

How to Squat

Everyone knows the basic movement of squatting, but it's extremely important to maintain proper form in order to reduce the risk of injury and the stress on your lower back. Here are some pointers!

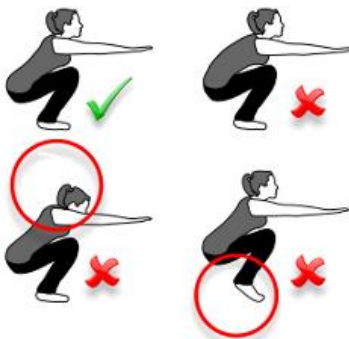
Just bodyweight

Stance: You can either fold your hands over your chest, mummy-style, or hold them out in front of you. Place your feet shoulder-width apart; the wider the feet are the less your knees will flex forward. The majority of your weight should be on the heel/midfoot.

Step 1: *'Reset your air'* by getting another big belly breath prior to squatting down. Keep your eyes forward.

Step 2: Stay tall and keep your torso long. Start by hinging your hips slightly back and pushing your knees apart as you pull yourself downward with your hips. Bending your knees should follow. The angle of your spine/torso will be the same as your lower legs.

Step 3: You'll know you're at the bottom of your squat when your thighs are parallel to the floor, or if your bum starts to "tuck in". Once you reach the bottom, reverse the movement and push powerfully back to your initial stance.



Using a bar

Step 1: Setup directly under the bar; with the bar centered and your hands spaced evenly. Pull your hands in as close to your shoulders as possible to create tension in the upper back.

Step 2: Drive your body into the bar while you squeeze the bar as hard as you can with your hands. Drive your elbows downward until they are pointed at the ground and squeeze your shoulder blades together and downwards. The bar should be at collarbone level if you're holding it in front, or at the base of the neck if you're loading it behind.

Step 3: Take a huge breath and hold it. Lift the bar off the rack and take one step back with each foot. You'll want to minimize the number of steps you take and perfect your step back technique. This will be critical for heavier squats—you don't want to be shuffling around with your feet when the heavy bar is on your back!

Step 4: Continue with the same technique as your bodyweight squat.

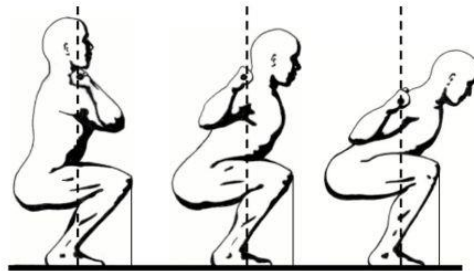


Figure 2-31. Bar position ultimately determines back angle, as seen in this comparison of the front squat, the high-bar squat, and the low-bar squat. Note that the bar remains balanced over the mid-foot in each case, and this requires that the back angle accommodate the bar position. This is the primary factor in the differences in technique between the three styles of squatting.

Source: Legh, B. (2015, January 14). Lab #1- Strength and Power Development through the Core Lifts. *KIN 303 Strength and Conditioning*. Lecture conducted from University of British Columbia, Vancouver.

Images: <http://hexaneandheels.tumblr.com/post/8143435968/how-to-squat-with-proper-technique-if-you-are>