

The Safety Squat *Revisited*

The many uses of this popular BFS training tool

If there's one universal truth about strength and conditioning coaches, it's that they love new toys. Suspension cables, want them. Kettlebells, got to have them. Fiber optic knee ligament stabilizers – don't know what the heck they are, but we need at least two. Some of these devices have value, and some are little more than novelties that soon will be tossed aside and forgotten. But there is one simple training device that has stood the test of time and should be a part of every coach's training toolbox. It's called the Safety Squat.

The Safety Squat was invented nearly two decades ago by Bernard Ivie, whose son Conrad won the BFS Athlete of the Year in 2001, and Mike Miller. The device weighs less than a pound, comes with a 9-volt battery, and is designed with a high-impact casing to protect the circuitry. After seeing thousands of these in action over the past two decades, we can guarantee its durability.

To use the device for the squat the athlete secures the elastic strap, which is attached to the casing, around their thigh and flips a switch to turn it on. When the athlete reaches a position where their legs are parallel to the floor, the device will beep and light up – if the squat is too high, no beep and no light. It provides instant feedback about the performance of the exercise.

The BFS Standards of Excellence

BFS has based its high school strength standards for the squat on a parallel depth or slightly below it. If an athlete squats three inches high with 500 pounds, not a whole lot is really happening and the athlete is missing out on the benefits of this great exercise. (Note: A more detailed discussion about the squat is provided in our position paper on the squat, which is available via a free download in the archive section of our website, biggerfasterstronger.com.)

We know that reaching parallel is key to successfully performing the squat, but the issue is how to judge parallel. During our clinics and certifications, we use a simple test to help athletes and coaches determine the proper depth. It's called the marble test.

If an athlete were to place an imaginary marble (or dowel) on the middle of the top of the thighs during their deepest squat position, which way would the marble roll? If the marble would roll towards the knees, the athlete is not squatting low enough. If the marble would stay stationary or roll towards the lifter's hips, the depth is fine. Using this standard, what you'll find is that the bottom of the thighs has to be *below* parallel at the bottom of the squat. The marble test is the best way to judge the depth of a squat, and



The BFS Safety Squat – it beeps at parallel!



The device is lightweight and can be attached to the upper thigh, as demonstrated by Ashley Gibson, and to the upper arm, as demonstrated by Jordon Cedarstrom.

the BFS Safety Squat duplicates what happens during the marble test. It's even more accurate to use the Safety Squat, which is completely objective.

The Upper Body Difference

The name Safety Squat is a bit of a misnomer – this is because the device can be used to ensure proper performance on dips and push-ups as well. The athlete simply straps the device to the back of an upper arm, and when the upper and lower arms form a 45-degree angle, it will beep and light up.

And as with the parallel squat, the BFS Safety Squat will ensure that the muscles are worked properly in dips – doing a quarter lift will not accomplish much except to strengthen an ego. Further, when these tests are used in physical education classes, the device



The BFS Safety Squat can be used for training and testing upper body exercises such as push-ups. Shown left to right are Janae Gardner, Lusila Angilau, Andrea Hammond and Lindly Fernandez.

ensures that all students are tested objectively – you can't fool the Safety Squat!

Strength training gimmicks will come and go, but after 20 years of success and countless testimonials from

those who have purchased it, we can assure you that the BFS Safety Squat is not a toy or a fad. It's an essential tool that will ensure the high standards of testing and performance on several important exercises. **BFS**

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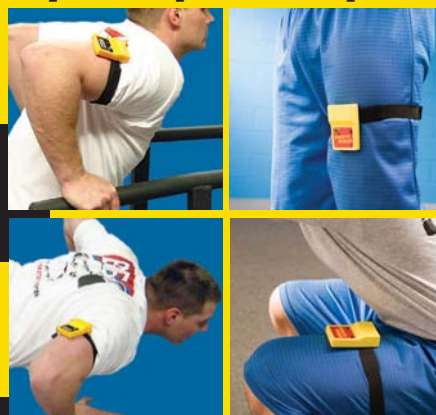
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The BFS Safety Squat helps athletes get the most from their workouts by encouraging perfect technique in squats, push-ups and dips.



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