

YOUR BODY

YOGA FOR YOUR BUTT

Six great moves that'll tighten your tush—no equipment required.

By Dina Roth Port

You might be
tempted to
start backing
into rooms.

A lot of women refuse to do derriere exercises because they're worried about adding bulk to their booties. "That's why yoga moves make perfect tush toners," says Suzi Teitelman, national director of yoga for Crunch gyms. "Certain yoga poses target the glutes—or what most people know as butt muscles—in a way that gives you a deep, concentrated burn because the muscle is contracted for a long period of time. And since these poses are often followed by a stretching sequence, you'll develop a long, lean look, rather than building bulky mass." Plus, when you're moving from position to position, you're raising your heart rate and burning calories, which helps melt fat all over your bod.

With the help of yoga experts, Cosmo has put together a painless 20-minute workout that you can do at home. Repeat the cycle of moves three to five times in a row at least three days a week to see results in as little as three weeks. Some helpful hints: Contract your butt muscles during each exercise to get the most out of it. Always keep your tailbone tucked under and abs tight. And remember, this is yoga, so inhale and exhale deeply through your nose (keep your mouth closed) during the workout. ↓

ZEN EATING TIPS

Chowing advice to keep your rear view—and the rest of your bod—ravishing.

- **Don't overdo dieting.** Undereating can whittle away the muscle tissue in your butt—making it look flabby rather than firm. Similarly, omitting carbs causes laxity in your muscles.
- **Eat water.** Fruits and veggies such as grapes, tomatoes, and lettuce are primarily composed of H₂O, which keeps skin (even on your backside) looking smooth and clear.
- **Space out your meals.** If you skip meals, the cells in your muscles can die prematurely since they're deprived of energy. All that remains is a mushy tush. Not cute.
- **Limit caffeine intake to one to two servings a day.** This energy booster dehydrates the skin, which thins it, making the layer of cellulite beneath it more apparent.

SOURCES: MICHAEL FLEMING, MD, PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS; CYNTHIA SASS, REGISTERED DIETITIAN, SPOKESPERSON FOR THE AMERICAN DIETETIC ASSOCIATION.

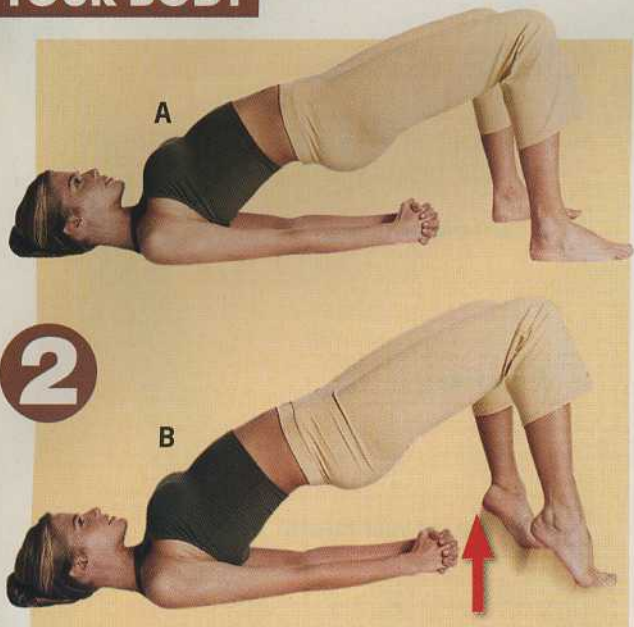
DOWNWARD-FACING DOG



A Rest on your hands and knees with your fingers facing forward and your hands directly under your shoulders. Your knees should be right below your hips, with toes tucked under. Exhale and straighten your legs, pressing your heels to the floor and sending your butt to the sky. Keep your hands on the ground, your spine straight, and your head directly between your arms (you should be staring at your thighs). Hold for one to two minutes, concentrating on contracting your muscles.

B **For a bigger challenge:** From Downward Dog, inhale and lift one leg up behind you to a 45-degree angle or as high as you can. Keep your toes pointed while trying to press the heel of your opposite foot to the floor. Hold for 30 seconds before lowering. Repeat with the other leg. "When you lift your leg, you're toning your butt because you're fighting gravity," explains Teitelman. Keep your butt muscle contracted, and repeat three to five times per leg.

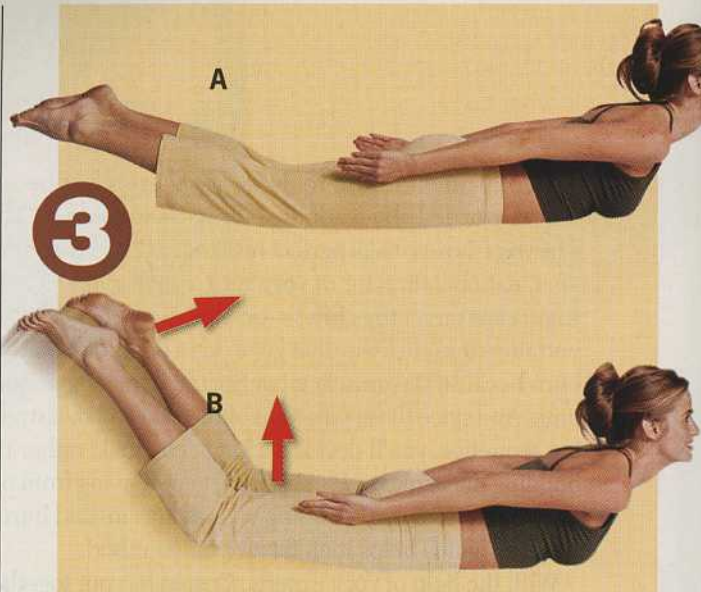
YOUR BODY



BRIDGE POSE

A Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet hip-width apart. Interlace your hands under your lower back. Lift your butt up as high as possible. Hold for 30 to 60 seconds before lowering. Repeat three to five times. "This move gives your backside a perfectly even shape because you're contracting your whole tush at the same time," says Kathy McNames, co-owner of Yoga Vermont in Burlington, Vermont.

B For a bigger challenge: Come up onto the balls of your feet and walk them closer to your hands. This works the butt more intensely because it's harder to maintain the pose. Hold for 30 seconds, then lower. Do three to five sets.



LOCUST POSE

A Lie flat on your stomach and place your hands alongside your hips, palms facing upward. Keep the tops of your feet on the floor. Inhale and lift your hands, legs, and chest off the floor as high as you can. Your head should lift as well and face forward. Hold for 30 seconds, then lower. Repeat three to five times. "This works the lower back part of the butt—a major trouble spot on many women," says Teitelman.

B For a bigger challenge: From the Locust Pose, bend your knees and lift both legs straight up (thighs off the floor) for 30 to 60 seconds, then lower. Keep your heels facing the ceiling and shins perpendicular to the floor. Do three to five sets.

Yoga Gear

The hippest accessories for om-ing addicts



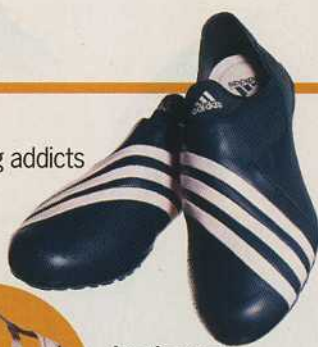
Short shorts, be present, \$19, www.bepresent.net



Cotton tank with appliqué, Trash and Ready, \$44



Exercise block, Adidas, \$10



Leather yoga shoe with foot guards (left), Adidas, \$70, www.adidas.com



Canvas bag with yoga mat, Mahanuala, \$55, www.puma.com



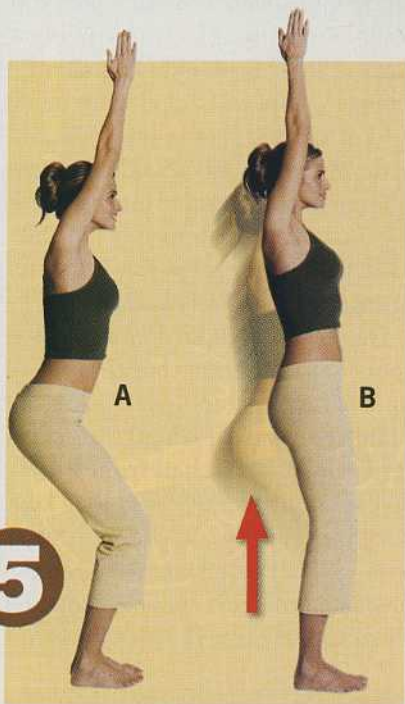
WARRIOR POSE

A Stand with your feet much wider than hip width. Turn one foot out and bend the knee so it forms a 90-degree angle with the ground. Stretch your arms out to the sides. Hold for 30 seconds, then switch legs.

B For a bigger challenge: Reach your arms in front of you so they're parallel to the ground. Lift your back leg and straighten the bent knee so your body forms a T-shape. Hold 30 seconds. Do three to five sets each side.

“By doing yoga, you’ll become long and lean, rather than bulky and muscular.”

—Suzi Teitelman



BOW POSE



A Lie on your stomach, hands by your side. Bend your knees and reach back and grab your ankles. Pull your heels away from your butt and your thighs off the floor. Lift your chest and head off the floor. Feet should be flexed and knees hip-width

apart. Hold for 20 to 30 seconds, then lower. “It makes your glutes regain a more compact shape,” says McNames.

B For a bigger challenge: Keep your legs pressed together at all times. Do three to five sets.

LIGHTNING BOLT POSE

A Stand with your feet together, toes facing forward. Bend your knees as deeply as you can. Simultaneously, join your palms together and stretch your arms over your head. Hold for 30 to 60 seconds. “This is the deepest pose you can do,” says Teitelman.

B For a bigger challenge: Alternate between the standing position and the sitting pose, holding each for one breath. Do three to five sets of 10 to 20 reps.

Fanny Stretch

Reward your rear end with the Pigeon Pose.

From the Downward Dog position (see page 87), bring your right knee up between your arms and rest your knee and ankle on the ground, keeping your knee facing forward. Keep your left leg straight. Sit upright with your hands supporting your body weight. Hold for at least one minute. Switch sides.

“This stretch releases tension,” says McNames.

