

# SQUAT STANCE ANALYSIS

Taking conjecture out of the effects of different squat stance widths



**Original Research** Paoli, A., et al. The effect of stance width on the electromyographical activity of eight superficial thigh muscles during back squat with different bar loads. *Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research* 23(1):246-250, 2009.

YOU SHOULD CHOOSE THE WIDTH OF YOUR SQUAT STANCE BASED ON COMFORT AND PERSONAL PREFERENCE, NOT BASED ON THE MYTH OF DIFFERENTIAL MUSCLE RECRUITMENT PATTERNS ASSOCIATED WITH DIFFERENT WIDTHS.

PHOTO: SHAWN WARREN

A great deal of gym talk and conjecture has historically surrounded the issue of how wide your stance should be in the squat. This issue concerns bodybuilders, strength athletes, and any other athlete who uses the squat to increase lower-body strength and power. The gym talk and conjecture mainly revolve around what foot position or stance width to use in your effort to target certain thigh muscles over others and what stance might allow you to lift more weight. Research in the past has compared the squat to other exercises, such as leg extensions; examined different foot positions; and weighed the effect of different squat depths on quad muscle recruitment. To date, no known research looked solely at the impact that different stance widths might have on a multitude of muscles used to squat—until now.

**Power Key:** squat stance, muscle activity, training loads, muscle recruitment