

FITNESS TIPS

How To Really ‘Hinge at Your Hips’ While Strength Training To Gain Better Overall Mobility



Kells McPhillips · December 21, 2020



Photo: Getty Images/Neurostock Images



“Hinge at your hips!” It’s one of those ubiquitous cues that trainers throw out in almost every yoga or strength training class you take. The movement pattern seems straightforward at first, but it can be difficult in practice (especially for those of us with tight hammies and not-so-great lower backs). So to clear up how to hinge at the hips for any level of mobility and flexibility, we asked trainer

Donna KATY MACFARLANE, a personal trainer and CEO of KATY MACFARLANE FITNESS.

Dave Schenk, NASM, founder and co-CEO of LIFT Society, to clear this cue up before your next training session.

“One of the best ways to visualize a hingeing motion is to imagine trying to close a car door with your hands full of groceries. You simply stand in front of the door and send your hips back into it, and it closes,” says Schenk. It’s a funny visual, sure—but that car butt bump translates directly to workout moves like a deadlift or forward folds in yoga. (So it’s time to pay a *little* more attention to your form when you get home from Trader Joe’s.)

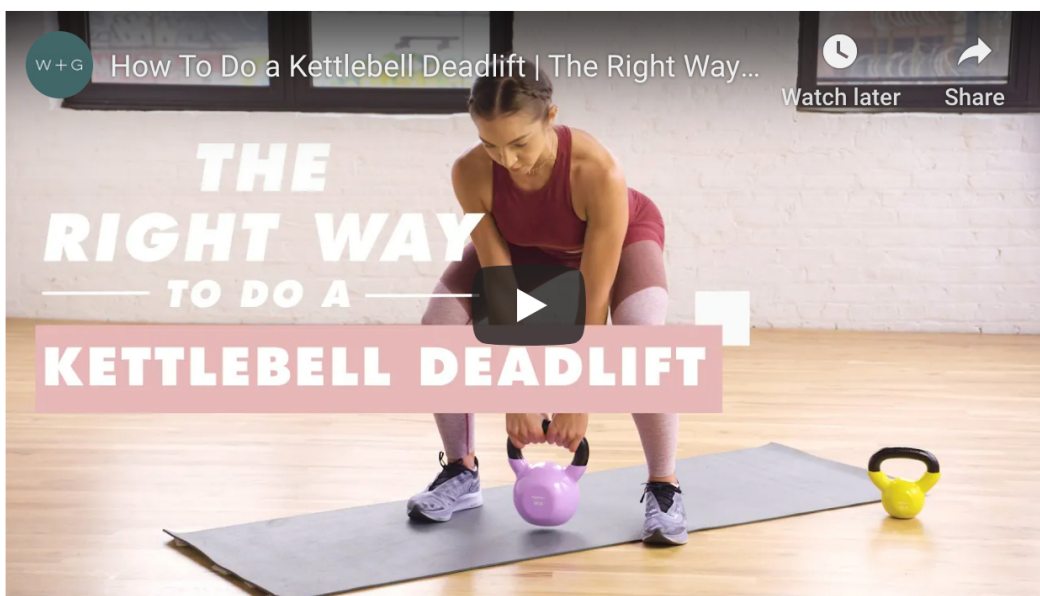
When your first warming up to the idea of practicing the booty twerk (I mean, hip-hingeing) at your home gym, Schenk recommends starting with light weights to avoid straining any muscles. “Hingeing exercises, like the deadlift, can be problematic if you go too heavy too soon,” he says. “Here’s why: The deadlift works the whole back of your body—think hamstrings, glutes, and all your back muscles from the bottom to the top.” This band of muscles forms the posterior chain, which is often weak for beginner strength trainers because modern-day life is so intertwined with sedentary behavior. “You should go light when you first start to deadlift because even though it won’t feel extremely challenging for your body, your low back will be working overtime to get the weight off the ground,” adds Schenk. Over time, your back will strengthen—and will no longer need special treatment.

Besides embracing lighter weights initially, Schenk also says those with tight legs should focus on modifications that keep them from rounding forward in the back. “A perfect modification of the classic deadlift would be the Romanian deadlift,” he says. “Instead of starting with your weights on the ground, you will pick them up from the safety bars [at the gym]. You then will send your hips back similar to the deadlift, but instead of lowering the weight all the way to the floor, you will only lower the weight below your knees. This will stretch and activate your hamstrings before you stand up and return to the starting position.” This way, you’re getting a killer workout while teaching your body to tolerate the larger range of motion you’ll need to full “hinge at the hips” for future deadlifts.

No matter what modifications you choose to make this move fit you (and not

the other way), Schenk says you'll see a huge difference in how hinging at the hips makes you feel. To name just one example, picking up those groceries will get a lot easier because you, my friend, will be getting stronger. "The next time you complete a heavy deadlifting set, take a moment and soak in the pleasure of having the character and discipline necessary to doing something hard like lifting heavy weights—and then let that confidence transfer to the rest of your life," says Schenk.

Now that you know how to hinge at the hips, try a deadlift to strengthen your hamstrings:



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EXPERTS REFERENCED

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Trainer

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VITAMINS AND SUPPLEMENTS

Is It Just Me Or Is It Impossible to Stay Focused WFH? Luckily, There Are Supplements to Help



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Raise your hand if you've experienced this way-too-relatable WFH scenario: You wake up ready to conquer another productive nine to five. An hour in, you realize you've been distracted to a standstill. Now you're focusing on the fact that you're not focusing, instead of what you're supposed to be focusing on. (Say that three times fast.)

To stop the cycle, you've first got to acknowledge it's okay to feel stressed out, says Ellen Vora, MD, a holistic psychiatrist based in New York City. Take a deep

breath, and look around. If working from your kitchen makes you think more about what to make for dinner or if using your bed as a desk makes you sleepy, it's time to switch things up.



“Our environment impacts our ability to focus in a number of ways, from comfort and ergonomics, to clutter that distracts us,” Dr. Vora says. “Also, our brain responds to contextual cues. If we associate a certain space with snacking and Netflix, it can be more difficult to have that same environment cue the brain to drop into a state of focus.”

Her tips for focusing start with cleaning up your work space and keeping it clutter-free (we see you, type A’s). Next up: “Use ritual to cue your brain,” she says. “‘Commute’ around the block for two minutes before starting your work day, and then take a relaxing walk outside to mark the end of the work day, letting your brain know it’s time to relax.” Check and check.

Lastly, try out time-blocking. “Schedule blocks of about 20 minutes of focused time, and five-minute mental breaks,” Dr. Vora says. But wait—don’t pick up your phone. Instead, stand up, get outside, rest for five minutes, or put some music and dance—hey, you might as well take advantage of this whole WFH thing.

Now that you have practical tips on how to block out those distractions, it’s important to take care of your nervous system with proper nourishment—which is where supplements come in. Solgar, the brand known for its high-quality, science-backed ingredients (yes, those aesthetically pleasing amber bottles you see everywhere), has you covered from curcumin to taurine. Haven’t heard of those? You’ve come to the right place.

Once you've checked off Dr. Vora's tips for focusing, read on for supplements that can nourish your nervous system.*

Choline

First up is choline, which is part of the B vitamin complex and an important component of nerve cells, making it good for nervous system health.* Besides supporting brain health, choline supplements like Solgar Choline 350 mg Vegetable Capsules also help support healthy liver function.*



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Solgar Taurine 500 mg Vegetable Capsules

Curcumin

“Curcumin, which is the active ingredient in the spice turmeric (what gives curry its yellow color), is [an antioxidant],” Dr. Vora says. To get the more potent form (rather than drinking a turmeric latte), try Solgar Full Spectrum Curcumin Brain Works Licaps, which also contain choline, vitamin B-12, and Bacopa, and are specially formulated to help support cognitive function.

Taurine

Taurine is not only found in cardiac and skeletal muscle, but is also one of the most abundant amino acids in the brain. Try Solgar Taurine 500 mg Vegetable Capsules, which are made up of free-form taurine for optimum absorbability and come in an amber bottle (like all Solgar supplements) to protect the potency of the ingredients.

Potassium

Last but not least is the essential mineral potassium, which according to Dr. Vora “is relevant to [support] the proper functioning of neuronal signal transmission in the brain.” Instead of committing to a banana a day, check out [Solgar Potassium Tablets](#), which also help balance electrolytes in the body. Congrats, you just focused through an entire article—and now you’ve got a game-plan to make that a regular thing, too.

**These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration.*



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Photo: Getty/Luis Alvarez

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Rebecca Norris · December 18, 2020

