

## Love Your Legs

5 easy, dance-inspired moves to sculpt a lean, shapely lower body

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You don't have to aspire to Dancing with the Stars to get the slim, toned legs of a ballroom champion. To sculpt muscle fast, try this graceful--yet effective--workout created by a former ballerina. In addition to a trimmer and shapelier lower body (hello, smaller jeans!), you'll get stronger muscles that will help you put more calorie-burning oomph in every step, whether you're out for a walk, bounding up stairs, or, yes--even dancing!

*What You Need:* A sturdy chair and a resistance band (optional).

*How To Do It:* Follow the routine 3 times a week on nonconsecutive days. Start with 1 set of 10 reps of each move (unless otherwise indicated). As you become stronger, do 1 or 2 additional sets. Try the Main Move first. If it's too tough, start with the Make It Easier option. For an added challenge, do the Make It Harder variation.

*For Quicker Results:* Add cardio spurts: March in place, do jumping jacks, or step up and down on a stair between moves.

### Move # 1: Cardio Curtsy

Stand with feet hip-width apart, toes pointing out. Hold chair with left hand (like a dancer at a barre), right arm at side. Cross right leg behind you, bending both knees (as if you were curtsying). At the same time, sweep right arm up and over, bending gently toward left (A). Straighten legs and lift right knee to side, bending torso to bring right elbow toward right knee (B). Without pausing, repeat 25 times as quickly as you can while maintaining good form. Switch sides.



### Move # 1: Cardio Curtsy

**Make it easier:** Don't lift knee toward elbow. Instead, keep right toes on floor as you slide foot out to right and bring right elbow to side.

**Make it harder:** As you lift knee toward elbow, rise up onto ball of left foot (not pictured).



### Move # 2: Big Kicks

Stand with heels together, toes turned out, left hand holding chair, right arm overhead. Keeping abs tight, raise right leg forward as high as you can without arching back (it may be only several inches). As you lower right arm to side, circle right leg out to side without lowering it. Continue, circling leg behind you as you tip torso forward, extending right arm in front of you (A). Lower right foot to floor, returning to start position. Do all reps, then switch sides.

**Make it easier:** Break the move into 3 parts: Raise leg forward, then lower to start position; repeat to the side and then to the back.

**Make it harder:** To provide resistance as you kick, tie an exercise band around right ankle and step on loose end with left foot (B). The shorter the band is between foot and ankle, the harder it will be. Hold each kick for 3 counts.

**Move # 3: Scissor Legs**

Lie on left side with left arm under head, right hand on floor, and legs in line with torso. Lift right leg about 2 feet and hold while you lift left leg about 1 foot. Pause, then lower left leg, followed by right leg. Do all reps, then switch sides.

**Make it easier:** Bend at hips so legs are slightly in front of body. Lift and lower the top leg only.

**Make it harder:** Squeezing legs together, lift them about 1 foot off floor. Pause, then raise top leg about 1 foot higher, still holding lower leg off floor. Lower top leg back to bottom leg, then slowly lower both legs.

**Move # 4: Funky Ballerina**

Stand with heels facing each other, toes out, right hand holding chair, and left hand on hip. Plié, bending knees to about 45 degrees. Lift heels off floor and squeeze butt, tilting pelvis forward and back 1 time. Lower heels and straighten legs for 1 rep.

**Make it easier:** Lie face up with heels together and knees pointing out so legs form a diamond. Lift butt off floor and hold as you tilt pelvis up and down once, then lower to floor for 1 rep.

**Make it harder:** Hold plié position with knees bent to 45 degrees and heels lifted as you tilt pelvis back and forth for all reps.

**Move # 5: Slide and Reach**

Stand with heels together, toes turned out, left hand holding chair, and right arm out to side. Slide right foot about 3 feet to right and bend knees to lower into a deep plié squat while reaching right arm overhead and bending toward left side. Stand back up, sliding right foot to start position. Rise up onto balls of feet, then immediately lower. Do all reps, then switch sides.

**Make it easier:** Place chair in front of you, holding it with both hands (don't reach or bend to side).

**Make it harder:** Tie the ends of an exercise band in a knot and loop around calves. Perform the move with this added resistance.

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