



For Great Thighs – Hit the Wall!

Luci Gabel
MA, MBA, ACSM, ACE

There are four muscles on the front of the thigh and when they are toned, they give the leg a really nice shape! Together, these muscles are called the quadriceps. Like the other muscles we've been talking about, these can be worked without using any equipment. The exercise I'll describe here is called the wall sit. Wall sits work the entire thigh, but they emphasize the quadriceps.

Wall Sits:

- Start with your back against a wall
- Walk your feet forward and slide your back down the wall bending your knees to about a 90 degree angle (If your knees don't go that far, slide them down as far as you feel comfortable.)
- Press your entire back against the wall, and pull your abdominals in towards your spine. This both works your abs and protects your low back while you do the exercise. (Remember the abdominal work we talked about two weeks ago? It works here, too!)
- Press your heels into the floor, and pick up your toes a little inside your shoe. By keeping your weight pressed into your heels, you'll protect your knees.
- Hold this position for a while. Start at 5 seconds, then go to 10 seconds, keep increasing the time until you can stay for about a minute.

If keeping your legs stationary during this exercise is pretty easy, try the next level:

- Get into the wall sit position as described above
- Raise one leg and straighten and bend at the knee. Do the same number of repetitions on each leg and increase the number as it gets easy

If you can do about 20 of the above exercises on each leg, you can increase the intensity by tying a *band or an exercise tube* around your shins right above the ankle. (You can purchase an exercise band or exercise tubing on line, at department stores, and even some grocery stores.)

- Straighten your knee, and stretch out the band as far as you can
- Do as many as you can on one leg, then switch to the other leg and do the same number

Believe me - these can get pretty challenging! I did a whole bunch while making the video to accompany this exercise and boy, were my legs tired!

It's recommended that you talk to your doctor before starting to workout. This is basic exercise information for the general public. If you have injuries or other physical limitations, this exercise may not be appropriate. A good rule of thumb: If it doesn't feel good- don't do it!

© Luci Gabel, October 12, 2007