

## Know Your Muscles - The Lower Body

Becoming familiar with the muscles that make up your body has more benefits than simply allowing you to talk shop with your training partners. The more familiar you are with the muscles you're working, the better you'll be able to judge what's needed to make improvements. In this article we'll get to know the muscles that make up the lower body. This is where you'll find the big, strong muscles that allow us to get around. The main muscles found below the waist are as follows: 1. Quadriceps femoris - this is a group of four muscles found at the front of the thigh. These are the vastus lateralis on the outside, the vastus medialis on the inside, the vastus intermedius between them, and the rectus femoris above them. The role of these muscles is to extend the leg from a bent position. 2. Hamstrings - these are found to the rear of the leg and consist of the biceps femoris, semitendinosus and semimembranosus. The hamstrings are used to flex the knee in the act of pulling the heel towards the buttocks. 3. Gluteals - these make up the buttocks and consist of the gluteus maximus covering the hip joint and the gluteus medius and minimus on the outside of the hip. The gluteus maximus facilitates hip extension while the other two lift the leg to the side in an action called hip abduction. 4. Hip flexors - these are found opposite the glutes on the front of the pelvis. Consisting of the psoas major and iliacus they raise the leg to the front. 5. Calves - these consist of the gastrocnemius and the soleus. Their role is to extend the foot at the ankle.

## About the Author

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