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# Your Muscles and COVID-19

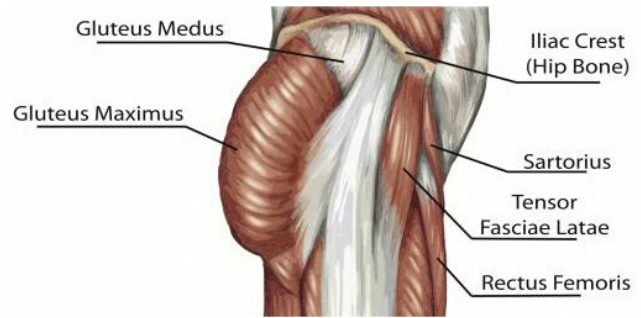
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**T**est your knowledge and check below: 1) What is the largest muscle in the body? 2) Smallest? 3) Busiest? 4) Hardest working? 5) Strongest Whether you are athletic or struggle to make it out of your home to get groceries, you are dependent on your muscles to get the job done. It is safe to say that most people have been less active during the Shelter-In-Place orders during COVID-19. That's not good news for your muscles but there is good news when it comes to how quickly your muscles will respond to exercise!

To oversimplify just a bit, we don't actually lose muscle with inactivity, but rather we lose the bulk, power, and the type of muscle that helps us function at our best. The next series of articles from the will show you how to target important muscle groups to function at your highest level. That light soreness you feel after working harder is the first sign that your muscles are kicking into gear and starting to grow. Following exercise your metabolic rate can elevate as much as 40% for as long as 12-14 hours. Within one week the power plants of your muscles actually start to multiply to meet the new demands. That's good news! Any increase in your activity level—athletic or basic function—is a win and begins to change your body for the better!

No doubt we need uterine muscles to come into the world, eye muscles to find food, the Gluts to chase food, heart muscle to sustain the chase, and Masseters to chew the food we catch.

Another contender for the strongest muscle is the group on front of your thighs, the Quadriceps or "Quads. They are involved with nearly every functional task that humans perform: bringing our legs into bed, standing up from a chair, getting up from the floor, climbing stairs, bending down to lift heavy objects, and powering you through a marathon.



## HOW DO I KNOW IF MY QUADS ARE WEAK?

**Athletes:** Your quads need strengthening if you cannot perform 10 single-limb sit-to-stand squats from a standard-height chair without using your arms.\*\* Give it a try:

1. Scoot to the edge of your chair, 2. Tuck one foot under your knee and extend the opposite leg out straight suspended in air, 3. Put your arms out in front of you lean forward and stand up with 1 leg only without pushing up with your hands, 4. Slowly lower without plopping, repeat with control 10x.

**Non-Athletes:** Your quads need strengthening if you cannot perform sit-to-stand from a standard-height chair without using your arms.\*\* Give it a try:

1. Scoot to the edge of your chair, 2. Tuck your feet under your knees, 3. Put your arms out in front of you lean forward and stand up without pushing up with your hands, 4. Slowly lower without plopping, repeat with control 10x.

If you performed only one exercise for your Quads it could be the one you just did to test your strength. Sit-to-stand powers the Quads, works on balance, can be done every time you sit or stand, and is something we do every day.

\*\*Chair should be high or low enough so that your thighs are parallel to the ground.

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## TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE ANSWERS

1) *Gluteus Maximus* ("Gluts", your buttocks, not the fat part but the muscle!) 2) *Ear muscles* (along with the smallest bones in the body) 3) *Eye muscles* (up to 100,000 movements per day) 4) *Heart muscle* (pumps up to 2500 gallons per day! That'd be like moving 50, 50 gallon drums of water with a 1 cup measuring cup in 1 day). 5) *Uterus muscle*. During delivery women win the strongest muscle contest!