



## SPECIAL REPORT:

# "How To Master The King Of All Exercises And Squat Like A Champion..."



**By Andy Bolton**

If You Want To Get Strong And Build Muscular Legs - You Must Squat... Here's  
How To Do It The Right Way...

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**By Andy Bolton one of only 6 men to squat over 1200lbs in a Powerlifting Competition and the first man to ever Deadlift 1000lbs.**

The Squat has long been considered the **King of All Exercises** by many athletes and strength coaches.

What's more, it is one of the few things Powerlifters and Bodybuilders often agree on. The Squat is used by nearly everyone who is serious about building strength and muscle:

- **Weightlifters** often use the Back Squat and Front Squat to help increase the weight they can lift on their Clean and Jerk and Snatch
- **Athletes** who require more strength, speed and power often use the Squat to help them sprint faster, jump higher, throw further and punch and kick harder
- **Bodybuilders** use the Squat to build the muscle in their Hamstrings, Glutes and Quads
- **Weekend Gym Warriors** and guys (and girls) who do not compete in anything, but simply train at the gym to get stronger and leaner use the Squat to help them progress towards their goals
- And of course, **Powerlifters** practise the Squat because it's one of the 3 official Powerlifts and by increasing their Squat they increase their Total and very often their Deadlift too



However, the fact remains that a ton of people Squat with *terrible form* and this is usually true the less advanced the lifter is. If you want to reach your strength potential and minimise injury-risk as well as get strong, pay attention as I talk you through how to **Squat like a Champion**.

I'm going to share with you things I have spent *over 20 years* practicing and teaching to others (including both my training partners and clients). These are the very same things that have allowed me to Squat 1214lbs in the heat of competition, against some of the strongest men who have ever lived.

And make no mistake; **the squat helps the deadlift** in a big way.

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Before we jump into the meat of this article, there is one issue to clarify. And that is the issue of *Raw versus Equipped Squatting*.

A lot of people talk about Squat form as if it is the same regardless of whether or not you squat raw or equipped. This is a *mistake* because although there are more similarities than differences between the two styles; the differences are significant enough to warrant thinking about if you want to maximise your Squat as safely as possible.

For this reason I will describe the correct technique for **Raw Squatting** (when walking the bar out of the Squat Rack/Power Rack) first. This is for Raw Powerlifters, athletes, bodybuilders and guys who train just to be strong /weekend warriors. I will follow this with the correct technique for **Equipped Squatting** (when using a mono-lift); naturally this will apply mostly to Powerlifters but will be of interest to all Squatters because the more you know the better.

Without further ado, let's get to it...

## The Raw Squat



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## Joking Aside, What Should You Wear When Squatting?

Any comfortable sports clothing will do just fine, so long as it isn't restrictive.

The one area that does warrant some thought is footwear. The best options are dedicated *Squat shoes* like I wear from Inzer (different options are available from other Powerlifting companies). These Squat shoes are flat-soled and offer good ankle support. They are pricey but last a long time. A cheaper option, that still offers a flat sole, are Converse trainers. Just beware that they are not as durable and don't offer the same level of ankle support.

Whatever you wear on your feet, just be sure it is not those awful trainers with air-bubbles. Not only are they over-priced, they are also incredibly un-stable and will rob you of pounds on the bar and invite injury to the knees and ankles.

You can also wear a WEIGHTLIFTING BELT, wrist wraps and knee wraps when Squatting Raw. Whether you do or not is up to you and here are some things to think about:

- The Belt will *increase pressure* and the feeling of *tightness* in your core and should allow you to Squat more. I usually belt up and have my athletes belt up from around 40% of our max...

...powerlifting belts come in 10mm or 13mm thicknesses, with the former requiring less time to break in and feel comfortable to wear and the latter offering more support. Take your pick. Both options are good and a quality belt from a company like Inzer should last you a lifetime. For ease of use choose the single prong style and avoid their double prong cousins like the plague

- Wrist wraps offer support and protection for the wrists
- Knee wraps offer **rebound out of the hole** and help you to Squat more weight. Some lifters get way more carry-over than others from knee wraps. (If you compete in a Raw federation that doesn't allow knee wraps it should go without saying that you shouldn't use them in your training). Some people also think that the wraps offer some *protection for the knee* and help to keep your knees tracking your toes when you Squat. If you do not wear knee wraps, a snug fitting pair of knee sleeves are a good alternative

- If you are an athlete you may want to Squat without a belt, wrist wraps or knee wraps because you can't wear those items when competing in your sport and therefore you want to get your body strong without them. It's your decision to make

### **The Raw Squat Set-Up**

This is the *most important* part of your Squat. If you get it wrong, nothing else will flow correctly. However, if you get it right, you will be rewarded with **the foundation for a good Squat**.

Ed Coan, the greatest pound for pound Powerlifter of all-time, used to spend a long time just getting under the bar and finding exactly the right point to have the bar on this back. His results speak for themselves. It's well worth watching a few videos on YouTube of Coan setting up and Squatting; there's much to be learnt from him.

### **Here's how to set up correctly:**

The bar should be set up in a power rack (or on squat stands) at your *chest height*. If you have the bar too high you will have to do a calf raise to get it out of the racks and if you have it too low you will have to do a quarter Squat to get the bar out of the rack. Both scenarios are inefficient and will lessen the quality of your set-up.

Using a full grip (not a thumb-less one) put your hands on the bar. Use the power rings to make sure your grip is *even*.

Next, position your feet directly under the bar and set them *hip-width apart*.

Now squeeze your shoulders back and down, force your *chest out* and **get your upper back really tight**, then duck your head under the bar and place the bar across your shoulders (finding the right position for you will take some experimentation)

Keeping your lower back arched and your chest out, drive your head back into the bar and take a deep breath of air into your belly.

*Un-rack the bar* by arching it out of the rack and then taking a small step back with your left foot, then doing the same with your right foot. (Walking the bar out any further than a few inches from the rack is simply a waste of energy and time).

Your feet should be around shoulder width apart and your toes turned out 10 to 40 degrees. You are now set up and ready to Squat. Finding your optimal stance width will take some trial and error. Do not be afraid to experiment.

### **The Descent (Eccentric Motion)**

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To begin the descent take another DEEP BREATH into your belly, **push the knees out to the sides and sit back**. Go down until the crease of your hip is just below the top of your knee (when viewed from the side).

When you are 'in the hole', here's how your Raw squat should look:

- Your shins should be *close to vertical*
- Your knees should be *tracking your toes*
- Your lower back should be tightly *arched*
- **Your upper back should be tight**, with the shoulders pulled back and down and the chest forced out
- Your head should be driven back into the bar and you should be looking straight ahead or slightly up

### **The Driving Phase (Concentric Motion)**

As soon as you hit depth, reverse the motion by driving with all the strength that you can summon. Now is the time to be **very aggressive**. Your goal is to generate as much *tension and force* as you possibly can and unleash it all on the bar that is trying to crush you. Do this on every rep of every set, regardless of whether you are using 40% or 95% of your max.

(Note: Do not accelerate loads of less than 40% as fast as possible because there is a risk of hyper-extending your joints if you do).

Be sure to keep your upper back tight and carry on looking *forwards*. If you look down and lose the tightness in your upper back, there is a chance that you will lose the weight forwards and you could even have it roll over your head. I've seen this happen and it's not cool! Especially with a new personal best on the bar.

A very important point is to **hold your breath** until you have locked the bar out; or at least until you are past your sticking point.

Once you have successfully driven the bar back to the start position, either take in some more air and perform another rep; or rack the bar. Do not be sloppy when racking the bar; stay tight and do not relax until the bar is safely resting in the power rack or squat stands.

You must keep your *core tight* throughout. It is this tension in your core that stops your spine buckling under heavy loads. In fact, rule number 1 of training for strength is learning to generate **total body tension**. Be sure to practise this on every rep of every set. It will keep you safe and make you strong.

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# The Equipped Squat



The major difference when squatting equipped compared to squatting raw is *stance width*. The more equipment a powerlifter wears, the wider he can take his stance. This wide stance is easier to achieve in a mono-lift, because there is no walk out.

The wider the stance, *the less the range of motion*, the more you can 'sit-back' and the more **glute and hamstring dominant** the squat becomes. The forwards lean of the torso will also be greater with the wider stance. This is necessary to counter-balance the hips sitting way back.

In contrast, look at an **Olympic Style Front Squat** and you will see a much closer stance, knees travelling way forwards and a much more *upright torso position* throughout the execution of the squat.

Neither style is right or wrong, just different. But you must be aware of these differences if you are to understand and improve your own squat style.

You can make a real mess of your squat (and your hips) if you try to squat too wide without equipment. The **powerlifting equipment** provides a large amount of protection for the hips and rebound (reversal strength) out of the hole. If you try to Squat overly wide raw you will more than likely find that two things happen that are un-desirable...

Firstly, your power out of the hole will be worse than with a shoulder width stance. And if you can't get the weight out of the hole, it doesn't matter how strong your lock-out is because you won't have a chance to show it off.

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Makes sense, right?

Secondly, your hips will start to feel beat up. This may happen straight away or after a few weeks. And once they start to feel painful you will have to rest in order to let them heal. And when you are taking time out to rest, you aren't getting stronger. So be sure to do things right in the first place and you will save a lot of wasted time in the future.

**Equipped lifters** should also bear in mind that wearing equipment is not a license to squat as wide as you can place your feet. If your knees start to drift inwards when you are squatting, (then provided this has never happened to you before); it is probably because you are squatting wider than optimal for your leverages and flexibility.

Here are the *key points* that apply to Squatting Equipped, using a mono-lift:

- Set up with your feet *directly under the bar* and in exactly the position you want to have them in when you Squat (they should not move from this position until you have finished your set and racked the bar. If they do, then there is no point in using the mono-lift)
- On the way down, trust your equipment and **sit way back**. In the hole, your shins should be vertical or very close to vertical. If you can't achieve this position then your form needs work and your HAMSTRING STRENGTH is lacking
- Keep the lower back arched, the upper back tight, your chest out and head driven back into the bar *at all times*

### **The Wrap-Up**

Regardless of whether your main focus is to build **strength, speed and power** or to add muscle, sprint faster and generally be more athletic; the squat can more than likely help you achieve these goals and should be a part of your strength training program.

If we look at the greatest **Powerlifters and Bodybuilders** of all-time, they often have/had *massive Squats*. Think of Ed Coan, Donnie Thompson, Tom Platz, Ronnie Coleman; the list goes on and on...

However, you need to appreciate that the Squat is a technical movement and **technique is the most important thing** that you must work on. Before you load the movement with any significant amount of weight, make sure you can perform it correctly. And once you have good form, work on it for life because there's always ways to improve.

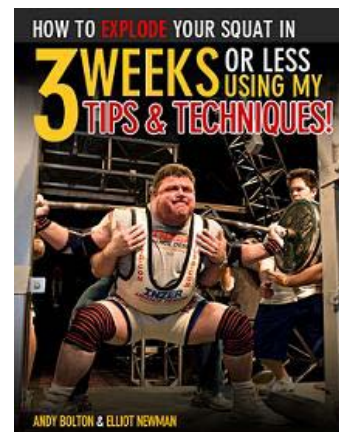
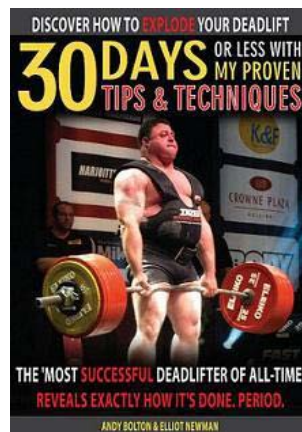
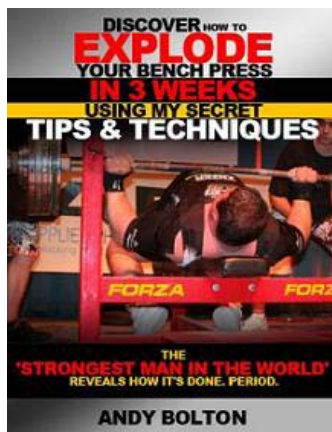
Your friend,

**Andy Bolton**

Strength Coach, Author, Public Speaker, World Champion Powerlifter and of course, the first man ever to make history and pull 1008lbs

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"Discover How To Add 100's Of Pounds To Your Squat, Bench Press And Deadlift... Using The Exact Techniques I Use To Squat 1214lbs, Bench Press 755lbs And Deadlift 1008lbs"



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