



## **Taking the Lunge**

Without fail, in every gym you will come across someone performing some form of lunge. Be it stationary, alternating or walking lunge, it seems to be the No.1 exercise on every personal trainers list, and rightly so. Lunges are awesome for working the butt, quadriceps and hamstrings, helping to create that toned rear end we all long for. If you do not already include some form of lunge in your lower body routine, now will be a good time to start.

### **Stationary Lunge**

The stationary lunge is great to start with as it requires less balance and co-ordination. You can use a wall or chair for balance to begin with if necessary. Perform 3 sets of 10-15 reps on each leg to begin with, incorporating the use of light dumbbells for added resistance. To ensure correct execution, follow these simple guidelines and tips.

1. Hold a dumbbell in each hand with your arms by your sides.
2. Keeping chin up and back straight, step the right foot forward so that your legs are a comfortable stride length apart, and the heel of your left foot is lifted off the floor.
3. Ensure that your knees remain soft and that your toes are pointed forward.
4. Bending at the knees, lower your body until your right thigh is parallel to the floor and your left knee is almost touching the floor.
5. Hold this position for a moment and then return to the start position, repeating the full range of movement 10-15 times and repeating on the left leg.

### **Tips:**

1. As you lower, ensure that your front knee does not move past your toes.
2. Avoid locking of knees as you return to the start position.
3. Ensure that you keep your back straight and chin lifted. Do not lean forward.
4. Perform each repetition slowly to maintain correct posture and that the left knee does not hit the floor.
5. Remember your breathing. Breathe in on the lowering and breathe out on the push back to the start.
6. Never compromise form. If you get tired and start to wobble its time to rest, or you risk injury.

### **Alternating Lunge**

Once you have mastered the stationary lunge you can progress onto the alternating lunge. The same muscles are targeted here but to a greater extent due to the pushing back to the start motion. This requires more balance and co-ordination although the form is the same, the only difference being that you push back to a standing position with both feet together before stepping forward with the other leg after each rep. Again, dumbbells can be used to add resistance and increase the level of difficulty.



### **Walking Lunge**

This type of lunge also incorporates the abdominal and lower back muscles for stabilisation, and as you have to lift yourself forward as well as up it works the quadriceps more. You can stop in between each lunge, pushing up and forward so that you stand with both feet together before stepping forward again with the other leg. To increase the level of difficulty do not rest between each stride, continually moving forward straight into the next lunge. Try this without any resistance at first to ensure correct co-ordination and balance and then introduce dumbbells for extra resistance if required.

Always bear in mind that there are no miracle exercises that will suddenly give you the tight, toned look you long for. It's always a combination of balanced nutrition, a correct resistance and cardio training program and your will power that will get you there. Good things come to those who wait!