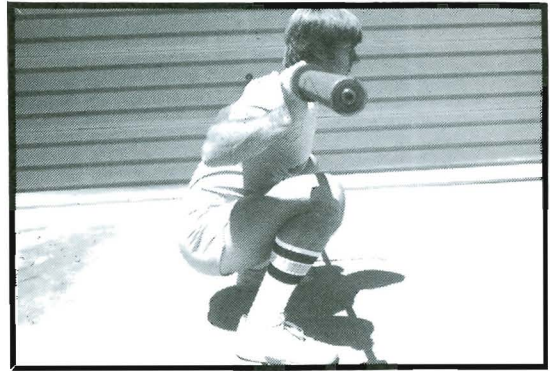


SQUAT CORRECTLY

Part 10 in a Series
by
Dr. Greg Shepard



Problem I: Knees In



Problem II: Too Low - Too Fast



Problem III: Knees Out



Problem IV: Knees Forward

Correct squatting techniques can actually strengthen the knee joint. We have maintained this for years. There is no dispute that squatting will make the leg muscles bigger and stronger. What is not commonly known is the fact that the ligaments can be made stronger and thicker. The tendons which connect the muscles to the bones surrounding the knee can be made thicker and stronger. In fact, the bone can also be made stronger and amazingly slightly bigger stemming from increased capillarization. Squatting correctly can also develop the ability of knee cartilage to withstand injury.

We realize some orthopedic surgeons relay their opinions to coaches and athletes that squats are bad for the knees. We recommend that coaches not argue with this opinion but just ask "Where's the research?" There is none; so that is usually the end of the discussion.

We have marvelled at the extraordinary reduction in knee injuries, as a result of squatting correctly especially in the sport of football. We feel that squatting correctly is like taking out an insurance policy. It stands to reason: if an athlete has a bigger, thicker and stronger muscle, ligament, cartilage, bone and tendon that same athlete will be less injury prone.

Dr. Mel Hayashi, an orthopedic surgeon specializing in sports medicine and joint replacement states,

"The way Coach Shepard teaches the squat is correct and will actually strengthen the knee joint." Dr. Hayashi sponsored a BFS Clinic in Thousand Oaks, California. He was also a Chief Orthopedic Surgeon at the '84 Olympic Games and has been the chief resident at the Mayo Clinic. However, we both agree if the squat is done incorrectly problems can occur which can produce a weaker and more injury prone knee joint as illustrated in the above photos.

Problems occur in the squat when the knees are out of perpendicular or vertical alignment.

Basically, a coach should look at the lower leg and knee to check for straightness from all angles. If the lower legs and knees flare IN, OUT or WAY FORWARD a problem will result. Not only does it place unwanted and possible dangerous pressure on knee ligaments; there is a loss of power. An athlete is just not as strong when the knee and lower leg are out of alignment. If an athlete accelerates fast and bounces at the bottom of an extreme low position with a heavy weight, this can also be dangerous. The correct style is to squat down always under control to a parallel or just slightly below parallel position.

In our next issue this topic will be discussed in further detail. The entire BFS squatting technique is shown on our video cassette, "The Core Program" (see opposite page).