

Squat the King Lift

The squat is the king of all exercises. It builds strong legs and hips which helps in all sports, but of course, is an official power lift. The squat is the first lift contested and sets the tone for the rest of the meet. Without gear, when the squat goes up so does the pulls, power clean, power snatch and of course deadlift.

There are many forms of squatting. You can do both front and back squats. With technology, we have a Zercher squat harness, Bow Bar which has a 2" camber, a rackable cambered bar and a safety squat bar. The safety squat bar is also cambered when sitting on your back, Olympic style squat where the bar sits high on back and feet close together. A manta ray squat device sits higher on the back. My experience is all of these devices aid the deadlift more than the squat.

Belt squatting will build the leg muscles and save the back, plus acts as a traction device correcting pelvic tilt. Our favorite is the box squat. They are done at parallel or below. No need to do high box squatting when using jump stretch bands or chains. When box squatting, there is one way to do this and one way only. Box squatting causes one to relax then overcome the load dynamically, as well as the static load dynamically at the same time. Both are great for explosive and absolute strength. They are the safest squat because they are a leg curl to separate from the box.

Now the methods used at Westside, let's start on squat day which is on Friday. Here, we rotate three methods which are the dynamic method, the circa-max method and occasionally the max effort method. All are followed by the repetition method with special exercises. The Friday squat workouts should use a squat bar. We use the Mastodon squat bar sold exclusively at Elite Fitness by my good friend Dave Tate.

Other style bars can distort squatting form. They are to be used on max effort day which is 72 hours later or on Monday. First, the dynamic effort method will build a fast rate of force development and not absolute strength. This is because of the explosive strength deficit. The percents are up to 70% of a 1 rep max. This method is very important for sports and jumping development. We know the strongest lifter handles most weight and most often. So let's look how a powerlifter should train most of the year. Let's look at a 9 week cycle of dynamic efforts. The laws of physical training must be utilized one such law is continuous training. The percents should range from 55% to 68%. Each week move up 5% for a three week wave. Then, add more accommodating resistance with jump stretch bands or by adding chains.

This is for a 9 week dynamic cycle for 800 lbs squat with contest gear. For training, use strong briefs plus a suit down with no straps.

1. 405 x 12 sets of 2 reps; 2 sets of chains
2. 445 x 12 sets of 2 reps; 2 sets of chains
3. 480 x 10 sets of 2 reps; 2 sets of chains
4. 405 x 12 sets of 2 reps; 3 sets of chains

5. 445 x 12 sets of 2 reps; 3 sets of chains
6. 480 x 10 sets of 2 reps; 3 sets of chains
7. 405 x 12 sets of 2 reps; 4 sets of chains
8. 445 x 12 sets of 2 reps; 4 sets of chains
9. 480 x 10 sets of 2 reps; 4 sets of chains

Because we box squat and have a box squat max which should be about 700 box max for an 800 contest squat that is how we arrive at these approximate percents. If no gear is used, it would represent 50-60% of a 1 rep max.

By changing the type of accommodating resistance we can avoid the law of accommodation. This means by definition that a decrease in response of a biological object to continued stimulus (Zatsiorsky). Let's look at a second dynamic method that is used to a large extent. A 1000 lbs squatter would use a combination of band tension which equals 25% of 1000 lbs at the top. Let's not forget the virtual force effect. This is when the lifter comes in contact with the box at an over speed eccentric phase imposed by the downward pressure of the band tension. When velocity is increased so is kinetic energy.

- Week 1- 400 on a bar plus 250 band tension 10x2
- Week 2- 450 on a bar plus 250 band tension 10x2
- Week 3- 500 on a bar plus 250 band tension 10x2
- Week 4-550 on a bar plus 250 band tension 8x2
- Week 5-600 on a bar plus 250 band tension 8x2

The bar weight is waved from 40% to 60% plus 25% added at the top. A third cycle is the future method. The band is attached at the top of the power rack and reduces the load in the bottom of the lift. This is great for the intermediate lifters or ball players. 600 lbs max squat workout would look like this. The first 3 week wave is with light jump stretch bands® that unloads the bar 65 lbs in the bottom, the second 3 week wave uses an average jump stretch band® that unloads 95 lbs in the bottom. The third 3 week wave uses a strong jump stretch bands®. This means use 65 lbs over 50% the first week, 95 lbs the second week and 155 lbs on the third week of each wave.

600 Max

- Week 1-365 for 12 sets of 2 reps; 300 plus 65 lbs contrast
- Week 2-425 for 12 sets of 2 reps; 330 plus 95 lbs contrast
- Week 3-515 for 8 sets of 2 reps; 360 plus 155 contrast
- Week 4-6 Repeat a 3 week wave add 2 sets of 5/8" chains
- Week 7-9 Repeat a 3 week wave plus 3 sets of 5/8" chains

Note to remember: Complete 50% and add 65 lbs on the bar as that is what is unloaded with the light bands. Add 95 lbs to 55% as that amount is unloaded with average bands. On the third week wave at 60% add 155 lbs of additional bar weight to replace the unloading in the bottom.

We have covered 23 weeks of squatting. Of course it can vary with other types of strength development. One such strength is strength speed or slow strength. This will build absolute strength. To do this method use an equal or greater amount of band tension versus bar weight. The bands will slow the concentric phase greatly by accommodating resistance to a massive degree. So, at Westside we have made 600 lbs bar weight and 600 lbs of band tension. The eccentric phase is controlled to roughly .5 m/s. This should duplicate the speed on a top squat poundage on contest day. This cycle should not last longer than two weeks. Following the regimentation of A.S. Prilepins do no less than 4 and no more than 10 lifts with weights above 90%.

An 800 lbs squat strength speed cycle:

Week 1-Add 440 lbs of band tension and do
365x2 reps
385x2 reps
405x2 reps
425x1 rep

Week 2
365x2 reps
405x2 reps
430x1 rep
450x1 rep

As you can see by adding the 440 lbs of jump stretch bands® this referred to as the weight lifting methods. This is where 1 or 2 reps are used for repeated sets at near or max effort.

We have now discussed 25 weeks of squat workouts. The most important cycle is of course the contest cycle. It is preceded by 1 or 2 weeks speed or dynamic work. The contest cycle at Westside is known as the circa-max method. The last 2 weeks followed by a deload week the week before a meet. It is much like the strength speed phase but with a less amount of band tension.

A 1000 squat cycle

This is not hypothetical based on a current 1000 lbs squat

Week 1
420x2 reps plus 440 band tension
470x2 reps plus 440 band tension
520x2 reps plus 440 band tension
570x1 rep plus 440 band tension

Week 2
470x2 reps plus 440 band tension
520x2 reps plus 440 band tension

580x1 rep plus 440 band tension
610x1 rep plus 440 band tension P.R.

Week 3- 500x3 sets of 2 reps plus 200 lbs of band tension

Week 4-Contest

Since we started this system, first proven by the former Soviet Union weight lifters man across the world have duplicated the system with great success. The more weight used for box squatting the more gear can be used. When using bands correctly the tension in the bottom should be great. This will cause the eccentric phase to be at a greater speed than normal. At the contest with the 2 ply gear rule, the eccentric phase at the contest can be very slow. To no disturb your timing use your contest gear suit and briefs but not straps or knee wraps. I hope the notes about squatting can help you on your quest to the top.

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