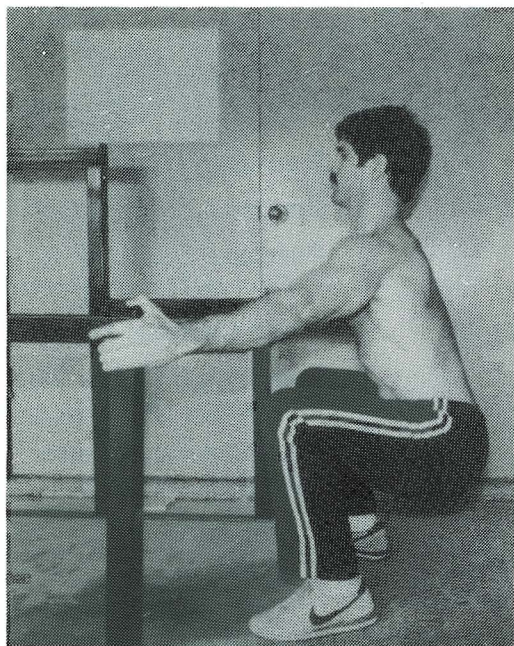
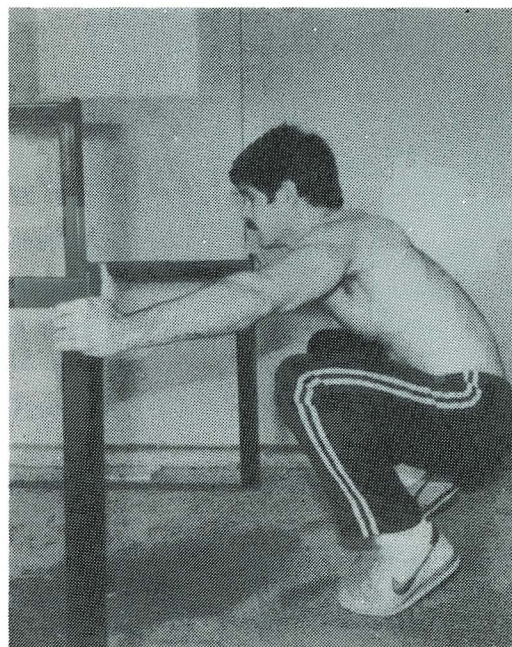


SQUAT CORRECTLY

Part 3 in a Series
by Dr. Greg Shepard



The Low Power Position



Incorrect Position

BEFORE EVERY SET: GET INTO THE LOW POWER POSITION!!

The squat is the King of all exercises for an athlete. It is important to attain a parallel or slightly below parallel position for developing the hamstrings for improving speed. Last issue emphasized getting into a proper "Power Position." Now to get the exact feel for squatting correctly we must get into the low power position.

The low power position is what an athlete should strive to attain when squatting. The athlete needs to hold on to something with both hands to get into this position. This is done for balance. The head should be level, the feet should be slightly wider than shoulder width, the toes should be pointed straight ahead or only slightly out. The lower back should be arched way in and I mean locked tightly in. The upper body should be in an upright position with the chest out. The thighs should be parallel or slightly below parallel. Finally, the most critical point in this whole procedure, is having the athlete do all of the above with his feet firmly planted **FLAT** on the floor.

If the athlete can do all of this correctly, he can now squat with the actual weight. Don't be surprised if your athlete's technique is perfect. Most athletes by using this technique will look like they have been squatting all their lives even though they're raw rookies with this lift.

Some readers may have heard that putting a board or plates under the heels is good for squatting, especially beginners. This is not true. This puts the bodyweight of the lifter forward on the toes. Besides being dangerous, you lose power. If you do not go through the low power position technique, then putting a board under the heels would help the athlete's balance. You see, beginners when squatting will often times raise their heels. A quick remedy was to put something under the heels. The best remedy is to assume a correct low power position, lock it in, feel it, remember it, and then you can do it perfectly and powerfully.

Some athletes will have a problem getting into this position correctly. The coach should physically push in on the lower back with one hand, pull back on the chest with the other and help the lifter keep an upright body position. Always look and make sure the heels are flat and the toes are not pointed out like a penguin.

If, after you've taught this, your athlete does not do it correctly the first time, *Don't* let him continue doing it wrong. Start over! There is no sense in practicing incorrectly. One last important point: Athletes should get into this low power position before every set for their entire lifting career. It always does two good things. First, it acts as a specific stretching exercise; and, two, it gets a lifter mentally and physically ready to squat correctly.

Next month's article will include proper hand and bar placement. Squatting correctly can make a huge difference in your total strength program. The entire BFS squatting technique is shown on the new video cassette: "The Core Program."