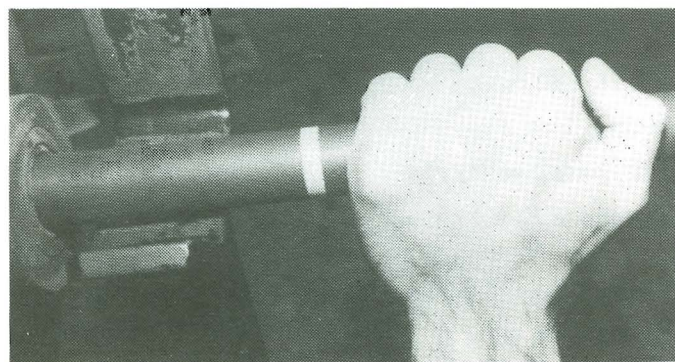
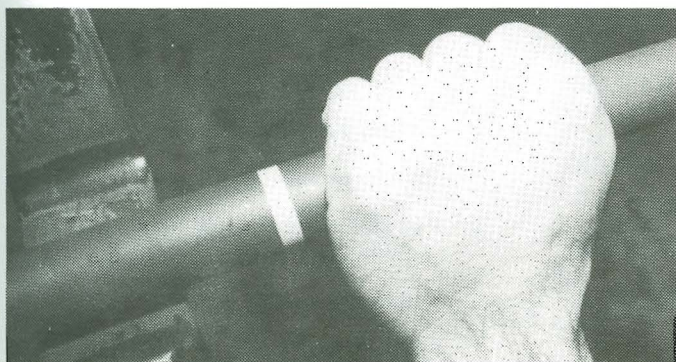


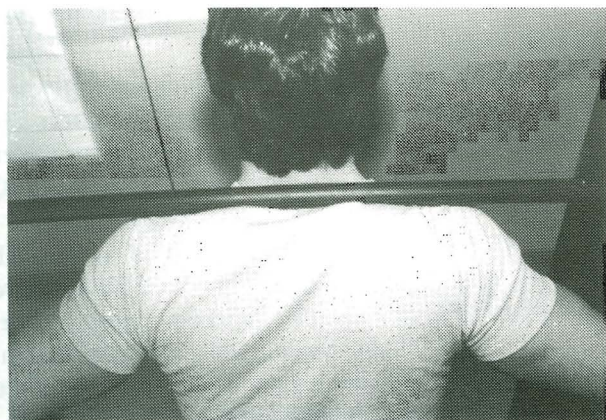
SQUAT CORRECTLY

Part 4 in a Series
by Dr. Greg Shepard



Line Up Hands Evenly First

This Thumb Position Prevents Slippage



Bar Placed Too High: Uncomfortable

This Lower Position Is Better

We will discuss in this article proper hand and bar placement. As discussed in previous articles, the squat is the king of all the exercises. Before attempting to squat, every athlete should demonstrate a proper power position and then assume a strict low power position. Then, and only then, is the athlete ready to approach the bar.

The first objective in placing the bar properly is getting each hand in the same relative position. Most bars will have lines about four inches from the inside collars. Use these lines as a reference point when placing the hands on the bar. A wider grip is preferable to a narrower grip. The bar will sit more comfortably on the shoulders with a wider grip. Even though the hand pictured above is inside the line, we recommend putting the 3rd or 4th finger on this line. The whole reason for lining up with precision is to insure perfect balance when placing the bar on the shoulders.

Now we are ready to place the bar on the shoulders. A very common mistake for athletes who squat is placing the bar too high on the shoulders. In fact, many

athletes place the bar right on the neck. This hurts. So they'll use a pad. For most athletes, this also affects proper balance for heavy squatting. The vast majority of athletes will squat more and more effectively with more comfort when the bar is placed lower on the shoulders as pictured. Only a very, very small percentage of athletes will be able to squat effectively with a high bar placement and this is because of structural differences in bone length and tendon-muscle attachments.

Sometimes athletes will have a problem with a bar slipping off their back when they try a lower bar placement. If this happens, simply place the thumb with the fingers as pictured in the top right illustration.

Most lifters, after learning this lower bar placement technique do not like to use any pads. Next month's article will include taking the bar off the rack and proper foot 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."