

# A Closer Look at the 6 Absolutes

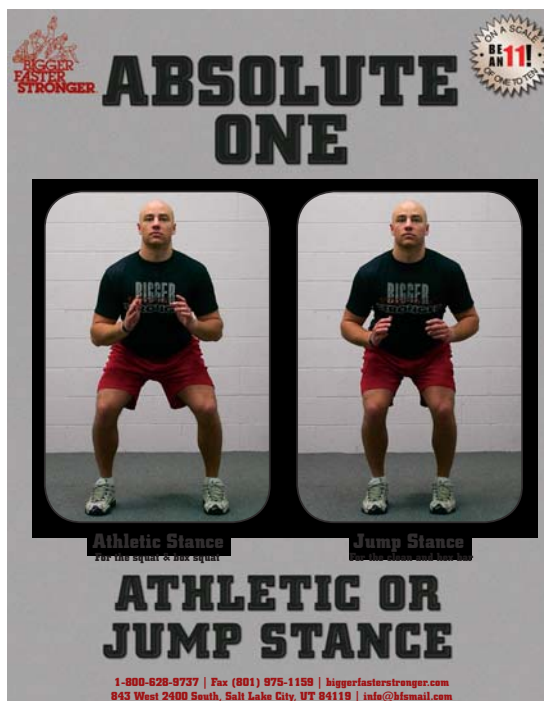
BFS's new training posters help teach and reinforce these valuable training principles

A key component of the BFS program is the BFS Six Absolutes. These are training principles that ensure good technique, not just in the weightroom but also in most sporting movements.

BY JOHN ROWBOTHAM, VICE PRESIDENT, BFS

**L**earn and practice the Six Absolutes and you can dramatically increase athletic performance and safety in the weightroom. The Six Absolutes also unify the training of multi-sport athletes, as all coaches will be using the same terminology when they teach. Because this is such a valuable coaching tool, BFS has recently developed a series of posters that summarize the concepts of the Six Absolutes.

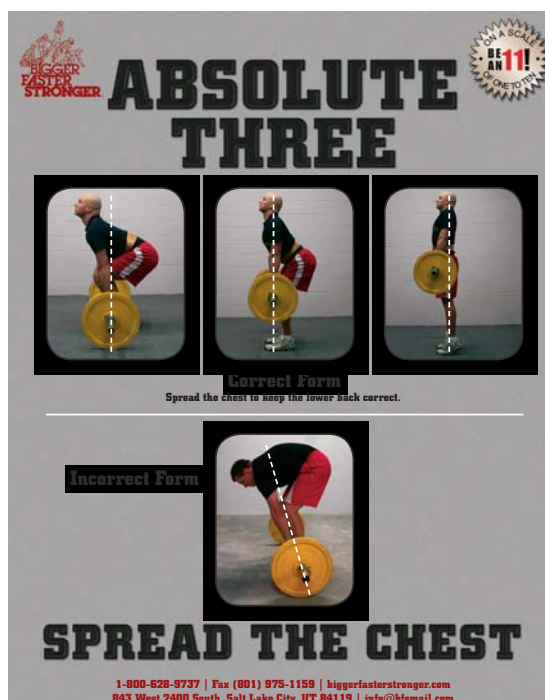
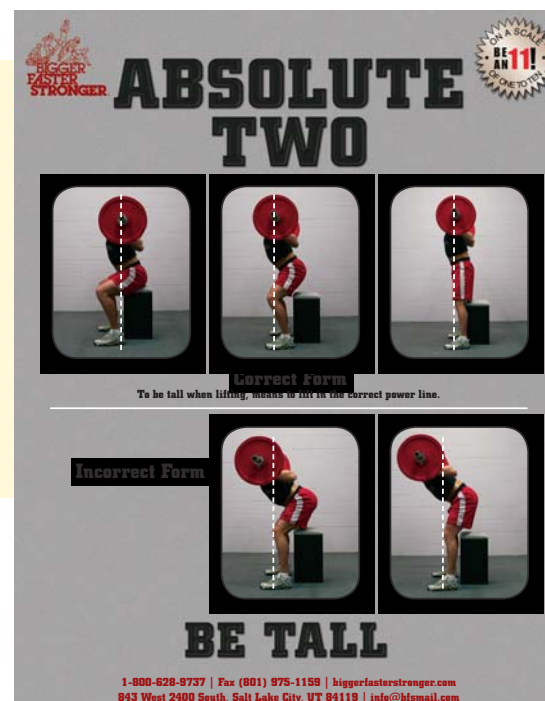
**The Six Absolutes.** This poster summarizes the key terms used in the Six Absolutes in the same order we teach them at our clinics: 1) Athletic or Jump Stance 2) Be Tall, 3) Spread the Chest, 4) Toes Aligned, 5) Knees Aligned, and 6) Eyes on Target. This should be the first poster an athlete sees in the weightroom.



**Absolute One:** Athletic or Jump Stance. When talking about stances, many coaches talk about moving the feet "about shoulder-width apart" or "narrower than hip-width." Instead, BFS uses the terms athletic stance and jump stance. The jump stance is used in jumping or when lifting from the floor with such lifts as the power clean or Hex bar deadlift. The athletic stance is the position athletes use to transfer to many sporting movements, such as when a linebacker is preparing to react to the movements of the offensive or when a baseball player prepares to swing at a ball. It is also a position in which we build strength, and so it is used in exercises such as the squat or box squat.

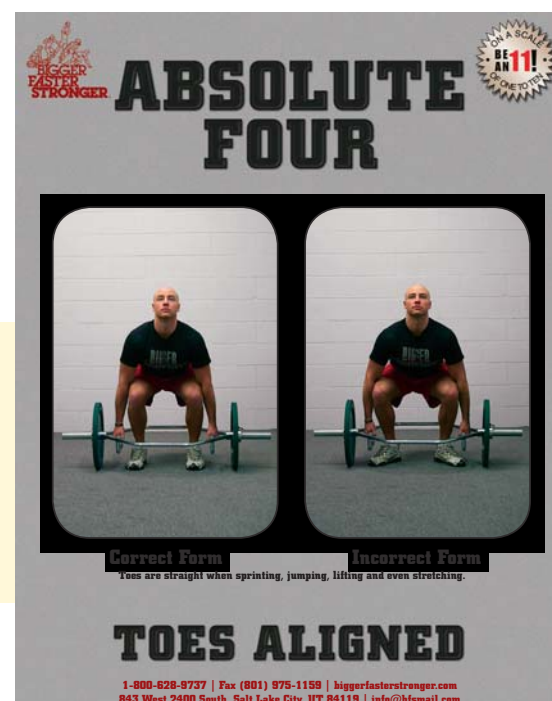


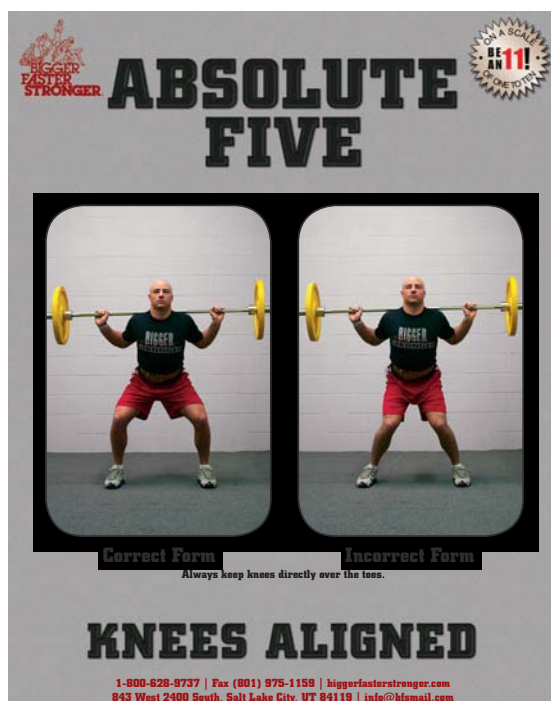
**Absolute Two:** Be Tall. Athletes need to be tall all the time, whether they are sitting, walking, sprinting, lifting or even stretching. You can't slump or lean forward outside your center of gravity and expect to lift safely or perform well on the athletic field. Being tall produces dramatic improvements in posture that will translate into better sport performance. Coaches often teach their athletes to "run tall," as this allows them to obtain the ideal posture to produce maximum speed. Our Be Tall poster shows how practicing this training principle ensures proper squatting technique by keeping the center mass of the barbell in line with the base of support, which is provided by the feet. The poster also shows that leaning forward and thereby shifting the weight in front of the toes creates pressure on the lower back that may cause injury.



**Absolute Three:** Spread the Chest. To protect the lower back and increase an athlete's power, it's important to reinforce the idea of "spreading the chest." Spreading the chest "locks in" the lower back, creating an arch that will transfer work to the lower back muscles rather than the ligaments. In our poster example you see how spreading the chest during the power clean enables the athlete to use the legs effectively in this exercise while keeping the spine in proper alignment.

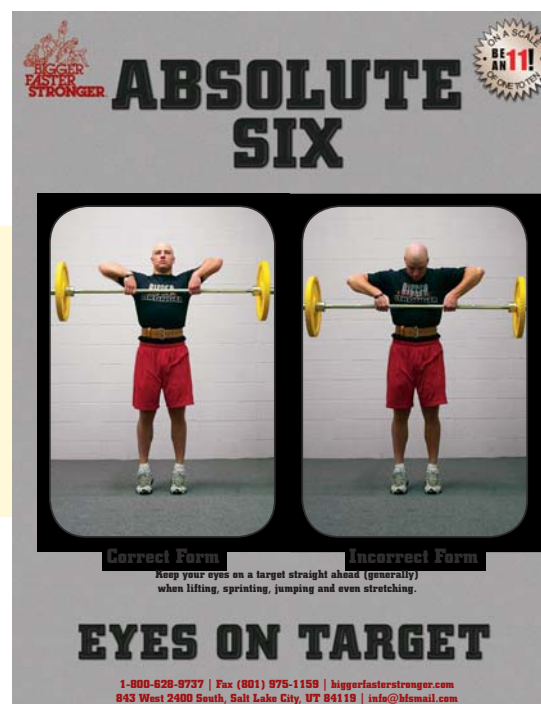
**Absolute Four:** Toes Aligned. Although this may seem like a minor point, it's a critical one to ensure proper technique in any sporting or lifting activity. Most athletes tend to use a "toes out" position because it gives great balance; but although this position may be fine in squatting, it should not be used in most applications. Pointing the toes outward rather than straight ahead will decrease running speed and the effectiveness of many important stretching exercises, such as the calf stretch.





**Absolute Five:** Knees Aligned. The knees must always be over the toes. If the knees are allowed to come inward out of alignment with the toes, the misalignment can cause injury. In our squatting example used in the poster, the photo shows how using incorrect form by allowing the knees to rotate inward and out of alignment with the toes places excessive pressure on the medial collateral (inside) ligament of the knee. Likewise, squatting with the knees too far outward places excessive stress on the lateral (outside) collateral ligament of the knee.

**Absolute Six:** Eyes on Target. Keeping the eyes on target is a great tool for teaching correct posture and athletic movements because it ensures that the head and spine are in proper alignment. In many cases, adhering to this principle can help avoid serious injury, such as when a football player drops his head during a tackle, a practice that can have catastrophic consequences. In the poster example of the power clean, not keeping the eyes on target will place excessive stress on the neck and will not allow the upper back muscles to be worked through their full range of motion.



**Bonus Poster:** The Power Line. Because it summarizes several of the Six Absolutes, we've created this bonus poster. The power line is an imaginary vertical line that runs straight through the athlete's center of mass. During lifting, an athlete will be able to generate maximum force in the safest manner by keeping the center of the mass of the barbell in the power line. As you can see, the power line utilizes four of the Absolutes, including Use an Athletic or Jump Stance, Be Tall, Spread the Chest, and Eyes on Target.



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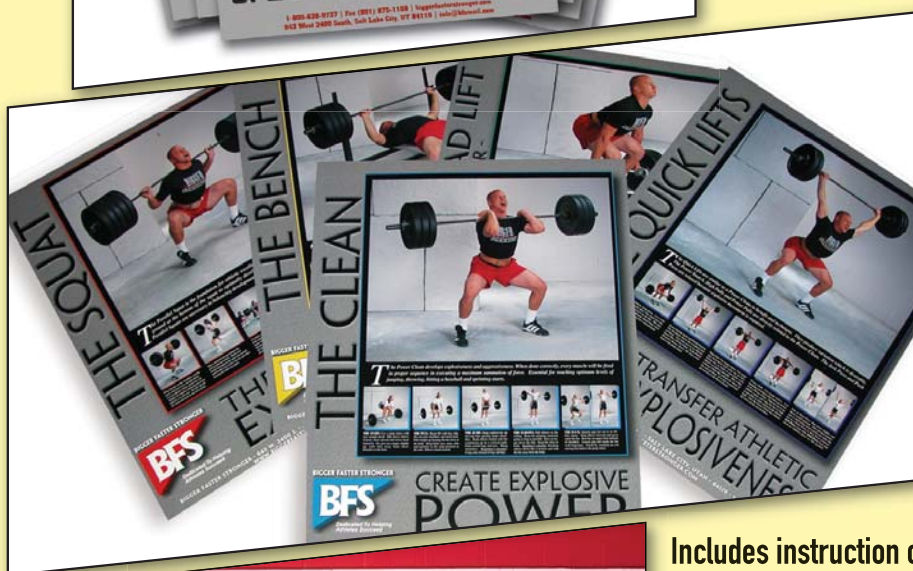
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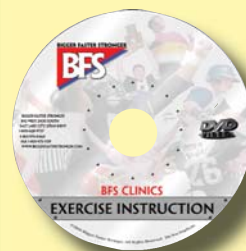
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