

NEW YEAR, NEW EXERCISE - WHY EVERYONE SHOULD BE DOING SQUATS!

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How often do you have to get up from a seated position or lift something off the floor? – the answer is several times a day.

Every time you sit down then stand up you are essentially performing a squat. It combines components of everyday functional movements such as going from sit to stand, going up and down stairs and walking. It is a technique that we have to do regardless of age - the ability to get on/off a chair, the ability to go to the toilet or get in or out of a car.

Within physiotherapy treatment we regularly prescribe it as an exercise to help strengthen the lower limbs but it can provide so many additional benefits when performed correctly.

“So, what does a good squat look like?”

Ask a toddler to pick something off the floor and look at their posture. We were all born to squat but unfortunately, as we get older, we develop bad habits, bad postures, muscle imbalances and we can become a little lazy. It is important to have good

mobility throughout your spine, pelvis and shoulders in combination with good muscle length and strength to enable us all to perform a squat effectively.

There are many varieties of squat exercises which can incorporate additional weights to make the exercise more challenging and ultimately more enjoyable. If you would like help or advice on how to progress and develop your squats, gym instructors, personal trainers and physiotherapists can all offer guidance.

Remember – squatting doesn't discriminate – no matter what age you are everyone needs to squat in their everyday life. To squat or not to squat – that is the question you must ask yourself for 2020. Why not give them a try?

If you are finding it difficult to exercise or want to learn more about which exercises might be best suited for you the physiotherapy team at PRRT are here to help. To arrange a physiotherapy assessment please contact our clinical administration team on 028 9042 7788.



10 REASONS WHY SQUATTING IS SUCH A GOOD EXERCISE

- 1) It helps maintain and improve the mobility in your joints – by engaging your hips, knees and ankles simultaneously. The extra load builds joint health and strength.
- 2) It keeps bones strong – weight bearing exercises help reduce the risk of fractures (Versus Arthritis.org).
- 3) It helps build strong core and leg muscles - by working your leg, stomach, lower back and buttock muscles all at once. Having a strong core makes everyday tasks such as bending, turning and standing easier.
- 4) It can improve your posture and balance- Squats not only strengthen your leg muscles but also your core stabilising muscles which are essential for balance and preventing falls.
- 5) It burns calories fast - by building more muscle you become more efficient at burning those extra calories.
- 6) It can improve your flexibility - Tendons, muscles and ligament become less elastic as we age therefore doing exercises that involve bending and stretching of the leg muscles will help you.
- 7) It helps to strengthen your heart and lungs – By challenging your cardiovascular system and by adding weights you require additional exertion and effort.
- 8) It can improve your speed and jumping ability – as your legs get stronger your ability to produce power in sporting activity increases.
- 9) Exercise improves digestion and circulation and helps reduce constipation – This is one of the benefits people don't realise. Squatting improves circulation in the legs allowing more oxygen and nutrients to travel through your body's organs, including the small intestine.
- 10) With all the above improvements daily tasks such as getting up from a chair or lifting heavy bags of shopping will become easier which is so important as we all get that little bit older.

PRRT is based at Maryfield, Holywood and provides psychological therapies, physiotherapy, personal development and training to the retired police population. PSNI employees can access our healthcare services via referrals from PSNI occupational health. Serving officers can access personal development and training directly.

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