

Posterior Chain Weakness
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Triathletes, at all levels and distances come and see me for their off-season strength training programs. My assessment determines the best exercise choices to strengthen the imbalances created while training and competing for the sport. I take into account their goals, training schedule and deficiencies and I always find one common denominator: A weak posterior chain.

The posterior chain essentially means the backside of the athlete's body. It could mean the calves, the hamstrings, the glutes, lower, mid or upper back. And on a general scale, triathletes are weak in all of the above. You would think with the miles of swimming, cycling and running would add balance to the body, but in fact, it doesn't. Triathletes are typically flexion dominant. Meaning, they tend to be short and tight in their hip flexors, quads, rectus abdominus, scalenes (neck), and pecs. Conversely, they tend to be long and weak in their glutes, hamstrings and back.

Years of poor posture and improper biomechanics while swimming, biking and running can cause the problems with the movement of the joints in your lower back as well as muscular imbalances. This can lead to S.I. Joint dysfunction, chronic pain and poor performance.

Triathletes can become intolerant to certain lumbar spine postures not only because they're in them so much (e.g., cyclist in long-term lumbar flexion), but also because they're forced into this posture due to a lack of hip mobility and lumbar spine strength/stability.

So what do we do? Well there are a few key exercises you can try in the gym to balance out your body and strengthen your posterior chain. Below are two we use in-season to keep our client's healthy as demonstrated by Pro Triathlete, Christine Fletcher.

Exercise 1: Cable Hip Hinge

Set-Up



Execution



Carmen's Coaching Tips:

- ✓ Ensure spine is stacked and long, do not bend at your waist.
- ✓ Keep your front shin vertical and your knee aligned over your toes.
- ✓ Do not allow your trail leg to shift behind the support leg, keep it lined up with it appropriate hip
- ✓ To stand back up, push your foot through the ground and drive hips fwd.
- ✓ Finish in single leg balance with glutes engaged
- ✓ Perform 3 sets of 8 reps per leg with a very slow tempo

Exercise 2: The Renegade Row

Set-up



Finish



Carmen's Coaching Tips

- ✓ Keep hips square to the bench
- ✓ Drive supporting palm down while you row, like you are shooting a bow and arrow
- ✓ Row using your back by keeping your shoulders pulled away from your earlobes
- ✓ Drive the opposite foot down into the ground of your support hand to keep you square
- ✓ Keep spine straight and neck lined up with upper back
- ✓ Perform 3 x 8 reps per side with a slow tempo

Human Motion is a world leader in training programs for Triathletes.
Visit our site at www.humanmotion.com for more info!