

Open Article

contents pages links



# STRENGTH TRAINING FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS

BY DENISE SCHIPANI

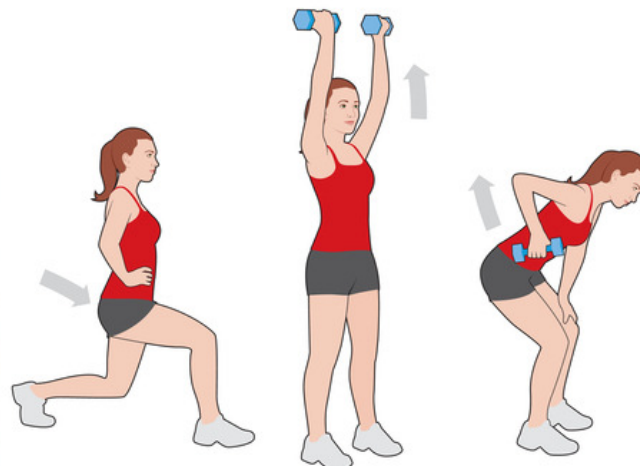
Despite the fact that cameras have gotten smaller and lighter, photographers still typically tote a heavy load, especially if they are shooting an event like a wedding. The problem? "At the worst, you can pull your spine out of alignment. But even at the least, you're creating a muscular imbalance that can lead to pain and weakness on one side of your body," says Robert Steigerwald, M.A., clinical exercise physiologist in Huntington, NY. He explains that if you constantly carry a heavy bag or your equipment on your left side, you're contracting the muscles on the right, such as your obliques (around your waist). You're also holding your shoulders in an imbalanced state, which can lead to back pain.

Other body-mechanics issues facing photographers: being on your feet all day can put pressure on your lumbar (lower) spine; and crouching to get good shots -- and staying there while you wait for subjects to prepare -- can lead to muscle soreness, especially if you're out of shape.

Convinced that being in tip-top shape can help you be a more successful shutterbug? Steigerwald recommends three basic exercises to combat imbalances and build strength. Additionally, he suggests doing some kind of cardiovascular activity a few times per week for 30-60 minutes. Core work, such as Pilates, is also good for overall stability and strength.

ILLUSTRATION BY VIC KULHIN

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### FORWARD LUNGE

This builds strength in the hips, quadriceps and hamstrings, and works on balance and core strength. To do: Stand with feet about hip-width apart. Take a large step forward with your right leg, then bend both knees so that your back (left) knee dips as close as possible to the floor and your front (right) thigh is parallel to the floor. Do not allow your right knee to extend past your right ankle. Concentrate on keeping your upper body straight (don't lean forward). Push off your right foot and return to the start position. "Keep your movements slow and controlled, and pull in your abdominal muscles to stabilize your body," Steigerwald says. Do 8-12 reps on each leg.

### FORWARD SHOULDER PRESS

This strengthens the shoulder muscles. To do: Stand with feet shoulder-width apart and hold two dumbbells in front, palms facing toward you and elbows tucked close to your ribs. Raise your arms above and slightly in front of your head until your arms are almost straight, hold for a beat, and then lower to starting position. Choose a weight that allows you to do 8-12 reps without losing proper form, but so that the last 2-3 reps are challenging.

### BENT-OVER SINGLE-ARM ROW

This works your upper back. To do: Hold one weight in your right hand. Standing with feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart, lean forward from your hips with a straight back and brace your left hand on your left thigh. Let your right arm hang down, palm facing your body, and then lift the weight up behind you, drawing your hand up close to your waist, elbow behind you, then back down. Keep your shoulders squarely forward. Go slowly to avoid using momentum. Do 8-12 reps on each side.