
Two Dynamic Hip Strengtheners for Mountain Running

Kristina Pattison - July 25, 2017

Mountain Running athletes know that balance and stability are crucial for staying safe on technical routes. Strong core and hip muscles are required to run and scramble efficiently up steep ascents and down unforgiving descents.



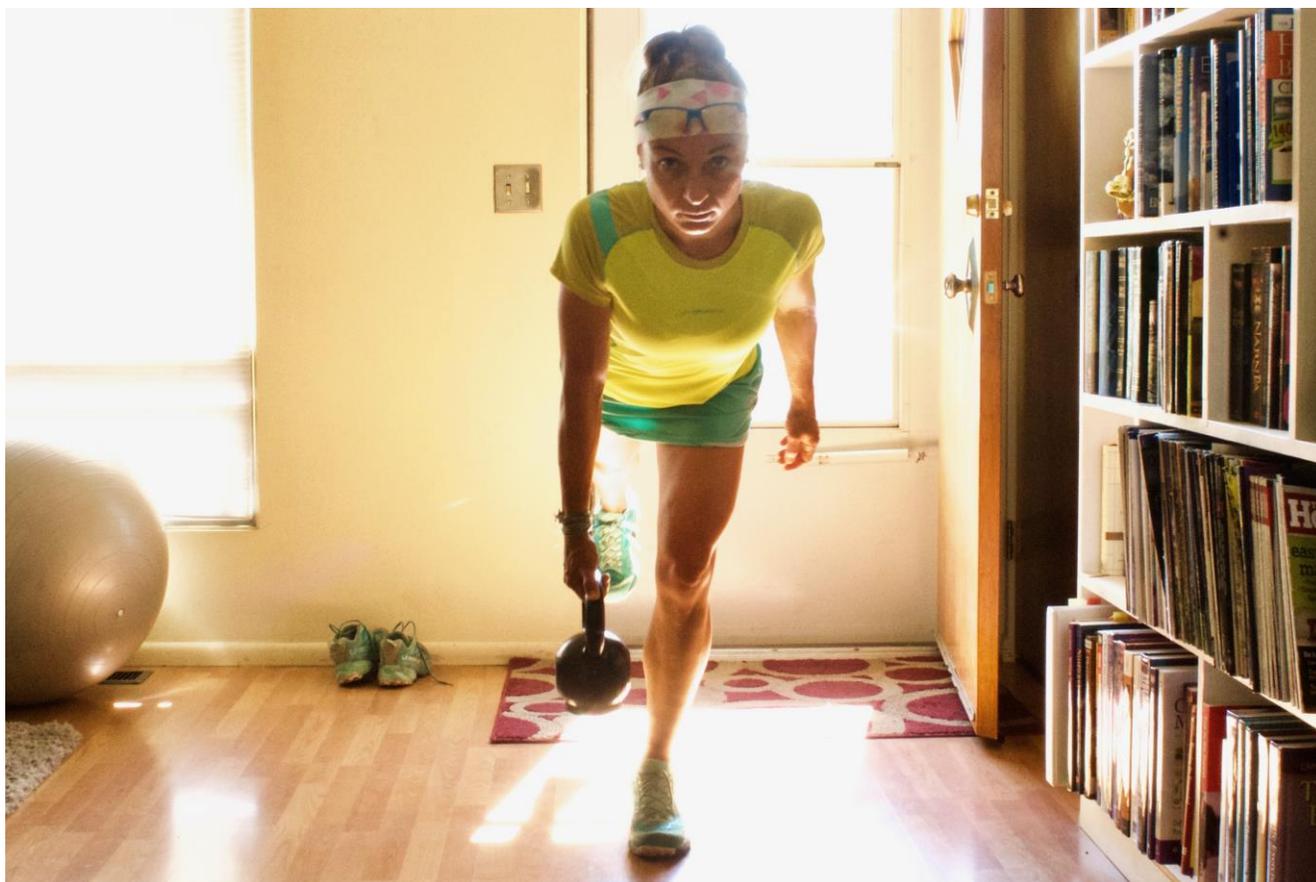
Ultrarunner Kristina Pattison on Holland Peak in the Bob Marshall Wilderness, Montana

The gluteal muscles at the back and sides of the hips and the core muscles work together as a force couple to hold the low back and pelvis in a neutral alignment. During ambulation, the rotational effect of transferring weight from one limb to the other requires the coordination of one half of the body at the hip and the other half at the core to synchronize to keep the hips and spine level. While running, demands on these muscles increase substantially as the forces transferring through the joints increase up to four times body weight with every step.

These two essential moves will help improve neuromuscular control of the core and gluteal force couple, while strengthening the powerful hip muscles that are responsible for speed.

Single Leg Deadlift

Perform a Single Leg Deadlift standing on one foot with a light weight in the opposite hand. Keeping the shoulders pulled back and down, maintaining a long neck, and keeping the back straight, hinge at the hip and bring the weight toward the opposite shin. The standing leg knee should bend slightly. Return to the start and repeat for 8-10 reps on each side.



The Single Leg Deadlift for runners. Photo: Kristina Pattison.

Tip: Keep your abs and glutes engaged the entire time to ensure your back stays straight and your hips stay level.

The Single Leg Squat

Perform a Single Leg Squat standing on one foot with a light weight in the opposite hand—you can hold weight at the side in suitcase carry position or at the shoulder in rack position (as shown). Keeping the shoulders pulled back and down, maintaining a long neck, and keeping the back straight, hinge at the hip and bend the standing leg. Return to the start and repeat for 8-10 reps on each side.



Tip: Challenge your stability by working deeper into the squat as you get stronger. Keep your abs and glutes engaged the entire time to ensure your back stays straight and your hips stay level.



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by Kristina Pattison, DPT, CSCS