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STEVE COOK'S /// 12-WEEK COLLEGE TRAINER

BIG MAN ON CAMPUS

DAY 4: QUADS, HAMSTRINGS AND ABS

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Big Man On Campus: Week 1, Day 4

By [Contributing Writer](#)

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Steve Cook will teach you to hit your legs harder and heavier than any other body part. Extend, curl, squat and shock your body to grow.

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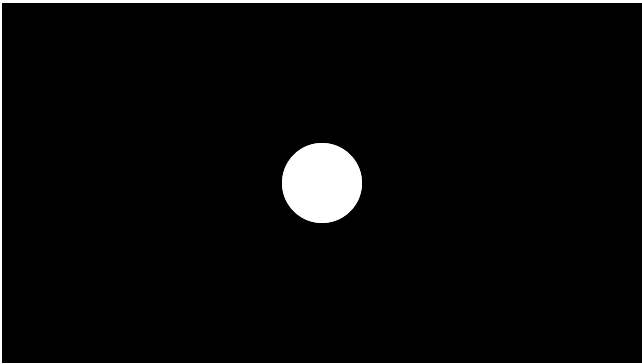
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and powerful hamstrings, you need to hit with everything you've got. Leg day needs to be trained heavier and harder than any other body part. Extend, curl, squat and shock your body into growth. Leave it all at the gym, Big Man.

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Day 4: Quads, Hamstrings and Abs 

1
Cardio Warm-up
5 minutes




2
Stiff-Legged Barbell Deadlift
1 warm-up set of 8-12 reps, 3 sets of 8-12 reps, 60 seconds rest



3
Standing Leg Curl
3 sets of 8-12 reps, 60 seconds rest

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4

Seated Leg Curl

5 sets of 12 reps, 30 seconds rest



5

Front Barbell Squat

1 warm-up set of 10-15 reps, 3 sets of 14-16, 10-12, 6-8 reps; 60-90 seconds rest, drop set on final set



6

Leg Press

3 sets of 10-12 reps, 60 seconds rest



superset

7

Leg Extensions

3 sets of 12-15 reps



Scissors Jump

3 sets of 10-12 reps, 60 seconds rest



Abs: 4 rounds, no rest between sets

8

Hanging Leg Raise

1 set to failure



9

Exercise Ball Crunch

1 set to failure



10

Decline Reverse Crunch

1 set to failure



11

Broom stick twist (shown as Seated Barbell Twist)

25 reps



Bigger Man Tips

MENTAL STRENGTH

Your legs are some of the biggest muscles in your body. That means your mind-muscle connection needs to be stronger on leg day than on any other day. Take extra time before every legs session to get amped, focused and ready for battle.

Because leg day is so tough, it's essential to get motivated. Before I hit the gym, I like to get on bodybuilding.com and watch people destroying their legs during intense workouts. You can also grab a training partner to help you work harder and push past failure.

CLASS NOTES

I prefer to wear a belt during my leg workouts. If you don't have one, don't worry and don't let it stop you from crushing. You can always buy a belt down the road when you start handling heavier weight.



Stay hydrated! Leg day is demanding, so it's in your favor to drink a lot of water. Take sips and stretch during those rest periods.

Stay hydrated! Leg day is demanding, so it's in your favor to drink a lot of water. Take sips and stretch during those rest periods.

Progression is a key factor if you want to build, so keep a journal of your exercises and how much weight you use. Add weight every week.

We're working our quads and hammies on the same day because they're opposing muscles. When you contract your quads, you're stretching your hamstrings, and vice versa. I think this is the best way to train legs for optimal growth.

Exercise Tips

SLDL

When you're performing straight-legged deadlifts, make sure you keep your back straight. Also keep your legs straight, but not quite locked out. Good form is very important when you deadlift, so keep that core tight. It's not easy to recover from an injured back.



Good form is very important when you deadlift, so keep that core tight.

If you're not sure how much weight to go up each set, that's okay. You learn that by trial and error. Add weight, but if it's so heavy you can't hit the reps, strip it. If you hit 12 reps easily, you know next time to add a little more. Leave your ego at the door: You're in the gym to enhance your physique, so don't concern yourself with others.

I don't use straps for many things, but when the weight gets heavy, they help me stick to the bar. Try not to use your straps as training wheels. Instead, build your grip and forearm strength and only add straps when you absolutely need them.

STANDING LEG CURL

If you don't have a standing leg curl machine in your gym, a lying leg curl machine works just fine. No matter what machine you're using, remember to keep your pelvis flat on the bench to ensure that you aren't swinging or using your lower back. Control the weight and be conscious about using only your hamstrings to curl.

SEATED LEG CURL

As the weight starts to get heavy, pay special attention to your form. Don't let it get sloppy. Squeeze at the bottom of the movement and come to a full extension without totally locking your knees. Your last set is going to suck, but you need to bring intensity and concentration to get that growth.



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STRETCH!

When you're through with the hamstring exercises, take five minutes to stretch them out.

FRONT SQUAT

I like to do front squats to reach that vastus medialis. When you're headed to the beach, or wearing shorter shorts, you can show off your defined legs.

Because the weight is in front of you and is less stable, you probably won't be able to load the bar like you do for back squats. That's okay—you'll get the hang of it.



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LEG PRESS

Any leg-press machine will work here, so use what your gym has available. Where you place your feet on the plate will target different areas of your quads. If you keep your feet closer together, it'll hit the outer sweep of the quads; if you widen your legs, it'll hit the inside. I like to switch up my foot placement to hit both areas.

Keep your body guessing by changing the speeds of the concentric and eccentric portions of this exercise. Never lift so fast that you sacrifice form or control. We're extending the last set of this movement with a drop set. Your legs may not feel very good, but don't quit!

LEG EXTENSION AND JUMPING LUNGE

This last superset is a gut-check. This is where growth happens. By the second superset, your legs will be screaming and your brain will be telling you to stop. Focus your mind. Don't give your legs any other option than to just keep going!

For leg extensions, I try to concentrate on the way down. It helps stimulate lots of different muscle fibers and brings out the cuts in your quads. If you're trying to go too fast, you won't see the size you want. Stay focused and finish strong.





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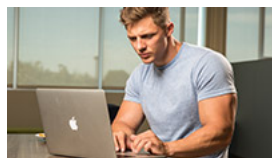
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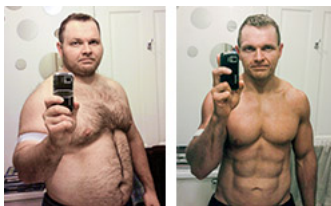
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