

# GET YOUR STRENGTH & CONDITIONING RIGHT FOR RUGBY



By  
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(Lead Strength & Conditioning  
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The importance of **Strength and Conditioning** is well established in rugby and the vast majority of players know they need to spend some time in the gym to add to their game and reduce the risk of injury. What is less valued though is the importance of good technique in the gym.

Strength training offers not only the opportunity to arm a player for the physical demands of rugby, but to also reinforce good movement patterns to reduce the risk of injury. If this isn't recognised, we can end up reinforcing bad habits that can actually increase the risk of injury. We spend a lot of time in our performance rehab gym working with injured players to undo movement patterns we believe contribute to their injuries.

The most common of which is the combination of a large lumbar extension and an anterior tilt of the pelvis which we often refer to as the 'duck arse' (see picture below)



*Playing rugby puts stress on your body that cant be replicated in the Gym*

The back squat is often a key exercise that reinforces this position and is often coached to enhance that arched back position in order to lift more weight. Great if you're a power lifter, not so great if you want to reduce the hamstring, groin and lower back injuries often associated with this position. Below are 3 alternative strength exercises to the back squat that you can use to reduce this movement pattern

## **RACK PULL DEADLIFT**

For those of you with less than ideal hip mobility, the Rack Pull Deadlift is a great option and will really target a glute dominant movement helping to undo the quad dominant patterns we often see with poor back squatting.



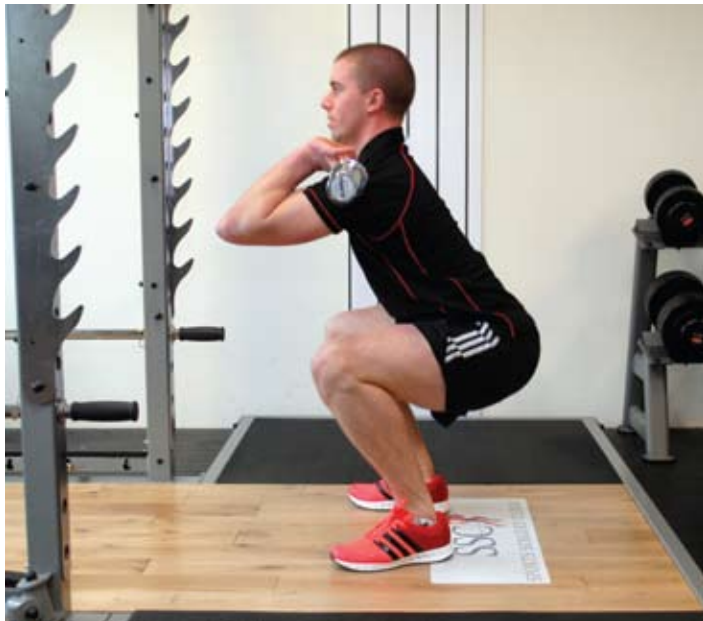
*Rack Pull Dead Lift*



**SPLIT SQUAT**

It's very rare during a rugby game that you're able to push with equal force through both legs. This is where unilateral lifts can play a role and transfer to the demands of the game.

It will develop range of motion through the hips, it offers the chance to really challenge that 'duck arse' position and it will give you a stability challenge throughout the movement.



**FRONT SQUAT**

We prefer front loaded squats, as they're a great self limiting exercise because they are difficult to do wrong. If you try to load too heavy or you don't use the correct technique, you'll drop the bar forward, the load becomes the coach. This is different to a Back Squat; take a look at the range of technique around your local gym and you will quickly see a comprehensive range of poor technique and too much load.

We see a lot of injured athletes at the Sports Surgery Clinic so we learn a lot about the movements that

lead to injury. This informs our Strength and Conditioning coaching and programming. We have a very strong focus on the quality of movement rather than just the amount of weight an athlete is able to move and are careful to make sure the athlete is aware of what good technique is and why they need it. Video feedback

during coaching sessions is a great tool for us to show the athlete where they're going right and wrong and where they can make changes to help keep them on the park for the season.

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