

A Closer Look at the *GLUTE-HAM RAISE*

The one-stop answer to training the posterior chain

What would the field of strength and conditioning be without buzzwords? *Core training*, *functional training* – every few years someone invents some new term that coaches start bringing up in everyday conversation. The latest buzzword term is *posterior chain*, which in the BFS dictionary translates into glute-ham raise.

The posterior chain refers to the muscles on the lower backside of your body, especially the glutes, hamstrings and calves. These muscles have garnered special attention from strength coaches because they are the major muscles used in jumping and running. In fact, it's estimated that approximately 40 percent of the power for sprinting and jumping comes from the glutes, and 25 percent from the hamstrings. Yes, squats will work the posterior chain, but better choices include power cleans, power snatches and deadlifts. But the best single exercise, your one-stop-shopping exercise so to speak, is the glute-ham gastrosoleus raise, or glute-ham raise for short.

A popular exercise among Soviet weightlifters, the glute-ham raise was introduced to the US by Bud Charniga, an elite weightlifter from the US. In 1979 Charniga visited Russia and found that every gym he looked in had a glute-ham station and that the exercise was an integral part of the training of Russian weightlifters. He saw that weightlifters often would perform some variation of the exercise twice in a workout, once before the workout with light weights as a warm-up, and again at the end of the workout with heavy weights as a strengthening exercise.

What's unique about the glute-ham raise is that it enables an athlete to train the muscles on the entire length of the spine and both the knee and hip extension functions of the hamstrings. This exercise is not possible with the back-extension benches found in most gyms, as the legs must bend to work the knee flexion. That's why our glute-ham bench has a curved hip pad rather than a flat one.

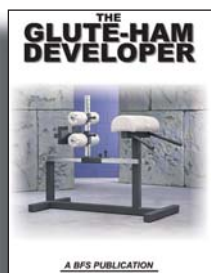
BFS Founder/CEO Dr. Greg Shepard says that proof of the value of such exercises is in the reduction of injuries



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reported by those who attend BFS clinics, which teach a number of assistance exercises such as the straight-leg deadlift and glute-ham raise. "After one year, schools that have sponsored a BFS clinic average a 50 percent decrease in injuries," says Shepard.

Whether you call it a posterior chain movement or a BFS auxiliary exercise, the glute-ham raise is a must for every serious strength and conditioning program. **BFS**



A detailed book about the glute-ham raise can be downloaded free from our website, biggerfasterstronger.com.

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