



LET'S SQUAT!

LET'S SQUAT!

Squatting extends your back, increases mobility in your hips, lengthens your calves, stretches your Achilles tendons, and strengthens your knees and ankles.

The preparatory routines in this poster can help you regain your innate ability to squat. You can pick and choose poses to see which ones work best for you. If you have time constraints, you may find that you prefer to alternate the postures, doing some on even-numbered days and others on odd-numbered days. There is no right or wrong length of time to hold the poses, though working repeatedly, deeply, and holding the poses as long as possible will help you progress. It is helpful to time yourself in each posture and keep a log of your progress. Daily practice and patience can bring excellent results. If you feel fatigue, tingling, or numbness while holding any one of the postures, come out of it. These are your signals to slowly stretch your legs and walk around to regain normal blood circulation. The big reward will be seeing and acknowledging how your body changes and your commitment to making it happen.

Text by Betty Eiler (pictured) : Photos by Jim Jacobs

It's such a simple thing ... squatting. It's bending your knees, balancing on your feet, and sitting with your hamstrings on or near your heels. It sounds easy, and it can be. Most of the populations in countries such as China and India have mastered it. Children all over the world grow up squatting as a way to sit and play. It's a natural development in a child's growth process. However, unlike in the Western world, people in other countries continue to squat as they grow into adulthood and old age. Squatting is incorporated into their daily activities as they gather in circles or conversation groups to eat, socialize, study, and work.

Squatting develops balance and stability. If you think you can't squat, start with some easy variations; then, over a period of time, evolve into the full posture. The more you do, the easier it will become. Give squatting a playful try. It's an easy option for extending and enhancing your appreciation of life.

May you regain the joys of mobility, balance, increased flexibility, and the freedom to play like a child. May you also feel more at home in cultures where squatting is recognized as a fundamental human movement and a daily part of life.



This poster can be pulled out and displayed.
Additional free, printable versions are available at eldr.com/poster.

ELDR Media: 2550 Ninth Street, Suite 111, Berkeley, CA 94710
eldr.com

1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



1 The ultimate squat is with the knees and feet together, the chest lifted, and the back in proper alignment.

2 To prepare, sit on a firm chair with your sitting bones (ischial tuberosities) near the edge. Open your legs about a foot apart, fold forward, grab your elbows, and breathe.

3 For a variation on #2, try the pose against a wall.

4 Extending the body in a forward hanging stretch, as shown, is a safe way to lengthen the back and stretch the buttocks and the backs of the legs.

5 You can achieve a deeper hanging stretch by gradually moving your hands down the support (make sure it is stable) and by leaning backward into your heels.

6 To further stretch your shoulders, cross your right arm over your left and hang. Then switch, left over right.

7 If your knees feel strained when you attempt to squat, assist them by placing a folded or rolled mat, towel, or pranayama bolster behind them, deep into the joint. To keep your heels on the ground, sit on a block, books, or bolsters.

8 It is important to “ground” the heels to help lengthen the back, release the hips, and facilitate relaxation. Without support under the feet to help you balance, it is possible to fall backward.

9 Squat with your heels elevated. Place a rolled mat, phone book, or block on the floor and rest your heels on it. To increase mobility in the hips and stretch the inner groins, turn your knees and feet outward. You can also use your elbows to push your knees apart. As you create more stretch in the legs, groins, and ankles, it will become easier to bring your knees closer together.

10 *One last hitch:* The front of your lower legs and ankles may fatigue from trying to stay upright. Use a weight such as a sandbag, table leg, or block to help you maintain the posture.