

# Show Some Leg

From Cooking Light  
Text by Gin Miller

To perform these exercises, you'll need a 4-foot dowel (or an old broom handle or mop stick) and a towel. Perform 2 sets of 12 to 16 reps on each side.

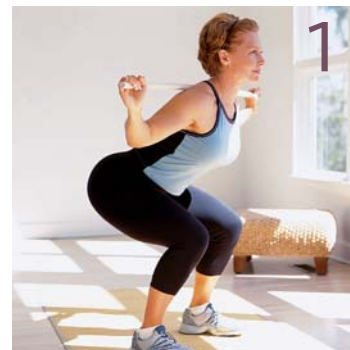
## Show Some Leg

### 1. Power Squat

FOCUS: calves, glutes, hamstrings, quadriceps

Stand with feet hip- to shoulder-width apart, toes and knees facing forward. Hold dowel with a wide overhand grip behind your head, resting dowel on your upper back. Allowing two full seconds, slowly lower body, bending at the hips and pushing buttocks back until thighs are almost parallel to floor. Hold for two seconds. Take four full seconds to return to upright position, tightening glutes as you rise.

TIPS: Don't rest the bar on your neck. Rest your heels on a folded towel if you have difficulty lowering into squat position. Try to keep your knees centered over your ankles. If your knees pass beyond the front of your toes, bend more at the hips. Keep your chest lifted and abs contracted.



### 2. Lifting Bridge

Focus: glutes, hamstrings, quadriceps

Lie with back on floor, knees bent. Place left foot flat on floor; lift right knee toward chest. Hold dowel centered behind right knee with an underhand grip. Pushing through left heel, tighten glutes and lift hips. Take two seconds to lift hips, hold for two seconds, then take four seconds to lower hips to floor. Perform all reps, then switch sides.

TIPS: Don't arch your back as you lift your hips. Keep your head and shoulders pressed against the floor. Hold dowel lightly behind knee; do not pull excessively.

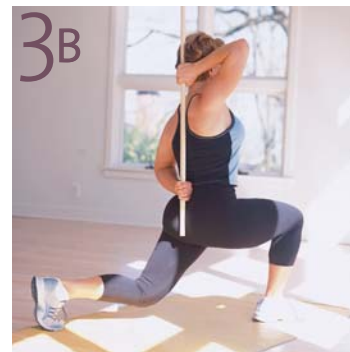
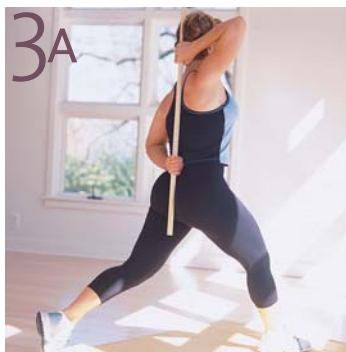


### 3. Fixed Lunge

Focus: calves, glutes, hamstrings, quadriceps

Stand with feet together, holding dowel vertically behind you with an overhand grip behind your neck and an underhand grip at the small of your back. Step left foot back into a lunge position. (You should feel a slight stretch in the front of the left hip.) Allowing two full seconds, slowly lower body, bending knees until right thigh is almost parallel to floor and left knee approaches but doesn't touch floor. Hold for two seconds, then rise for four, pushing up and back from the right foot. Perform all reps, then switch sides.

TIPS: Hold dowel firmly against your head and glutes, keeping chin lifted. Keep the knee of your front leg behind your toes. Slide rear leg farther back if needed. Before you lunge, make sure you're holding the bar high enough on your back to avoid bumping it against the floor.



## Legs (cont.)

### 4. Dead Lift with Toe Rest

Focus: glutes, hamstrings

Stand with left foot flat on floor and right toes resting on floor. Hold dowel behind upper back with arms wrapped over it, hands wide apart. Keep knees soft. Allowing two full seconds, bend forward at the hips until torso is parallel to floor. Slowly lift right leg to the back, keeping knee slightly bent, then lower leg until toes again touch floor. Take four seconds to lift torso back to standing position. Perform all reps, then switch sides.

TIPS: Keep the bar off your neck. Don't be discouraged if tight hamstrings limit your range of motion. Just lean forward as far as you can. Keeps abs contracted and shoulder blades squeezed together.



### 5. Standing Leg Extension

Focus: glutes, hamstrings, quadriceps

Stand with feet together, holding dowel vertically with one end resting on floor at your right side for balance. Lift your right knee as high as possible and fully extend your leg, allowing one second for each move. Keep leg extended for two seconds. Take four seconds to slowly lower leg back to floor. Perform all reps, then switch sides.

TIPS: Keep the supporting leg straight as you lift and extend opposite leg. Don't round or lower chest as you lift knee. Don't drop the extended leg; the key is to fight gravity as you slowly lower leg.

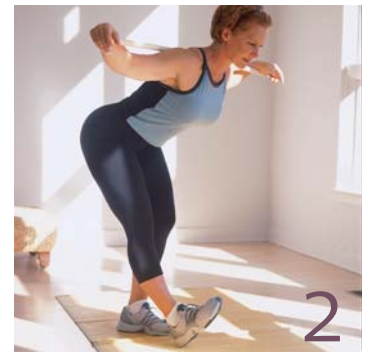
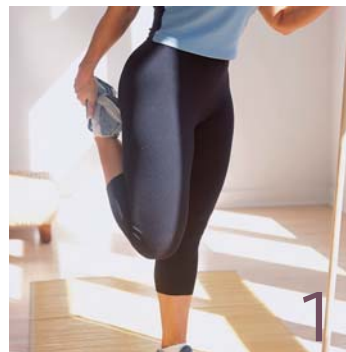


## The Home Stretch

**1. Quadricep Stretch** - Stand with feet together, holding dowel vertically with one end resting on floor at your left side for balance. Reaching behind with your right arm, pull right heel toward buttocks. Remain facing forward, keeping knees together, chest lifted, and abs contracted. Hold for 20 seconds. Repeat on opposite side.

### 2. Leaning Hamstring Stretch

Cradle dowel behind your shoulders. Extend right leg forward with heel resting on floor. Sit back with the buttocks and lean forward at the hips until you feel a stretch in the back of your right leg. Flex foot back, bringing toes toward shin, to stretch calf muscles. Keep left knee soft. Hold for 20 seconds. Repeat on opposite side.



*Gin Miller, a fitness expert featured in numerous workout videos and DVDs, is the creator of step aerobics and named one of the 25 fittest people in the world by People magazine in 1994. For more information, visit her web site at [www.GinMiller.com](http://www.GinMiller.com).*