

## **Butt Power**

By Susan Ellis

Powerful pushes! It's what every skater strives for. Power in your push actually starts from engaging specific muscle groups in your butt, which engage specific muscles around your hip, which engage muscles around the upper quad, which allow you to fully complete each extension using all of these muscle groups.

As discussed in the tip on Butt Tuck – April 2003, the position of your pelvic bone controls the position and actions of your hips, as well as controlling the ankle bend which is important to bringing your weight forward to the ball of your foot to push. And since your hip bone is connected to your thigh bone, which is connected to your knee bone, which is connected to your shin bone, which is connected to your ankle bone, the position of your pelvic bone is key to developing forward momentum and power. You must maintain the pelvis in a tilted position so that your butt is tucked under you to have control of what the rest of the lower body needs to do to generate forward momentum and power. This pelvic position can be referred to as the butt tuck, the pelvic tilt, the tummy crunch, hips under you, or whatever name you want to give it.



To tuck your butt, bend your back so that you fold your body over at the belly button (tuck your belly button in) and gently bring your hips under you. A common error in skating is to bend at the hips only and not the belly button. Simply bending at the hips will leave your butt stuck out.

Another error is trying to round the back too much, i.e.: cat back, which pre-stretches the muscles around the lower back and hips so you can't use them as effectively in the push. A good butt tuck should allow the back and hip muscles to stay relaxed in order to engage them to work for you, not against you.

A powerful push starts from the abdominal muscles and goes through the hip and glute muscles. Tucking your butt allows you to use your butt, hips and quad muscles to generate power right through to the end of an extension.

### **FEELING IT!**

Here are a couple of simple dryland exercises to help you feel the difference between an 'out butt' and an 'in butt' (butt tuck).

#### **1) Forward momentum component**

Bend at the waist by folding forward at the belly button. Stick your butt out, as if you were 'mooning' somebody, flattening your lower back and pushing your belly button downward. Bend your ankles and notice the position of your knees. Now tuck your butt

gently under you by bringing your belly button back up towards your spine. Bend your ankles again. See how much further forward your knees came with your butt tucked! And notice as well that your weight came further forward towards the balls of your feet. OK, so that will help you to develop the forward momentum component.

## **2) Power from the butt**

Place a chair beside you and assume a basic skating position. Hold on to the chair lightly with your right hand. Put your right leg in back of you in a recovery position. Put your left hand on your hip, fingers point down to the ground and thumb right over top of the top of your hip bone (iliac crest).

Now, stick your butt out as you did in the above exercise, and, keeping your butt stuck out, go through a push. Feel anything in your upper quad, hip and butt?

Now tuck your butt under you, and, keeping it tucked all the way through, do a push. Feel the difference in the power from now being able to use your butt, hip and upper quad.

Now that's what I'm talking about! Butt Power!

See also: Pressscoopinchpushpinish – December 2009, Skating with Your Core – September 2010