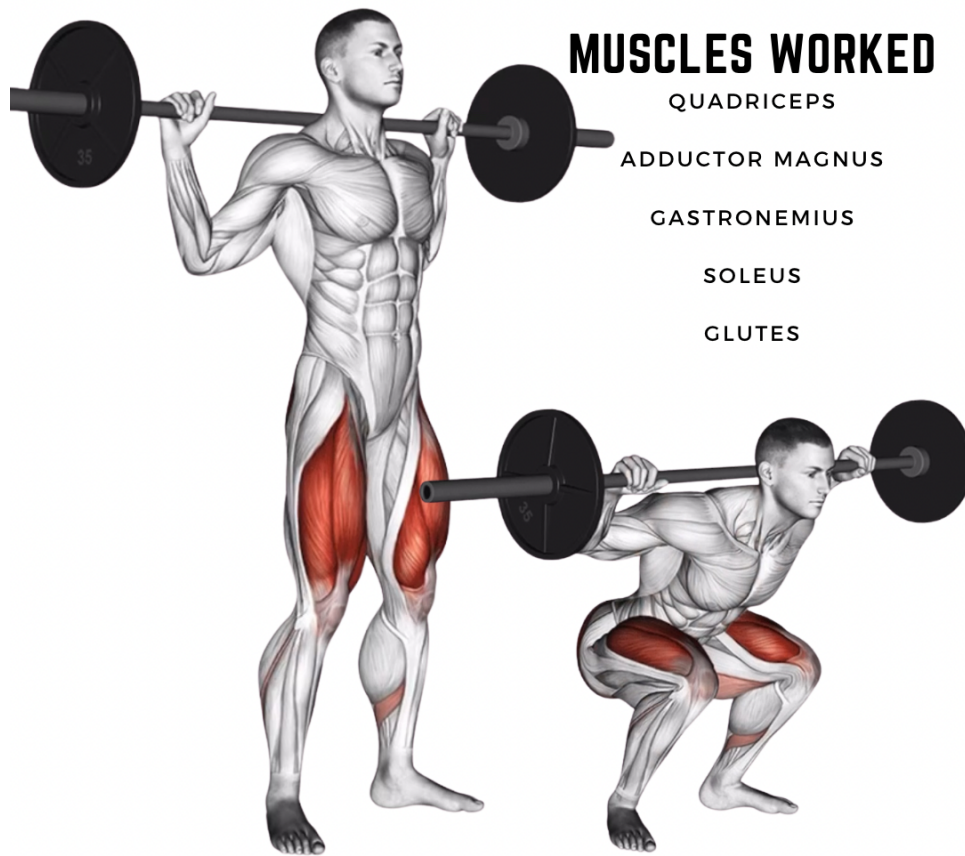


## HOW TO PERFORM A BARBELL SQUAT



1. Start with the barbell on a rack, placed just below shoulder height.
2. Move underneath the bar so it's resting behind the top of your back and grip the bar with your hands wider than shoulder-width distance apart, arms facing forward.
3. Stand up to bring the bar off the rack. You may need to step back slightly.
4. With your feet shoulder-width distance apart and chest up, squat down until your hips are below your knees.
5. Press feet firmly into the ground and push your hips back to stand up.
6. Do 3-5 reps — depending on the weight of the bar and your fitness level — and then slowly step forward to replace the bar on the rack.

## **COACHING QUEUES**

### **1. Don't drop your chin**

Before you lower into the back squat, pick a point on the wall in front of you and focus on it. Keep looking at that point as you lower and then drive back up. This will help you avoid dropping your chin towards your chest, which encourages unhelpful movement in your upper spine that will cause you to hunch forwards and make it more difficult to complete the lift once you fatigue towards the end of the set. You might also want to avoid staring yourself out in the mirror because that can be distracting.

### **2. Get your chest up**

If you want to lift as much weight as possible and reduce your risk of injury, keep your chest up throughout the move. If you drop your chest, your spine will flex (bend forwards) and that's not a great thing when you have a heavy load on your back. One thing that will help you keep your chest in the right place is taking a deep breath before you lift and holding the air in your lungs as you lower. Once you begin to rise from the bottom position and are in control of the lift, you can exhale as you return to the start position.

### **3. Keep your knees in line with your toes**

Plant your feet roughly shoulder-width apart with your toes turned out slightly at a "10 to two" position. Bend at the knees and hips simultaneously to lower your backside towards the ground and as you lower, keep your knees in line with your toes. It doesn't matter if your knees go over your toes, but you do want to avoid letting them turn inwards. You can spread your knees slightly at the base of the lift to open your hips and sit lower, then squeeze them back in to initiate the upwards movement.

### **4. Heels flat on the floor**

Your weight should be on your heels and mid-foot throughout the lift. If you go onto the balls of your feet, you're in a weaker position that puts extra pressure on your knees. One reason people struggle to keep their heels down is because they have tight hamstrings, so stretch these muscles by squatting down with your back against a wall and hugging your knees to your chest. It doesn't matter if your spine curves because,

in this instance, you're not carrying external load. The aim here is getting depth.