

HOW SQUATS CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE

Health, Strength, Energy, Confidence & Happiness Are Your Birthright.

This book will help you see things in a new, and exciting way with combined information and insights that you probably haven't considered before. It is written with the aim of helping you, whether male or female, of any age and experience level, to supercharge your energy, health, strength, and happiness through squats in just 10 minutes a day!

This book will teach you:

- Key mindsets to unlock your tremendous storehouse of physical energy
- 44 highly practical exercises (for use with or without exercise equipment) for all fitness levels, from newbie to experienced
- A simple-to-do breathing technique to lift fatigue and increase energy, awareness, focus, speed up recovery and more - within 24 hours!
- Methods to increase your vitality, strengthen your immune system and promote longevity - *naturally*
- A fast-track system of habits to adopt for a lifetime of optimum health, fitness and well-being starting today!

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Motivational Food for Thought
- Your New Relationship to Chairs & Sofas
- Ideal Yoga Exercises for Better Squats
 - Making Squats Fun!



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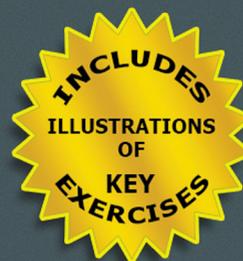
HOW SQUATS CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE

RAJ KHEDUN

HOW SQUATS CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE

Supercharge Your Energy, Health, Strength & Happiness with Squats in Just 10 Minutes a Day!

SUITABLE FOR EVERYONE



FOREWORD BY
ROB VAN DAM

RAJ KHEDUN

WITH
ALAN RISEBOROUGH



Keep Fit Kingdom



HOW SQUATS CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE

**Supercharge Your Energy, Health,
Strength & Happiness with Squats in Just
10 Minutes a Day!**

Suitable for Everyone

**Foreword by Rob Van Dam
(ECW, TNA & WWE Wrestling Champion)**

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Editorial Reviews

“This book, 'How Squats Can Change Your Life', is the most extensive I've seen on the subject of squats, and covers everything I could imagine on the topic.

After reading this, you'll understand not just “how” but more importantly “why” to squat, and it's explained thoroughly from many angles; physical, mental and spiritual.

This book presents a great way to help you build a relationship with your legs and by extension, your entire body - you'll actually get to know yourself better. Get prepared to go after your goals, and start by reading 'How Squats Can Change Your Life!'”

Rob Van Dam ('RVD')

ECW, TNA & WWE Wrestling Champion

“How Squats Can Change Your Life” hooked me at first glance. I just had to grin when reading the title. Then I became completely fascinated on reading the Table of Contents - that's never happened.

I so enjoy the care for the whole person that is on every page; from the breathing tips, quotes, nutritional strategies, life-enhancing practices, to easy-to-understand information on endorphins, dispelling fear and re-wiring your brain. Love that!

This book is a demystifying manual on how the whole human works.

Inside of “Squats” are treasures of practical wisdom for anyone willing to bend their knees and access the ‘quad energy garden’. May we all walk in beauty.”

Ana T. Forrest

Founder of Forrest Yoga and author of “Fierce Medicine: Breakthrough Practices to Heal the Body and Ignite the Spirit”.

“As a practitioner and teacher of energy medicine, for 30 years in the art of Jin Shin, I know how important it is to keep the body, mind and spirit in balance. ‘How Squats Can Change Your Life’ offers us a routine to keep our body healthy and strong in an effective, easy, and yes, even fun way!

Raj and Alan offer their expertise to guide you through the why's and how to's of squatting as

a tool to help you get energized and achieve robust health, in just 10 minutes per day. I'd recommend this book for anyone looking for great workouts and exercise methods that could indeed, change your life!"

Alexis Brink

President of the Jin Shin Institute, New York City and author of "The Art of Jin Shin: The Japanese Practice of Healing with Your Fingertips".

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FOREWORD
BY ROB VAN DAM
(ECW, TNA & WWE Wrestling Champion)

"How Squats Can Change Your Life", is the most extensive book I've seen on the subject of squats, and covers everything I could imagine on the topic.

It's not hard to find information on the proper form of the exercise, but after reading this, you'll understand not just "how" but more importantly "why" to squat, and it's explained thoroughly from many angles, physical, mental and spiritual.

When I first started lifting weights, I was told that I must have been built for squats. I had good form and was told it was my best exercise.

I was also taught that as I build muscle, I'd start closing gaps in my body that are necessary for a full range of movement. I decided to dedicate myself to maintaining my flexibility for wrestling and for life - I stretched vigorously whilst I built up my muscles.

Even when I was squatting over 500lbs (226kg) I could, and would do a full split on the floor, even with my body suspended

between two chairs or benches to support my feet.

I have no doubt that stretching helps with increasing strength and muscular development, and it definitely helps you achieve a better squat, which in turn helps your overall fitness.

Squats make your entire body adapt to the condition of the movement, from flexibility and strength, to balance and whole-body development.

As this book intimates, if you don't include squats, you really don't have a fitness regimen. So, learn to stretch and squat; get familiar with the edge of your comfort zone and work in from there, on increasing your range of motion. It's a great way to build a relationship with your legs and by extension, your entire body - you'll actually get to know yourself better, and it is this insight that will help you with many, many other things in life including squats themselves.

Get prepared to go after your goals and start by reading "How Squats Can Change Your Life".

Good luck and have fun stretching out and reaching for your potential!

- *ROB VAN DAM* (RVD)

Preface

“How Squats Can Change Your Life” has been written for anyone that wants to know how squats can help them achieve increased health, fitness, strength and energy in a remarkably short time.

Before I'd reached my teen years, I remember being fascinated by superheroes and their physiques. Just a childhood fantasy, like many others before me, I guess.

In my teens, I started casually reading up on anatomy, just for fun, as you do! From there I practised and realized that squats were the single most rewarding exercise you could perform. By investing a bit of effort into your legs you could develop your overall bodily strength, muscles, circulation, stamina, and start to mould your body the way you wanted. There is a real sense of natural hormonal euphoria from the movement, repetitions, sets and lifting achievements themselves. What's not to like?

What I noted with regular squatting workouts (with or without weights) was interesting. I no longer got sick. I no longer got the usual round of viruses, colds, infections, aches and pains that I used to get which others still regularly got.

One of the best advantages is that I no longer needed to take medicines or wait around for my turn in a packed doctor's office or GP surgery – something that always made me feel awkward. I haven't needed to see a doctor for over 8 years, I was even called by my GP's secretary because I was no longer on the register though as a responsible adult, I did register, from free choice, but I'm glad I didn't need to – freedom is a wonderful thing!

Something clicked for me. I realized that the body has its own inbuilt 'pharmacy' of *natural* drugs which you can activate by squatting regularly (with or without weights) for 5-10 minutes per day. This can help prevent a litany of health problems from developing in the first place.

I felt that this knowledge, along with a few methods, techniques and appropriate mindsets that I used (and still do) should be shared with as many people as possible, which is ultimately what compels me to write this book.

Squats have changed my life - now it's your turn to learn, experience and benefit from how squats can change your life, too.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank:

Dr Michael Dixon - Chair of the College of Medicine, National Clinical Champion for Social Prescription (NHS England) and Medical Advisor to HRH The Prince of Wales. He graciously shared several insights which point toward modern-day healthcare inevitably moving towards more self-care.

You can read our full interview with him here:

<https://keepfitkingdom.com/interview-with-dr-michael-dixon/>

Dr Gemma Newman - The 'Plant Power Doctor', who has been working in medicine for 16 years, and serves as Senior Partner at NHS family medical practice, The Orchard Surgery in Ashford, Middlesex. She was very generous in sharing the distilled wisdom gained from seeing patients over the years and the changes we can and should make to enjoy a happier, healthier and higher quality of life.

You can read our full interview with her here:

<https://keepfitkingdom.com/an-interview-with-the-plant-power-gp-dr-gemma-newman/>

Ana Forrest - The creator of Forrest Yoga, (author of “Fierce Medicine: Breakthrough Practices to Heal the Body and Ignite the Spirit”) a highly experienced yoga teacher combining over 45 years of physical practice with Eastern wisdom. She shares several unique perspectives and ideas with us such as healing from pain and injury, finding harmony within, and ultimately, conscious transformation.

You can read the full interview with her and her husband, Jose here:

<https://keepfitkingdom.com/interview-with-ana-forrest-jose-calarco/>

Alan Riseborough - Dedicated strength athlete and writer. His thoughtful, constructive ideas and tireless input and advice on the subject of squats has been invaluable. Squats are not only his favourite exercise, it's also something that he has passionately specialized in for close to 30 years.

Raj Khedun
London, UK
March 2021

Introduction

Reclaim your birthright of health and strength: Supercharge Your Energy, & Happiness with Squats in Just 10 Minutes a Day!

The reason for this book is simple - to quickly, effectively and as permanently as possible, help you transform, not just your body, but also your life, through squats.

At Keep Fit Kingdom, our mission is to help a billion people reach 100 years of age happily and healthily by the year 2100 – why? So that we live long enough to fulfil our potentials and pass on the wisdom gained to the next generation – if we don't do this, are we not missing a major point?

Much research has revealed that the health (and connected social) problems we're experiencing around the world today often stem from a lack of guidance, lack of role models, purpose, lack of support and encouragement, especially over the last two generations to the point where things have spiralled out of control.

This is of course, a longer conversation for another time perhaps (hit us up via email or social media). In short, we want to do our bit

to make the world a better place by raising the baseline, helping people to get inspired and keep healthy, energetic, as free from pain and disease as possible and to sustain it for the long-term, one person at a time. We can develop habits which then automatically take care of most challenges while we creatively tackle the rest.

If you're reading this book, you're probably already aware how current healthcare systems are limited and how slow they are to change. With the endless merry-go-round of bureaucracy and politics around health and the pharmaceutical industry, just imagine, where that will leave you in the months and years ahead? Why not let's try and free ourselves from that increasingly-complicated web and make more conscious, constructive decisions, starting now?

For this book, we have drawn upon a rich variety of methods, techniques and experience from experts around the world in the fields of elite fitness, performance coaching, weight training, CrossFit, strength competition, and bodybuilding. We've distilled the benefits and steps that anyone can take. So whether you're a beginner, intermediate or advanced trainee, you'll easily be able to find a routine that works for you.

We've kept this book short, simple and to the point. Where needed, it will outline a brief rationale, and only include the essentials to guide you. It will also include a compelling list of exciting, beyond-the-conventional, outside-of-the-box ideas to help jump start the practise of the methods described. This is designed to make it an easily absorbed 'lifestyle prescription', if you will.

What we want to make clear from the outset, is that this is not an anatomy book - there are plenty of those out there that you may want to refer to if needed. After you've finished reading this book, you'll know everything needed to quickly get you on your way to experience and realize the results and benefits of squats for yourself.

Something to Think About

Why would you have muscles all the way through your legs for instance, if they weren't there to be used, is anything about your body redundant? Are you not missing out in the case of fully bending your legs, of that extra 40-65 degree freedom of motion? What about the free, inbuilt, vigorous health and physique development that comes from working your own bodyweight resistance against yourself –

no matter where in the world you happen to be or go?

Using the basic principles, methods and exercises outlined here on a regular, daily, weekly and monthly basis, you will notice a significant positive impact on your state of health, mind and well-being.

From big ideas to small practical steps – the great thing is, if you're fortunate enough to possess a pair of legs, you're ready to go! So read on, and we'll give you easy-to-use strategies, routines, and encouragement so that you can start releasing your own optimum health – today!

With the extra energy and confidence you'll possess, not to mention the time you'll actually save, it is our sincere hope that you will soon be enjoying more quality time with your family, friends, spouse/partner, children, and of course, yourself. We wish you the very best of health and happiness on your way to the big 100, and we hope you enjoy the read.

If you like the sound of our goal, please spread the word so we can work together and do our part to realize the Keep Fit Kingdom mission and continue to share, educate and uplift.

We'd love to hear from you! So if you'd like to share your views on health, fitness and wellness or simply say hello, please email: info@keepfitkingdom.com or contact us via Facebook, Instagram or Twitter which is: @keepfitkingdom for all three.

Disclaimer

The content in this book is not intended to replace your doctor, physiotherapist, or care provider's advice. Please ensure, you are clear to exercise before starting any new exercise programme by consulting your doctor or healthcare provider as appropriate. Thank you.

How to Use This Book

To get a good overall feel of the book and to feel excited about putting yourself in the picture, absorbing the ideas and applying its benefits to yourself, we recommend reading through Chapters 1, 2, 5, the end of Chapter 10 (Exercise List 1, Exercise List 2) and Chapters 11, 13 and 14.

We've aimed to make it an easy-read so that you can simply focus on integrating squats seamlessly into your lifestyle right away.

Changes Due to the Coronavirus Lockdown

The landscape of fitness has changed radically around the world since the coronavirus pandemic started to cause serious disruption in January-February 2020. (At the time of writing, 2021 appears to be following the same trend as 2020.)

It forced gyms, fitness and yoga studios globally to close. Pretty much all establishments across the board are following necessary government guidelines and social distancing rules along with increased hygiene standards and procedures.

Thankfully, regardless of Covid-19, many of the exercises presented in this book can be performed at home without equipment. Other exercises may require a minimal amount of basic equipment which can easily be purchased online if desired.

CHAPTER 1

SQUAT MOTIVATION: IGNITING YOUR PERSONAL REASONS FOR CHANGE

Unlike many books that jump straight into the exercises and just doing stuff first, we thought we'd paint the scene and engage your mind with possibility thinking and excitement – first. This is the most important part. After all, no improvement or change is possible over the next weeks or months without having some personal reasons for being motivated to change, right?

If you can list 15-20 reasons why you want to accelerate your energy and develop strength naturally (i.e. better family life, enhanced work performance, more active lifestyle, more confident engagement in sports, competition, longevity, preventing sickness etc.) you'll be much more likely to stick with the process long enough to reap the rewards.

So, definitely take a few moments to jot your answers down into your smartphone notepad, diary or anywhere else that works for you. Feel free to share your reasons with us on social media, you could help spark others'

minds too – and remember, what goes around comes around!

Motivational Squat Quotes and Phrases

"No other exercise builds confidence like the squat."

-Dave Tate (Founder of EliteFTS.com)

"There is never an absolute answer to everything, except of course that you have to do your squats."

-Mark Rippetoe (Author of "Starting Strength")

"For your legs and hips, squats are absolutely necessary."

-Lenda Murray (8 x Ms. Olympia winner)

"Don't have \$100 shoes and a 10 cent squat."

-Louie Simmons (Founder of Westside Barbell)

"If you want bigger arms, squat. Squatting makes everything grow."

-Sergio "The Myth" Oliva (3 x Mr. Olympia winner)

"I do squats until I fall over and pass out. So what? It's not going to kill me. I wake up five minutes later and I'm ok."

-Arnold Schwarzenegger (7 x Mr. Olympia winner)

- *"Keep your squats low and your standards high."*
- *"Life has its ups and downs...we call them squats."*
- *"Squat until you walk funny."*
- *"Good things come to those who squat."*
- *"Lift like a beast, squat like a boss."*
- *"Eat. Sleep. Squat. Repeat."*
- *"Shut up and squat!"*
- *"Squats are like life. It's about standing up when something heavy tries to keep you down."*
- *"If it doesn't challenge you, it doesn't change you."*
- *"Once you start squatting, be satisfied that the phrase 'you don't do squat!' can't apply to you."*
- *"It never gets easier, rather, you get stronger."*

- *“If you don't stand for something, you'll fall for anything.”*

Motivational Fuel for Thought

- Your mind is the true builder of your muscles.
- The health of your body closely mirrors your subconscious expectations. So always expect to remain perfectly strong and healthy.
- Your body is literally manufactured by your mind. You can make a choice not to be limited by genetics, work on using your mind more as a free source of energy.
- You can extend your natural lifespan by breathing more slowly.
- Animals noted for their long lifespans such as the elephant and snake have a lower breathing rate than man. The giant tortoise, for instance, which can reach 200-300 years of age, only breathes 4 times per minute.
- Your ability to focus and concentrate deeply depends on slow breathing. Quick or uneven breaths follow

negative human emotions such as: fear, lust and anger. We have learned much from the lives of animals. Eg. A restless monkey breathes around 32 times in a minute, compared to the average human which is around 18 times per minute.

- Be aware of and note down your breathing rate and think about what unnecessary, life-draining, negative stresses you can give up or get rid of.
- *“The world is the great gymnasium where we come to make ourselves strong.”* -**Swami Vivekananda**

CHAPTER 2

SQUATS: YOUR STRONG, TRUSTED FRIEND

Squats have been known for thousands of years to be the single most transformative exercise that the human body can perform. It's also well-documented that the accompanying secretion symphony of feel-good hormones, endorphins, dopamine, serotonin and more, produce an invigorating, all-body effect on your well-being that's difficult for any other single physical exertion to surpass.

Most Impacted Body Parts

- Lower back (lumbar area)
- Core (midsection)
- Hips
- Hamstrings
- Glutes (Buttocks)
- Thighs
- Knees
- Calves

- Ankles
- Feet

What You Can Expect

- Increased energy
- Natural release of dopamine, adrenalin, serotonin, and elevated natural growth hormone (GH)
- Increased strength
- Increased confidence
- Reduced cortisol (fear hormone) levels
- An erect, upright posture
- Increased bone strength and density
- Greater heart, lung and liver capacity and efficiency
- Slower resting breathing rate
- Ability to walk, run, jog and do most other activities more easily or effortlessly for longer
- Muscle growth (hypertrophy)
- Deeper levels of relaxation
- Deeper and better quality of sleep
- Look amazing

- Clear and improved skin tone
- Start to ooze magnetic confidence and appeal that draws admiration and attraction from others
- Realize a greater appreciation for what your body can do
- Unparalleled sense of achievement (like no other) that carries over into everything else you do

CHAPTER 3

SQUATS AND YOUR HORMONES

Dopamine

This naturally occurring 'feel-good' chemical found in the human body is a neurotransmitter, meaning that it sends signals from the body to the brain.

It has been suggested that it's the chemical behind our deepest dreams and aspirations. Dopamine is involved in controlling motion as well as your emotional responses connected to pleasure and reward.

A good balance of dopamine is crucial for both physical and mental well-being. Important brain functions influencing mood, concentration, memory, learning, motor control and sleep are affected by the level of dopamine in your body.

We produce this chemical when we consume foods that contain amino acids including tyrosine and phenylalanine.

There are certain recognizable symptoms associated with high and low levels of dopamine. High levels can lead to schizophrenia and cocaine addiction whilst

low levels are associated with Parkinson's Disease.

Endorphins

When you exercise, your body releases chemicals called 'endorphins' which have evolved to promote survival.

Endorphins trigger a positive feeling in the body, similar to that of morphine. For example, the feeling that follows a run or workout is often described as "euphoric", and is also known as "runner's high". It is often accompanied by a positive, energetic and decidedly optimistic 'can do' outlook on life.

Endorphins act as analgesics, which mean they can diminish the perception of pain from anywhere between 20 to 40 minutes. Manufactured in your brain, spinal cord, and many other parts of your body, they also have a sedative effect similar to that found in pain medication. However, these natural chemicals do not lead to addiction or dependence.

Serotonin

This is a complex neurotransmitter widely held as being a main contributor to feelings of well-being and happiness and is derived from an amino acid found in the brain stem. It is

involved in adjusting cognition, learning, memory, reward, and many other physiological processes. Too little of it can lead to depression.

Here are some things that can help increase serotonin by up to 30%:

- Sun rays/sun bathing
- Massage
- Meditation
- Recalling happy events
- Quality sleep (7.5 hours seems best for most) as well as regular sleeping patterns
- Moderately demanding exercise (i.e. power walking, bodyweight squats, lunges, etc.) of 10-15 minutes stimulates serotonin production and the effect usually lasts for several hours after the activity has stopped
- Vitamin D supplements

Cortisol

This is the primary stress hormone in the body.

It increases sugars (glucose) in your bloodstream, optimises your brain's use of glucose and boosts the provision of substances that repair tissues. Cortisol temporarily limits non-vital functions in a fight-or-flight scenario by modifying your immune system responses including suppression of the digestive and reproductive systems and other functions. This complex, nature-given alert system also communicates with certain brain areas that control motivation, mood and fear.

Overwhelming, unregulated fear can cause:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Digestive problems
- Headaches / migraines
- Heart disease
- Sleeping problems / insomnia
- Weight gain

- Memory and concentration impairment

**You can transform fear and stress by
the following methods:**

- Eating a well-balanced, healthy diet (A 75% vegetarian diet - not necessarily a 100% vegan one - is increasingly being recommended as suitable for most by doctors globally)
- Getting regular, daily exercise
- Getting plenty of sleep
- Practising yoga, meditation, and deep breathing
- Journaling
- Massage
- Hobbies, sports, reading, art, music, writing etc.
- Contributing to healthy friendships
- Maintaining a good sense of humour / laughing
- Smiling in the mirror
- Getting involved in community or volunteer work

- Getting coaching, therapy or counselling if needed

Brain-Derived Neurotrophic Factor (BDNF)

Brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF) is a protein which acts like brain fertilizer, keeping you mentally in gear for life. BDNF keeps your billions of brain cells or neurons active and powerful.

When you secrete BDNF, it stimulates a series of genes that are able to create new brain cells and connections between them. It can quickly help rewire your brain to accelerate learning whilst fortifying memory and preventing cognitive decline. BDNF nourishes your existing neural network as well as sharpening your awareness and memory function.

It is desirable to keep your BDNF levels as high as you can, and you can do so by the following methods:

- Exercise (squats, and other exercises and sports)
- Mental Stimulation (learn something new every day: e.g. via books,

constructive use of podcasts, YouTube for seminars, documentaries, Ted Talks, problem solving etc.)

- Get some sun (20 minutes per day if possible) you may also use an infrared lamp
- Avoid fast-food, processed and sugary foods (eat more curry, turmeric, red grapes and blueberries)
- Do something to reduce or channel the energy of stress daily (i.e. into meditation, art, music, drama, singing, reading etc.)
- Spend time with family and friends (nurture a few real relationships, online ones can also work if you know what you are looking for)
- Try I.F. (Intermittent Fasting - anywhere between 8 to 12 hours can help your body to draw upon a host of hormones for a rejuvenating effect)
- Get at least 7 hours of sleep per night

Natural Human Growth Hormone (HGH)

Produced by the pea-sized pituitary gland at the base of the brain, Human Growth Hormone (HGH) encourages growth. It also helps regulate muscle and bone growth, overall body composition, sugar and fat metabolism as well as that of bodily fluids.

High intensity exercise is one of the most effective ways to dramatically increase your HGH levels. This rise is related to the kind of exercise you do, its intensity, food consumed before and after the workout, and your body's natural predisposition.

Research shows that significant increases in HGH result from weight training sessions with limited rest periods. It is this metabolic nature and corresponding build up of lactic acid and the following recovery cycle that increases HGH significantly.

Vigorous weight training, circuit training, repeated sprints, and interval (HIIT) training, can all help spike your HGH levels. The great news is that, over the longer term, (3 months and beyond) your exercise investment will very likely optimise your hormone functions and decrease body fat simultaneously which will in turn, also enhance your HGH levels. This creates a 'virtuous cycle' almost on

autopilot which is definitely something you want to take advantage of.

CHAPTER 4

SQUATS: THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN

Squats are an important exercise for any athlete or gym-goer regardless of whether they are male or female. However, there are anatomical differences between men and women which makes squatting different for each gender. It is useful to take these differences into account when designing your training programme.

We all know that the hormone, testosterone, is important for building muscle and strength, and women have significantly (15-20 times) less of it in their bodies than men. It is also believed that the hormone relaxin, which softens ligaments and joints, could make the risk of injury higher for women when lifting heavier weights or doing extremely vigorous sports.

Anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injuries are far more common in female athletes. The larger Q-angle (Quadriceps angle) is considered a significant factor that makes women more susceptible to this injury. The knees can collapse inwards (known as valgus

collapse) during very heavy squatting due to this. Strengthening the glutes and hamstrings is of high importance for women to help prevent valgus collapse and decrease the risk of knee injury.

As women typically have a greater proportion of slow-twitch muscle fibers compared to men, they're well-suited to high-rep training and can often handle greater training volumes. Women, it has been observed, appear to have superior recovery abilities compared to men and can instead train more frequently (not usually being able to handle as much weight as men) – which is ideal for trying out the various and different types of squats mentioned in this book! And, as always, a common sense approach is helpful for both men and women when it comes to squats.

CHAPTER 5

RETHINKING SQUATS

Full Squats vs Parallel Squats

Many people have been taught never to go lower than 90-degrees, why? The stock answer is, “so that you don't damage your knees”.

Well, let's take a look at this a little more closely. In other countries, people squat, to their heels and can do vigorous physical labour for hours daily in this position for years with no problems whatsoever. In fact, they have better synergistic full-body and connective tissue strength simply because they have not had it 'trained out of them' by modern ideas. Their cartilage, tendons, and muscles are actually stronger because they use them. The adage, 'use it or lose it' is quite fitting here.

Does it Matter if Your Knees Go Over (or Beyond) Your Toes?

When you're squatting, your knees naturally 'travel' or go 2-4 inches (5-10cm) over or past your toes especially when handling heavier

weights. If they didn't, you would place more stress on your hips and lower back, which carries a greater potential for injury. However, 6-8 inches (15-20cm) past your toes would probably be excessive. It depends to an extent, on the length of your thigh (femur) bone. As long as your entire foot is kept in contact with the floor, it is generally safe.

Consider Olympic weightlifters that are constantly performing full, deep squats; their knees go quite beyond their toes in the process of hoisting hundreds of pounds (or kilos) of weight over their heads. If you experience knee pain or have had, for example, an ACL (anterior cruciate ligament) injury, then it will make sense to work around it. Lighten the load (or limit the number of bodyweight squats you do) work on your hamstring stretches and prevent excessive knee flexion until you more fully recover and gradually regain your mobility.

The following four squat exercises give you an idea of the amount of knee movement involved, from most to least: 1.The Front Squat, 2.The High-Bar Back Squat, 3.The Low-Bar Back Squat, 4.The Box Squat.

Time to Rethink Your Relationship to Chairs and Sofas

As long as you have a body, you owe it to yourself to know the maximum extent of movement options available to you in order to make the most of it. Be aware of how you're using your body (whether you're standing, sitting or lying down) at every moment during your waking day.

- Next time you sit down – observe how low down you're actually going
- Use different types of chairs that allow you to bend your knee beyond the typical 90-degree parallel chair
- Use bean bags or memory foam cushions
(The latter are easy to make, simply cut the desired size and shape of foam, then choose your preferred colour of vinyl material and simply wrap and stick.)
- Use the floor! Each time you need to get up, leverage your own bodyweight, and you'll be getting stronger, fitter and healthier. Press your hands into the floor to help yourself up if needed.
- You can make it fun and turn it into a game with yourself and others by

seeing if you or they can clear the floor without using your hands (this type of training disrupts and changes the way you see your body and you become more aware of how other people move). Help them where you can – preferably after you get good at this!

Take at least 2 minutes each day to check in with your physical body to note how you're positioning it. Appreciate what it's been able to help you do so far and what more you'll be able to do soon by following this guide.

CHAPTER 6

SQUAT NUTRITION

Adopt a simple, clean, yet varied diet. To start with - if you're not used to changing your diet around - aim for 70-80% whole foods with one 'cheat' day at the weekend. If you feel like you want to 'Netflix and chill' - just do it, don't fuss endlessly about it. Enjoy it!

Make good food choices, eat ample fresh fruit, veggies, nuts, seeds, herbs, spices and wholesome carbs, (rice, oats, pasta, bread, potato, sweet potato etc) for fuel. Day by day and week by week - your body will process and make the best use of your good food fuel, and the rest will take care of itself.

There is no need for any complex, awkward diets, just stick to the basics with foods that work well for your particular constitution. Keep a simple food diary so you can note which foods work best for you.

Caffeine

This useful psychoactive performance supplement is growing ever more in popularity globally for a reason – it works!

Used sensibly, it can change your life for the better without any side effects.

It has been found extremely useful in the 100-300mg per day range. Just about any reputable, inexpensive brand will do the job, e.g. Urban Fuel, Fmax 5 Nutrition, Bulk Powders, etc. Don't use it if you feel any chest pains or experience palpitations. If you do, either stop for a day or two or reduce the dose to half tablets (100mg) and those effects will normally quickly subside within 12-24 hours, so you should be fine.

Many people regulate the dose in parts taking 100mg upon waking, and another 100mg, 6 hours later, if needed. 100mg is generally a little more than the amount of caffeine contained in a big, strong mug of coffee, except you won't suffer from the yellowing teeth, bad breath or acid indigestion issues that can come with it.

Smelling Salts

Are you very cranky in the mornings? Do you sometimes just find it hard to get your motor running? Do you find yourself delaying or procrastinating to do things for no logical reason?

There's a reason why all types of people, from pro-athletes and students to business people and those who have demanding tasks at hand, use smelling salts. They work!

We have tested smelling salts extensively with no side effects whatsoever. It's handy to have some around if you sometimes feel lethargic, woolly-headed, spaced-out, confused, or otherwise have spells of chaotic, procrastinative thinking.

If you're the type that tends to have a slow-to-go start in the morning, a dose of smelling salts and half a caffeine tablet (100mg, commonly, it's 200mg per tablet) as soon as you wake up, is certainly going to get your head in a good space, so keep those at your bedside if needed.

As for the smelling salts, using them once or twice per day is all you'll probably need to jump start your psychophysical engine into gear, until your own momentum kicks in.

CHAPTER 7

SQUAT PREPARATION AND GETTING STARTED

Breathing

Using the power of your breath, your inhalations and exhalations through your mouth and nose, you'll be able to stay focused and get the most out of every exercise. There is much more to the breath than what current mainstream medical or biological science tells us. It doesn't matter that it's not fully understood (yet), what matters is that you use it and derive the incredible benefits it offers.

The breath is not merely 'air' or 'oxygen' (78% nitrogen, 21% oxygen, and other gases, 1%) as we may have been taught to think in school. In many ancient texts on the subject, it's actually described as being the living, universal dynamics of the cosmos, which contains not only tremendous energy, but also unlimited intelligence which is yours to take advantage of. You are connected to it 24/7.

That's perhaps a topic for a future book, but for now we'll focus on how to use the breath to gain more energy and boost your immune

system, as well as increase your focus and mental calmness. The latter is extremely useful not just for physical training, but for any endeavour that requires careful attention or study over prolonged periods. The increased memory expansion and retention you'll also gain is, of course, highly desirable when you're wanting to ace any kind of exam or test for top grades, or gain the edge when you're aiming for a promotion.

Try this exercise with closed eyes and head parallel to the ground with eyes either closed, or looking straight in front of you. It should take between 25-30 seconds.

1. Breathe rapidly through your left nostril 12 times
2. Breathe rapidly through your right nostril 12 times
3. Breathe rapidly through both nostrils 12 times
4. Breathe rapidly through your mouth 12 times
5. Stop
6. Note your level of calmness
7. If you're comfortable, do the above 2-4 times (with eyes open or closed as you prefer)

You can do the above as frequently as you want to 'reset' your mind and give your physical energy a quick top-up. This routine takes 2-3 minutes for an optimum state of mind and body, the benefits of which should last you 3-4 hours approximately. (You can always top up afterwards if you wish.)

Here are more very easy, yet effective breathing methods, tips and hacks that you can use and experience the advantages of for yourself - in many cases almost immediately.

Try this basic breathing / squat exercise

- Breathe in and out through your mouth for maximum oxygenation into your lungs and muscles
- Breathe quickly: in and out 4 times then breathe in and squat. Breathe in on the way down, and breathe out on the way up, as you return to standing
- In-between sets, your lungs may want to take a longer, deeper breath, you can hold it in your lungs for a 6-15 count (if this is comfortable for you) to let the energy diffuse more intensely into your cells you will feel vitalized and refreshed as well as enjoying

extended moments of mental calm and clarity

Of interesting note, an ancient yogic text, (the Grahayamalatantra, we had a lot of fun pronouncing that one!) says that; with breath control, the body becomes light, one's face becomes bright and cheerful whilst your digestive power increases. Now, as well as improving your health, it's also a recipe for increasing your influence.

In addition to using these breath basics for squat workouts, spend some time getting familiar with the power of your breath. You can further multiply and amplify the benefits of these breathing techniques to:

- Increase your energy and vitality
- Increase your level of concentration
- Improve awareness
- Increase your immunity to viruses e.g. colds, flu etc.
- Improve digestive speed, detoxification efficiency and regularity of bowel movements – ideal for clearing constipation

- Save time
- Dissipate worry, stress and anxiety
- Think deeper
- Unlock greater levels of creativity
- Extend your lifespan, naturally

Flexibility and Stretching

Flexibility is extremely useful to have in daily life.

If you want to be functionally strong, and enjoy using your body to the maximum in ways that will help you gain the satisfaction of the freedom of movement, you really owe it to yourself to stretch for at least 5-10 minutes per day.

Stretching can significantly help prevent accidents, injuries, sprains, strains and more. It can also help you recover quicker from the more demanding workouts that you've put your muscles through.

Impact, ECW and WWE wrestling legend, Rob Van Dam, (aka RVD) is notable in that he stretches for up to an hour per day and credits the practice for being able to wrestle for years without the overly serious injuries

that plague most other wrestlers, athletes, gym goers and other sportspeople.

Stretching will help tremendously with:

- Pain reduction
- Reduced bone and joint deterioration
- Speeding up recovery time after most strenuous activities
- Speeding up lactic acid clearing DOMS (delayed onset muscle soreness)
- Alleviate mental lethargy and 'brain fog'
- Enhanced ease of movement
- Increased overall energy efficiency
- Emotional well-being
- Overall physical confidence

It is surprising to us that some still seem to sit on the fence about this subject. You don't have to be one of them. Try it and you'll notice the difference for yourself. Stretching at first, slowly and gently until your body adapts to the practise definitely extends your range of motion. It will enable you to do more and feel

better about your body's new-found extended range of motion.

A 5-10 minute stretch routine will be key to opening your personal pharmacy-of-mastery so that you can 'complete the circuit' to fully connect your mind and brain to your body and perform at your best.

4 Effective, Squat-Preparation Stretching Exercises

a. Hamstring Stretching (Yoga: Seated Forward Bend, 'Paschimottanasana')



If you do nothing else, this classic hamstring stretch (aka 'Seated Forward Bend' (or 'Paschimottanasana' for the yoga students among you) is the one to master, and only takes 5 minutes a day.

Sit on the floor with your legs extended straight out in front of you with knees loosely

locked, and either hold your ankles or 'cup' your heels, if you can. Proceed to bend your head toward your knees and see how far you can go. Hold for a count of between 25-50 quick breaths through your mouth or nostrils, whichever is most comfortable.

After 50 breaths, you will find that you can go a little bit lower, and so on. Aiming to count 100-150 breaths in the lowest position you can go will just take about 3-5 minutes (although it might feel like an eternity at first!). With daily practice, you should be able to get your nose to your knees in 12-24 weeks (depending on your current level of flexibility and range of motion, ROM). Notice afterwards how much easier and pleasant it is to walk, and especially to lift your legs higher with less effort. Ballet anyone?

For those with arthritis or the elderly this is highly practical as you can clear e.g. Uneven pavements or side walks without 'clipping' an unexpectedly uneven slab at the toe part of the shoe due to not lifting the leg and foot high enough. When the elderly fall, it can be a lot more unforgiving, with broken bones, joint problems, operations etc. (You can help yourself and others avoid these scenarios.)

What You Can Expect

- Good, confident posture
- Toned core
- Fuller development of your back muscles along the entire length of your spine
- Gentle internal organ and digestive system stimulation
- Relief of trapped wind / gas

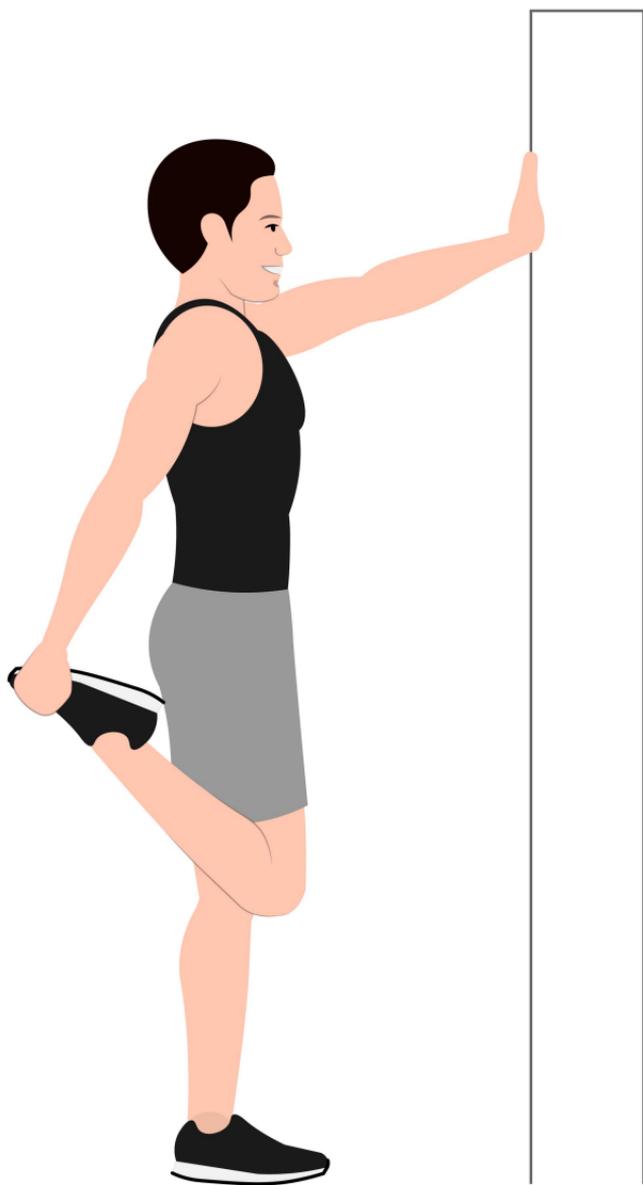
b. Quad Stretching (Standing, gently pull heel to butt)

Bend your left knee so that your foot is behind you, then grasp your left foot in your left hand. To stretch your quadriceps, pull upwards on your foot.

You will start to feel the muscles on the front side of your left thigh stretch and gradually loosen up.

Keep your knee pointed down towards the floor. Hold this pose for 15-20 seconds, and gently release. Repeat with the right leg.

SQUAT PREPARATION AND GETTING STARTED



**c. Low Squat Sitting Pose (Yoga:
'Garland' or 'Malasana' pose)**

Squat down, under control and remain in the position for 60 seconds at a time – let gravity help you sink down lower into the pose. This will help stretch out your knee ligaments, strengthen your lower back, thighs and stabilize your core.

Rock onto your tip toes and back to heels – this will help train, build and tone your calves along with a complete range of leg motion to activate your posterior chain (back, glutes and hamstring muscles) and accustom your body for more regular and intensive squatting.



d. Inner Thigh Stretch (Yoga: 'Bound Angle' or 'Throne Pose' / 'Badhha Konasana')

This can be a somewhat challenging inner-thigh stretch that opens the upper thigh area as well as your hips. Sit on the ground (on a rug or yoga mat) and bend your knees. Put the soles of your feet together while wrapping your hands around the top outsides of your feet.

Breathe to a count of 12 while bringing your heels toward your groin area. To stretch your inner thigh muscles, gently press down on your knees -using your elbows- toward the floor. Do not go beyond what's comfortable for you. Aim to stay in the position for 3-10 minutes. (Use your time well, and listen to a podcast, Audible book, a talk on YouTube, or anything else that inspires or motivates you.)



Getting Started

When you're just starting out, it is advised that you do not squat with weights to begin with.

As you progress and develop foundational and connective tissue strength in your lower body, you'll be performing more intensive bodyweight squat workouts.

After 4-6 weeks of preparing your posterior chain (back, glutes and hamstring muscles), using extra resistance in the form of weights, or other ways, will be a logical next step if you wish to further and dramatically develop your leg size, strength and overall capacity.

Main 3 Squat-Width Stances

- Normal (shoulder-width apart)
- Narrow (knees 4-6 inches / 10-15cm apart)
- Wide (shoulder-width and a half apart)

CHAPTER 8

INCREASING SQUAT INTENSITY: START, STOP AND HOLD SQUATS

Start and Stop Squats

One of the best ways to increase the intensity of the squat is to use a timer. Make use of your smartphone stopwatch or countdown timer app.

The following method is great for quickly increasing and decreasing the intensity of your squat.

- Set a countdown timer and see how many squats you can do in 90 seconds. (Note down how many)
- Set a countdown timer and see how many squats you can do in 60 seconds. (Note down how many)
- Squat for 5 minutes non-stop, doing six rounds or 6 x 10-second squats per minute.
- Squat for 5 minutes non-stop, doing four rounds or 4 x 10-second squats changing the width stance (between,

medium, narrow and wide) every minute

Try different foot positions (toes pointing out, toes pointing straight ahead and toes pointing slightly in) as well as different foot-width distances apart, for variation.

By keeping your muscles engaged to a greater or lesser extent, you can get a very rewarding and satisfying thigh and leg-building workout in just 5 minutes!

- Start: Bend your knees and go down to 90 degrees parallel
- Stop: Take 6 quick breaths (through your nose or mouth)
- Rise 45 degrees, stop, take 6 breaths
- Descend to a little below 90 degrees, stop, take 6 breaths
- Then decide how much to rise by, stop, take 6 breaths and go from there
- Either stand up completely to relieve the tension or go heels-to-rear (buttocks) and relax there to take a breather

Hold Squats

Staying in the bottom of the squat position for timed holds is more challenging than it sounds and looks. Try staying in the lowest position or angle that you can for 1-3 minutes before slowly rising up until you've locked out your knees - to standing fully upright again.

With practice, the rapid building up of your overall knee strength, stability, flexibility and posterior chain may surprise you.

Note:

For all of the above, start out slow, with a manageable number of squats and breaths and limit it to 5 minutes per micro-session before building up.

If you've not followed a fitness program for some time, you may find your heart pounding a little bit whilst you're breathing a little harder for a minute or two after a set. That's absolutely normal.

Athletes who are extremely fit also do bodyweight squat workouts with intensity, and judging by how sweaty they've become, you'd think that they had just been training all out with heavy weights - to failure (i.e. to maximum)!

Depending on your current level of fitness, you generally should not experience dizziness. However, if you do, sit down and take a few moments and some deep breaths until you get back to normal. Always have a bottle of water on hand too!

CHAPTER 9

SQUAT EXERCISES AND ROUTINES

1. Bodyweight Squats

Think bodyweight squats aren't very effective? Think again!

Bodyweight training has the innate potential to increase your strength and muscle mass. Getting bigger and stronger isn't just about lifting heavy weights, scientific research has shown that bodyweight training makes a significant contribution to your overall synergistic performance and health.

Bodyweight squats are used by thousands of athletes around the globe. A great example is former NWA / WCW wrestling champion, Ric Flair. He used to do 500 bodyweight squats every day to improve his leg strength and conditioning. Top strength coaches like Jason Ferruggia and Zach Even-Esh speak highly of bodyweight squats and of bodyweight training in general.

It's unquestionable that training with weights is an excellent method of vastly improving your strength and muscular gains. However, years' of pure weight training alone can also

lead to a boatload of regrettable injuries, aches and pains. This is where the intelligent integrating of bodyweight squats into your training can help enormously.

Your body doesn't actually know the difference between weights or the deliberate intensity you give it, it only feels the tension or resistance and responds by adapting to the demands you put on it.

By practicing between 8-10 medium-pace squats for 2-3 sets once, preferably twice per day, you will be able to install a new sense of connectivity between your mind, your brain, and your muscles. You will stimulate these areas as well as your heart and lungs as they become better conditioned to handle extra resistance demands.

Advantages of Bodyweight Squats over Barbell Squats:

- Faster recovery (less soreness)
- Less joint stress
- Less potential cartilage damage
- Zero setup time
- Freedom to perform them anywhere
- No barbell crushing your neck!

As if that wasn't enough, bodyweight squats will also help you improve and maintain your ankle and hip mobility. Everyone from gym neophytes to beat-up veteran athletes can find value in doing some form of the bodyweight squat. So don't miss out!

How to Perform:

The first exercise involves going down slowly, taking 10 seconds to do one squat.

It will probably feel a little bit slower than you might have thought at the beginning, but it's the slower, gradual movement that gives your body mechanics, your tendons, hamstrings, ankles and feet a chance to adapt to the new stress. Take your time and enjoy it, don't rush it.

- Take a shoulder-width stance
- Fold your arms across your chest or clasp your hands behind your head
- Bend at the knees and hips
- Squat to the desired depth
- Return to start by pushing through your heels

Ideas for Using Bodyweight Squats:

- Exclusively, 3 sets by themselves
- Within circuits
- In bodyweight leg workouts
- In Tabata sessions
- As a warm-up before weighted squats
- As finishers after a weighted workout

3 Bodyweight Squat Variations to Try:

Wall Squat:

A classic. If you're an athlete, it's likely you've already tried these before. It only takes 2-3 sets of 30-60 second holds to set your legs on fire!

Jump Squats:

One of the best bodyweight squat variations, this will boost your explosive power and add some muscle to your legs too. They're useful for just about any sport. Definitely worth trying in order to determine how well they work for you.

Sumo Squats:

Changes in stance, whether they're small or large, can create a completely different feel and effect to an exercise.

The wide stance used for this squat shifts the emphasis onto the glutes and adductor (inner thigh) muscles.

2. Leg Extension

When it comes to using machines, a popular leg machine that's just as popular as the leg press (covered in the next exercise), albeit for different reasons, is the Leg Extension. Let's get into the advantages it offers in your quest for a better squat.

One of the main benefits of using this dedicated machine is that it's easy to use with no special set up required, hence the appeal to many gym-goers.

In comparison to the squat, it's nowhere near as taxing or fatiguing – yet anyone looking for the “pump” can get it easily enough on the leg extension.

Even though the squat hits the quadriceps effectively, certain studies suggest that extensions can be highly effective at targeting

the powerful rectus femoris (main thigh) muscle. In addition, this exercise only minimally involves the lower back.

Some coaches argue however, that the leg extension has its hazards.

Their main concern is that the exercise can put undue strain on the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL). As ACL injuries are common in sports, minimising use of exercises which could overstress or damage ligaments obviously makes good sense.

Despite the valid arguments for and against the leg extension, it appears to be just as popular today as ever, especially in the bodybuilding community. Lots of the big names in bodybuilding and strength sports have made good use of the leg extension. Four-time Mr. Olympia winner Jay Cutler, for example used to perform several sets of extensions to warm his knees up before doing squats.

If you watch some strongman training videos on YouTube and others online, you'll notice dominant champions like 5-time World's Strongest Man, Mariusz Pudzianowski using extensions in their training. The leg extension even features in training programmes of some of the most respected strength and

bodybuilding coaches around, like for example, Christian Thibaudeau's.

Leg extensions can certainly help build muscle size, and a bigger muscle is potentially a stronger muscle. Consider it another tool to stimulate your thighs from a different angle and also help prevent training inertia and staleness. As with all exercises, it is recommended to use good, controlled technique and avoid overuse of this somewhat controversial (or any other) isolation exercise.

3. Leg Press (including variations)

If your goal is to achieve a bigger squat, the Leg Press machine will serve you well when it comes to adding strength and size to your thighs. It's a productive way to train your quadriceps, hamstrings and glutes, so let's take a closer look.

The leg press brings with it a host of benefits.

It's easy to use and targets the legs well without fatiguing the lower back.

Without a barbell resting on your neck there is little chance of neck strain, shoulder pain or discomfort. The legs can be subjected to heavier weights than what you would normally use for squats. Taller individuals

often find it more comfortable than traditional squatting.

Critics of the leg press argue that it can cause back pain due to arching the lower back during the exercise. Another argument is that some lifters pile too many plates onto the machine and press excessively heavy weights - which is more about insecurity and pride than solid training for true longevity.

This opens up an invitation to injury especially for novice lifters – remember this is all about building up your legs, for confidence and real-world, lifelong strength, not about over-inflating your ego!

High reps work well on the leg press and it isn't essential to train with a tremendous amount of weight. American speed skater Eric Heiden (who won 5 gold medals at the 1980 Olympics) used the leg press regularly in his leg workouts.

He typically used relatively light weights, around 500lbs (227.5kg), for sets of one hundred reps. Similarly, IFBB bodybuilding legend and 5-time Mr. Olympia Masters champion, Vince Taylor, told us in an interview that he used high reps and high volume on the leg press to build his huge legs. He used to perform up to 40 sets of the exercise. Interestingly, Vince never squatted.

Using both the squat and the leg press responsibly creates a winning combination.

Here are some useful leg press variations to add to your squat programme. These will help you to pack some extra mass onto your upper legs.

1. Single Leg Press

If you've never done any single leg work before, you'll probably notice an imbalance in your leg strength which is very common. This leg press variation will help even out such imbalances.

2. Paused Leg Press

Adding a pause to the bottom of each rep will work the quads more intensely. You won't need many plates on the machine for this variation. Your leg strength for the deadlift will also improve as well by training this exercise.

3. Banded Leg Press

When you add bands to the leg press machine, you'll find the reps become more

challenging, especially at the top of the movement. It's perfect to try as a new training stimulus when you reach a training plateau.

4. 10 Core Exercises (unweighted)

Getting strong doesn't always necessitate the use of barbells, dumbbells or kettlebells. Here are 10 excellent core exercises that don't require any weights in order to increase your strength.

1. Body Saw

The abs are an important part of your core and that's right where you'll feel it when you do the Body Saw. These feel great when you use furniture sliders or a towel to do them.

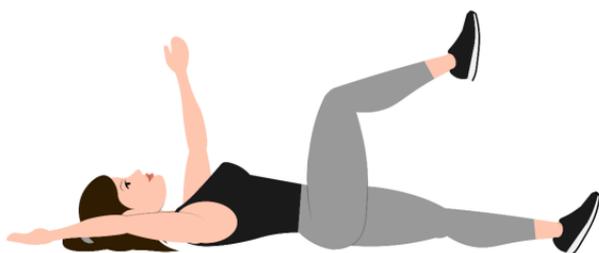
2. Dead Bug

This core exercise has a distinct name that's bound to stick in your mind! If you haven't put this into your routine already, make sure to try it and soon reap the rewards of an improved anterior core, strength and stability.

Start



End



3. L-Sit

Your abs and hip flexors are two of the several muscle groups that are targeted by the L-sit. This ranks as one of the best bodyweight core exercises you can do.

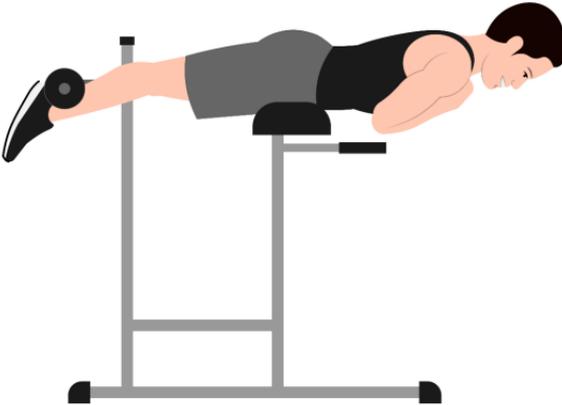
4. Back Extension

The erector spinae (back) muscles respond well to both high and low rep ranges. Put a few higher rep sets (of 10-15 reps) into your workout to improve your lower back strength.

Start



End



5. Hanging Leg Raise

It takes a bit of time and effort to build up to a few sets of these. It's well worth it though as you'll be strengthening all of your core

muscles including your abs, hip flexors and TFL (tensor fasciae latae) muscles.

6. Side Plank

This isometric core exercise is highly effective at strengthening the obliques and the quadratus lumborum, (QL) or deepest abdominal muscle. A few short bursts (of 15-second holds) suit this exercise admirably.

7. Plank

Probably every serious athlete has used the plank at some point in their training programme. Utilize a few of the more advanced variations, like the single-arm plank, to place more of a demand on your core.

8. Dragon Flags

These may take a bit of practice to master but you'll gain a lot of strength in your midsection and other muscles around your body. You'll improve your ability to build up full-body tension, which is essential for a strong squat.

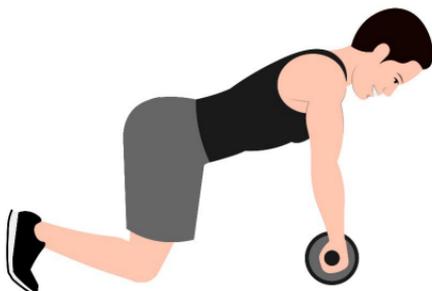
9. Hollow Hold

This is another exercise that's becoming increasingly popular with strength coaches. See if you can hold this position for 60 seconds.

10. Ab Wheel Roll Out

You'll get a full body workout when you do the ab wheel roll out. If you can progress to the standing version, then you can certainly say you've got a strong core.

Start



End



Keep educating yourself about improving your core strength and health. If you're interested

in finding out more, do look into the work of Stuart McGill, Mike Robertson, and Mike Boyle, who are among the most knowledgeable specialists in the area of core training.

5. 8 Great Glute-Building Exercises

The gluteal muscles are key to keeping your lower body healthy. The gluteus maximus is the largest muscle of the body, so it's only natural that it plays a major role in your squatting performance. Research has proven that stronger glutes make a better athlete, so it's time to start putting effort into building better glutes.

How Do You Add Glute Training into Your Exercise Programme?

Well, it can be done after your squat training, and it fits nicely into core sessions too. Bodybuilders and physique athletes may spend an entire session isolating their glutes for hypertrophy (growth). High reps and low reps are important for glute development, so working with several rep ranges is recommended.

Let's take a look at some of the benefits that a glute-training focus can bring you:

- Strengthened squats & deadlifts
- Improved knee health
- Increased hip stability
- Help prevent lower back pain
- Better appearance
- Overall boost in athleticism

With so many glute exercises to choose from, it can at first seem tough to make a decision on which ones to adopt first. So, we've made your job that little bit easier by specifically selecting a small selection of exercises to help you get started.

1. Hip Thrust

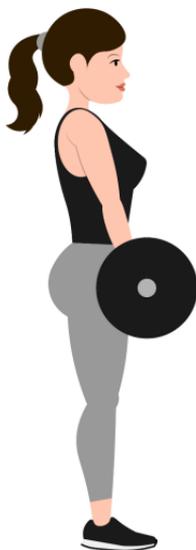
Fantastic for building size and strength in your glutes, especially the powerful gluteus maximus. Aiming for reps with double your bodyweight on the barbell is a good goal for those who want to get very strong.

2. Romanian Deadlift

The glutes, hamstrings and lower back all feel the benefit of hard work on the Romanian

Deadlift (RDL). Switching to a trap bar or dumbbells is feasible when your gains slow down with the barbell.

Start



End



3. Band Walks

These are fun to do and target the gluteus medius (side hip muscle) and hip abductors (lateral side of the thigh). They're ideal to include in your warm-up in preparation for some intense squatting.

4. Pull Through

You'll feel a strong contraction in your glutes when you perform pull throughs. Your hamstrings will also get a good degree of stimulation too.

5. Standing Cable Hip Abduction

The upper glutes will gain some muscle from this exercise. When training at home, using a band is a good substitute for the cable stack.

6. Glute Bridge

This is one of the best exercises for the glutes and it's not difficult either. It works well with or without weights. For something different, try some of the variations with foam rollers.

Start



End



7. Fire Hydrants

This is a good one that targets the gluteus medius muscle and improves hip stability. Adding a band for resistance is a good idea as you can also measure your progress.

8. Frog Pumps

We mentioned that high reps are important in glute training and here's the perfect exercise for that. A couple of sets of 30-50 reps at the end of a workout will pretty much 'fry' your glutes. Be prepared to witness some rewarding thigh growth.

There is an endless array of glute exercises to explore, but start with these and you

can't go wrong. If you're so inclined, do some research to learn more about them. The bottom line (no pun intended), is that if you want a powerful squat, and to elevate your entire bodily strength to new heights, never neglect to train your glutes!

6. Kettlebell Goblet Squats

Kettlebells are a training tool that have become extremely popular in fitness culture. Just about every gym you'll walk into has a range of kettlebells and they're incredibly popular for home use and can of course very easily be purchased online. Fitness coaches like Pavel Tsatsouline have helped bring them more into the mainstream whilst educating us about how to get the most out of them.

Are kettlebells useful for squatting? Yes! Similar to the barbell, there is an entire catalogue of squat variations. One that stands out, partly due to how easy it is to learn, is the goblet squat.

Let's look at some of the benefits of this exercise:

- Improved hip, knee and ankle mobility
- Improves your squat mechanics

- Minimal pain (no bar resting on the neck to cause lower back stress)
- Enhanced shoulder stability

As you'd expect from any squat, several muscle groups get worked simultaneously: quads, hamstrings, glutes and calves are some of them. If core strength is what you're after, you'll gain plenty of that from consistent work on kettlebell goblet squats.

Whatever your training goal, the goblet squat deserves a regular place in your routine.

How to Perform:

- Grab the kettlebell by its 'horns' and hold it at chest level, keeping it close to your chest
- Feet should be approximately hip-width apart
- Descend to the bottom of the squat
- Elbows should be positioned between the knees
- Drive through the heels to return to standing position

Start



End



Ideas for Using Goblet Squats:

- As a warm-up before barbell squats
- In a workout finisher
- To add volume to a leg workout

- In a HIIT (High-Intensity Interval Training) workout

Rep & Set Range:

- 3-5 sets of 10-12 reps
- 5 sets of 5 reps

Try this!

Fitness coach Eric Bach has a good goblet squat challenge that's worth attempting.

Holding a kettlebell weighing 18-36kg (40-80lbs), descend to the bottom position of the squat and stay there for 15 seconds. Then stand up and perform as many full goblet squats as possible, see if you can reach 15 reps.

7. Kettlebell Front Squats

Here's a kettlebell exercise that's favoured by many strength and conditioning coaches, double Kettlebell Front Squats. Whether you're a rugby player or a wrestler or just fancy training like one, this is one highly effective squatting exercise to try

out and hopefully keep in your training programme.

Like the Barbell Front Squat (covered later on), it will work the muscles of your anterior core effectively, build quadricep size and decrease stress on your knees and lower back. There's no need for heavy weights on these either, kettlebells above 20kg can challenge even the strongest of men. For women, 8kg kettlebells are a good starting point.

How to Perform:

- Choose 2 kettlebells of the same weight
- Clean the kettlebells to the rack position (or get a partner to help you put them in position)
- Interlock your fingers if preferred and avoid flaring out the elbows
- Inhale and squat deep, keep the torso vertical and keep looking forward
- Exhale and drive through your heels to return to standing position

Start



End



Ideas for Using Double Kettlebell Front Squats:

- In a front squat specialization period

- In a conditioning session
- In a core-focused workout

Rep & Set Range:

- 3-6 sets of 8-10 reps
- 5 sets of 5 reps

Variations to Try:

- Single kettlebell front squats

Uneven Loaded Kettlebell Front Squats

- Eg. a 20kg kettlebell in one hand and a 16kg kettlebell in the other

8. 10 Core Exercises (weighted)

1. Weighted Plank

Most people know what the plank is. Adding weight to this popular anti-extension (or actively resisting extension of the lumbar spine) exercise helps to build more strength into the muscles of your core, especially the

transverse abdominis (stabilizing) and rectus abdominis (six-pack) muscles.

2. Good Mornings

This is one exercise that will help build thick spinal erectors to help you power through your squat. Experiment with different variations to keep making gains.

3. Pallof Press

This top notch anti-rotation exercise (which basically means a movement that requires you to resist a force that's trying to make your trunk turn) deserves a place in your strength training. Its benefits include improved core activation and stabilization.

4. Renegade Rows

Being an exercise that trains both anti-extension and anti-rotation makes this one of the best core exercises you can do. Kettlebells and dumbbells work well with this core blaster too.

5. One-Arm Farmer's Walk

Great in a conditioning workout or when used as a finisher, the one-arm farmer's walk, will

help you build some serious core strength. Expect sore obliques (your trunk twisting muscles) the first time you try them!

6. Weighted Back Extension

The glutes, hamstrings and lower back all gain strength by performing these on a back extension bench. Hold a barbell, dumbbell or medicine ball to add resistance.

7. Landmine Rotations

Although squats don't require any rotation, the landmine rotation is highly effective at building overall core strength. Even an empty barbell can be quite challenging for these.

8. Standing Cable Crunch

Strong abdominal muscles are essential for developing a core of steel. These will help increase your confidence in your midsection for doing heavy squats.

9. Medicine Ball Slam

This medicine ball exercise is perfect for helping develop a powerful core. The abs, obliques, serratus, (the fan-shaped muscle in

the upper rib area) and lower back are effectively targeted.

10. Turkish Get-Up

This is definitely the most technical exercise on this list. Besides giving you a stronger core, you'll improve your hip mobility which is just what you need to be a good squatter.

9. Landmine Squats

Lifters who have more thorough knowledge and experience will be familiar with the Landmine Device. It enables you to train with a barbell by holding the barbell sleeve. It's a nice tool which allows you to get a bit more creative with your training so it's a piece of equipment worth getting to know about and to try.

Landmine squats are suitable for just about anyone. Gym neophytes can use them to prepare for back squats as landmine squats have an easy learning curve and encourage good technique. On the opposite end of the spectrum, veteran lifters will find this movement much easier on creaking knees and beaten-up backs. There's little discomfort with this exercise and it's hard to spoil it technique wise.

One good advantage of the landmine squat is that little setup time is required. You won't need to load up two ends of a barbell or use lots of weight either.

Execution:

- Lift the bar to chest height
- Keep both hands on the end of the bar's sleeve and rest on your sternum
- Elbows should be pointing toward the floor
- Lower yourself into a deep squat
- Return to standing position

Ideas for using Landmine Squats:

- As a temporary replacement for back squats
- To bring variation into a stale routine
- In a hypertrophy (muscle growth) phase of your training

Rep Range:

- Higher reps work well for landmine squats. Aim for between 10-15 reps per set

Tips:

- Pause at the bottom of the rep for an added layer of difficulty.
- Press the weight up after each rep to get some extra upper-body work in and to further stimulate the stabilizing muscles of your core.

10. Front Squats

Front Squats are one of the few exercises that can rival the back squat in terms of importance in your training. Many top strength coaches and athletes actually favour this fantastic variation exercise. Some of the best strength coaches in the world, Dan John and the late Charles Poliquin for instance, have praised the front squat and highly recommend its use in your training. This exercise is certainly worthy of your time, study and practice.

Let's look at some of the benefits:

The front squat offers some great benefits that the back squat does not.

Perhaps its greatest advantage is that there's much less compressive force exerted on your knees and lower back.

In addition, since the barbell is positioned to the front of your body, there is very little pressure on the neck. If these benefits aren't enough to pique your interest, here are a handful more:

- Works your anterior core (intensively)
- Increases activation of your glutes
- Less risk of hip strain
- Improves upper back strength
- Forces an upright posture
- Increased safety - the bar can simply be dropped if you can't quite get that last rep out
- Less technical elements to learn compared to back squats

Another big advantage of the front squat is that massive amounts of weight aren't necessary. This will save you a significant

chunk of time and the task of loading up a heavy bar. Additionally, the use of lighter weights means you won't feel completely fatigued or immobile the day after with DOMS (Delayed Onset Muscle Soreness) after your session.

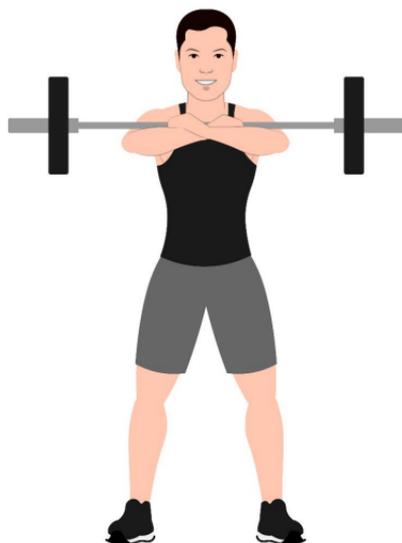
Execution:

Variation 1 (Clean grip-style)

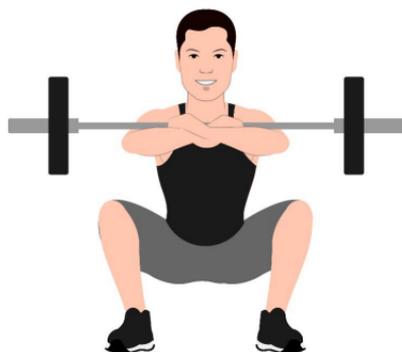
- Place your hands on bar slightly wider than shoulder-width
- Rest the bar at the base of your neck and keep your elbows high
- Take a big breath
- Brace your abs
- Break at the hips and knees
- Descend to the bottom position
- Exhale and push through the heels to return to the top position

SQUAT EXERCISES AND ROUTINES

Start



End



Variation 2 (Arms-crossed style)

- Rest the bar on your delts (shoulders) while your arms are straight out (parallel to the floor)
- Cross your arms so that each hand is on the opposite shoulder
- Unrack the bar and take a shoulder-width stance
- Take a big breath
- Brace your abs
- Break at the hips and knees
- Descend to the bottom position
- Exhale and push through the heels to return to the top position

Ideas for Using Front Squats

- Before or after your back squats
- As a replacement for back squats
- Alternate (between one workout using back squats, and the next using front squats)
- Within a complex (i.e., a series of exercises performed back-to-back without rest)
- Tabata front squats

- As an exercise in a 'core' session
- As a finisher
- In a short-term cycle to help boost your back squat

Weights and Rep Range:

- Being able to perform reps with your bodyweight on the bar is a realistic expectation for any athlete. A high standard to aim for is a front squat that is 85% of your back squat.
- A rep range of 1-6 is a good guideline. You may find it becomes more difficult to support the bar at higher reps.

Tips:

- Try front squat holds to gain some extra strength and confidence.
- Load the bar up with a weight heavier than you can usually front squat, unrack it and hold for 5-10 seconds
- High-rep front squats are more of a challenge because it becomes difficult to maintain the bar in position.
- Two-time World's Strongest Man, Jouko Ahola from Finland, would use

the Smith machine for high rep front squats. Give it a try, it's more challenging than it looks.

- The front squat is a great assistance exercise for the deadlift as well as aiding in the improvement of your leg drive.

You will also find some front squat inspiration in the YouTube Video List at the end of the book.

11. Zercher Squats

The Zercher Squat (named after American strongman, Ed Zercher) is one of those lifts that you've probably never seen anyone, unless they're a serious strength athlete, do in a gym. If you browse around the internet however, you'll find it's an exercise that's steadily gaining in popularity.

These squats are executed with the barbell carried in the crooks of your elbows. It's a slightly uncomfortable position when you first try it but you can soon become pretty accustomed to it.

Squatting with the barbell in this position has several advantages.

Bigger and stronger quads, improved core strength as well as improved glute and hamstring strength will be yours with some solid work invested in the Zercher squat. Your traps (neck) and biceps will also grow too as they play an important role in supporting the weight.

The Zercher squat shares some similarities with the front squat: the bar can be dropped if necessary which eliminates any danger of getting stuck underneath it. There is far less spinal compression compared to the back squat which makes it a fine exercise choice if you have lower back trouble. In addition, it's easier to hit a greater depth with both of these squats as well.

Execution:

- Set a barbell at approximately waist height or higher
- Place the bar in the crooks of your elbows, clasp your hands and unrack the bar
- Stand with feet shoulder-width apart
- Descend to the bottom position keeping the bar close to your body

- Push through the heels to return to the start position

Note:

- There are several ways to position your hands including interlocking your fingers or one hand grabbing your opposite wrist.

Ideas for Using Zercher Squats:

- Performing several sets of them after back squats
- As part of a 'core' session
- In a quadriceps workout

Rep Range:

- Performing 3-6 reps per set is a good range to aim for

Tips:

- Use a thick barbell and/or thick elbow sleeves to ease discomfort in your arms

- Try a sandbag or keg for variation - have fun visualizing yourself training like a strongman or woman!

12. Barbell Back Squats

The classic Barbell Back Squat has been used as a strength and mass builder for decades.

Back in the 1930's, Mark Berry, an American weightlifter, proved how productive high-rep barbell squats could be. He played a large part in the creation of the famous 20-Rep Squat programme. Indeed, it would be difficult to find a foundation-building system that doesn't include back squats. They're featured in many 5 x 5 programmes (eg. like that originated by Bill Starr) and the demanding 10 x 10 German Volume Training (GVT) programme.

Icons such as Arnold Schwarzenegger and Bruce Lee have spoken about the effectiveness of the back squat.

The barbell back squat has so many benefits that it could take a good few pages alone to list them all, here however are some of the major ones:

- Increased muscle mass
- Increased strength
- Greater bone density
- Better balance and mobility
- Improved core strength
- Improved circulation
- Improved posture
- Stronger mind and discipline
- Slowing of the aging process & enhanced longevity

When you squat it creates an "anabolic environment" meaning it triggers the release of important hormones serving as a major catalyst for strength and hypertrophy (growth). As a result, other lifts you do in the same workout can also help you gain from this powerful effect.

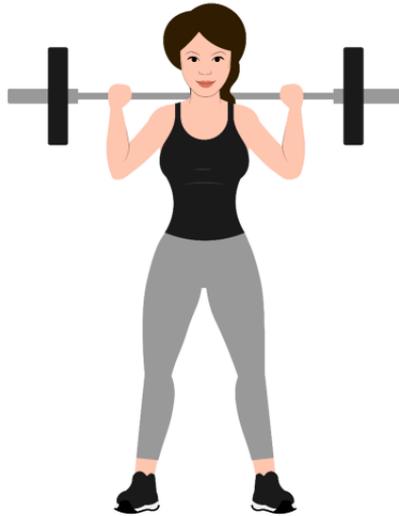
We'll now take a look at the setup for the high bar back squat (the low bar squat is mainly for powerlifters).

Execution:

- Set the barbell on the rack at approximately shoulder height

- Position yourself under the bar and rest the bar on your upper trapezius (neck) muscles
- Set your desired hand-width position
- Unrack the bar
- Set your feet shoulder-width apart
- Turn your feet out about ten degrees
- Take a good, deep breath
- Bend at the hips and knees simultaneously
- Keep your eyes forward and torso upright as you descend
- Lower until your thighs are at least parallel to the floor (or you reach your desired depth)
- Exhale as you push through your heels to return to the start position

Start



End



Ideas for Using Squats:

- As the sole exercise of a workout
- As the main lift in a leg workout
- As high rep finishers

- Within a barbell complex (i.e., a series of exercises done back-to-back without putting the barbell down)
- In full body workouts

Weight and Rep Range:

- Being able to squat at least your bodyweight on the bar is a realistic expectation for any keen trainee.
- Squatting double your bodyweight is considered strong for men.
- Squatting one and a half times bodyweight is considered strong for women.
- The back squat is suited to almost any rep range.
- Low reps with very heavy weight (singles, doubles, triples) are best reserved for those seeking maximum strength development eg. powerlifters, and strongman/strongwoman competitors.

Tips:

- Experiment with different setups

- Changing your hand position on the bar and trying different foot widths is recommended
- Try barbell squats with the heels elevated. If you have difficulty getting into a good squat position, you could benefit from using a heel wedge which can make it easier on your knees or back. This will give you more quadriceps (thigh) stimulation, and will help you perform better if you currently lack ankle flexibility.
- Belts and knee sleeves will be useful if you plan to squat regularly. Invest a little time to online research the different thicknesses of belts and sleeves, and try a couple of them out.

A Challenge

If you've already got some squatting experience under your belt, here's a challenge by the legendary strength coach, Dan John that you may want to try.

Load up a barbell that's roughly your own bodyweight and try 50 reps with it. Good luck and feel free to let us know how you get on!

13. Pause Squats

Pause Squats are one of the best assistance exercises that you can do to help increase your strength for back squats. They can also add more muscle to your thighs for extra mass, and overall they're a terrific way to push your strength levels up. If you haven't tried these, you're missing out!

Why Should You Use Them?

Pause squats will increase your strength for getting out of the “hole” (the bottom-most position you reach in the squat) and improve your midsection, quad, hip and glute strength.

The pause at the end of the negative (or eccentric) phase of the movement eliminates any momentum and prevents you from 'bouncing' out of the bottom of the squat, perfect for sparing your knees and lower back from injury.

Lighter weights are used for pause squats, therefore risk of injury is much lower. Anyone who wants or needs to use lighter weights in their routines (eg. older lifters etc) will find them especially beneficial.

Your squat technique will improve with regular use of the pause squat and it will also improve your balance in the bottom position too. The pause squat will teach you to stay tight and in control of the rep, resulting in a corresponding boost of confidence which is fundamental for a strong squat.

Execution:

- Your usual squat setup is fine for Pause Squats
- Descend to the bottom position and hold there for the desired number of seconds
- Ascend or drive up, forcefully
- The pause at the bottom is usually anywhere between 1-5 seconds
- Some lifters may opt for longer holds. The pause can be counted simply as one, two, three (or “one-thousand-one”, “two-thousand-two”, to ensure you get the full second count).

Ideas for using Pause Squats:

- 3 or 4 sets before your main squat sets
- 3 or 4 sets after your main squat sets

- Pause squats exclusively for your entire squat session

Note:

- Pause squats aren't well suited to high reps, so try sets of 3-5 reps to start with.

Tips:

- The bottom position pauses can be applied to front squats as well.
- Try double pause squats - pause once on the way down and in the bottom position for an extra thorough muscle burn and resistance workload without extra weight. Your psycho-physiological gains from such training become amplified significantly.

14. Anderson Squats

One of the best ways to build up extra strength and confidence in the bottom position of the squat is to use the “Anderson Squat”. Named after the mighty Paul Anderson, he regularly used this

method of squatting to build his tremendous strength.

Sometimes referred to as “The Bottom-Up Squat” or “Pin Squats”, this fantastic variation has the potential to help you break through stubborn squatting plateaus.

The muscles in your midsection, or core, will be challenged in this squat variation. Your quads, hips and glutes all get thoroughly worked too.

Starting in the bottom position of the squat relies on strength alone to get the bar moving, as there's no way to “bounce” out of this lowest position like you can (but definitely should avoid!) in the process of doing the usual back squat.

Several similarities are shared with the Pause Squat. The Anderson Squat will teach you to stay tight, therefore your squat technique will improve. Lighter weights are necessary which makes it ideal for older lifters and for those who don't want to be fatigued for other sporting or lifestyle activities.

One of the bonuses of using this lift is that it won't make you excessively sore due to less eccentric (downward movement) stress.

Execution:

- Using the power rack, set the bar at the bottom position (or slightly above the bottom) of the squat
- Position yourself under the bar and set up with the same stance and hand position you typically use
- Take a good breath in
- Brace your midsection, squeeze your hands hard, create lots of tension in your body then drive the bar upwards while exhaling
- Slowly squat back down to the pins and rest the bar on them
- Repeat

Ideas for Using Anderson Squats:

- 4 to 5 sets after your main squat sets
- Alternate with other types of squat in one workout and Anderson Squats in the next.

Weights and Rep Range:

- Low rep ranges are preferable for Anderson Squats. Singles, doubles and triples are ideal.
- Start with a weight you can squat, for at least 10 reps. Build up gradually.

Notes:

- Top strength and bodybuilding coach Christian Thibaudeau says Anderson Squats can build strength for the deadlift.
- Like the Pause Squat, Anderson Squats can be applied to Front Squats too.

15. Hip Belt Squats

Bad back? Bad knees? Painful shoulders and neck? Then you'll want to do yourself a favour and get acquainted with the Hip Belt Squat! It's one of the best squatting variations around which works your quads (thighs) thoroughly, yet puts minimal stress on your joints.

Like every new exercise you learn to perform, there's always a little bit of a learning curve. With the Hip Belt Squat, it's the setting up part that can be a little tricky at first.

Placing a couple of high boxes or stacks of weight plates next to a power rack is a great way to get set up for this exercise.

Each exercise has a list of variations and the Hip Belt Squat is no exception.

In the YouTube Videos List at the back of the book you'll find some videos to show you how it's done: with Kettlebells, Hand-Assisted and with the Landmine.

No matter which variation you use, your legs will feel like they are on fire after a handful of high-rep sets, guaranteed!

Using them after doing back squats is great, but try them BEFORE doing back squats for a unique feel in your legs. You'll be able to do more Back Squat sets with legs and a lower back that are prepared, and with more gusto too.

Invest a little money into a hip belt and loading pin and start building extra muscle onto your thighs. You'll probably need a new pair of jeans after a few weeks of doing these

– now ladies and gents how's that for a well-justified reason for a wardrobe upgrade?

16. 3 Time-Saving Squat Workouts

Life is often busy and finding time to train can be a challenge. If you find you have minimal time available, try out these three workouts to keep your gains going.

1. 1-10 Ladder

If you like your legs to feel thoroughly worked after a leg workout (which also reminds you that you've actually trained) this one's for you!

Heavy weights aren't necessary for this. So, do one rep, rack the bar and have a short rest. Do two reps, rack the bar and have a short rest. Continue all the way up to 10 reps if you can manage it. That's a total of 55 reps once you've completed it.

If you find that too easy, try doing it without racking the bar in between each set.

2. Bodyweight Density

Another simple but effective workout.

Load the bar up to approximately your own bodyweight. Set a countdown timer for 10

minutes.

Working in sets of 3, 4 or 5 reps, try to do as many total sets and reps as you can within the 10 minutes. Extend the time up to 15 minutes if you find you have the capacity.

3. 10kg-Increment Increase Session

Start with an empty bar.

Do 3-5 reps. Load 5kg on each side of the bar and perform 3-5 reps.

Continue adding 10kg with each set. With rest times of 30-60 seconds between sets, you'll feel the challenge kicking in pretty quickly here.

Of course, the increments don't have to be 10kg per set. Try 5kg or 2.5kg increments too, if 10kg currently proves a bit too much or unmanageable for each set.

Remember to alter rep tempos and rest times to make things more or less challenging as per your needs for these above workouts.

As you can see, there are countless ways to vary and stimulate your muscles, anatomy and organs to keep things fresh.

Adding in some Pause Reps here would also be a good idea to help spice things up further still!

17. 3 Squat Variations Named after 3 Strongmen

Here are some more squat variations to add to your training toolbox. Read up on these exercises which are all named after well-respected people in the world of strength. You'll find some video links at the back of the book.

1. Hatfield Squats

Fred Hatfield was one of the first men on our planet to squat over 1000lbs (454kg), which is made even more impressive by the fact he was in his mid-forties when he did it. This is a squat variation that he used in his own routines.

A Safety Squat bar is essential for this. The use of your hands in this exercise can assist you with each rep, and your lower back won't get too fatigued either.

2. Karlsen Squats

Here's one named after Norwegian strongman Svend 'Viking Power' Karlsen, who took gold at the World's Strongest Man competition in 2001.

Try this variation to add some size and strength to your quads. Higher reps work great on this.

3. Steinborn Squats

Not having a squat rack is no excuse to avoid squatting!

Here's an unconventional way to get the bar onto your back in order to do your squats.

Named after Henry "Milo" Steinborn, a popular strongman from the early 20th century, Milo used this method to build up his squatting strength.

Note:

This is not suitable for beginners and you'll need a good, solid foundation before you attempt it.

18. Single-Legged Bodyweight Squats

Single limb exercises are a natural progression in bodyweight training.

An exercise instantly becomes more of a challenge when only one limb is doing it. When you perform Single-Legged Bodyweight Squat exercises you will place more demands on your legs and core, and even restore strength and muscular imbalances in these muscle groups.

Check out the following selection of Single-Legged Bodyweight Squat exercises and have a go at them. Add those that work best for you to your squatting repertoire.

One-Leg Wall Squat

Using only one leg for this wall squat variation makes it far more of a challenge of course compared to using both legs. Expect your core muscles to get vigorously worked in this exercise. Simple but effective.

Bulgarian Split Squat

This exercise is a favourite of many strength and conditioning coaches. Just about every muscle in the lower body gets properly

stimulated and worked from the Bulgarian Split Squat.

Start



End



Split Squat Iso Hold

Another isometric single-leg squat on the list, this one won't take long to master and it's highly effective at stimulating your legs thoroughly. Extra strength and endurance will be your reward for working on this.

Shrimp Squats

If you've ever met anyone who claims that bodyweight squats are easy, introduce them to the Shrimp Squat. Leg strength, balance, skill, and mobility are essential to master this more advanced exercise. "Practice, practice, practice" is the formula for mastery of the Shrimp Squat.

Pistol Squats

Bodyweight athletes often debate which single-leg squat is the toughest; the Shrimp Squat or the Pistol Squat. Whatever your opinion is, being able to do a few Pistol Squat reps will earn everyone's admiration and respect. Period.

Exercise List 1: Level of Difficulty (Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced)

Beginner:

1. Back Extension, Ab Wheel, Deadbug, Bodysaw, Hollow Hold, Plank, Side Plank.
2. Cable Crunch, Medicine Ball Slams, Weighted Plank.
3. Band Walk, Cable Hip Abduction, Fire Hydrant, Frog Pumps, Glute Bridge.
4. Leg Extension, Leg Press, Landmine Squat, Kettlebell Front Squat, Kettlebell Goblet Squat, Jump Squats (bodyweight), Split Squat Iso Hold (bodyweight), Squat Holds (bodyweight), Sumo Squats (bodyweight), Wall Sits (bodyweight).

Intermediate:

1. L-Sit, Hanging Leg Raise.
2. Good Morning, Landmine Rotation, One Arm Farmer's Walk, Palloff Press, Renegade Rows, Weighted Back Extension.
3. Hip Thrust, Pull Through, Romanian Deadlift.
4. Banded Leg Press, Single Leg Press, Anderson Squat, Barbell Back Squat, Front

Squat, Hatfield Squat, Hip-Belt Squat, Karlsen Squat, Pause Squat, Zercher Squat, Bulgarian Split Squat (bodyweight), Single Leg Wall Squat (bodyweight).

Advanced:

1. Dragon Flag
2. Turkish Get Up
3. Pistol Squat (bodyweight), Shrimp Squat (bodyweight), Steinborn Squat.

Exercise List 2: Level of Equipment Required

No Gym or Equipment Required:

- Bodyweight Squats
- Single-Leg Squats
- Basic Equipment Required:
- Barbell Back Squat
- Core (unweighted)
- Core (weighted)
- Front Squat
- Glute Exercises
- Kettlebell Goblet Squat

- Kettlebell Front Squat
- Landmine Squat
- Pause Squat
- Squat Variations Named After 3 Strongmen
- Time-Saving Workouts
- Zercher Squat

Gym or Equipment Required:

- Anderson Squat
- Hip Belt Squat
- Leg Extension
- Leg Press / Leg Press Variations

CHAPTER 10

MAKING SQUATS FUN!

Here are some great games you can play to make squats fun! You can slot these micro-squat workouts in anytime, and just about anywhere. Here are some ideas to help get you started:

- In the morning upon waking to energize your body and get your circulation going.
- In-between meetings.
- Waiting on the phone (put it on speaker and squat -or insert any of the bodyweight squat variations- while you're waiting).
- Waiting at an airport lounge.
- Waiting for something to heat in the microwave or cook (don't turn your back on the cooker though!).
- Waiting idly for someone or something.
- Apple founder, Steve Jobs, used to have “walking meetings” - get fit with your colleagues and do a little bodyweight squat session at your online group meetings, office or park!

(Observe social distancing where required.)

- Try them for 5 minutes at a time with your family or whilst doing informal brainstorming sessions on conference work calls or other meetings - you'll be surprised at what ideas arise, plus you'll get stronger, healthier and fitter in the process! Don't separate health and fitness from your work life, they can and should harmonize together in some way.
- Have a fun competition among your family, friends or co-workers by timing who can remain longest in the 90-degree squat position, or the 120-135 degree position.
- Offer a health-food gift, plant-based chocolate, Amazon voucher or other prize to the winner - they'll love you for it!

CHAPTER 11

EXTRA MOTIVATION: SQUATTING WITH THE PROS

Awesome Men's Squat Performances

Adding a bit of extra weight to the bar or squeezing out an extra rep is a measurable way to check your progress and ensure you get good at squatting.

Read up on the following men, and watch their performances, (refer to the video list) and squatting abilities to inspire and remind yourself of the progress you can also achieve with solid, regular efforts and dedication over time.

1. Lee Moran

American powerlifter Lee Moran was the first man ever to officially squat over 1000lbs (454kg). Next time you try for a one rep max, watch this man beforehand to inspire you.

2. John Cena

Squats have played an important part in building this WWE wrestler's strength. That

he can squat over 600lbs (272kg) makes it no surprise that he's one of the strongest ever WWE athletes.

3. Chad Wesley Smith

If you've ever tried squatting 300lbs (136kg) for 20 reps you'll know how tough it is. Powerlifter Chad Wesley Smith manages to hit 22 reps with 500lbs (227kg) demonstrating his laudable strength.

4. Lü Xiaojun

Chinese weightlifter Lü Xiaojun is one of the best on the planet. He can squat over three times his body weight and even make it look easy.

5. Jeff Seid

If you're a fan of high rep squats, check out physique athlete Jeff Seid's impressive performance of a 100-rep total with 225lbs (102kg). He knows the value of squats for building a solid physique.

6. Mike O'Hearn

Doing sets of 20 or 30-rep back squats is enough to leave most people gasping for air.

Can you imagine how Mike O'Hearn's lungs must have felt after doing an impressive 47 reps with 315lbs (143kg)?

Awesome Women's Squat Performances

The standard of women in strength sports is definitely on the rise and shows no sign of slowing anytime soon. There are lots of great videos out there on the internet capturing many of their outstanding performances.

Read up on the following women and watch their performances by referring to the video list. If you're after a bit of motivation before your gym, squat or leg- day session, these are sure to infuse you with that coveted winner's edge to help inspire you to hit your own goals!

1. Deng Wei

As an Olympic weightlifting competitor in the 63kg class, Deng Wei from China can squat approximately 2.5 times her body weight and does so for two reps in the video listed training session. That's amazing and this world-class standard shows why she won gold at the Rio Olympics in 2016.

2. Stefi Cohen

She's the first woman to ever deadlift more than four times her own body weight so it's only natural that she's going to have a pretty strong squat too. Definitely check out her 400lb (181.5kg) squat.

3. Sara Sigmundsdóttir

Anyone who has ever done sets of 20-rep squats will appreciate just how difficult it can be. High profile CrossFit competitor Sara Sigmundsdóttir from Iceland shows us how it's done by squeezing out 20 reps with 102kg (225lb) in the video listed training session.

4. Brittany Pryor

Strength athlete Brittany Pryor knows the value of heavy squatting for getting ultra-strong. Squatting a barbell loaded with ten 45lbs (20kg) plates for one rep is seriously impressive, doing two just like Brittany is incredible.

5. Natalie Hanson

Attempting to unrack a barbell with three times your bodyweight on it is enough to scare off most trainees. Powerlifter Natalie Hanson from Alaska shows just how strong women

can be when she does a deep squat with 579lb (262.5kg) which is over three times her own weight.

Squatting with “The Quadfather” Tom Platz

When the question “Who has the best built legs?” comes up, the name Tom Platz will invariably enter the conversation. A hugely successful bodybuilder in the 1980's and sometimes called an uncrowned Mr. Olympia, Platz aka “The Quadfather”, had leg size and definition that was leagues above other competitors - even in comparison to today.

The barbell back squat was the central focus of Platz's leg-building routines.

The man had a genuine desire to go through excruciating reps and sets of squats to attain his goal of huge legs. His legs were 100% as strong as they looked.

He achieved these squatting records in his bodybuilding career: 635lbs (288kg) x 15 reps, 500lbs (227kg) x 23 reps, and 350lbs (159kg) x 52 reps. These are numbers that most people would find challenging even on a leg press machine.

A regular approach he used in his leg routines was to squat continuously for ten minutes with 200-250lbs (91-114kg) on the barbell. It's likely that over 100 reps would have been performed within this time frame. There were times where he'd squat for twenty minutes without stopping.

Another protocol he employed from time to time was drop sets. He said one of his toughest workouts was squatting to failure with six 45lb (20kg) plates on each side of the bar, then dropping down to five plates, and continuing this all the way down to two plates on each side.

One other form of squatting Platz particularly liked was the Hack Squat (on a machine). He had his own unique style of doing these to target his quads. He was exceptionally strong on these too, handling weights of up to 500lbs.

As if hard and heavy sets of squats and hack squats weren't enough in a session, Tom would finish off with leg extensions, leg curls and calf raises. On occasion, he would do sets of up to 60-rep leg extensions and curls.

Platz worked hard on the basics and used some creativity and unusual methods to push his legs to maximum failure. He used little in the way of fancy equipment or training tools.

Even now, in his sixties, Tom still makes use of the squat in his training.

Refer to the List of YouTube Video Links to see some of Tom's leg routines in action!

CHAPTER 12

GET YOUR SQUAT ON! (EXTRA INFO)

Interesting and Fascinating Facts About Legs & their Development

- Running helps build up all of your leg muscles quickly as it hits all of them from various angles.
- The femur (thigh bone) is the longest bone in the human body making up roughly a quarter of your full height. It supports your body weight when you run, jump, walk and stand. It is also the strongest bone, being stronger than steel and four times stronger than concrete.
- The femur bone of a normal adult weighing 85kg (187lb) with size 11 feet can take the equivalent weight of 16,000 people standing on it simultaneously, for at least a second.
- It is scientifically proven that there is less knee stress in doing full squats than half (90-degree parallel) squats.

GET YOUR SQUAT ON!

- Thigh muscle mass really begins to develop when you perform squat sets in the 12-20 rep-range.
- Squats actually strengthen knee tendons.
- Leg extensions place more stress on your knees than squats.
- The femur's greater trochanter is the attachment point for your gluteal muscles. (This is essential for building the muscles of your butt.)
- Contrary to common belief, squats alone won't give you a 'big butt' (or 'booty') – but it will develop your glutes to your own maximum genetic potential which is different for everyone.
- Dropping down too fast in the squat is dangerous for your knees especially with heavier weights.
- Never attempt to bounce off your butt whilst lifting heavy loads – that will destroy your knees, so NEVER do that.

CHAPTER 13

MUSIC AND VIDEOS

Recommended Music Playlist

This list is one that's in progress and has been compiled to get you started and help you use music to stimulate your emotional energy.

The idea is to connect you with your personal motivational reasons to squat and keep you going in the coming weeks and months.

Crank these up and of course, add your own music tracks and songs and tell us on social media which songs really get you going. We'll add them to the list so that others can add what's been 'working out' for you, to their playlist and they likewise can share theirs with you too!

- “Eye of The Tiger” -Survivor
- "War" (Rocky IV) -Vince DiCola
- "Training Montage" (Rocky IV) -Vince DiCola
- “Rags to Rings” (Extended version) - Danny McCarthy/Mark Petrie

- “Waves” -Trivium
- “Jump” -Van Halen
- “Nevermore” -Symphony X
- “Summer Kiss” -Parsec
- “Heaven Can Wait” (Extended mix) - Sandra
- “Never Let Me Down” -Depeche Mode
- “Two Steps from Hell” -Dragon Rider
- “The Final Countdown” -Europe
- “Fuel” -Metallica
- “Waves” -Trivium
- “Jump” -Van Halen
- “Gonna Fly Now” -Rocky OST
- “My Last Breath” (Instrumental version) -Evanescence
- “Pulse Power” -Dynatron
- “Propulsion Overdrive” -Dynatron
- “Excellerator” -Dynatron
- “Unquestionable Judgement” - Dynatron
- “The Legacy Collection Vol I” - Dynatron
- “Hooks In You” -Marillion

- “I Am The Fire” -Halestorm
- “Almost Easy” -Avenged Sevenfold

List of YouTube Video Links

Note: Due to account status changes on YouTube, we cannot guarantee that the video links below will always play, as they can be removed or deleted at any time. However, you should still be able to find them or very similar ones easily by simply copying and pasting the description of the video given below into YouTube or Google.

When you find some great squat-performance videos, send us the links on social media. We'll add them to the list so others can view and add them to their squat playlist to continue to build-up their inspiration too!

AWESOME MEN'S SQUAT PERFORMANCES

Lee Moran's Legendary 1003lb Squat!

https://youtu.be/LeAkTU_3Ceg?t=23

John Cena Squats 611 Pounds

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OgDVFz0WWSW>

500 x 22 Raw Squat-JTSstrength.com

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eBhp7VcXvVY>

Lu Xiaojun (77kg) 275kg Back Squat

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RGqhBETLFVA>

Jeff Seid 100 Reps at 225lbs Squat Workout Challenge

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISccQ7CtjXg>

Mike O'Hearn Birthday Squats 315lbs for 47 reps

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9I3rE9xzDN0>

AWESOME WOMEN'S SQUAT PERFORMANCES

Deng Wei 160 x 2 Squat Almaty 2014 Worlds Training Hall

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G980H0IitI4>

Stefi Cohen 182.5kg Squat Boss of Bosses IV 2017

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0tIYvBssNfk>

Back squat: 102 x 20 reps by Ragnheidur Sara Sigmundsdóttir

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rp931W8k6jE>

FRONT SQUATS

Dan Green 575 x 3 Front Squats

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OM-YgRN2OLc>

Boyanka Kostova (58kg) 180kg Front Squat

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_31Mn1H4MyM

HIP BELT SQUATS

[Respected coach Ben Bruno shows you how it's done]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PldcPTOACm4>

Belt Squats with Kettlebells / Underground Strength Coach.com

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mfjs99e3i0Q>

Hip Belt Squat Garage Gym Training

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LUL7-1RXsbk>

WITH LANDMINE

Straddle Hip Belt Squats

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vBRUqmJrGU>

KETTLEBELL SQUATS

Kettlebells are versatile training tools and it's great to get creative with them. Here's something a little bit unconventional that should give you more ideas for your kettlebell squatting. Check it out!

Do You Even Kettlebell Squat Bro?!? 14 Squat Variations

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jku4gGIwuSo>

LEG EXTENSIONS

Jay Cutler's Leg Extension - Exercise #1

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1nLmWEGXpxc>

Tom Platz: Turn Pain into Power - Grow Through What You Go Through

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rzd_8YN6vtc

Tom Platz Squats 500lbs for 23 reps

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f7w7pcgYA3o>

Tom Platz Muscle Camp - Legs

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8fulA0RGzDU>

LEG PRESS

1. Single Leg Press | How-To Exercise Tutorial

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZYDTJaAM-gE>

2. Paused Leg Press

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uPCqdOUTp4>

3. Banded Leg Press

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iYyqJ2vrxmI>

CORE EXERCISE (UNWEIGHTED)

How To Do A Turkish Get-Up

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xia-NN7XWoM>

3 SQUAT VARIATIONS

Hatfield Overload Squats for Hypertrophy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-ko97lnlmk>

380K: Karlsen Squat x 4

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i7jGg_0WGFo

**T-Nation - Lost Lifts for Complete
Strength: Steinborn Squat**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uSNUXbfHj
uQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uSNUXbfHjuQ)

Conclusion

We hope you've enjoyed going on this journey of squats with us through these pages! It is our sincere desire that you select and practise any of the routines outlined in this book that suit you best, and do it consistently for at least 4 weeks.

We think you will be pleased with the results and that you'll enjoy the physical, emotional and mental gains so much that you'll keep going for another 8 weeks.

At 12 weeks you will likely find a new habit-forming mechanism kicking in – then you'll never look back!

We'd love to know how you get on, so don't hesitate to drop us a line via email: info@keepfitkingdom.com or contact us via Facebook, Instagram or Twitter which is: @keepfitkingdom for all three. Thank you and connect soon!

Authors' Bios

Raj Khedun

Raj from London, England is an avid health, fitness, yoga and well-being enthusiast.

A vegetarian for over 20 years, he's also a relationship coach and just a passionate guy who's excited to make a difference in the lives of others and committed to see Keep Fit Kingdom's mission fulfilled.

He believes that we must raise awareness with a heady mix of motivation, practical steps, positivity, and encouragement to help people reach 100 years of age happily to realize the healthiest version of themselves.

In his spare time he enjoys reading, martial arts, philosophy, movies, mentoring and networking with like-minded, positive people eager to fulfil their potentials and make dreams happen!

Alan Riseborough

Alan from England, is a strength and muscle enthusiast that has been passionate about weightlifting since he picked up his first dumbbell at 15 years-old.

During his 30 years in the iron game, he's been a keen competitor in strength sports including powerlifting, arm wrestling and strongman.

Alan enjoys reading, horror films, and travelling - that is, when he's not figuring out how to lift heavy objects!

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