

How to Keep Your Knees Out on Squats

Contributed by Luke

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[Source: stronglifts.com]

Reader [Matt](#) asked:

I have a problem with keeping my knees from buckling in as I move to higher weights in my [Back Squats](#). I know that I am weak on the lateral aspect of my legs and that I need to concentrate on abduction movements to help strengthen that area.

Which muscles do I want to target besides my [vastus lateralis](#) and [gluteus medius](#) to keep my knees straight while doing squats? What exercises would you recommend to strengthen these muscles?

Why You Must Keep Your Knees Out. It's easier to break parallel when your knees are out: your stomach doesn't get in the way of your legs. Knees out also means more strength and less chance of injury.

- **More Strength.** Your quads do all the work when you Squat with your knees in. Knees out involves your [adductors](#) & makes [squeezing your glutes](#) easier. More muscles used is more strength.

- **Knee Safety.** Your feet must be inline with your thighs. Knees out is more strength, thus toes out. Squatting with knees in & toes out puts uneven compressive forces on your knees.

Why Your Knees Buckle In. Knees buckling in on Squats means your have weak adductors. Strengthening your abductors won't solve the problem.

Same reader [Matt](#) replied:

Are you sure its weak adductors? I was taught that adductors pull your legs in towards the midline and abductors pull away from the midline of your body.

Being in the exercise science field myself and talking to other professionals on this matter, we believe that the problem is weak abductors or lack flexibility in my adductors.

Getup. Do body-weight Squats while pushing your knees out. Feel how your adductors extend on the way down & shorten on the way up. Now Squat with your knees in. Your adductors can't work, your quads do everything.

Matt is right on the adductor/abductor function. Hip flexibility is important, work on that too using the [Squat stretch](#). But if your knees buckle in on Squats, you have weak adductors. Not weak abductors.

How to Keep Your Knees Out. Don't lose your time strengthening your adductors with special exercises. Squats will fix the problem.

- **Push Your Knees Out.** Actively push your knees to the side on each rep you Squat. Focus, tighten all muscles & exaggerate pushing your knees out. Your adductors will get stronger.

- **Lower The Weight.** Easier to learn technique with light weights. Lower the weight. Relearn how to Squat. Increase the weight each workout.

- **Use a Resistance Band.** Do body-weight Squats with a mini Flex Band double wrapped right below your knees. The resistance band will force you to push your knees out. 3 sets of 10 as warmup/on recovery days.

Resistance bands works well if you lack muscle control / focus to push your knees out while Squatting. If you don't have that problem, actively push your knees out every time you Squat. Your knees will stop buckling in.