Front Squat

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Starting Position
- Position a standard Olympic bar at chest level in a squat or power rack.
- Load bar evenly on both sides and secure weights with collars.
- Grasp the bar using a pronated grip slightly wider than shoulder width.
- Rotate the arms such that the bar can be evenly placed across anterior deltoids/clavicles.
- The back of the hands should be slightly outside the shoulders, located next to the bar resting on the deltoids.
- Lift the elbows up and forward (upper arms should be parallel or as close as possible to the floor) to increase the stability of the bar on the shoulders.
- Wrist should be hyperextended and elbows fully flexed.
- To lift the bar from the rack, extend the hips and knees and take 1–2 steps backward.
- Feet are between hip- and shoulder-width apart and pointing forward or just slightly outward.
- The back of the hands should be slightly outside the shoulders, located next to the bar resting on the deltoids.

Descent (Downward Movement)
- Initiate the exercise by slowly flexing the knees and hips.
- Descend with control.
- Maintain a flat back with a high elbow position.
- Avoid leaning forward or rounding the upper back during the descent phase.
- Keep the eyes focused straight ahead with the head erect.
- Keep the body weight centered over the heel and midfoot portion of both feet.
- The heels of both feet should remain in contact with the floor at all times throughout the descent.
- Keep the knees above or slightly in front of the ankles during the descent. Do not allow the knees to move in front of the feet.
- Continue the descent until the backs of the thighs are parallel to the floor, heels begin to lift off the floor, or the trunk begins to round or flex in a forward direction (Figure 2). The flexibility of the lower body will determine the actual depth of the descent.
- At the bottom position of the descent, avoid bouncing or increasing the rate of descent before beginning the ascent.
- Continue to hold the breath from the beginning of the descent.

TYPE OF EXERCISE: Lower body and multijoint
MUSCLES USED: Gluteus maximus, quadriceps (vastus lateralis, vastus intermedius, vastus medialis, rectus femoris), hamstrings (semimembranosus, semitendinosus, biceps femoris)
Ascent (Upward Movement)

- Lift the bar forcefully and with control by extending the knees and hips.
- Keep the back flat. Do not round the upper back or lean forward during the ascent.
- Arms should remain tight and head erect with eyes looking straight ahead.
- Push through the entire foot on both feet with weight evenly distributed from the heels to the toes to ensure the entire foot remains in contact with the floor.
- Keep the hips directly under the bar. Avoid having the body weight move toward the toes.
- Keep the knees positioned above to slightly in front of the ankles.
- Continue the ascent by extending the lower body joints at a consistent rate until the initial standing position is reached.
- Continue holding the breath from the beginning of the descent through the midpoint of the ascent, then exhale and breathe normally before beginning the descent of the next repetition.

Returning the Weight to the Rack

- At the completion of the set, return the barbell to the rack by slowly walking forward and returning the bar to the support hooks of the rack.

Variation (Front Square with Crossed-Arm Grip)

To perform the front squat with crossed-arm grip,

- Flex the elbows and cross the forearms in front of the chest.
- Position the bar evenly on the anterior deltoids without touching it with the hands.
- Once the bar is correctly placed, put both hands on top of the bar and utilize pressure from the fingers to keep it in position.
- This is an open grip because the thumb will not be able to encircle the bar due to the shoulders being in the way.