

# Eliminate Rubber Legs

*By Trish Massart*

I remember my first triathlon. It was the “Early Bird” hosted by Somersault Promotions in 2000. I particularly remember that rubbery leg feeling when I first transitioned from bike to run. I told the volunteer at the first aid station that I had lost my legs in T2. She thought I was joking.

A targeted strength program, combined with some well placed brick workouts, will help to diminish this feeling and help to keep you pedaling smoothly and running strong—right to the finish line.

Our sport tests every muscle in the human body and none more so than the core, (which includes the glutes), quads and hamstrings. Last month we spoke about core strength and how a simple 15 to 20 minute strength session, two to three times a week can add considerable gains to your overall performance. This month, we are going to add a few exercises to build upon what you’ve gained. These exercises will add another 5 minutes to your workout. You can do all four of the new elements or pick and chose which ones you do each work out. To review last month’s column click here ([http://www.somersault.ca/somersault\\_excercise\\_column\\_1.pdf](http://www.somersault.ca/somersault_excercise_column_1.pdf))

The key to a short strength training session is quality. As mentioned last month, when you train, train with purpose and focus. Make each exercise count. Force your body and mind to work just beyond its comfort zone. You can increase the intensity of these exercises by adding more resistance (weight) or by increasing the length of time you hold each pose.

If you have been diligent with your workouts since last month’s article, it is time to up the intensity and change the program. These new exercises are challenging, so start at your own (dis)comfort level.

Chose to perform this routine after a short to medium swim bike or run. One final note before we begin: to ensure a quality work out, avoid strength training before a high intensity workout like speed intervals or hill repeats.

Perform these exercises in succession, with a 1 to 2 minute break after the last exercise. Complete the whole circuit 2 times for developing athletes (aka, beginners), 3 times for more advanced triathletes or for those with at least 1 year of strength training under their belts.

For the timed exercises work to your maximum and then each week add 5 more seconds. For the exercises with repetitions work to your maximum and then each week add 2 more reps.

## Exercise tips

- **Exercise 1:** Standard push-up to side plank. Repeat 8 to 12 reps. Go sloooooowly.

### Exercise 1 – Push-up to side plank

Notes:

Starting from the ground, push-up, then rotate to side plank (right side) hold for count of 5. Rotate back to push-up position. Push-up, then rotate to side plank (left side) hold for count of 5. Rotate back to push-up position. Moving slowly is best for this exercise. It is not a race.



- **Exercise 2:** Standard plank. Hold for 45 seconds (developing) or 75 seconds (advanced).

**Exercise 2 – Standard plank**

Notes: Ensure a straight line from heels to top of head. Do not let middle sag. Stack shoulders over elbows.



Next exercise starts at push up position

- **Exercise 3:** Close-grip hover. Hold for 30 seconds (developing) or 45 seconds (advanced).

**Exercise 3 – Close-grip hover**

Notes: Similar to push up position, but inside of the arms are “glued” to sides of body. Hover 3” from floor.



- **Exercise 4:** Straight arm plank. Hold for 60 seconds (developing) or 75 seconds (advanced).

**Exercise 4 – Straight arm plank**



Notes: body position is same as push up start. Keep back flat i.e. straight line from toes to top of head.

- **Exercise 5:** Mountain climbers. 8 reps each leg (developing) or 15 reps (advanced).

**Exercise 5 – Mountain climbers (standard )**

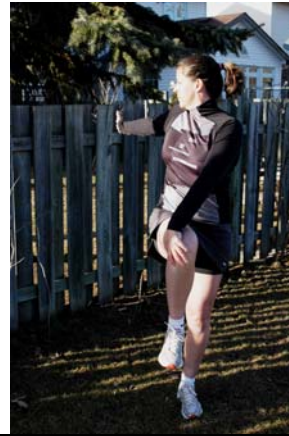


Notes: body position is same as push up start. Pull knee to chin while maintaining good body alignment.

- **Exercise 6:** Yoga balance. Hold for 30 seconds or more. Switch sides.

**Exercise 6 – Yoga Balance**

Notes: find solid footing and ground your right foot (balancing leg). Raise left knee. Support left knee with right hand and extend left arm at shoulder height behind you. Look over your left shoulder. If you are not feeling challenged enough, close your eyes. You should feel every muscle in your legs working to stabilize your body.



- **Exercise 7:** Squats without weights (for developing) with weights (up to 25lbs for advanced). 15 reps.

**Exercise 7 – Squat**



Notes: Envision a bench or chair behind you. Squat as though to sit down. Watch that your knees do not rotate inward or outward, nor that they cross in front of toes. Keeping your eyes focused up helps to maintain form.

- **Exercise 8:** 3-point touch. 8 reps each side (developing) or 15 reps (advanced).

#### Exercise 8 – 3 point touch

Notes: Hold a weighted item in your right hand (water bottle will do). Ground your right foot and raise your left knee. Balancing on the right foot, without taking a break, touch the bottle in front of you at 10am, 12pm and 2pm positions, standing up straight in between each touch.



- **Exercise 9:** Sumo walk. 25 steps forward. 25 steps back.  
Rest 1 minute.  
Repeat circuit. Each circuit should take less than 6 minutes to complete.  
Don't forget to stretch.

#### Exercise 9 – Sumo wrestler walk

Notes: using a stretch cord or exercise band, use a loop for additional resistance. Placing a loop at your ankles with your feet slightly more than hip-width apart, lower into a half squat stance. Hands can be in front or at waist. Raise the right knee as high as you can and step forward. Repeat with the left. Step forward. Then repeat the exercise stepping backwards.



**Trish Massart** is a veteran personal trainer and triathlon enthusiast. She has studied under Ironman greats such as Dave Scott and Mark Allen to perfect her sport-specific strength training expertise for triathlon. Trish is principal trainer for **Fit over 50**, an at-home fitness consultancy for adults over 50.