



# INCREASE ATHLETIC STRENGTH WITH THIS SQUAT PROGRESSION

Since the game of hockey (and most other sports) depends on independent leg and hip strength, we use a simple squat progression that will develop strength on a single leg. Here is how we develop strength in a Day 1 workout. Keep in mind there are three planes of movement, and we address those on Day 2 or Day 3 of a program. This is just one of our progressions but it is a great place to start. For all these variations, assuming they look good with body weight, we will start with our lowest hold progression by holding the weight in the middle of the chest.



**GOBLET SQUAT:** A bilateral (two-legged) squat is a fundamental human movement and important for athletic development. This is the only bilateral squat in our progression, and serves to teach the general squatting motion in a movement that is not as proprioceptively demanding as the unilateral progressions. In a goblet squat, we are looking for appropriate hinging at the hips and knees allowing for the athletes butt to sit well behind the heels. Think sitting down into a chair. Heels should push through the floor throughout the movement, and knees should stay out as wide as the feet (keep knees from winking in towards each other). Depth will vary, but generally, 90 degrees is the goal.



**SPLIT SQUAT:** To set this up, take a big step forward and freeze. Keeping your feet in place, bend both legs so your back knee touches the ground. To stand up, push a flat front foot into the ground and let the back leg help to raise you back to the top. When standing at the top keep your back foot on the ground and keep your heel high (don't let it collapse to the middle, stay on the ball of your foot). In order to progress on from this, you should be able to do the movement without jerking motions and with your upper body staying tall throughout the motion like you are riding up and down in an elevator.

**REAR FOOT ELEVATED SQUAT:** Now we get even closer to a true single leg movement by elevating the back foot on a bench or box and standing on the front foot. Bending the front leg, reach the back knee towards the ground until the front thigh is parallel to the ground. At the bottom, your front shin should be vertical and not angled too far forward. Push with a flat front foot until you rise back up to the starting position.

This variation allows for the greatest external load, so we really get some huge strength gains out of this movement. The nice part is, since it is a single leg movement, we can

use less weight than if we were squatting on 2 legs. This makes the movement safer and more functional.



**SINGLE LEG SQUAT:** You can increase single leg strength by, well, squatting on one leg. This is a true three dimensional exercise because, even though you are only moving up and down, your hips have to work to keep your body from rotating or flexing side to side. To perform a single leg squat, stand on one leg and lower yourself to a depth you are able to do well (you can mark that depth by reaching your butt back to a bench, couch, etc). Keep your chest up, weight spread evenly over your foot and your heel pressed through the floor.

We use this series of movements to progressively increase demand on the legs. There are many variations stemming from here, but this progression helps to increase leg strength and improve motor control, which are vital for any athlete. To see these movements in action, see the videos at our blog on MiHockey.com.

- DARRYL NELSON AND BRIAN SIPOTZ