

Ball Hamstring Curl

FORM: Position your feet hip-width apart on the ball with your ankles slightly dorsiflexed (toes pointing towards the ceiling). Slightly brace your spine and keep in neutral at all times. Extend your arms out to your sides with palms turned to the floor to help stabilize your body during the exercise. Press your hips upwards off the floor into extension by contracting your glutes (butt muscles). At the same time press the backs of your lower legs and heels into the ball for additional stability until your legs and hips are straight with your torso and legs in alignment. Slowly contract your hamstrings to move your heels towards your hips while plantar flexing (toes pointed away from your shins) your ankles to rest the soles of your feet on top of the ball. Continue to pull your heels towards hips, raising your hips further off the floor. Then slowly lower to floor. To increase the balance challenge, move your arms towards your side or place them on your chest to reduce your stabilizing points of contact with the floor. OR To increase the challenge, raise one leg off the ball in the starting position and curl with one leg. Perform 10 to 15 or more reps for 1 to 3 sets.

Stability ball leg curls are a great hamstring, glute, and lower back exercise. It requires full body stabilization and hamstring activation that is similar to activation that is found in activities. It is one of my favorite hamstring exercises. I most often include it within any of my running athletic conditioning programs. Unlike many lower body exercises it incorporates both hip extension with knee flexion, which relates too many running sports. There is a lot going on with this exercise. There is not much research on this exercise though. What research that has been done has been done comparing it to a prone leg curl. In one study it was found that it had similar benefits to the traditional leg curl machine, but did not activate the hamstrings as well ([Study](#)). COUNTER POINT TO THIS STUDY: Remember this exercise is not just a hamstring exercise it works the entire posterior chain (lower back, glutes, hamstrings, and calves). That is why I like it so much. It is very functional and I consider it an additional core (not the essential 5) exercise since it works the glutes and lower back so much. Another study found that the ball hamstring curl exercise showed higher EMG activity in the biceps femoris compared with the semitendinosus. This might be beneficial to know if pre-hab or post-rehabilitating that muscle ([Study](#)).

Do it Right!
Exercises you Should Do



Many authorities suggest that the Stability Ball Hamstring Curl is simple, safe, and highly effective exercise to strengthen your hamstrings, glutes and core muscles. Most of our common lower body exercises like leg presses and lunges focus mainly on the quads and glutes. The Ball Hamstring Curl engages more. It only requires an inexpensive ball to have it be part of your program.