

Summary: This exercise improves hip stability, strengthens the hip abductors (particularly the gluteus medius), and increases stability of the knee joint. A study found that gluteus medius strengthening exercise is essential to meniscal injury surgery patients and should be included in rehabilitation program in early stages ( [study](#) ). Performing the lateral band walking exercise protects the knee by training correct movement patterns at the knee joint so it doesn't cave in or out. It can be done with an elastic band around the knee, ankle or foot, and can be done in an upright posture, squat or anything in between. This exercise is great for those who suffer abduction weakness. Gluteus medius is one of the strongest and most important abductors. It weakness may create more use of the tensor fascia latae, which may create issues at the lateral knee (IT Band Syndrome).

## Banded Lateral Walks Toes Pointing Forward and Out

### GREAT ATHLETIC TRAINING EXERCISE SERIES

This is a beginner to intermediate exercise. Keeping the band flat, not bunched, and place the band just above each ankle. Best if done out of squat position. [VIDEO](#)



shutterstock

# Banded Lateral Walks Toes Pointing Forward and Out

## GREAT ATHLETIC TRAINING EXERCISE SERIES

This is a beginner to intermediate exercise. Keeping the band flat, not bunched, place the band just above each ankle. Best if done out of squat position.

1. Position your feet shoulder-width apart. The band should be taut, but not stretched.
2. Bend your knees slightly and move into a half-squat position to activate the gluteus medius.
3. Keep your feet in line with your shoulders and face forward with your body weight evenly distributed over both feet.
4. Maintaining the half-squat position, shift your weight over one leg and take a step sideways with the other leg. Move this leg in and out, sideways, for eight to 10 repetitions. Keep your hips level during the movement. With this exercise, it helps to maintain a low, forward-facing posture. Your back should be straight, not rounded.
5. Slowly shift your weight and switch legs. Do another 8 to 10 side steps. [VIDEO](#)



When you sit for long periods, the gluteus medius and other abductors can become weak and lead to certain types of pain, such as patellofemoral and iliotibial (IT) band syndrome so says some physical therapists.<sup>4</sup> Keeping the abductor muscles strong and flexible is one key to preventing these problems. Some clinicians feel that this exercise improves hip stability, strengthens the hip abductors (particularly the gluteus medius), and increases stability of the knee joint. It is sometimes used by athletes as a warm up routine since it engages many of the deep muscles that stabilize the pelvis. Some suggest doing this exercise before exercise can improve hip, foot, and ankle stability as well as knee joint stabilization, which may in turn, improves overall body mechanics and movement efficiency during a workout or competition. A study found that gluteus medius strengthening exercise is essential to meniscal injury surgery patients and should be included in rehabilitation program in early stages ( [study](#) ). It is common in the literature that if you develop the glute complex, which includes the gluteus medius, you protect the knee. It is also common in the literature that performing the lateral band walking exercise protects the knee by training correct movement patterns at the knee joint so it doesn't cave in or out. Maintaining proper tracking is important when landing safely, which this exercise may help with. Many experts believe improper knee movement biomechanics is one factor that explains why female athletes have a disproportional incidence of ACL injuries. This exercise should be included in most female athletes' training I believe.

**TRAINING CUES:** It can be done with an elastic band around the knee, ankle or foot, and be done in an upright posture, squat or anything in between. This exercise is great for those who suffer abduction weakness. Gluteus medius is one of the strongest and most important abductors. It weakness may create more use of the tensor fascia latae, which may create issues at lateral knee. Much recent research has been done on this exercise and topic ( [Research](#) ). The gluteus medius, is activated anywhere between an average of 36-50% MVIC (maximal contraction) on the stance leg, compared to 19 to 33% on the moving leg. The tensor fasciae latae (TFL) is also activated during this exercise, which may be considered undesirable in patellofemoral rehab, since it is particularly associated with muscle imbalance. Lower TFL activation is seen in the squat position than an upright position. So perform in a squat 30 degree position since it yields higher gluteus medius activation than the upright posture. The stance leg also has more activation of muscles than the moving leg. The ankle or foot placement of the resistance produces more EMG than at the knee. Therefore place band around ankle or feet for best results.