

SIGN:

Your derriere still sags, despite logging what seems like years on the stairclimber.

SOLUTION:

Incorporate strength training into your workout. Women often overestimate the toning effects of cardiovascular exercise, says Lyle Anderson, a trainer at Crunch Fitness in New York City.

"Stairclimbing won't significantly lift or firm your butt, especially if you've been doing it for a while. To get more-shapely glutes, you need to build the muscles through strength training," he explains. Start firming up your gluteal muscles with a serious program of squats, lunges and leg presses from J.J. Flizanes, director of Homebodies L.A., a bicoastal personal-training company. Do the following moves two or three times a week and you'll feel firmer in a month.

■ **Leg presses** (on an incline leg-press machine): Do 3 sets of 20 to 25 slow reps. Depending on your strength, start with anything from the bar alone up to 50 pounds.

■ **Stationary lunges** Take 2 seconds to lower and 2 seconds to rise. Do 2 sets of 15 to 20 reps on each side. As you get stronger, hold a dumbbell in each hand.

■ **Squats:** Use an 8- to 12-pound dumbbell in each hand; do 2 sets of 15 to 20 slow reps.

■ **Glute kick-backs** (a.k.a. "donkey kicks"): Do 2 or 3 sets of 15 to 20 slow, controlled kicks, one side at a time. For added resistance, wear ankle weights (no more than 5 to 8 pounds, to avoid injury).

SIGN:

You're so proficient at your workout, you could do it with your eyes closed.

SOLUTION:

Challenge yourself by trying new sports, upping your speed or varying your routine.

You may be ecstatic that you climbed 50 flights on the stairclimber, "but your body reacts to the stimulus you give it, and if you keep giving it the same stimulus day in and day out, you'll hit a plateau," says Keli Roberts, group fitness manager at Equinox Fitness Club in Pasadena, California, and a spokesperson for the American Council on Exercise. "With hiking, cycling, swimming, competitive sports, mini triathlons, elliptical trainers, rowing machines, treadmills and classes at your disposal, there's no excuse for doing the same thing over and over." Vary the intensity of your workouts as well. "Alternate days of longer, steady aerobic exercise with shorter, more intense sessions," she suggests.

SIGN:

You feel exhausted halfway through your workout.

SOLUTION:

Make sure your diet is sufficiently high in calories and important vitamins and minerals. "The number one cause of low energy I see in women is not eating enough to sustain their activity and provide the necessary nutrients for building muscle," says William O. Roberts, M.D., a vice president of the American College of Sports Medicine and a family and sports medicine physician at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. According to the American Dietetic Association, a five-foot-six, 135-pound, moderately active 25-year-old woman needs 1,800 to 2,200 calories a day—evenly spaced throughout her waking hours in meals and snacks—to stay consistently well fueled. Dehydration and iron deficiency are also energy drainers, says Martha McKittrick, R.D., a nutritionist at New York-Presbyterian Hospital in New York City. If fatigue persists, check with your physician to rule out other health problems, such as thyroid conditions, diabetes and sleep disorders.

SIGN:

You dread the thought of working out.

SOLUTION:

For one week, ban all your usual workouts: No running, no cycling class, no yoga, no weights. Instead, hit the town and dance the night away. Clean out the attic. Grab a few friends for a skate night at your local roller rink. "You want a good workout? Plan a day of yard work," says Flizanes. "Weeding, mowing, gardening, trimming bushes and raking will work every muscle in your body." When the week is over, you should feel good about going back to your exercise program—and inspired to try something totally different. To avoid boredom in the first place, vary your routine so you're not doing the same thing more than once a week.

SIGN:

You're still running an 11-minute mile—after five years.

SOLUTION:

Add speed work to your program. "One key to quickening your pace is to

