

5 WAYS TO POWER UP YOUR

Squat

Raise your squatting game with these form tips

- 1 'Ground your feet,' says strength coach Phil Learney (phillearney.com). 'Plant your feet shoulder-width apart and dig your heels into the ground, with the entire soles of your feet in contact with the floor at all times to keep you balanced and able to generate force.'
- 2 'Rest the bar on the back of your shoulders, gripping it firmly and pulling it down to make it feel heavier before you step out of the rack. This ensures your lats are stabilising your back and your abs are engaged to support the move.'
- 3 'Before you squat, get your head up and properly arch your lower back. Strive to keep this arch, which will prevent you from rounding your back. It helps if you focus on keeping your elbows underneath the bar to keep your chest up and enable you to maintain the correct posture.'
- 4 'Always squat below horizontal. Stopping at 90° is awful because the knee is most unstable in this position. Push your knees out as you drive up to keep everything in alignment.'
- 5 'Breathe out forcefully as you lift. Take a deep breath when you're standing to help brace your torso and core and, as you drive up, exhale hard to help punch the weight back up.'



Plan for perfection

Build a training plan that guarantees results with this expert advice



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<p>Q Why is it important to plan each workout session?</p>	<p>A written plan helps you to define the goals you want to achieve from your training. You can chart your progress, refine your objectives on a daily basis and easily redesign the plan if your goals change.</p>	<p>Following a routine is essential for steady progression. Constantly changing exercises at random won't give the body time to adapt. Workout plans also ensure progress because the work done should become more intense over time.</p>	<p>Planning each session cultivates motivation and keeps you on track to meet your goals. Share your plan with a training partner and follow it together so you keep each other honest and motivated.</p>
<p>Q What common failing could a proper plan fix?</p>	<p>Using poor technique because of a lack of mobility work. Plan some dynamic stretches before a workout as they can help you to perfect lifts. Try T press-ups (press-ups with rotation) for the upper body and bodyweight squats for the lower body.</p>	<p>If they don't focus, people do not exercise hard enough. To initiate a change, such as increasing muscle mass, a significant stimulus is required. Taking the easy route won't stress the muscles. Follow a plan to ensure you stay intense and focused.</p>	<p>Your plan should have a reminder not to hit the showers after the final set. People don't stretch enough and even when they do it tends to be half-hearted. Stretching increases performance and prevents injury – it's so important.</p>
<p>Q What should I remember when planning my workout?</p>	<p>Testosterone levels deplete after 45 minutes of training, so aim to complete your most intense work during that window, with a warm-up and cool-down either side.</p>	<p>Have a firm idea of how many sets and reps you are doing for each exercise. If you start to become fatigued, it's better to drop the weights slightly and complete a full set rather than giving up.</p>	<p>An effective workout is suitable, specific and safe. Your ability level will determine the intensity of your workout, so design your plan with suitable goals in mind. Start small and work your way up to minimise any risk of injury.</p>

For more ways to improve your squat go to mensfitness.co.uk/links/squattips