

This Month's Focus: Glutes

1. Flex and Push. Students sit with their legs stretched in front of them, turned out. Take a Theraband and wrap it around the bottom of the right foot (on the heel end) flexed. Bend the right leg in a plié position and stretch. Do 8 reps total. Repeat on the left. For added difficulty, hold the working leg up at about 45 degrees as you plié and stretch the leg.

2. Glute Stretch. Students sit on a Pilates ball with their left leg bent and foot flat on the floor (like in chair pose). Cross the right leg so the right ankle is over the left knee. Flex the right foot. With the right knee out to the side, lean forward with a flat back to stretch the right glute. Hold for about 20 seconds. Repeat on the left. As an alternative to sitting in a Pilates ball, students may lie on their backs to do this stretch.

3. Tap and Lift. Students begin on their hands and knees. Lift the right leg in a turned out arabesque. Cross it over to the left and tap your right foot on the floor on the other side of your left leg. Lift the right leg back to arabesque. Lower the leg. Do 8 reps total. Other side. To make this exercise easier, alternate reps: right, left, right, left, etc. To add difficulty, before lowering the leg from arabesque, bend the working knee to the side (similar to a side attitude position). Extend it to arabesque again. Then lower.

4. Pigeon Pose. Have students sit in pigeon pose (yoga) for 20 to 30 seconds on each side. If pigeon pose is too much for students, have them sit cross-cross and stretch forward. Then switch their crossing and bend forward again.

5. Glute Strength. Students begin in their hands and knees. Place a small exercise ball (4-6 inches in diameter) behind the right knee. Do 10 to 20 pulses upward and to the back in parallel, with the knee bent and ball behind the knee. Repeat on the other side.