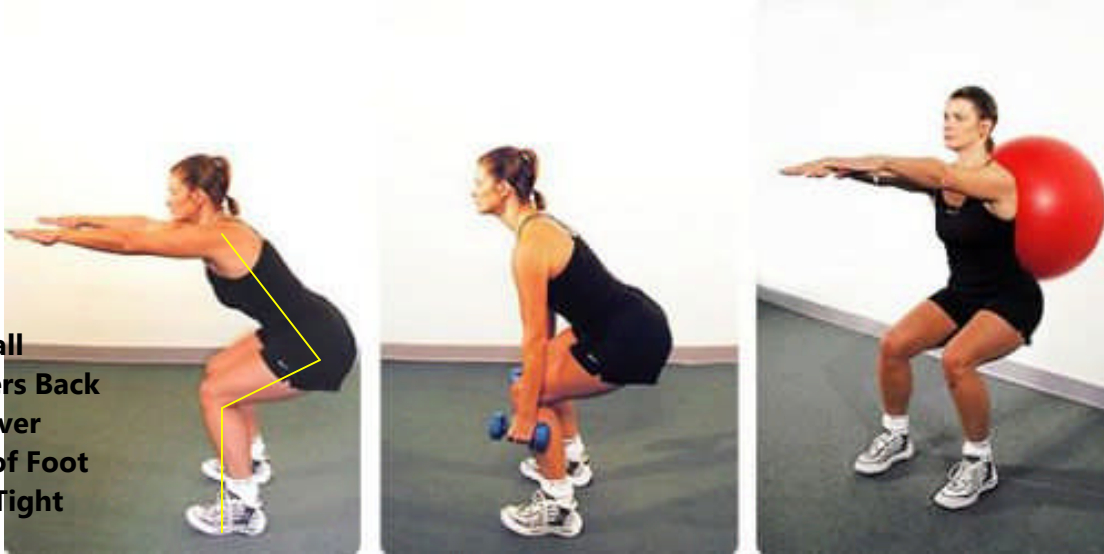


# Squats

[www.myfitnessarticles.com](http://www.myfitnessarticles.com) © 2009

- **Chest Tall**
- **Shoulders Back**
- **Knees over Center of Foot**
- **Core is Tight**



**Benefits of the Squat:** Every muscle works when you Squat: legs move the weight, abs & lower back stabilize, upper-back stays tight, arms squeeze the bar, etc. The Squat is a full body exercise.

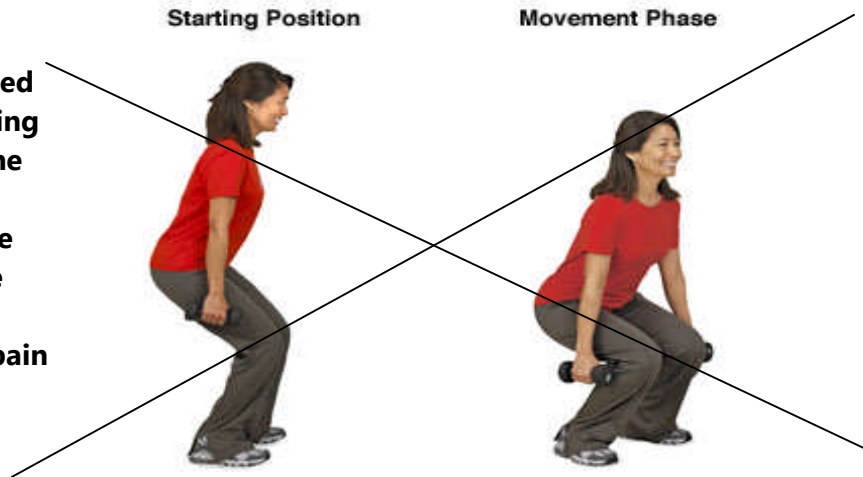
- **Builds Muscle.** You can use heavy weight when doing the Squat. Heavy weight means more stress. This stress causes a hormonal response: increased testosterone levels. Meaning more muscle.
- **Leg Strength.** Squats strengthen your legs by working them through a full range of motion. This helps all sports but also daily activities. No more bending over to pick up an object, you can just Squat.
- **Hip Flexibility.** While you need hip flexibility for Squats, once you have this flexibility, doing Squats maintains it.
- **Knee Stability.** Squats done with proper technique, with the bar coming below parallel, strengthen your knees.

**Squatting Down:** All muscles are *activated* & ready to Squat. Key to the Squats is the hips.

- **Hips Back.** Think sitting on your toilet or a fitness ball. Hips go back first, way back. If you can't, you probably have tight hamstrings.
- **Knees over Toes.** Don't let your knees travel forward in the bottom Squat position. Knees over the toes, not further.
- **Knees Out.** Never allow your knees to buckle in. It can cause knee injury. Push your knees out.
- **Hit Parallel.** Your hip joint must come lower than your knee joint. Ask someone to judge your depth or tape yourself. No Partial Squats.

## What a Bad Squat Looks Like: Causes pain in the lower back, hips and knees

- **Core is not engaged**
- **Lower back is taking on the stress of the body weight**
- **Knees are over the toes causing knee pain**
- **She is smiling in pain**  
☹️



**Squatting Up.** Your hip muscles are stretched when you hit parallel. Use that stretch to bounce from the bottom. DO NOT relax your hip muscles & DO NOT bounce off your knees. Keep your hip muscles tensed.

- **Hips Up.** If your hips come forward, your knees will also come forward. Drive your hips up straight out of the bottom.
- **Squeeze Your Glutes.** Power comes from the glutes. Squeeze your glutes as hard as you can while driving your hips up.
- **Push From the Heels.** Curl your toes up if needed. Don't let your heels come off the floor. Push from the heels.
- **Knees Out.** Same as for the way down: don't let your knees buckle in. Push your knees out.

### Common Squat Problems:

- **Lower Back Rounds.** Keep your chest up & do the Squat Stretch. Read why your lower back rounds during Squats & how to fix it.
- **Leaning Forward.** Happens when your hips go up faster than your shoulders. Read how to avoid leaning forward on Squats.
- **Bent Wrists.** Will cause wrist pain once the bar gets heavy. Support the weight with your back muscles, not with your wrists.
- **Knees In.** You have weak and/or tight hip muscles. Do the Squat Stretch & actively push your knees out on every rep.
- **Knees Forward.** Move from the hips: hips back when Squatting down, hips up – not forward – when squatting up.
- **Heels off the Floor.** Puts stress on your knees & impairs stability. Curl your toes up and push from the heels.