

“Gluteal Amnesia” It’s Not Exactly What You Think It Is

By Dr. Andy Rosser, Downtown Olympia

No, “gluteal amnesia” doesn’t mean that you can’t remember where your rear-end is. If you do, though, ask any of your cycling friends and they’ll be sure to clarify for you. What, then, is ‘gluteal amnesia?’ It refers to something I work on with lower back and knee pain patients every day in my practice. Essentially, the gluteal/hip muscles forget how (and when) to contract to make our legs move correctly. This can end up creating problems for the lower back and knee because they are forced to take up the slack. They have to move through a greater range of motion which can lead to wear and tear on the joints. Eventually this can present as pain syndromes and arthritis/degeneration of these joints. As cyclists, hip weakness can manifest as lower back pain, hip pain, knee pain, neck and shoulder pain, or pain in the hands as a result of too much pressure on the handlebars. The rest of this article covers some basic exercises you can use to help call your forgetful glutes into action!

Easiest: Basic Low Back Bridge

With knees and feet only an inch or so apart, lift the toes so the heels are pressed into the ground. To lift the hips, drive the heels into the ground. Don’t arch the lower back as you lift. Hold for 15-30 second. Try 3-5 repetitions of this exercise daily.



Harder: Bridge March

While in the bridge position, straighten one leg at a time holding for one to two seconds on each side. The challenge of this exercise is in keeping the hip from sagging to the floor and keeping the hips/abdomen from twisting. In this way, it challenges the core at the same time. Try 8-10 repetitions of this exercise daily.



Hardest: Unilateral Hip Lift

In the same starting position as the bridge exercise, pull one knee up toward your chest. Then drive the heel of the other foot into the ground, lifting your hip toward the ceiling. This combines movement and strength of the hip with the core challenge. Try 6 repetitions of this exercise per side per day.



Read more about Dr. Rosser’s adventures as an amateur cyclist www.rosserchiro.com. He is the team chiropractor for the CBC/Olympia Orthopaedic Associates Racing Team, and assists other athletes in the community. For more information, he can be contacted at andy@rosserchiro.com.