



Have you ever gone to the gym and thought, *what am I supposed to do?* We get it. The gym – the people, machines, and a multitude of options – can make “being fit” all too intimidating and therefore, it’s easy to give up.

But, here’s some good news: there’s one exercise that you can make your default movement any and every day of the week. That movement is the glorious squat. I personally believe that there is no better movement than the squat (unless it’s something combined with a squat).

Perform **each** exercise a total of **three** (3) times each day, not necessarily in a row, but sometime throughout the day. **Before** starting – read the entire article.

30 Day Squat Challenge

Day 1	5 Squats	Day 11	22 Squats	Day 21	15 Squats
Day 2	8 Squats	Day 12	REST DAY	Day 22	20 Squats
Day 3	10 Squats	Day 13	15 Squats	Day 23	25 Squats
Day 4	REST DAY	Day 14	20 Squats	Day 24	REST DAY
Day 5	12 Squats	Day 15	25 Squats	Day 25	30 Squats
Day 6	14 Squats	Day 16	REST DAY	Day 26	33 Squats
Day 7	15 Squats	Day 17	30 Squats	Day 27	35 Squats
Day 8	REST DAY	Day 18	32 Squats	Day 28	REST DAY
Day 9	18 Squats	Day 19	35 Squats	Day 29	40 Squats
Day 10	20 Squats	Day 20	REST DAY	Day 30	50 Squats

***** Perform each day’s exercise a total of 3 times throughout the day.**

(Heads up: This article will primarily discuss doing squats with your own body weight, which are sometimes called “air squats”. However, the following principles also apply to squats with weights if performed correctly.)

Squats are an innate human function

The first and most important reason why squats are important is that squats are *natural*. Did you know that you squat multiple times a day? Sitting, standing, and using the restroom all require you to squat. If you want to be a functional human being, it would be a good idea to keep one of your most basic movements in strong working order. The more that you build your squatting muscles, i.e. your quads, hamstrings, calves, and abs, the longer you'll be able to function normally and even optimally.

Squats increase your mobility and balance

If you're out of practice, trying to sink into a full-depth squat might not feel very good, or even be possible at this point. That's okay. You're just a little rusty. When you don't practice the squatting movement, your muscles and joints get tighter and less mobile.

This probably wasn't the case when you were a young child. If you observe children, they naturally squat to full depth with an ease that'll make you jealous. But once children hit kindergarten and start sitting in chairs more often, their natural flexibility begins to diminish.

That said, it's possible to get back to our original squatting ability. Do a little each day. If you can't get all the way down to parallel as in the image to the left, you can use a chair, medicine ball, or some other stable object that can assist you. Make sure not to use the assistance of your hands though, as this will defeat the point of strengthening your legs. Try to go down a little further each day. Before you know it, you'll be all the way down to parallel and beyond.

Squats increase your circulation

A study published in the American Heart Journal states that “squatting from the standing position increases arterial blood pressure, cardiac output, and “central blood volume” in normal subjects”.

Simply put, squatting gets the blood moving around your body in a more efficient manner. Good blood circulation is imperative to good health because blood carries oxygen to the brain and all other parts of the body. Poor circulation can lead to diabetes, thyroid disease, hypertension, and obesity.

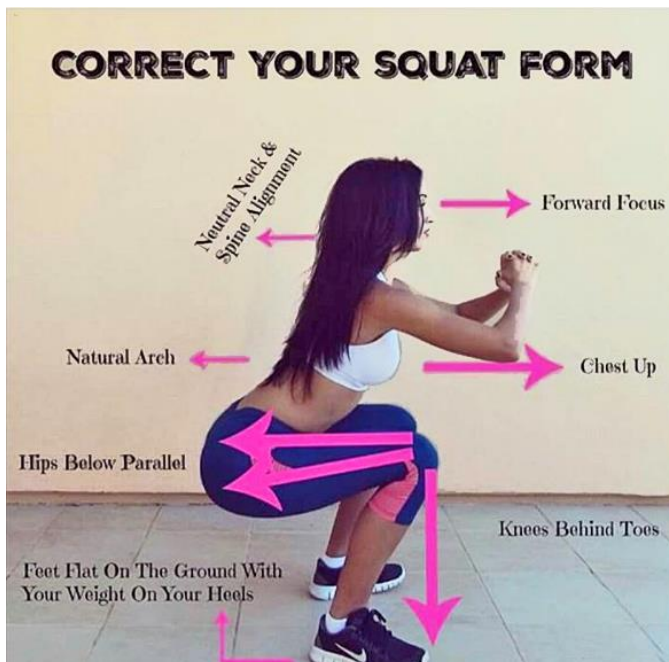
Squats can strengthen your legs and the rest of your body

Squats have the unique ability to encourage muscle development in your entire body. Because squatting is a compound moment that recruits about 70% of your body's muscle mass, natural testosterone, growth hormones, and other anabolic (building) hormones are released acutely. These natural anabolic hormones are secreted for the purpose of helping your body build muscle. So, don't neglect your squats because it's a natural way to boost your ability to build muscle. This is especially the case when you do squats under a heavy weight.

Squats burn fat

When you step into most gyms, you'll see rows and rows of cardio machines: treadmills, ellipticals, recumbent bikes, and so on. Each of these machines has a "Fat Burning" feature on it. We generally associate fat burning with these kinds of cardiovascular activities, but in squats, you actually also gain the benefit of burning a large number of calories while doing the movement. Not only that, you get the added

benefit of burning more calories even after the movement is finished.



This fact is connected to our previous point about muscle gain. It's been shown that adding one pound of muscle contributes to burning 50 more calories per day. Doing squats is one of the best ways to pack on the muscle.

If you were to gain ten pounds of muscle, you could passively be burning an additional 500 calories per day.

How to Do A Proper Squat

As discussed in the article above, the squat is an essential movement of life. Our bodies are anatomically designed to squat and the ability to do it well can improve your athletic ability, flexibility, and the strength of your entire body, especially your knees, back, and hips.

MAINTAIN PROPER FORM

If your form is getting sloppy, **stop...** come back another day. While not backed by scientific proof, assume one bad squat negates 10 good ones!

Some have said that squatting is dangerous, or that you shouldn't squat beyond 90 degrees. If so, the question is, "Then how do you get off the ground?" It's not possible, or at least very difficult, to get up without bending your knees further than 90 degrees!

Here, we're primarily talking about bodyweight or "air squats," but the same principles still apply to squats using weights.

The reason why people give these strange precautions is that they've witnessed what can happen when you squat poorly, with bad form or too much weight, or they're just misinformed. In this article, I outline some basic principles that will make your squats safe, efficient, and beneficial for all parts of your body. I've included two descriptions below. The first is just the quick rundown of a squat and the second is an extensive description of how to achieve a perfect squat. I hope this is helpful.

A simple squat how-to:

1. Start with your feet about shoulder-width apart.
2. Tighten your core and prepare to keep your back in a solid, straight position.
3. Push your butt back and then down.
4. Keep your weight in your heels and do not allow them to leave the ground.
5. Your core should be engaged the entire time with your shoulders back.
6. Slowly descend until the crease of your hip is below your knee joint.
7. Ascend straight up without moving forward. Continue to keep your weight in your heels.



8. Stand as tall as possible while squeezing your glutes and thighs.
9. Repeat with control. (Squats are not to be done rapidly or with weights until you master the basic body functions.)

For those really interested in the mechanics, here's an even more detailed squat how-to:

- 1) Start with your feet about shoulder-width apart and your toes slightly facing outward.
- 2) Keep your head in a neutral position, looking slightly above parallel.
- 3) Do not look down at all; the ground should only be in your peripherals.
- 4) Seek to keep your spine in a neutral position. If anything, a slight curve in your lower spine is acceptable.
- 5) Keep your abs and midsection very tight.
- 6) Push your butt back and then down.
- 7) Your bent knees should not go past your toes.
- 8) Do not let your knees swing between your feet. Keep your heels on the ground for the entire movement.
- 9) Stay off the balls of your feet; remember to keep your entire feet firmly planted to the ground.
- 10) As you descend, lift your arms out and up.
- 11) Keep your torso extended.
- 12) From a side view, your head should not show that it's either forward or backward. It should line up straight with your spine.
- 13) Keep your back tight and straight at the bottom. There should be no rounding of the back. This will keep your back in the safest position possible.
- 14) Stop descending when the fold of your hip is below the knee joint and parallel with your thigh.
- 15) Squeeze your glutes and hamstrings and rise without any leaning forward or shifting of balance.
- 16) Return to the upright position with exactly the same movements you used to descend.
- 17) Use every muscle you can think of as you do this movement; there should be no uninvolved part of the body.
- 18) Upon rising, without moving your feet, exert pressure to the outside of your feet as though you were trying to separate from the ground beneath you.
- 19) Finally, end the squat by standing as tall as you possibly can.

Ready to squat?