Consistency is key to getting results, so do this workout three times a week. By performing these toning and conditioning moves regularly, you'll improve the shape of your muscles and make them stronger. This will help you generate a change in your ratio of lean muscle mass to fat and change your body composition in the long run. Lean muscle tissue raises your metabolic rate, which in turn helps you burn more calories too. If you're unable to do the specified number of reps at first, build up slowly. Advanced exercisers can add on an extra set of all the exercises to make the workout harder. Hold on to something for

balance when doing the standing moves until you've built up the strength and confidence to do them unaided. Build up your reps over time, even if you only add one rep each time you do the workout, or increase the intensity by adding ankle weights and dumbbells. This way, you'll never plateau and will keep improving.

In addition to the above, you also need to do some form of cardiovascular exercise three times a week, such as walking, running or swimming, to burn more calories. If you're short on time, do your cardio before the toning workout. Make sure you're working hard enough; you should only be able to talk in short sentences. If you can chat easily, it's time to work harder, and if you can't speak at all, take the intensity down!

WARM-UP



Lower body

Find a step or stair and step up and down with your right leg for 20 reps, then repeat with the left leg. Do three sets. When stepping down, make sure you land on the balls of your feet, followed by your heels.



Upper body

Do 10 shoulder rolls backwards then 10 forwards, keeping your hands on your shoulders and leading with the elbows. Repeat, this time with extended arms to increase the range of motion. Do three sets.

THE MOVES



a



b

< 1 Single-leg squat

WORKS: All muscles below the waist, including core, quadriceps, hamstrings and gluteals.

Standing with your legs shoulder-width apart, extend your left leg straight out in front of you, making sure your muscles are tensed and foot's flexed (a). Extend your arms forward to counterbalance your body weight (b) as you squat down with your right leg, pushing your body weight back as though you're going to sit down into a chair and exhale as you lower down. Keep your core engaged throughout to support your back. Inhale and return to the start position, repeating 10 times. Swap legs and do 10 more reps. Rest for 30 seconds, then perform a second set.

2 Single-leg lunges >

WORKS: All muscles below the waist, including core, quadriceps, hamstrings and gluteals.

Standing with your legs shoulder-width apart, hold a weight or full water bottle in front of you with both hands. Bring your right heel to your bottom in a leg curl so you're balancing on your left leg (a). Exhale, and bend down on your supporting leg as though you're doing a stationary lunge, letting your arms hang in front of your body to even out the body weight (b). Make sure your supporting leg is grounded and your toes are spread in your trainers (not scrunched!). Inhale and return to the start position, repeating for 10. Swap legs and do 10 more reps. Rest for 30 seconds, then do a second set.



a



b

< 3 Seated isometric squat

WORKS: Quadriceps, hamstrings and gluteals.

Find a wall, stand with your back against it and slide down until your legs are at a 90° angle, imagining you're sitting on a seat. Make sure the lumbar region of your spine is pressed into the wall and your stomach muscles are pulled in (keep breathing though!). When you feel your legs burning, visualise the amazing results! Do two sets of the maximum amount of time you can hold, gradually building up your time. You'll find the stronger your legs become, the longer you can hold this posture with less effort.

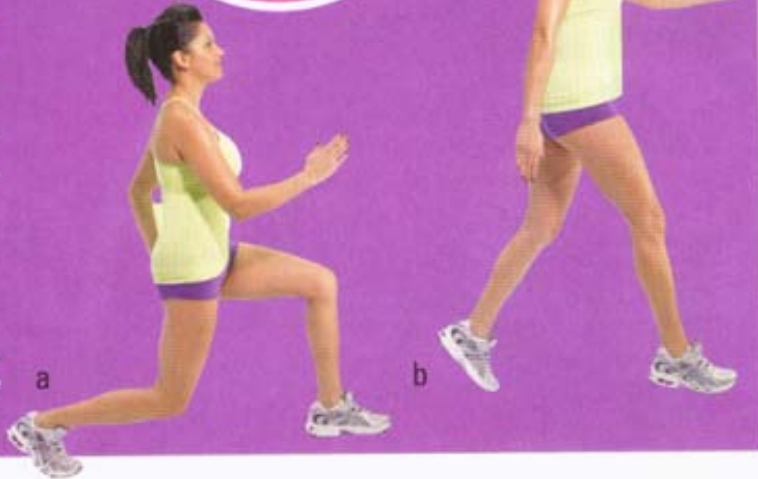


b

4 Plyometric lunges

WORKS: Core, quadriceps, hamstrings, gluteals and heart rate.

From standing, take a large step forward with your left leg. Bend at both knees (a) and jump in the air, switching your left leg behind you and your right leg in front (b). Keep scissoring the legs and switching sides by jumping, like alternate walking lunges but on the spot with impact involved. Think about being really light and keeping your body weight in your stomach when landing, trying not to lean too far back or forwards. Make sure you only do this exercise after all the standing exercises so you're warmed up. Do 10 reps, rest for 30 seconds, then do another set. Or to avoid high impact, keep your feet on the floor and pulse up and down in the lunge position three times instead of one jumping rep, then swap sides.



TOP TIP!

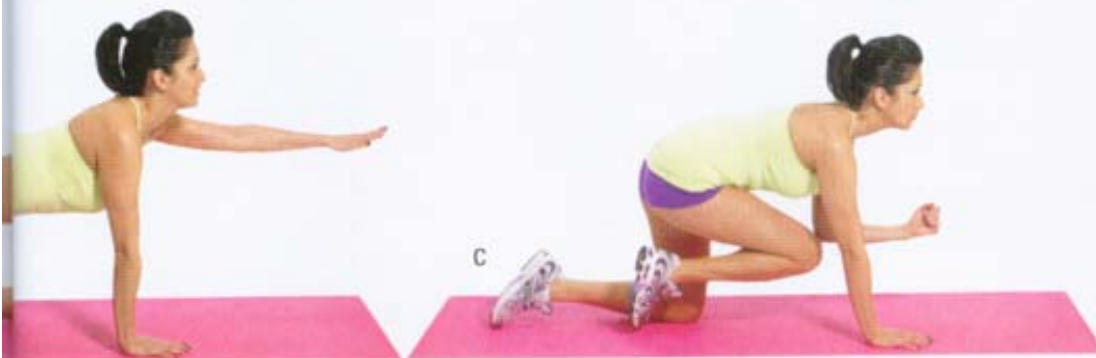
When you find certain moves tough or feel like skipping a workout session, visualise how great your firmer bottom, trimmer thighs and flat stomach will look if you keep working hard.



5 Rear thigh raises

WORKS: Core, gluteals and hamstrings.

On your hands and knees, place your hands in line with your chest (a). Extend your right leg straight out behind you, engaging your core muscles to help you balance. Raise your left arm straight out in front of you (b). Bring your right knee and left elbow together, keeping your posture strong and grounded (c). Make sure your back doesn't collapse or sink towards the floor when you're doing this. Then straighten out your leg and arm again. Do 20 reps. Swap sides, using the opposite arms and legs, and do 20 reps. Do two sets in total. ➤



6 Hip abduction

WORKS: Gluteals, core, and inner and outer thighs.

Lie on your back and bend your left leg so your heel is pressed into the floor. Bring your right leg off the floor, making sure your foot's flexed as shown (a). Press your palms into the floor by your sides and lift your bottom, pushing your body weight into your palms (b). Once you're up in a one-leg bridge, take the extended leg out to the side, making sure your body doesn't go towards the same direction as the leg (c). Bring it back to centre and lower your body back down. Repeat for 10, then do 10 reps on the other side. Do two sets in total.



7 Outer thigh raise

WORKS: Gluteals, abdominals and thighs.

Lie on your side, with your body in a straight line. Rest your head on your hand as shown, and place your other arm on the floor in front of you for support. Bend both legs in front of you so your knees are at 90°. Bring the top leg up (a) and point the knee down in front of your waist (b), then extend the leg fully, letting your heel lead the way (c). Inhale as the knee comes in towards your chest and exhale as you extend the leg. Do 20 reps, and repeat for 20 on the other side. Perform two sets in total.



8 Sit-ups

WORKS! Upper
and lower abdominals.

Lie on your back on a mat, bending both legs. Place your hands either side of your head, cross your right leg over the left knee and lift your left leg off the floor (a), slowly bringing your lower body towards the upper body. Exhale as you come up, keeping your abs engaged (b). Make sure your head stays in line with your spine and keep your lower back pressed into the mat, especially as you inhale and release. Make sure this exercise is really controlled and keep your abs engaged. Do 20 reps. Swap legs and do another 20 reps. Perform two sets in total.



a



b



TOP TIP!

You're more likely to stick to your workouts if they're fun. Play music, do your sessions with friends, or do the exercises outside for a change of scenery. Or do all three at once!



c

Ladan Soltani is an internationally recognised health, fitness and lifestyle expert, with over 20 years' teaching experience. A qualified personal trainer, aerobics instructor, holistic nutritional therapist and NLP life coach, she specialises in working with the mind and body together for powerful and positive results. Ladan teaches classes on Sky's Fitness TV (on Channel 282 or online at www.fitness.tv) and has released her own *Legs, Buns and Tums* DVD, available from Fitness TV. She is also setting up her own online health and fitness channel, ladansoltani.tv, which will go live later this year. Contact Ladan at www.ladansoltani.co.uk.