

BODYWEIGHT MOVES INDEX

The SuperFunctional Program includes many complex movements. Most of those that require further explanation fall into the bodyweight category. Here, you will find a breakdown of all those used in the workouts, along with many more to help you develop your own training.

USING THESE MOVEMENTS

When training advanced calisthenics, the objective is to move through set “progressions.” This means advancing from more simplistic movements to more complex ones. Where these calisthenics movements are included in the workouts, aim to hold each progression for one minute. For example then, if it says “planche progressions,” then the aim is to be able to hold planche for one full minute. In the meantime, you will build up to it using crow pose, straddle planche, etc. Once you can hold one of these progressions for one minute, you can then attempt the next level up.

If you can hold straddle planche for just 30 seconds, then you can either use more repetitions (attempts), or you can combine it with the next level down – perform straddle planche then crow pose for instance.

This list doesn’t only include advanced movements however, but also countless more basic moves. These can be swapped in and out for similar exercises in the program.

Good luck!

EQUIPMENT

Before we dive into the full list, find below an introduction to common training equipment. This is not essential, but will be a very useful investment if possible.

Pull Up Bar

A pull up bar is an absolutely fundamental piece of equipment for bodyweight training. While you can perform a lot of calisthenics with no equipment at all, it is very difficult to train the pulling muscles (lats and biceps) if you don’t have a pull up bar.

This means it will be extremely difficult to build your biceps at all, and you may eventually develop kyphosis (a hunched spine) as a result of building only the pulling muscles on the front of your body (often referred to as the mirror muscles).

Depending on your set-up, you can get a pull up bar that will mount onto the side of a wall, one that screws into a door frame, or one that fits over the outside of a doorframe.

This is perhaps the only 100% crucial piece of equipment to have access to in order to complete the SuperFunctional Program.

Parallel Bars/Dip Bars

Parallel bars are bars that are normally around elbow height that stand freely and that can support your bodyweight. The idea of these is that they can be used to perform bodyweight dips: place either hand on a bar and then lower and raise yourself. At the same time, you can also use them to perform neutral grip pull ups, bodyweight rows, and all kinds of other moves.

For those who don't want to potentially damage their doorframe or their walls, parallel bars can be used in place of a pull up bar (by hanging underneath). Keep in mind though, that these are not as well-suited to a number of movements that you would normally perform with a pull up bar. Still, their vast number of push-movement options makes them one of the best 'all-round' gym options on the market right now.

Parallettes

Parallettes are like parallel bars but keep you much closer to the ground, only raising the hands off it slightly. They are nevertheless still perfectly level bars, which makes them ideal for a range of different movements such as V-sits, handstand push ups, and of course planche.

Gymnastic Rings

Gymnastic rings are rings that hang from any surface (such as a pull up bar or tree branch) and can be held in either hand. This then lets you perform push ups with the hands turned out or in, as well as supporting your feet or other parts of your body for a range of different variations on push ups, dips, and more.

When you perform a movement like the dip using gymnastic rings instead of parallel bars, you require far more core strength and supporting muscle in order to steady yourself. This makes even simple moves far more challenging. And they lend themselves to easy progressions if you lower them more and more toward the ground.

TRX

TRX is an expensive brand found in many gyms. These are straps with handles at the end which perform much like gymnastics rings. The difference is that they have flat handles that prevent a lot of the best movements possible with gymnastics rings. Not only that, but they cost significantly more.

Push Up Stands

Push up stands elevate your hands off the floor during push ups. This in turn reduces some pressure on your wrist, forces you to maintain more tension in your core, and increase your range of motion to provide more of a stretch for the pecs.

Rope

Find a piece of rope and you can use it for rope climbs, for tricep extensions, for bodyweight rows and more. What's amazing about this is that it will also train your grip to a very significant degree, which in turn makes you vastly stronger.

Ab Roller

One bodyweight tool for abs is the ab roller. This is a wheel with handles which you can slide backward and forward along the ground. This in turn requires a lot of control for your whole body, and can also improve your mobility.

Note that an alternative though is to use a barbell with the weight plates on loosely, or a piece of cloth on a shiny floor.

Weighted Vest

You can continue to increase the difficulty of your bodyweight workouts indefinitely by simply using more and more complex and challenging progressions. However, another easy way to increase difficulty is to simply add weight – in the form of a vest with pockets for small packs.

Bench

While we typically associate benches with resistance training using weights (for curls, bench press, etc.), the truth is that a bench can also come in extremely handy during bodyweight movements. For instance, you can use this for the Bulgarian Split Squat for instance, or as a support for your hands during a tricep dip.

Bosu Ball/Exercise Ball

A bosu ball is half an exercise ball, either of which can be used to perform many of the exercises below in unstable positions (sit ups, incline/decline push ups

etc.). This helps to train the core and involves more supportive muscles during the moves.

Minimal Shoes

A minimal shoe are not a strict requirement for calisthenics but may improve your training and are highly recommended for SuperFunctional Training. This is a shoe with a minimal sole (not much between your foot and the ground), not heel-toe-drop (no elevated heel or at least sub 3mm), and a wide toe box (giving your toes space to splay). This encourages natural movement, allowing you to use the muscles in your feet for greater stability and performance. It also helps to loosen the plantar fascia and thereby may improve overall mobility (the jury is out). In short, it can help with advanced leg moves if you want to take your training further.

Plyometric Box

A box for leaping up onto – fantastic for building plyometric leg strength. Not essential, but cool.

INDEX OF BODYWEIGHT MOVES

Below is a semi-comprehensive list of bodyweight moves you can incorporate into a training routine, including every major muscle group. These are ranked for difficulty with 1 being easy enough that everyone should be able to do it and 5++ being elite gymnast level.

Your goal is to gradually work up toward the more highly rated movements, by using programs built up of what's currently achievable for you. The bottom of this article explains how to do this.

Examples are provided where necessary. The type of contraction is also provided:

Concentric: Muscle shortening

Eccentric: Muscle lengthening

Isometric: A static hold

Plyometric: An explosive burst of movement

Isokinetic: A continuous movement (such as pedalling)

PUSH MOVES

PECS

Push Ups on Knees

Difficulty: 1

Type: Concentric/Eccentric

Push ups on knees are one of the easiest ways to build up to a regular push up. These can also be used at the end of a workout, when you are too fatigued to perform regular push ups. To perform, simply do a push up but with your knees touching the floor instead of your feet.

Wall Push Ups

Difficulty: 1

Type: Concentric/Eccentric

This is another easier alternative to the regular push up. Simply lean against a wall with both hands and push your body weight that way. The lower your upper body, the harder this movement becomes.

Press Ups/Push Ups

Difficulty: 2

Type: Concentric/Eccentric

Easier Progression: Push ups on knees, wall push ups

To perform a push up correctly, start with your hands shoulder width apart and your toes planted on the ground behind you in the middle of your body. Now lower yourself to the ground to the point that your nose is almost touching (don't look up). Your body should be completely straight: there should be no dip in your hips which is a sign of a weak core. Likewise, you should be protracting your scapula fully as you push yourself up, and retracting them as you lower yourself.

Don't flare your elbows, and make sure there is a straight line from your head to your heels. Imagine a ruler-stick has been shoved down your back and you have to keep it straight!

Clapping Push Ups

Difficulty: 3

Type: Plyometric

A clapping push up is a push up performed in an explosive manner to launch yourself up in the air. This requires the engagement of more fast-twitch muscle fibre, thereby helping to improve **starting strength** and power. Clapping push ups are not particularly well suited to hypertrophy however, due to the low amount of **cross bridging** and lack of blood occlusion.

Offset Push Ups

Difficulty: 2+

Type: Concentric/Eccentric

The offset push up is a push up performed with your hands at different levels.

One might be on a bosu ball, or one might be on a bench. This can increase the focus on a single muscle, or it can help you to more easily get a stretch on the pecs on one side. Just be careful to avoid injuring the rotator cuff muscles.

Archer Push Ups

Difficulty: 3

Type: Concentric/Eccentric

In an archer push up, you will push yourself down on one arm, while extending the other out to the side. This isolates one pec, increasing the amount of weight that it has to deal with.

One Handed Push Up

Difficulty: 3+

Type: Concentric/Eccentric

Easier Progression: Archer push ups

A one handed push up takes the idea of the archer push up one step further by forcing one arm to deal with 100% of the force. You're going to perform this movement by placing your supporting hand closer to the middle, and then spread your legs apart in order to cast your weight over a larger surface area and thereby reduce the force. Over time, you can build up to bringing your legs closer and closer together, and even removing fingers to perform finger push ups – great for grip strength but touch on the finger tendons.

RTO Push Ups

Difficulty: 3

Type: Concentric/Eccentric

Prerequisites: Supinated support hold

While there are endless variations of push ups around – many of which involve the gymnastics rings – one of the simplest and best options is to perform RTO push ups. Here, you will be turning the rings outward so your grip is supinated (palms facing forward). That helps to strengthen the bicep tendons, thereby helping you to avoid injury in more challenging moves like the
First you should master the **supinated support hold**.

Dips

Difficulty: 2+

Type: Concentric/Eccentric

Easier Progression: Tricep dips, Assisted dips

Dips are performed by supporting your weight on two even surfaces and then lowering your legs into the middle by bending at the elbows. Be careful not to 'flare out' the elbows however. There are many variations and progressions you can use here. For instance you can perform these explosively (adding a small

jump), you can add weight, or you can keep the legs raised. Dips on rings (**ring dips**) are also more challenging.

TRICEPS

Tricep Dips

Difficulty: 2

Type: Concentric/Eccentric

Tricep dips are simply dips performed so that your triceps are doing most of the work. Place your hands on a bench or other raised platform behind you, and lower your buttocks to the ground. Your heels should be planted firmly in place.

One Armed Tricep Dips

Difficulty: 3

Type: Concentric/Eccentric

Not many people think to do this easy variation, which will make the move significantly more isolated and aid with tricep hypertrophy. Again, spreading the legs makes this easier to accomplish the first time.

L-Sit

Difficulty: 4

Type: Isometric

Support your body with your hands on parallettes or parallel bars, then keep your legs at a 90 degree angle. This is an **isometric hold** so you should aim to increase your time here up to a minute.

V-Sit

Difficulty: 5

Type: Isometric

The V-Sit is like the L-Sit but with your feet at a more upward angle. This is great for developing improved **mobility** as well as core strength and tricep strength. The difference between mobility and flexibility is that mobility encompasses movements that you can perform without external assistance. Positions you can reach without pushing on your limb in one way or another and that you can hold with strength. Mobility and calisthenics are extremely closely tied.

Triangle Push Up

Difficulty: 2+

Type: Concentric/Eccentric

A simple way to move the emphasis from the pecs toward the triceps. Simply place your hands in a triangle position beneath your sternum and press from that position. This is similar to the **medicine ball push up**.

Triceps Push Up

Difficulty: 2+

Type: Concentric/Eccentric

A similar variation. Here, you bring your hands down by your side. This also lengthens the lever. You can perform this on your knuckles to increase the difficulty and to toughen the bones – very useful for martial artist.

Bodyweight Tricep Extension

Difficulty: 2

Type: Concentric/Eccentric

Place your hands and forearms on the ground flat while in push up position. Your elbows should be directly beneath your shoulders and your hands out in front. Now straighten your arms by pushing down into the ground with the hands.

Bodyweight Skull Crushes

Difficulty: 2+

Type: Concentric/Eccentric

This is the same movement as above but with your hands held higher on a bar or on rings. You then let your upper body hang below you and then raise yourself up bending only at the elbow joint.

The OG skull crusher in the gym uses the same biomechanics but holding a barbell over your head. It is so named because any mistakes will cause you to drop the bar on your face – crushing your skull! This version if it goes wrong will cause you to chin yourself though, so the name is still fairly apt. Practice caution!

SHOULDERS

Decline Press Ups

Difficulty: 2

Type: Concentric/Eccentric

Doing press ups already trains your shoulders to an extent as support muscles. However, if you can increase the angle so that you are pointing downwards toward the floor then you will essentially be aiming the weight more directly onto your shoulders. This is a great way to train the shoulders and as long as you have a couch to put your feet up on it's pretty easy.

Bodyweight Shoulder Press

Difficulty: 2

Type: Concentric/Eccentric

Increase the angle even more though and what you essentially have is a shoulder press. To train this you will want to simply use your feet to steady yourself on a couch or something, but now you are going to make yourself almost completely

vertical with your legs bent and then use the same movement as the incline press up but directly up and down.

Pike Push Up

Difficulty: 2

A pike push up is an incline push up performed without the chair or bench to raise your legs. In other words, your hands and feet are both planted firmly on the ground, but you are creating an upside-down push up so that your body is in a V-shape and your butt is sticking in the air.

Handstand Press Ups

Difficulty: 4

Type: Concentric/Eccentric

For anyone who wants more of a challenge, then doing handstand press ups certainly delivers on that front. Here you will simply balance your entire weight vertically on your hands with no help and then you will press up and down.

Balance is the main challenge here (it's a great party trick though) so you may want to get help from a friend holding your feet, or alternatively try leaning your legs against a wall (though they tend to drag). These are the easier progressions to start with that will still train your shoulders and core.

As another side note, there are two different versions of this exercise: the **bent arm shoulder press** and the **straight arm shoulder press**. In the former, your arms are bent and your back tends to be arched to compensate. This requires more chest and shoulder strength but is slightly easier to balance – especially with parallettes. Straight arm presses require you to completely straighten your arms at the top of the movement, which requires a huge amount of shoulder stability and a lot of balance. This is perfect for building up to other straight arm moves like the planche though.

One Handed Handstand/Handstand Push Up

Difficulty: 5+

Type: Concentric/Eccentric

An incredibly difficult-but-impressive movement to work toward. This requires huge amounts of balance and pure power in your upper body. Again, you can work toward this by letting a spotter hold your feet. You can also practice the **au batido** movement from capoeira, which involves holding the one-handed handstand for a very short duration, kicking your legs over your head to provide useful momentum as you do.

MULTI-JOINT

While nearly all bodyweight exercises are in-fact multi-joint (meaning that target more than one muscle group), some movements are so compound as to be

impossible to neatly categorize into one of these groups. Thus, the following exercises can also be used on a push day but don't neatly fit into any of the above categories.

Support Hold

Difficulty: 2

Type: Isokinetic

The support hold involves holding your weight on top of the rings with your arms fully extended. You should spend time practicing this isometric hold to build straight arm strength. From there, you can then progress to the harder **supinated** support hold, and then to the more taxing moves on this list that require straight arm strength – such as the planche progressions. Aim to hold each position for one minute.

Crow Pose

Difficulty: 2+

Type: Isometric

The second easiest starting progression when building toward planche. The arms are bent with the elbows tucked up by them, and you will balance on just the hands. This is a starting point that will help you work toward all **hand balancing** moves on this list, opening up a huge range of possibilities.

Crane Pose

Difficulty: 3

Type: Isometric

Easier progressions: Crow pose

The next progression from the crow pose. Performed with the arms straight now, and the scapular protracted.

Pseudo Planche Push Up

Difficulty: 3

Type: Isometric

This exercise requires you to perform push ups while leaning forward with your hands slightly back. This effectively trains the same muscles as the planche, but uses your feet to provide a little assistance.

Tuck Planche

Difficulty: 4

Type: Isometric

Easier progressions: Crane pose

Now you are balancing on straight arms with the legs hanging beneath you and your back arched with scapular protracted.

One Legged Planche

Difficulty: 4+

Type: Isometric

Easier progressions: Tuck planche

From the tuck planche, straighten one of your legs out behind you.

Straddle Planche

Difficulty: 5

Type: Isometric

Easier progressions: Tuck planche/straddle planche

From the tuck planche, straighten both legs out behind you, keeping them both straight as you do. Widening your legs shortens the lever arm and brings your center of gravity closer to your hands, making the movement slightly easier.

Bent Arm Planche

Difficulty: 4+

Type: Isometric

Easier progressions: Maltese push up

The bent arm planche is a movement that shifts the tension from the straight arm position to the bent arm position. It is slightly easier than full straight arm planche, but is still a challenging and valuable movement in its own right.

Wide Arm Planche

Difficulty: 5+

Type: Isometric

Easier progressions: Straddle planche, maltese push up

Some people find this variation easier, others find it harder (as compared with regular planche). Simply perform planche, but with the arms wider than shoulder-width.

Planche

Difficulty: 5+

Type: Isometric

Easier progressions: Straddle planche, one legged planche

Prerequisites: Strong tendons – RTO push ups, supinated support hold, perfect push ups

This is one of the most sought after moves in calisthenics and is all over Instagram. With arms straight, you are straightening your legs out behind you. You will have a rounded back but you can choose your hand position. Incredibly impressive and a wonderful full-body challenge.

Planche Push Up

Difficulty: 5++

Type: Concentric/eccentric

Not hard enough? Then try performing push ups from this position!

Manna

Difficult: 5++

Type: Isometric

Easier progressions: Pike pulses, l-sit, v-sit

Manna is perhaps one of the most difficult and physically demanding movements in calisthenics/gymnastics. Essentially, this is a V sit where your legs actually double back over you and point back. This means lots of hip flexibility, but also requires you to lift your body from a very difficult angle.

Maltese

Difficulty: 5++

Type: Isometric

The maltese is a horizontal iron cross. It is incredibly difficult and in some ways similar to a wide grip planche.

Crawls

Difficulty: Mixed

Type: Isokinetic

There are a wide variety of different crawl exercises which involve staying low to the ground and moving back and forth. This trains mobility while also maintaining constant tension on the pushing muscles.

PULL MOVES

BICEPS

Chin Ups

Difficulty: 2

Type: Concentric/eccentric

Chin ups are pull ups with the arms supinated (palms facing you). This moves the focus more onto the bicep. If you can't do a chin up or pull up, then you can use **assisted chin ups** by getting a person or a chair to help you a little, or you can use **chin up negatives** where you jump into the upper position and slow your descent.

One Armed Chin Up

Difficulty: 5

Type: Concentric/eccentric

Easier progression: Archer chin up, rocking chin up
This is a chin up performed with one arm. Incredibly difficult.

Rocking Chin Up

Difficulty: 3

Type: Concentric/eccentric

Hold onto the bar with both hands but use predominantly just one arm to pull yourself up. This is like a pseudo one arm chin up!

Rope Climb

Difficulty: 4

Type: Isokinetic

Prerequisites: Strong elbow tendons from supinated support hold, RTO push ups
Rope climbing is fantastic for building biceps AND grip strength.

Note: All of the planche moves actually build a surprising amount of bicep strength and size. But as these are very advanced moves, you will still need a bar to achieve a full-body workout.

LATS

Pull Ups

Difficulty: 2+

Type: Concentric/eccentric

Like chin ups but with the grip pronated, which targets the lats more.

One Handed Pull Up

Difficulty: 3

Type: Concentric/eccentric

Perform the pull up with one hand.

Archer Pull Ups

Difficulty: 3

Type: Concentric/eccentric

Pull yourself up onto the bar so that you are over one hand (in the center) with the other outstretched.

Hangs

Difficulty: 2

Type: Isometric

Simply hang from a pull up bar with arms fully outstretched. This is great for shoulder mobility, grip strength, spine health and more. You can build up to very

long hang times and also try hanging with different grips: false grip, supinated, etc.

Neutral Grip Pull Ups

Difficulty: 2

Pull ups with the palms facing toward one another. Can be achieved via certain pull up bar attachments, by hanging from dip bars, or

Inverted Pull Up

Difficulty: 2

Type: Concentric/eccentric

This is the equivalent of the wall press for pull ups. You lie underneath parallel bars, gymnastics rings, TRX, or a low bar (you can use a squat rack in the gym for example) and then pull your upper body up off the ground while keeping your heels in contact.

Bodyweight Row

Difficulty: 1

Type: Concentric/eccentric

An easier version of the inverted pull up. Old onto a rope or similar while standing, lean back, then pull yourself back in with one hand or two. Similar to a wall press in reverse.

Kipping Pull Up

Difficulty: 2

Type: Plyometric

This is a pull up performed using momentum to get you over the bar. Great for those that can't perform pull ups or for trying high-rep pull ups. There is some debate as to whether a kipping pull up is a useful tool or not, but this is arguably largely political owing to the association with crossfit. In fact, the kipping pull up can be a useful form of 'resistance cardio' with the right programming.

Explosive Pull Up

Difficulty: 3

Type: Plyometric

Perform a pull up, but once completed launch yourself into the air. You can maintain contact with the bar, or attempt stunts like clapping, or even spinning 360 degrees.

MULTI-JOINT EXERCISES

Front Lever

Difficulty: 4+

Type: Isometric

Easier Progression

Start from a dead hang and then rotate your body so that your legs are parallel with the floor. This is one of the more challenging pull movements in calisthenics.

Tuck Lever

Difficulty: 4

Type: Isometric

The same as above but your knees are bent, thereby shortening the lever arm and making the movement easier. You can even perform tuck lever pull ups!

Muscle Ups

Difficulty: 4

Type: Plyometric (predominantly)

Muscle ups are when you do a pull up, go over the top of it, and then press yourself upwards. This is something that gymnasts do a lot as well as climbers and which trains the whole upper body in a very dynamic and explosive manner. You can train using just the top 'pressing' aspect of the movement by positioning yourself on the top of a wall (as though you're about to climb over it) or lifting your chest up to prop it against a pull up bar and then doing miniature presses to lift yourself up just slightly from there.

As an easier progression building up to the muscle up, try explosive pull ups where you bring the body as high as you can over the bar. You should also practice your **false grip** which involves having your wrist higher than the ring or bar you're holding. Performing muscle ups on rings is a fantastic aim for any calisthenics athlete to work toward.

Iron Cross

Difficulty: 5+

Prerequisites: Extreme shoulder stability, bicep tendon strength

One of the best known gymnastics moves and one of the hardest. Involves achieving a crucifixion position by hanging from gymnastics rings with your arms outstretched.

CORE MOVES

Sit Ups

Difficulty: 2

Everyone knows this one. Just make sure not to pull on the back of your head, or to make the mistake of *rolling* your abs upward.

Crunch

Difficulty: 2+

The sit up is a crunch where you only bring your upper body forward. The aim is to focus on 'folding' the rectus abdominis – which is the plate of muscle on the front of the mid-section and the area you should be focussing on.

Myotatic Crunch

Difficulty: 2

A crunch/sit up with your back arched over the back of a bosu ball. This increases the range of motion, thereby helping you to engage the entire surface of the rectus abdominis.

L-Sit/V-Sit Hang

Difficulty: 3+

Type: Isometric

This is a hanging version of the l-sit/v-sit. This can be a useful progression building up to that move and manna, and can also be useful for performing variations on the pull up – by doing both simultaneously.

Hanging Leg Raises

Difficulty: 2+

Type: Concentric/eccentric

Easier progression: Frog kicks

Hang in position or use a dip bar and then raise the legs directly upward. Note that in order to train the abs and not the hip flexors, you need to feel the *abs* bend – not merely lift the legs.

Hanging Frog Kicks

Difficulty: 2

Type: Concentric/eccentric

Hang from the bar and then raise just the knees to your chest.

Leg Raises

Difficulty: 1+

Type: Concentric/eccentric/isometric

Lie flat on your back and raise your feet slightly off the ground. Useful for building toward hanging leg raises and dragon flag.

Dragon Flag

Difficulty: 4

Type: Concentric/eccentric/isometric

Bruce Lee's favorite ab exercise. Lie on a flat bench, hold the top with your hands, and then bring your body up so that you are resting on your shoulders. Now let your legs lower to the point where the heels almost touch the floor and return.

Pike Pulses

Difficulty: 2+

Type: Concentric

This exercise trains compression strength – the ability to compress the hips and core. Perform by sitting on the floor with your legs pointing straight ahead and fingers touching the ground reaching forward to about knee-level. Arms should also be straight. Now “pulse” the legs upward.

Around the Worlds

Difficulty: 3

Type: Isokinetic

Hang from the bar and draw large circles with your legs.

Supermans

Difficulty: 2

Type: Concentric/Eccentric

Crucial for spine mobility and strengthening the erector spinae to counterbalance the rectus abdominis. Lie on your front face down, then raise your hands and your legs upward.

Twisting Sit Ups

Difficulty: 2+

Type: Concentric/eccentric

Bring your elbows to your knees. You can also use **bicycle sit ups**. Both train the obliques, the muscle on either side of the rectus abdominis.

Plank

Difficulty: 1+

Type: Isometric

Balance on your forearms and toes and hold the position. This is great for beginners as an option for an ‘active recovery’ when creating a circuit. You can also use it to strengthen the rectus abdominis ready for planche and lever – this is the band of muscle that holds the core in place. **Side plank** is a variation where you face outward and rest on one arm, thereby engaging the obliques.

Note: Nearly every exercise on this list is supremely taxing for the abs and core – to the point that we don’t strictly need separate abs training. That said... it never hurts!

LEG MOVES

Hindu Squat

Difficulty: 1

A hindu squat is a squat without strict form: you may rest on the balls of the feet with heels elevated. No specific mobility is required for this basic move.

Air Squat

Difficulty: 2

Type: Concentric/eccentric

The air squat is simple: a squat with no resistance other than your bodyweight, keeping heels flat. Very easy. You can also hold the lower squat position (called horse stance in martial arts) as an isometric hold. Squatting lower to increase range of motion also helps.

Jump Squat

Difficulty: 2

Type: Plyometric

The easy way to make the air squat more difficult, more explosive, and more effective for burning calories, is to turn it into a jump squat. Simply perform an air squat and then *get air*. Launch yourself up as high as you can go and at the peak contraction you'll be generating your maximum force.

Pistol Squat

Difficulty: 3

Type: Concentric/eccentric

The one legged squat with your heel FLAT on the ground. This is an obvious inclusion but I do feel that the vast majority of people under-utilize the power of the pistol squat. This move builds power in the leg, as well as balance, and mobility. If you struggle to balance to begin with, try putting one hand out against a wall.

Once you've got the move down it's immensely satisfying and a guaranteed crowd-pleaser. What's more, is that you'll now be able to get a pretty difficult leg workout in *whereveryou* are.

Bodyweight Hamstring Curl

Difficulty: 2

Type: Concentric/eccentric

Lie flat on the ground facing upward and then push through your heels to bring your upper body up and toward you. Alternatively, trap your feet beneath a log of bar while kneeling and then lower your body forward and then pivot it back upward.

Squat Walk

Difficulty: 3

Type: Isokinetic

The squat walk is a move that involves walking around in a squat position, keeping your chest out and back straight. You can also take this further by doing a 'squat run'. The other day I had to tie up some cardboard boxes with string, which involved me running around the boxes in a low posture wrapping the string as I went. As you do.

Weird though this was, the result was my legs were pumped for hours after. Plus this one can be made more fun by carrying a kettlebell in front of you, or a bar on your shoulders. Or you can try and navigate some kind of assault course of your design.

Sissy Squat

Difficulty: 3+

Type: Concentric/eccentric

This one is somewhat controversial seeing as there are suggestions that it can cause knee problems. I personally have never found that to be true – and some people have even recommended using sissy squats for rehab - but of course you need to proceed with caution and listen to your body.

To perform this move, you go up on tip toes, lean your knees forward, and your head backwards so that your center of gravity is much lower. Now bend the knees and lean back as though you were doing the limbo. It basically looks like you're Neo.

You can also perform sissy squats on one leg, or while shuffling underneath something – turning actual limbo into a workout!

Bodyweight Lunge

Difficulty: 1+

Type: Concentric/eccentric

Simply step forward into a deep lunge and return.

Lunge Walk

Difficulty: 2

Type: Isokinetic

Another 'walk' you can do is the lunge walk. Simply lunge around the garden, and for extra credit, throw on a weighted vest.

Bulgarian Split Squat

Difficulty: 2+

Type: Concentric/eccentric

Place one foot behind you on a bench and then lunge forward.

Pistol Jump Squat

Difficulty: 4

Type: Plyometric

Another way to make the pistol squat more difficult and more impressive is add a jump at the end. Not only is this a very taxing plyometric move, but it's also one that translates perfectly to real-world jump height training. That's because when you jump, you do so off of *one leg* in most scenarios. While the vertical jump is measured from standing on two feet, a single legged jump might well be a better indicator of functional performance. Plus, it's great for symmetry.

Calf Jumps

Difficulty: 2

Type: Concentric/eccentric

Calf jumps are jumps that you perform using *only* your calves. You'll launch yourself into the air while keeping your legs entirely straight. The result is that you'll be explosively training the calves and building one of the crucial links in the chain that you'll use for jumping.

Side Squat

Difficulty: 2

Type: Concentric/eccentric

This is a great tool for building up to various one-legged moves. Load up with a kettlebell in goblet position, or with a barbell across your back, and then step out sideways into a lunge. You'll now squat on that one leg while the other one stretches out. Step back into the middle and repeat on the other side.

Burpees

Difficulty: 2+

Type: Plyometric/concentric/eccentric

This is a push up followed immediately by a squat jump. It's a great option for resistance cardio and a good example of an almost full body movement.