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## Butt seriously, glutes are key

By Carrie White  
Tribune

Derek Steveson is a butt man. Rehabilitation consultant for the Arizona Diamondbacks, Steveson sees the gluteus maximus, medius and minimus - the three muscles of the buttocks - as being perhaps the most important of the body. "If you look at pure size and mass, the glutes are the biggest muscle. They are meant to absorb and produce a tremendous amount of force," the Tempe physical therapist said.

But sedentary lifestyles - including long commutes, computer-driven careers and big screen recreation - mean glutes aren't getting the workout they once did.

"We sit a lot longer than our ancestors," Steveson says. And this inactivity is causing people problems - namely in the back.

"If your butt is weak, you're going to have back pain," Steveson says.

While some people contract the glutes as they walk to make them stronger, Steveson believes unconscious firing reaps the best results. That's why his glute-strengthening prescription includes uphill hiking - at least 20 minutes, three times a week. "We live in such beautiful surroundings with wonderful hills just minutes away," Steveson says. "There are people who won't exercise, but they will hike on a Saturday or Sunday morning."

Sports that work the glutes include tennis, handball, basketball and soccer, but some exercises will work, too, under the right circumstances. This month, the Tribune will demonstrate some of them in our Exercise of the Week series.



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