

The Perfect Lunge

Lunges.

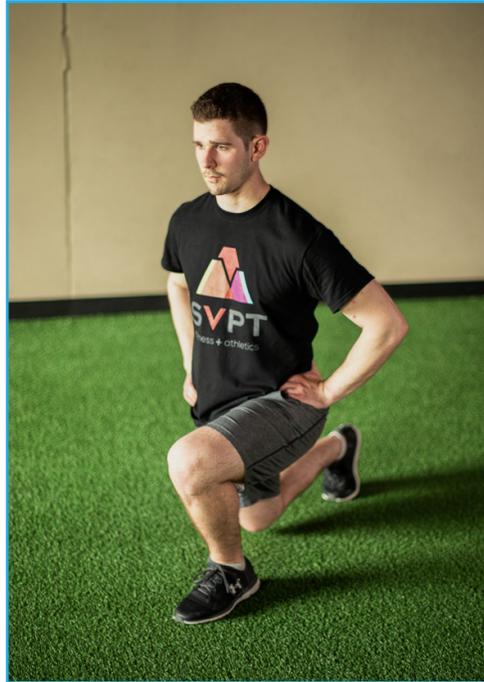
We love to hate them. Why? Because they are darn hard.

What is so great about lunges? If you have problems squatting, then lunges can be the next best thing. Just like the squat, lunges are a functional compound movement that uses more than one joint - hip and knee joints. When done properly this hip and knee dominant exercise strengthens all major leg muscles – quadriceps, calves, hamstrings and glutes.

The perfect lunge can also stretch your hips, and improve your balance, mobility, flexibility and body awareness because they are unilateral (one leg at a time). Because lunges are done on one leg, they can also help even out strength imbalances between each leg.

Another great thing about lunges is that they can be performed in all planes of motion – forward, lateral and reverse, which is great for variety and developing more durability.

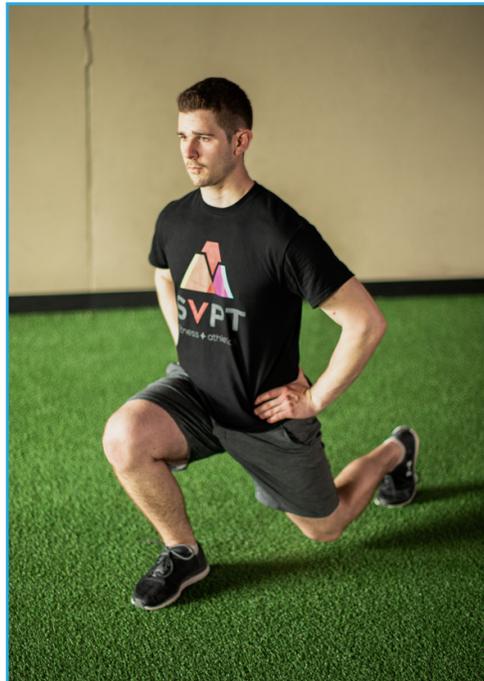




The most well-known lunge is the forward alternating lunge.

1. Stand tall with feet hip width apart, hands on your hips, chest lifted, chin neutral and core tight.
2. Take a big step forward with right leg and start to shift weight forward so heel hits the floor first.
3. Lower body until right thigh is parallel to floor and right shin is vertical (it's okay if knee shifts forward a little). If mobility and flexibility allows, lightly tap left knee to ground while keeping weight in right foot.
4. Press into right foot to drive back up to starting position.
5. Repeat on the other side.

Please note: if you have knee pain you may have to vary where your knee tracks. The most common reason for pain in the knees is having too much weight in the front toes AND letting your front knee go too far over the toes. This will put stress in the tendons of the knee, causing discomfort.



Aim to perform 3-4 sets of 8-12 per leg. When you feel comfortable with your form using bodyweight, you can add external load, such as dumbbells or kettlebells.