

Steps are often used for cardiovascular workouts and aerobic routines. But along with burning calories and getting your heart rate up, you can use a step for exercises that tone the muscles in your arms and legs. Maximize your workouts by incorporating a step into your overall toning and exercising routine.

You can use the step in a variety of ways to tone most major muscle groups in your body. The step is popular for toning the lower body, including the gluteal muscles, quadriceps, hamstrings and calves. But you can also perform many exercises that will tone your upper body and core muscles, too.

TOE TAP

Start your routine with this cardio warmup. Standing behind the step approximately one stride away and lightly place one toe on the step in front of you with knee bent. This is just a toe tap, so no weight will be placed on the toe touching the platform. Quickly lift foot, and alternate the feet tapping the top of the step, with each movement. Alternating at a quick pace to get your hear rate pumping.

SQUAT W/ LIFT

Place your body with your hips and shoulders perpendicular to the step. Place your foot closest to the step firmly on the platform in line with your hips. Your feet should be about shoulder-width apart, keeping your weight on your heels. Keeping both feet planted squat backward as if you were going to sit in a chair. Keep your weight distributed equally between your feet. Leaving your foot planted on the step, explode upwards lifting your floor planted foot. Perform 8-10 reps and switch sides.

LUNGE W/ KNEE RAISE

Facing the step with your feet about shoulder-width apart. Step forward with one leg, lowering your hips until both knees are bent at about a 90-degree angle. Your weight should be in the heel of your foot on the step. After you lunge, push off your leg on the platform and lift your back knee toward your chest, keeping your abs engaged. Repeat eight times and switch sides.

INVERTED PLANK

Place both forearms on the step and align your shoulders over your elbows. Extend your feet behind you, so you are balancing on your toes. Keep your back flat and abdominal muscles tight in this plank position. Lift your left forearm so you are now resting on your palm, then lift your right forearm. One at a time, lift your forearms and put your weight on the palms of your hands so you are in a pushup position. Then lower back down on your forearms. Repeat while trying to keep your core as stable as possible.

TRICEP DIPS

Load your stepper with 2-4 levels of risers. Facing away from the step, start exercise seated on floor, knees lightly bend, chest up. Place both hands palm down on the stepper to hold your body up and your feet are planted on the floor in front of you. Begin with your elbows slightly bent and keep your hips as close to the bench as you can. Drop your hips down straight toward the floor with your elbow kept behind you in the descent. Raise up to full extension and then lower again slowly.

ONE LEG LIFT w/ SQUAT

Place your body so your hips and shoulders are perpendicular to the step. Place the foot closest to the platform up on the step, with the other foot placed on the floor about shoulder width apart from each other. With both feet firmly planted, lower into a squat position, just like sitting into a chair, weight evenly distributed through both feet. Knees should not extend past the ankles, back straight, core engaged. Driving through your heels, lift back up, and as you lift, raise your floor planted foot, without moving your platform foot. Repeat

**ADDITIONAL
RESOURCES**

These are just a few exercises to get you started with your stepper. Other toning exercises you can do with a step include calf raises, step-ups, step jumps, inverted pushups, lateral jumps, side planks, abdominal crunches, bench presses, chest presses and flies. You can raise and lower the step height to change the degree of difficulty of these exercises and add light hand weights to increase the intensity. For many more exercises we encourage you to search your computer for "Exercises using a step" as there are many great articles, videos and illustrations to add variety and to your exercise routine.

**CARE FOR
STEPPER**

Always use your stepper on a level surface. There are rubber stoppers on the bottom of your platform and each riser. Although they work great for most floors, you may have a more slippery surface and experience some sliding. If slipping occurs, place a thin yoga mat or exercise mat under your stepper for traction.

It is wonderful to exercise outside in the fresh air but please don't leave your stepper outside as nature's elements can deteriorate the finish and platform on your step and reduce its lifespan. Wipe your step clean of sweat and shoe dirt with a warm soapy wipe, do not use harsh chemical cleaners.

Your risers may experience some movement during intense workouts of jumping back and forth but they are designed to stay together through all normal usage. Never use your stepper for extreme jumping or workouts that are not intended for normal step use.

