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livingwell

Developing the four-headed muscles — the quads

By PATTY LEON
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Having a well-developed and shapely thigh is not only appealing to the eye, it is critical for the simple function of walking.

The quadriceps femoris, commonly referred to as the quadriceps or "quads," is a group of muscles that make up the front of the thigh. In Latin, quadriceps means four-headed. The muscles in the front portion of the thigh that make up the four-headed quad are the vastus medialis, vastus lateralis, vastus intermedius and the rectus femoris.

The quadriceps are extensors of the knee joints. Their primary function is to move the knee joint, allowing you to walk, run, jump and squat.

Just like every other muscle in your body, the quads require maintenance to function properly. The proper intake of nutrients and water is essential. Training the quads is easy because most leg exercises incorporate the front thigh and back hamstrings, which make up the leg muscles above the knee.

Besides, you don't want to be that person in the gym who has a sculpted upper body with chicken legs below the hips.

Renee Rogers, of Rogers Auto Service in Hinesville, started training seriously about four years ago and entered her first show as a figure competitor. She placed second in the medium class and third in the masters category at the 2011 Southern Isles Bodybuilding, Figure and Wheelchair Championships in Savannah.

Taking care of personal matters, Rogers returned to the competitive stage Oct. 3, at the 180 Fitness Competition in Statesboro, as a physique competitor and placed first in short class, first overall and second overall in posing.

Her secret was keeping busy and staying on her fitness regimen during the years she was not competing.

Whether you are a fitness competitor or just looking to create muscular and shapely thighs, Rogers said her five best quad moves will make you feel the burn and get you on the right track.

"My No. 1 favorite would be what they call the swinging lunge," Rogers said. "Every time I do a swinging lunge, I am usually recovering for three or four days."

Her second quad buster is the leg extension, which Rogers said was brutal for her.

Her third quad builder is the leg press on a decline leg-press machine. She said she performs the maneuver the basic way, but plans to add a twist to increase her quad size.

"With the knees going out from the body versus the knees coming into the body to work on developing the quad sweep," she said.

She finishes the quads with hack squats and Smith Machine front squats.

Always consult your doctor before starting a fitness routine, especially if you have any chronic conditions. Seek the help of a professional personal trainer to make sure you are using the machine and weights properly and that you are using proper body mechanics throughout the exercise.

Bodybuilding.com is a good resource explaining the exercise movements. The swing lunge described by Rogers is an advanced version of a basic lunge.

For beginners, the basic lunge, basic leg press and leg extensions are a good starting point before proceeding to more advanced movements.

According to Bodybuilding.com, here is how to perform those three basic exercises.

Lunge

1. Stand with your torso upright holding two dumbbells in your hands by your sides. This will be your starting position.

2. Step forward with your right leg around 2 feet or so from the foot being left stationary behind and lower your upper body down, while keeping the torso upright and maintaining balance. Inhale as you go down. (Note: As in the other exercises, do not allow your knee to go forward beyond your toes as you come down, as this will put undue stress on the knee joint. Make sure you keep your front shin perpendicular to the ground.)

3. Using mainly the heel of your foot, push up and go back to the starting position as you exhale.

4. Repeat the movement for the recommended number of repetitions and then perform with the left leg.

Caution: This is a movement that requires a great deal of balance so if you suffer from balance problems, you may wish to either avoid it or just use your own bodyweight while holding on to a fixed object. Definitely never perform with a barbell on your back if you suffer from balance issues.

Leg Extension

1. For this exercise, you will need to use a leg-extension machine. First, choose your weight and sit on the machine with your legs under the pad (feet pointed forward) and the hands holding the side bars. This will be your starting position. **Tip:** You will need to adjust the pad so that it falls on top of your lower leg (just above your feet). Also, make sure your legs form a 90-degree angle between the lower and upper leg. If the angle is less than 90 degrees, that means the knee is over the toes, which in turn creates undue stress on the knee joint. If the machine is designed that way, either look for another machine or just make sure that when you start executing the exercise you stop going down once you hit the 90-degree angle.

2. Using your quadriceps, extend your legs to the maximum as you exhale. Ensure that the rest of the body remains stationary on the seat. Pause a second on the contracted position.

3. Slowly lower the weight back to the original position as you inhale, ensuring that you do not go past the 90-degree angle limit.

4. Repeat for the recommended number of times.

Leg press

1. Using a leg-press machine, sit down on the machine and place your legs on the platform directly in front of you at a medium (shoulder-width) foot stance. (Note: For the purposes of this discussion, we will use the medium stance described above, which targets overall development.)

2. Lower the safety bars, holding the weighted platform in place and press the platform all the way up until your legs are fully extended in front of you. **Tip:** Make sure that you do not lock your knees. Your torso and the legs should make a perfect 90-degree angle. This will be your starting position.

3. As you inhale, slowly lower the platform until your upper and lower legs make a 90-degree angle.

4. Pushing mainly with the heels of your feet and using the quadriceps, go back to the starting position as you exhale.

5. Repeat for the recommended amount of repetitions and be sure to lock the safety pins properly once you are done. You do not want that platform falling on you fully loaded.

Caution: Always check to make sure that when you re-rack the weight, the platform is securely locked.



Renee Rogers of Hinesville poses during the 180 Fitness Competition in Statesboro on Oct. 3.



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LIVING WITH CHILDREN



John Rosemond

A composite of recent questions posed to me by journalists, along with my answers:

Q: What is the biggest problem in American parenting?

A: The marriage not lasting much past the birth of the first child. The two people, husband and wife, continue to live together but their marriage slowly fades away and is replaced by a virtually all-consuming focus on the child. Daddy and mommy replace husband and wife.

Q: Why is that so bad?

A: Because it is an unarguable fact that nothing puts a more solid foundation of well-being and security under a child's feet than knowing his parents are in a committed relationship. Under those circumstances, children do not seek a lot of attention. Their most fundamental needs are being met.

Q: How does all that apply to single moms?

A: My mom was single for most of the first seven years of my life, so I'm eminently qualified to answer that question. The single mom needs to demonstrate to her kids, through how she lives her life, that women are interesting people. She needs to have a rich life outside of her parental responsibilities.

Q: You're making it sound as if children really don't need much attention.

A: They do for the first two years of life, at which point they should be slowly but surely weaned off of their dependence upon it. After a lifetime spent studying children, developmental psychologist Burton White

came to the conclusion that the happiest children entertain themselves. They seek very little adult attention.

Q: So what should a parent do if a child is constantly wanting attention?

A: Parents should not let children dictate the terms of the parent-child relationship. Children who constantly want attention need parents who refuse to give it to them on demand.

Q: What if the children get upset if the parents refuse to give them attention?

A: So what? Children don't know what is best for themselves. Children who get upset because their parents refuse to let them command center stage in the family should be sent to their room until they cool off.

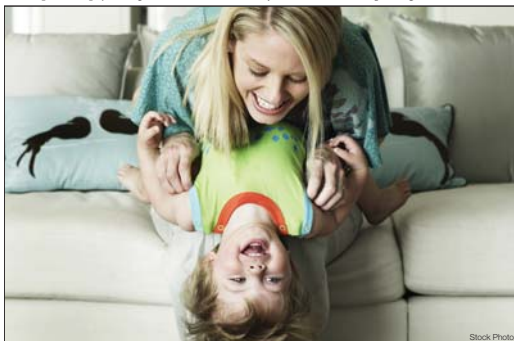
Q: So what is the second-biggest problem in American parenting?

A: The mother reading too much. The more she reads, the more confused she becomes, the more she worries, the more she begins to second-guess herself. As a consequence of all that, she begins to experience child rearing as stressful, which it's not. It's a relatively simple, straightforward undertaking as long as you've got your parenting head on straight.

Q: That's an ironic thing to hear from a guy who's written more than a dozen parenting books, don't you think?

A: Heaven help me if my writings cause confusion, worry, or second-guessing. From all that I gather, they have a calming effect. I am a walking, talking parenting tranquilizer. You can call me the Mommy Whisperer.

Family psychologist John Rosemond:
johnrosemond.com, parentguru.com.



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Apple Walnut Crisp Recipe



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BISTROMD

Special to the Courier

This fall-favorite dessert is perfect for any time of the year and is one that everyone will love. Have all the taste of apple pie without any of the guilt with bistroMD's apple walnut crisp recipe. This sweet treat has only 160 calories per serving and is a perfect size for your next family get-together.

Apple "crisp" or "crumble" gets its name from the perfectly golden crumbly and crisp topping after you bake it in the oven. This well-known dessert is a staple for any fall gathering, which is around the time for apple harvesting. We suggest using Golden Delicious apples because they are common to find year-round, but you can also use locally grown apples, when in season, for even more flavor.

This recipe is stuffed with sweet cinnamon apples and chopped walnuts for a sweet, melt-in-your-mouth center. The apple crisp's topping contains oats, brown sugar, ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg and sea salts to create an impeccable crumble finish.

Chef's tip: Top with a dusting of cinnamon for an incredibly delicious dessert.

Prep Time: 30 minutes

Cook Time: 50 minutes

Total Time: 1 hour, 20 minutes

Nutrition per Serving, serves 10

Calories: 160

Net Carbohydrate: 25 grams

Protein: 2 grams

Ingredients

½ cup plus 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour

½ cup old-fashioned oats

¼ cup packed brown sugar

½ teaspoon ground ginger

½ teaspoon cinnamon

¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg

1 pinch salt

4 tablespoons walnuts, chopped

3 tablespoons unsalted butter, diced

1 pinch ground cloves

3 pounds Golden Delicious apples

(about 7 cups), peeled and thinly sliced

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees and oil a 1½-quart baking dish.

2. In a small bowl, combine ½ cup flour, oats, brown sugar, ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg and sea salt.

3. With a pastry blender, cut in the butter until the mixture becomes crumbly.

4. Stir in the chopped walnuts and set aside.

5. Combine sliced apples, 2 tablespoons flour, cloves and vanilla extract. Mix well so apples are evenly coated.

6. Transfer apples to a baking dish and sprinkle the topping over the apples.

7. Bake until bubbling and the topping is golden brown, about 50 minutes.

8. Serve warm.

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