

How to Improve:

Muscular Endurance

Why Improve?

The Bridge is an excellent way to build muscular endurance (the ability of a muscle to contract over a period of time) for the body core (lower back and abdominals). The Squat motion (of sitting and standing) closely parallels activities we do throughout our lives on a daily basis. The ability to control and move your own body weight can lead to improvements in posture, core (torso) strength, upper and lower body endurance, balance and injury prevention. Having sufficient muscular endurance in a variety of muscle groups help your body to work in unison, which can help with Active Living activities, sports, or any movement which requires the use of a variety of muscle groups working for a prolonged period of time.

Remember:

1. **Quality not quantity.** It is better practice such activities as the Bridge with correct technique for a shorter period of time, than using improper technique for a longer duration. Remember – body straight, abdominals tight (avoid hips in the air or sagging to the ground), head and neck in line with the back. Stop when you lose this technique.

To improve the endurance in the lower body, practice Squats without sitting fully on the bench. To do this, squat down as if you were going to sit on the bench, then stand up, without touching the bench.

2. **Gradually increase the duration.** Try a count of 10 or 15 seconds the first time, being extra careful to hold the correct body position. Take a rest and repeat the Bridge for a similar time. As the activity gets easier for you, hold it for a few seconds longer each time.

For lower body muscular endurance improvement try to continue squatting and standing until you become tired, then take a rest, and repeat the activity.

3. **Challenge yourself.** A healthy body should be able to do maintain correct Bridge technique and do correct squats. Anyone can improve, no matter what level they begin at.
4. **Consistency.** You will notice more improvements more quickly if you perform 3 sets of Bridge and Squats 3-5 times a week. Don't forget to warm up the muscles with activity before you begin, and stretch the muscles after you are finished.

