

Running Strong

A no-equipment needed, quick and easy strength sequence for runners



ST. HELENS
=Striders=

Introduction

If you love running, you're probably doing a lot of it. Why wouldn't you? There's so many positive mental and physical benefits. I'm sure you've seen big improvements following blocks of consistent training.

This just encourages us to do even more of the same. If we do that, we'll just keep getting better and better, won't we? Not always!

Running is such a simple sport. You put one foot in front of the other, over and over. But, that repetitive movement places big demands on your body.

Often, the benefits you see are due to improvements in your 'aerobic capacity' (think heart and lungs). This is the 'engine' that provides your body with the ability to run. We all want a big powerful engine and consistent running really super-charges it.

But, this powerful engine needs to be supported by a strong body (think muscles, bones, ligaments, tendons etc.). If you had a small car with a weak frame, tiny wheels and bald tires, putting a big engine in it is going to cause all sorts of issues. The same can be said for our bodies - if our bodies aren't strong enough to cope with the speed or distance we're running, we're going to get injured, burnout or stop improving.

Simply put, your engines can become too powerful for your body. Doing this simple, 15 minute sequence once or twice a week, will help your body keep up with your engine, to keep you running strong and long.

If you've got any questions, or would like personalised advice, the Coaches are available on sthelensstriderscoaches@gmail.com



Preparation

Getting the body primed for the session

Warming up

Before we do any exercise we've got to get the body primed and ready for what's to come. Strength and conditioning is no different.

If you're doing this sequence at the end of a run, then you'll be good to go. However, if you're doing it as a stand alone exercise, you should do a little warm-up.

You could go for a light jog for 5-10 minutes, march up and down the stairs a few times, do a series of dynamic stretches (just like at the **start** of your group runs), or whatever it is that you enjoy doing pre-exercise.

A good warm-up will:

- Raise your heart rate for at least 5 minutes
- Activate your muscles by loading them
- Mobilise your joints by doing multiple different movements
- Prepare the body of the work in the main session by being specific to what is coming up.

How to do the sequence:

One repeat of this sequence will take approximately 15 minutes. You can adjust it to suit your schedule and desired intensity - add a few more reps or reduce the number, you can repeat certain parts of the sequence to focus on weak areas or increase the training benefits.

Single Calf Raises

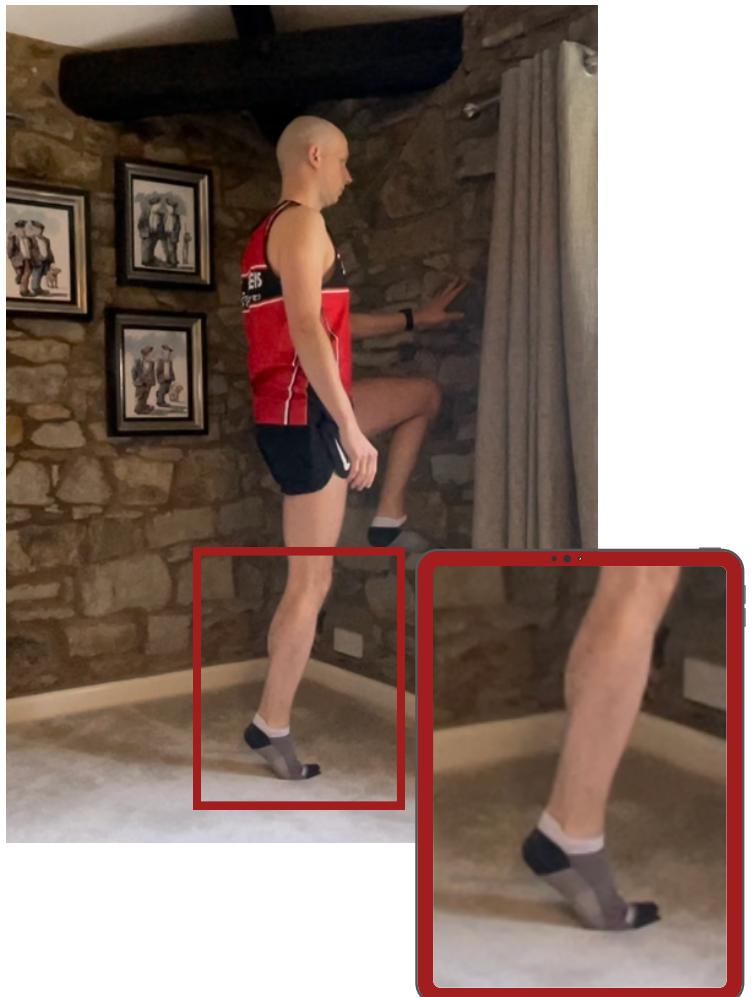
To strengthen the glutes and lower leg

Complete 2 x 10 reps on each leg

Stand facing a wall for balance. Raise one knee so your leg is in a ‘running’ position. Make sure the toes are lifted on the raised leg. Engage your glutes (squeeze your bum cheeks!).

Using the wall for balance, drive the heel of the standing leg upwards, as high as you can get before slowly lowering back down.

Keep the bent leg still the whole time.



Lunges

To strengthen the glutes and lower leg

Complete 2 x 10 reps on each leg

From a standing position with both feet together, step one foot back, into the 'lunge position'.

Lower the knee of the back leg down to towards the floor, lifting the back heel. Make sure the front knee doesn't come any further forward than the toes (if this happens, take a bigger step backwards). Squeeze the glutes as you push back up to the original lunge position.



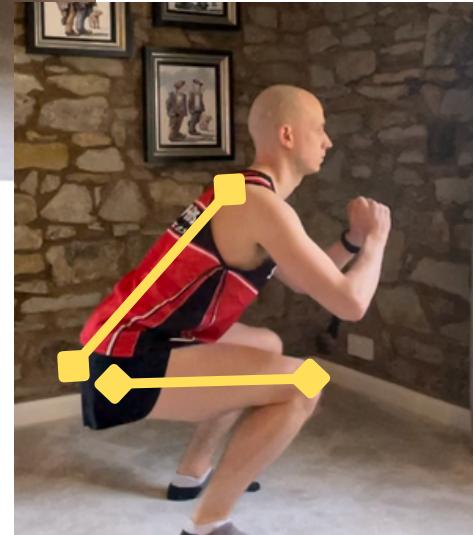
Squats

To strengthen the glutes and lower leg

Complete 3 x 10 reps

From a standing position with feet hip-width apart, 'sit down' by lowering the bum down and back. Keep the back nice and straight (don't lean forward or curve the spine). Go down until the thighs are parallel to the floor if you can.

Drive through the heels and squeeze the glutes to return to standing position.



Push-ups

To strengthen the upper body and core

Complete 3 x 10 reps

Get down on the ground, place your hands slightly wider than shoulder width apart. Place your toes or knees on the ground behind you, so your body is suspended above the ground, in a straight line.

Slowly, with control, bend your elbows and lower your upper body down towards the ground. Pause briefly and then drive the upper body back up, by pushing through the heel of your hand.



Make it easier: use the knees instead of the toes.

Make it harder: lift one leg as you push back up to the top (eventually through the whole movement!).

Plank

To strengthen the core and shoulders

Complete 3 reps

Come down on to the floor and adopt the ‘plank position’. Ensure that your hands are directly underneath your shoulders. There should be a straight line from your knees, to your hips, to your shoulders (your bum should not be in the air, or sagging down). Squeeze the bum cheeks, and tilt the hips forward (thrust movement!).

Hold for 30 seconds. As you progress, you can add time on in 10 second increments.



Make it easier: use the knees instead of the toes.

Side Plank

To strengthen the core, shoulders and legs

Complete 3 reps on each side

Lay on your side and straighten your legs. Push the hips up into the air, by driving through the heel of the hand, to straighten the arm, and pushing into the ground with the foot.

Keep the arms and legs straight, squeeze the glutes and hold hips up as high as you can.

Hold for 20 seconds. As you progress, increase this in 5 second increments.



Make it easier: rest the bottom knee on the ground.



Make it harder: lift the top leg up.

Bridge

To strengthen the core and glutes

Complete 3 reps

Laying on your back, bend your legs to bring the heels towards the bum cheeks. Drive the hips upwards, pushing down into the heels, squeezing the bum cheeks. There should be a straight line from your knees, to your hips, to your shoulders.

Hold at the top for 30 seconds and slowly lower down again. As you progress, you can increase the hold time in 10 second increments.



Make it harder: hold one leg up for 10s. Swap legs for last 10s.

Boat

To strengthen the core

Complete 3 reps

Sit up really tall with a straight spine, with your knees bent and feet close to the body. Gently lift the feet off the ground and lean back slightly.

Hold for 30 seconds, keeping the back straight, pushing the chest upwards, taking the knees out in front of you a little.



Make it harder: Straighten the legs and lift the arms.

Disclaimer

This guide has been created by the Coaches at St. Helens Striders to help you improve your running. It is intended as a guide only and not as specific advice to you. Any decision you make about your training should be done after careful consideration, using professional and/or expert advice.

The Coaches are here to help if you need tailored advice or support. You can reach them by emailing sthelensstriderscoaches@gmail.com.

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