

HIGH FREQUENCY SQUATTING

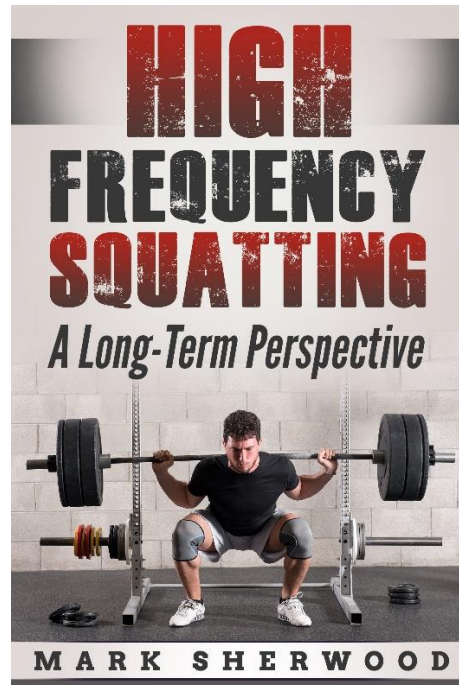
A Long-Term Perspective



M A R K S H E R W O O D

High Frequency Squatting

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Mark Sherwood

For more information from the author visit:

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High Frequency Squatting

By Mark Sherwood

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Introduction

The squat is one of the most demanding exercises in weight training. It requires the simultaneous exertion of a multitude of muscles from your shoulders to your feet. If you consider this, it seems that squatting on a high frequency basis would be a questionable practice as it could easily lead to overtraining due to its demanding nature.

For anyone who is considering high frequency squatting, the fact that it could easily lead to overtraining is a valid concern. If the intensity or volume are always high when engaging in high frequency squatting, there is a good chance that you will break-down or burn-out and stall-out. No one wants to endure the pain, sweat, and hard work of heavy squatting if it does not lead to progress. In spite of the risk of burnout, there are some lifters who have experienced great success with high frequency squatting.

If you have the right physiology, you can squat hard on a daily basis and make rapid gains. However, even those who respond well to an intense high frequency squatting program will eventually run into a sticking point that won't budge no matter how hard they push themselves. At the same time, you should know that if your progress with high frequency squatting has never materialized or has stopped, that doesn't mean you must stop squatting on a high frequency basis. What it does mean is that you should reconsider the way that you approach high frequency squatting.

While squatting on a high frequency basis can be good, it must be done in a manner that your body can handle. You will need to be wise about the amount of sets, weight, and intensity that you use on a daily basis. If you train within your capacity to recover, you can utilize a high frequency squatting program on a long-term basis. This must be done within the context of gradual gains that are repeated multiple times over a long period of time.

If you are only going to be squatting on a high frequency basis for a couple months, you can push harder to gain faster. For those who want to push for fast gains, this will be addressed in a bonus section at the end of the book. The bonus section offers a fairly intense high frequency squatting program that can be used six to eight weeks, or as long as it produces results. However, the majority of this book is dedicated to those who are interested in high frequency squatting on a long-term basis.

Chapter 1

Long-Term High Frequency Concepts



If you enjoy squatting and would like to engage in high frequency squatting on a long-term basis, you will have to avoid the problem of burnout and overuse injuries. Both of these problems can occur very easily with high frequency heavy squatting, but there are no laws that require you to squat heavy in every workout. Most people can squat on a high frequency basis if they adjust the poundages, intensity, and training volume according to their recovery ability.

Some people may not see the value in modifying the volume, weight, or intensity of the workouts. This type of mindset believes that if the weights aren't heavy, and the sets aren't pushed close to failure, the lifter will fail to build any strength. I disagree as I believe that lighter lifting that is performed at a moderate intensity on a high frequency basis prepares your body to grow more comfortable with the weights you are using. This allows you to easily handle a small increase in load from time to time. I know that many will question the strategy of allowing your body to become more comfortable with a given number of sets, reps, and weight, but you must understand why this is good:

Anytime you grow more comfortable with the load you have been using, the reason is because you have gained strength. As long as the weight you are lifting feels comfortable to lift, you will always be able to add more. It's only when the load becomes too hard to lift that you will fail to be able to add more weight. The constant practice of making your sets harder by immediately adding more weight at the first sign of a strength gain will eventually end up causing a sticking point. The constant effort to make your workouts harder may lead to progress for a while, but the end result is usually an insurmountable training plateau.

If you have been taught to be intensity minded as I once was, you must get it out of your mind that your body can only get stronger when a training stress is severe and brutally hard. The good thing about high frequency training is that you don't need to kill yourself in every workout to get stronger. The training stress is challenging, but it is not severe. When applied on a high frequency basis, your body will have plenty of opportunity to get better at handling the training stress so that you can add more. When you add more, you repeat the process until the weights become easier to lift and you can add more again.

Constant Overload Makes Recovery Difficult

The overload principle is good when it is used correctly, but it is often over-used. Many lifters try to add weight to their lifts every week. If your body has the ability to make rapid adaptations and rapid strength gains, or you know how to adjust the reps correctly as you add weight, weekly overload will work. However, what often happens is that as you continue to gain strength, you will keep adding more weight. As you add more weight, you will also increase the stress on your body. The more stress you place upon your body, the harder it becomes to recover. As recovery becomes progressively more difficult, you will eventually stop recovering enough to gain strength from the frequent use of overload.

The Acclimation Principle

The way to avoid the inability to recover from the constant application of overload is to apply the acclimation principle to your training. The acclimation principle is almost the opposite of overload. Overload is based on the mindset of making workouts harder. In contrast, acclimation is based on allowing the same workouts to grow easier over time. The workouts don't get easier because you are using less weight, less reps, or less sets, instead, the same workouts get easier because you get progressively stronger by doing them with a high degree of consistency.

The main goal that your body is trying to accomplish when it gains strength is to make it easier for you to lift the same weight. Anytime your body acclimates to anything in life the reason it acclimates is to help you face the same conditions with greater comfort and greater ease. This is a natural process that your body is trying to accomplish, so let it achieve what it is trying to accomplish. In the case of strength training, you do this by repeating the same workouts until the same weights can be lifted with greater comfort and more ease.

Acclimate First, Then Overload

Once you have given your body sufficient time to acclimate to the same amount of weekly sets, reps, and weight, then you can apply the overload principle by adding more weight. The important concept that is being emphasized is that you must acclimate first, then overload. Acclimation is a continual process that happens over the course of many workouts. In contrast, overload is to be applied occasionally. Overload never works unless acclimation occurs first, and if you overload before you acclimate, you will hit an immovable wall and a never-ending sticking point. The reason I stress these points is to persuade you that it is to your benefit to grow more comfortable with the same workout for a while before making it harder; especially when the goal is long-term progress.

Chapter 2

Two Basic Workouts



The basics of the long-term high frequency squat program are fairly simple. The initial program provides a framework that you can start with and adjust as necessary as you continue. The basics will be explained first, and the adjustments or add-ons will be discussed afterwards.

Workout A, and Workout B

The basic high frequency squat program calls for five to six squat sessions per week. Three or four of the weekly workouts will only be moderate in weight and intensity. These workouts are called **workout A**.

One or two of the weekly workouts will be heavier and higher in intensity, but not extremely heavy or hard. These workouts are called **workout B**. These two workouts are presented on the next page:

Workout A

Do 3 warm up sets as follows:

Warm up set 1:

Use an empty bar to do as many reps as needed to warm up your legs, hips, and back.

Warm up set 2:

Do 1 set x 10 reps with 30%

Warm up set 3:

Do 1 set x 5 reps with 50%

Do 5 Work Sets as follows:

5 sets x 5 reps with 60% to 65% of your single rep max

Workout B

Do 4 warm up sets as follows:

Warm up set 1:

Use an empty bar to do as many reps as needed to warm up your legs, hips, and back.

Warm up set 2:

Do 1 set x 10 reps with 30%

Warm up set 3:

Do 1 set x 5 reps with 50%

Warm up set 4:

Do 1 set x 3 reps with 60%

Do 5 Work-Sets as follows:

5 sets x 5 reps with 75% of your single rep max

Rest Between Sets

You do not need to rest more than 30 to 60 seconds between your warm up sets because they are easy sets. If you rest too long between warm up sets, you will start to cool off and lose the effect of the warm up before you do your work sets. Rest as long as needed to recover between work-sets. You may be able to recover in as little as 60 to 90 seconds between sets when using 60% to 65% of your max. In contrast, it may take up to 3 minutes of rest to fully recover between sets when using 75% of your max.

Order of Workouts Within A Week

Remember that workout A is to be performed three or four times per week, while workout B is to be performed once or twice per week according to what you find works best.

If you prefer doing five squat sessions per week, You can either do workout A three times per week and workout B two times per week, or you can do workout A four times per week and workout B once per week. These options are listed below:

| 5 Squat Sessions per Week | |
|---|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;">Option 1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Do workout A three times per week Do workout B twice per week</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"><tr><td style="text-align: center;">I suggest doing workout A on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, and doing workout B on Monday and Friday</td></tr></table> | I suggest doing workout A on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, and doing workout B on Monday and Friday |
| I suggest doing workout A on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, and doing workout B on Monday and Friday | |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Option 2</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Do workout A four times per week Do workout B once per week</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"><tr><td style="text-align: center;">I suggest doing workout A on Tuesday, Wednesday Thursday and Friday, and doing workout B on Monday</td></tr></table> | I suggest doing workout A on Tuesday, Wednesday Thursday and Friday, and doing workout B on Monday |
| I suggest doing workout A on Tuesday, Wednesday Thursday and Friday, and doing workout B on Monday | |

If you prefer doing six squat sessions per week, you have one option, which is to do workout A four times per week, and workout B twice per week. This weekly schedule is listed below:

| 6 Squat Sessions per Week | |
|--|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;">Do workout A four times per week Do workout B twice per week</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"><tr><td style="text-align: center;">I suggest doing workout B on Monday and Friday and doing workout A on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday</td></tr></table> | I suggest doing workout B on Monday and Friday and doing workout A on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday |
| I suggest doing workout B on Monday and Friday and doing workout A on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday | |

Do Workout B When You Feel Strongest

I have provided my own suggestions for when to schedule workout A and workout B into a weekly schedule. However, you can schedule Workout A and Workout B in whatever order that you prefer, but consider that Workout B is heavier and demands more strength and energy than workout A. This being the case, I believe that it is best to do workout B on days when you feel strong, which is something that you can determine for yourself better than anyone else.

Chapter 3

Adjustments And Addons



Add More Reps to Your Last Set

The squatting program presented in this book is based on sets of five reps. It is possible that you have the type of physiology that benefits especially well to high rep training. If this is the case, make the following adjustment:

Do more reps on your last set when using 60% to 65% of your max for 5 sets of 5 reps.

I would start with 10 reps on your last set and evaluate how it affects the rest of your training over the course of a week. If you still have plenty of energy and feel you can add more reps, then do up to 15 reps on your last set. The exact number of reps you perform is up to you and how it affects your strength throughout the week. Do the amount that you find leads to the best results.

Those who choose to do more reps for their last set may be wondering how often this should be done. I recommend that you start with once per week. If you can easily handle doing more reps on your last set

once per week, then you can add it to your workouts more often according to what delivers the best results.

When adding more, always remember that your body can change the way it reacts to your training from week to week. For example, your body may seem to wake up and gain some extra strength for a few weeks when you initially add more reps to your last set. However, you should know that fatigue can accumulate over time from doing the added reps and eventually start to hinder your progress. If an initial boost to your strength starts to dissipate and transitions backwards to a loss of strength, you are probably over-doing it. It may take more than one round of trial and error to figure out how often you can add extra reps to your last set for best results.

Add An Occasional Heavier Workout

Some lifters may want to do an occasional heavier workout by going heavier than 75% of their single rep max. If this is true of you, you can occasionally replace a 5 x 5 workout that is done with 75%, with a heavier workout consisting of the following sets, reps, and percentage of your single rep max:

3 sets of 5 reps with 80% to 85% of your single rep max.

I would suggest that this be done within a time range of once every ten to twenty-one days. My recommendation is to start by including a heavier workout once every two weeks. When adding the occasional heavy workout, monitor your strength, and monitor the way your body feels in between workouts. If you feel you can include the extra workout more often, then do so. The thing to watch for when adding a heavier workout is not just the immediate effect, but the long-term effect. You may initially gain strength from adding an occasional heavier workout, but if it keeps you from making gradual strength gains over a long period of time, back off or throw it out. Quick gains come as a result of pushing yourself. In contrast, long term gains come as a result of pacing yourself. Make your adjustments and observe your results with long-term progress in mind.

Remember also that the volume and load of high frequency squatting must be adjusted to fit your personal recovery rate. This can vary according to your level of daily activity, daily stress, daily sleep, and the quality of your diet. As long as you have plenty of energy and are recovering your strength from workout to workout, you are on the right path.

Chapter 4

Avoid Breakdowns



It is possible that you use the correct percentages of your single rep max, yet find that you are highly fatigued from high frequency squatting. If this happens, you may need to work your way up to it. This can be done by starting out with three squat sessions per week. For those who need to gradually work up to high frequency squatting, I recommend two weekly sessions with 60% to 65% of your max, and one session with 75% of your max. Do 5 sets of 5 reps for each session. When you feel as though you are recovering from this without any problems, add another weekly session with 60% to 65% of your single rep max for 5 sets of 5 reps.

If the extra workout adds too much work and you can't recover, cut one of your weekly workouts back to a short workout by doing just one or two sets of five reps with 60% to 65% of your single rep max. Do 5 sets of 5 reps for the other three weekly workouts. Follow this schedule until you develop the ability to handle a little more. Any time your body feels ready, add one set at a time to your shorter workout until it eventually expands into a full workout where you are doing 5 sets of 5 reps with 60% to 65%. You can then follow this same procedure of adding one set at a time when you feel ready to add a fifth workout to your weekly schedule.

Remaining Pain Free And Injury Free

When engaging in high frequency squatting, one of your ongoing goals should be to maintain a pain free body. Once a muscle group gets irritated, it is hard to nurse the irritated area back to health while squatting five to six days per week. Your best solution for getting back to a pain free condition is to take a break from high frequency squatting and to avoid heavy squats. Once you are pain free, gradually work your way up in frequency and weight. However, an even better solution is to avoid developing an irritation in the first place. You may find that you can avoid chronic aches and pains by cutting back to two or three squat workouts per week for one week out of every three or four weeks. Another important consideration is to make sure you always warm up properly and to squat with perfect form.

Those who warm up properly and use excellent squatting form on every rep of every set will find it easier to avoid the development of problem areas in the knees, back, or thighs. Good form means to always be on perfect balance throughout the entire squat. The weight distribution should not be on the balls of your feet, or on your heels, but on the whole foot. Both the bar and the body should be under control while using a smooth squatting motion without shaking and jerking. Rep speed will vary from lifter to lifter but each rep will usually take two to four seconds which means that a set of five reps will generally take ten to twenty seconds to perform.

Do not drop rapidly into a squat and bounce out of the bottom position. Never allow your back to round over when squatting. Avoid drifting or lurching forward with the bar as you squat. Another problem occurs when you raise your butt and hips first before ascending upwards with your shoulders. The result of this is that your legs straighten first but you remain bent over at the hips after your legs straighten. When this happens, you then have no choice but to use your lower back to straighten up into a vertical position. This puts a tremendous amount of stress on your lower back. Your hips and shoulders should ascend upwards together at the same time instead of in a sequential manner.

Do your best to find a squatting technique that allows you to stay healthy and pain free so that you can avoid a forced layoff. Uninterrupted training is one of the keys to consistent improvement over the long-term.

If you need more information and a visual guide that teaches proper squat technique, refer to the following link:

<http://www.precisionpointtraining.com/strength-training-articles/resources-on-how-to-squat/>

Chapter 5

The High Frequency Squatter



Those who choose to embark upon a high frequency squat program are somewhat exceptional. If you are a high frequency squatter, you are in a special category of self-discipline and ambition. However, discipline, ambition, and hard work are not enough to insure improvement. You must combine these attributes with knowledge and sound training habits that enable you to improve while remaining injury free. My hope is that the information in this book will help you to accomplish this. I wish you much success and the best of training.

Bonus Section

Short Term High Frequency Training



The goal of this book is to equip you with the knowledge of how to design a long-term high frequency squatting program. However, I would like to briefly address a strategy for those who are looking for more of a short-term program that will promote faster gains. The program is designed to last six to eight weeks, or as long as it continues to help you make progress. This plan is based on performing three different squat workouts. Two of the workouts are performed twice per week, and the other workout is performed once per week. This adds up to a total of five squat workouts per week. The weekly schedule along with the weight, sets, and reps for each workout are presented in the chart on the next page:

Warm up Sets

Warm up Set 1:

Use an empty bar to do as many reps as needed to warm up your legs, hips, and back.

Warm up set 2:

Do 5 reps with about 30% of your single rep max

Warm up set 3:

Do 5 reps with about 50% of your single rep max

Warm up set 4:

Do 3 reps with about 60% of your single rep max

Warm up set 5:

Do 3 reps with about 70% of your single rep max

Work Sets

Mondays and Wednesdays:

Do 2 to 3 sets x 5 reps with 80% of your single rep max

Tuesdays and Thursdays:

Do 1 set x 5 reps with 80% of your single rep max

Do 1 set x 12 reps with 65% of your single rep max

Friday

Rest

Saturday

Do 1 set x 3 reps with 85% of your single rep max

Do 1 set x 8 reps with 75% of your single rep max

Sunday

Rest

Tips For Success

Don't max out on reps more than once per week. The program is designed to allow you to stop your sets a couple reps short of max reps to failure. As you continue with the workouts listed, the weights should start to feel easier to lift, at which point you should increase your poundages by 5 pounds. Keep using this program as long as you are making progress every week or two. If you reach the point where your progress has stopped for three or more weeks, your body is probably maxed out on heavy squatting on a high frequency basis.

Not For Everyone

Squatting heavy on a high frequency basis doesn't work for everyone. You may not have a base of training experience to benefit from it, and some lifters don't have the right physiology for it. If you try the program listed above and your energy and strength start to take a dive, either stop the program, or you can try working your way up from a moderate frequency to high frequency. You do this by starting out with three squatting sessions per week. Assuming you reach the point where you can recover from squatting three times per week, increase to four sessions per week. In the same way, you should only increase to five sessions per week when your body grows comfortable with four sessions per week. This process may only take four to six weeks for some lifters, but don't be surprised if it takes up to six months before you can handle five intense squat workouts per week.

If you try squatting hard and heavy on a high frequency basis, and it does not work, or it stops working, don't assume that high frequency squatting is an ineffective training strategy. Chances are that you can benefit from high frequency squatting, but you will need to design your workouts in a manner that enables high frequency squatting without burnout or injury. You can do this by referring back to the first five chapters of this book.

Resources On How To Squat

For information on Squat technique and how to squat, click on the following link.

[Resources on How To Squat](#)

About The Author

Mark Sherwood is a long-time fitness enthusiast who has pursued weight training and other fitness activities for over thirty years. His educational and professional background include a B.S. degree as an exercise specialist in physical education from the University of Wisconsin Madison, and positions as a fitness instructor and physical education teacher.

One of Mark's passions is to distinguish between strength training concepts that are consistently effective as opposed to those that are effective for a short time period. Through his education, research, and personal trial and error, he has endeavored to gain the necessary knowledge to share effective training strategies with those who desire to maximize their training results.

Mark resides with his family in Southern California. For more training resources from Mark, you can visit www.precisionpointtraining.com. In addition, you can view more books on strength training that he has authored on the next page.

Additional Resources

A Quick Guide To Strength

Beginning Strength Training

Boom!

Bottom Up Loading

Converting The Marker Rep

Cluster Set Training

Density Responsive Lifters

Developing A Feel For Effective Workouts

Easy Progression With Mini Sets

Escalating Loading Ramps

Force And Frequency Training

Frequency Responsive Lifters

Frequent Training Preparation

Fusion 3: Book 1

Giant Pyramid Training

High Frequency Strength Training

High Frequency Front-Loading

High Frequency Squatting

High Volume 5's

Heavy Frequency Training

Individualized Workouts For Hardgainers

Intensity Ratios

Intensity Responsive Lifters

Marker Rep Training

Minimalist Responsive Lifters

Never Miss A Lift

Overcoming Strength Training Plateaus

Overload And Acclimate

Phase Potentiation

Precision Responsive Lifters

Quick Workouts For Quick Muscles

Ramp Up Your Strength

Ramp Up Your Training Volume

Rest-Pause Training

Self Adjusting Linear Periodization

Short Cycle Mastery

Speed Responsive Lifters

Strength Challenge 20/20

Strength Training Capacity

Strength Training Thresholds

Strength To The Max

Strength To The Max And Beyond

The 1 x 100 Challenge

The 6 – 15 Marker Rep Workout

The High Frequency Training Pyramid

The Peak Strength Principle

The Redistribution Principle

4-Way Loading

5-4-3: Linear Periodization

12-10-8-6: A Workout Plan For Building Size And Strength