

Buttocks – Seemingly the big question: To squeeze or not to squeeze...

Based on an article written by Shari Berkowitz, The Vertical Workshop Blog.

Getting bouncy buns, strong buttocks and a lifted bottom doesn't come from what you think it does. It **100% does not come from squeezing your seat, butt, buttocks.** All that squeezing you've been doing... is not going to get you a strong seat!

NO SPOT TRAINING

First, I must share with you that there is not such thing as "spot training". You cannot craft the perfect set of buttocks by squeezing them or working them alone. You are an organism and not a mechanism. So, you work as a whole. We can't just work your buttocks alone. And that squeezing in each exercise is saying that you can.

In truth, you never have to squeeze any muscle to get it to work or strengthen or look fit. What you do have to do: actions that use those muscles in their primary and secondary ways. It's that simple, really. **And it takes your whole body to allow that to happen. All muscles work all of the time. Yes....all of the time.**

However, all muscles work all of the time with primary actions, secondary, tertiary and so on. Based on where they are and the desired action they either assist in mobility or stability of a joint in the action. And every single muscle in your body is actually working for that to happen. So you can't get great buttocks by squeezing them. Simply, you must work the entire body and allow the gluteus to do their actions naturally. That's how it works!

OVERDOING BREAKS DOWN RATHER THAN BUILDS UP

If you do squeeze your buttocks constantly in all exercises, **it actually causes more harm than good.** This can hurt you. You see, when you squeeze your seat you are actually causing a tremendous amount of compression of hip joint and it simply does not look good.

Let me ask you this: When you look in the mirror at your bare buttocks and squeeze...does it look good? I ask this because I know how we all are. We all look in the mirror and check out what is or is not working. Tell me, especially the ladies...what does it look like? Nothing good. So, just common sense and the visual tell you that it doesn't work. So...why does everyone say to squeeze those glutes? Be-

cause it's an easy muscle or muscle group to get into in that fashion. It's not actually that easy to train, but it's easy to squeeze.

Do not squeeze your seat/buttocks or sit bones. Do the action of "Hug your heels together" with legs ideally parallel and together so that these muscles can train and eventually you can live your life with true parallel (as normal people should be) with incredible strength from deep muscles.

SO WHAT DO WE DO?

We allow our gluteals to engage when they need to. Don't try to release them if they are doing their job. We just make sure, by a stable pelvis and action of our lower abdominals and back muscles together that our gluteals work:

Now, gluteus maximus works best in hip extension. That doesn't mean just when your leg is behind you, but it works when you are going up any level...like a stair (Going up front on the Chair) or seeming like it (Press down front). Any time you are trying not to let your hips flex while kneeling or standing...that's gluteus maximus (Kneeling chest expansion, Thigh stretch and Standing arms on the Tower) are great examples of this. Any time you lift your hips/pelvis in an exercise, it's the action of hip extension even if your legs don't actually go behind you like Shoulder Bridge Prep, Corckscrew, Long Spine, etc. Even keeping your legs level with your pelvis when you are lying on your stomach in a Swan preparation, in Single leg kicks, or in Pull straps on Reformer and so many other things...that is the active resistance of falling into hip flexion...and your gluteals do that.

When in class doing the following exercises, the Half Roll Down or the Shoulder Bridge on the mat, you feel your glutes engage.... but recognize how you don't squeeze them... they just do it on their own?"

We don't want to relax our buttocks: you want them to engage when they're supposed to. They do it on their own. Our bodies are extremely efficient and work when given the correct environment.

NEVER SQUEEZE YOUR SEAT

"Of course, if you want to jam your lumbar spine, impinge your sacro-iliac joint, force your thigh bone into its joint, or other things. Then squeeze all that you want."