



the breath connection

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Practical Squatting

...truly an art form!

The word **squat** can be scary, because most people associate squats with intense workouts at the gym only to be done by ripped and buff athletes. However, did you know that you perform a squatting motion constantly throughout the day?

The 2 most important parts of squatting are:

1. Exhaling on the hard part
2. Keeping your core muscles engaged.

That sounds simple, but most of us have trouble doing both at the same time... when we engage our core, we hold our breath, or when we exhale, we stop engaging our core muscles.

The work of your core muscles is to stabilize your spine.

CHAIR SQUATTING

A chair is the easiest place to learn proper squatting.

- Stand in front of your chair.
- Feet hip width apart and parallel.
- Stand up nice and tall.
- Engage your core by gently pulling your belly button toward your spine.

**Feet hip width
apart & parallel**

Stand up tall

Engage core

Inhale



Check in: *unclench your butt, unclench your jaw and relax your shoulders down from your ears.*

Here we go...

- Nice big inhalation.
- As you exhale, keep your core engaged.
- Poke your bum back first.
- Allow your arms to come up in front of you.
- Sit down.

Exhale

**Poke your bum
back first**

**Allow arms to
come up in front**

Sit down



Now let's stand back up...

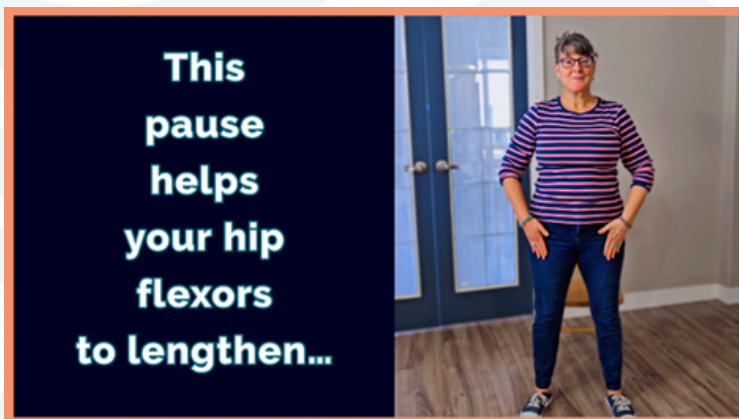
- Feet hip width apart and firmly planted on the floor parallel to each other.
- Nice and tall through your spine.
- Inhale and engage your core.

- Drop your chin toward your chest.
- Exhale.
- Power up through your legs.



Practice chair squatting 2 or 3 more times.

NOTE: Now just stand here for a moment and take a few breaths. This is especially important if you have been sitting for a prolonged period. This pause helps your hip flexors to lengthen and your low back to relax. This will allow you to walk away without stiffness and prevent you from straining your low back.



KITCHEN SINK SQUATTING

Another safe and easy place to learn proper squatting.

Here we go...

- Hands resting on the edge of the sink.
 - Step back from the cupboard.
 - Feet hip width apart and parallel.
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- Stand tall.
 - Inhale and engage your core.
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- Exhale, poke your bum out and sit back while keeping your spine long and core engaged.
 - Only go as far as your knees or hips will allow.

**Hands resting
on edge of sink**

**Step back &
place feet hip
width apart &
parallel**



Stand tall

Engage core



Exhale

**Poke
bum out
& sit back**
**Keep spine
long & core
engaged**



- Pause, inhale.
- Exhale and power up through your legs by engaging your quad and glute muscles and taking the focus of your breath down your legs to the bottom of your feet.
- Make sure you are not using your arms to pull yourself up.
- You know you are doing a proper squat when you can see the tips of your toes past the front of your knees and your spine remains nice and long.



Practice kitchen sink squats 2 or 3 more times.

If your hips or knees are protesting while you are attempting to squat, here are a couple of modifications...

- Take a wider stance with your feet.
- Or put one foot slightly in front of the other.

NOTE: If your hips and knees are saying 'Hell no, I'm not squatting!' then go to the next section where we further discuss supported forward flexion.