

GLUTEUS MAXIMUS

The gluteus maximus is the largest muscle of the “glutes group” (gluteus medius and gluteus minimus) and is the primary muscle for hip extension. The gluteus maximus originates along the sacrum, lumbar fascia, and sacrotuberous ligament. It lies superficially to the gluteus medius and gluteus minimus. Due to the angles of the muscle fibers, the gluteus maximus has two insertion points and can be broken down into two sections: the upper fibers and the lower fibers. The upper fibers assist with abduction of the leg, while the lower fibers assist with adduction of the leg. Together, both the upper and lower fibers work together to extend and externally rotate the leg at the hip joint. The gluteus maximus is known to be one of the strongest muscles in the human body and plays a large role in the stabilization of the hip joint while the body is erect. If the gluteus maximus becomes overly tight, flexion of the hip joint may be limited. If the muscle becomes overly weak, it can result in unstable hips while in motion or standing. Since the hips hold a lot of upper body weight while erect, unstable hips can lead to discomfort and increased chance of injury. To strengthen the gluteus maximus, yoga poses or movements that bring the leg into extension, abduction, and adduction will all work to bring strength and stability to the gluteus maximus and hip area. Going from a seated chair position to standing while putting the weight in the heels and pushing the hips back into flexion is also a good way to strengthen the gluteus maximus.

GLUTEUS MAXIMUS

Action: *Upper fibers:* abduction. *Lower fibers:* adduction. *Entire muscle:* extends and externally rotates leg at hip joint

Origin: Sacrum, ilium, thoracolumbar fascia, sacrotuberous ligament

Insertion: *Upper fibers:* iliotibial tract. *Lower fibers:* gluteal tuberosity

Agonists: *Extension:* semitendinosus, semimembranosus, biceps femoris (LH), adductor magnus. *Abduction:* gluteus medius, gluteus minimus. *External rotation:* obturator internus, obturator externus, gemellus inferior, quadratus femoris

Antagonists: *Extension:* iliopsoas. *Abduction:* adductor longus, adductor brevis, adductor magnus. *External rotation:* tensor fasciae latae, gluteus minimus, gluteus medius

Poses: *Contracts:* salabhasana, ustrasana, urdhva dhanurasana. *Lengthens:* eka pada rajakapotasana (front leg)

