A Simple guide to:

SQUATS

- Squats are mostly known as a leg exercise, but they promote body-wide muscle building by catalysing an anabolic environment
- Squats are also one of the best functional exercises out there, promoting mobility and balance and helping you complete real-world activities with ease
- Squats also help you to burn more fat, as one of the most time-efficient ways to burn more calories continually is by developing more muscle
- Squats have long been criticized for being destructive to your knees, but research shows that when done properly, squats actually improve knee stability and strengthen connective tissue
- Squats are one type of exercise that should be a part of virtually everyone's fitness routine, as they provide whole-body benefits

How do you do a squat?

1. Warm up
2. Stand with your feet just over shoulder width apart
3. Keep your back in a neutral position, and keep your knees centred over your feet
4. Slowly bend your knees, hips and ankles, lowering until you reach a 90-degree angle
5. Return to starting position; repeat 15-20 times, for 2-3 sets for beginners (do this three or four times a week)
6. Breathe in as you lower, breathe out as you return to starting position

Why are squats such a good exercise?

1. **Builds Muscle in Your Entire Body**

In fact, when done properly, squats are so intense that they trigger the release of testosterone and human growth hormone in your body, which are vital for muscle growth and will also help to improve muscle mass when you train other areas of your body aside from your legs.

So squats can actually help you improve both your upper and lower body strength.

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2. **Functional Exercise Makes Real-Life Activities Easier**

Functional exercises are those that help your body to perform real-life activities, as opposed to simply being able to operate pieces of gym equipment. Squats are one of the best functional exercises out there, as humans have been squatting since the hunter-gatherer days. When you perform squats, you build muscle and help your muscles work more efficiently, as well as promote mobility and balance. All of these benefits translate into your body moving more efficiently in the real world too.

3. **Burn More Fat**

One of the most time-efficient ways to burn more calories is actually to gain more muscle! For every pound of additional muscle you gain, your body will burn an additional 50-70 calories per day. So, if you gain 10 pounds of muscle, you will automatically burn 500-700 more calories per day than you did before.

4. **Maintain Mobility and Balance**

Strong legs are crucial for staying mobile as you get older, and squats are phenomenal for increasing leg strength. They also work out your core, stabilizing muscles, which will help you to maintain balance, while also improving the communication between your brain and your muscle groups, which helps prevent falls – which is incidentally the number one way to prevent bone fractures.

5. **Prevent Injuries**

Most athletic injuries involve weak stabilizer muscles, ligaments and connective tissues, which squats help strengthen. They also help prevent injury by improving your flexibility (squats improve the range of motion in your ankles and hips) and balance, as noted above.

6. **Boost Your Sports Performance; Jump Higher and Run Faster**

Studies have linked squatting strength with athletic ability. Specifically, squatting helped athletes run faster and jump higher, which is why this exercise is part of virtually every professional athlete's training program.

7. **Tone Your Backside, Abs and Entire Body**

Few exercises work as many muscles as the squat, so it's an excellent multi-purpose activity useful for toning and tightening your bum (glutes), abs, and, of course, your legs. Furthermore, squats build your muscles, and these muscles participate in the regulation of glucose and lipid metabolism and insulin sensitivity, helping to protect you against obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

8. **Help with Waste Removal**

Squats improve the pumping of body fluids, aiding in removal of waste and delivery of nutrition to all tissues, including organs and glands. They're also useful for improved movement of faeces through your colon and more regular bowel movements.