

Bodyweight Bulgarian Split Squat

Unloaded rear-foot-elevated split squat, hands on hips

Key positions



1. Rear foot elevated: establish support



2. Same foot positions: lower with control

Muscles worked

Main muscles

- Gluteus maximus contributes to front-leg hip extension.
- Quadriceps extend the front knee as you rise.

Supporting muscles

- Hamstrings and adductors assist leg movement and control.
- Hip and trunk stabilizers support pelvic control, posture and balance.

What makes it useful

A compound exercise with the rear foot elevated and the front leg doing most of the work. Train glutes, quadriceps and balance on each side, without external weights.

Movement & technique

Bodyweight Bulgarian Split Squat | Establish stable support, then lower and rise with control.

Before you start

Use a stable, nonslip bench or box with clear surroundings. Choose a comfortable height, start without weights, and keep sturdy balance support nearby if needed.

1 Establish your stance

Face away from the bench and place the working foot forward. Keep a stable, comfortable stance width, with the front heel and forefoot firmly on the floor.

2 Rest the rear foot on the bench

Rest the other foot on the bench, instep supported and toes pointing down. Settle mainly over the front leg, brace gently, and place hands on hips.

3 Lower under control

Bend the front hip and knee, lowering the rear knee toward the floor. Keep the front foot planted and knee tracking naturally; stop at a controlled depth.

4 Drive through the front foot

Press through the front mid-foot and extend the hip and knee to rise. Keep rear-foot support, regain balance without jumping, and complete both sides.

Form reminders

- Keep the front heel and forefoot grounded and rear instep supported.
- Let the knee follow the toes; keep pelvis and trunk controlled.
- Allow a slight natural lean; avoid excessive folding or back arching.
- Use controlled range without forcing a fixed angle or maximum depth.

Finish safely

- Stop for pain or dizziness. Adjust support height, stance or depth, and use sturdy balance support or coaching when needed.
- Avoid unstable surfaces and dropping the rear knee. Mount and dismount carefully; establish bodyweight control before adding load or jumping.

References

1. NASM - Bulgarian Split Squat (www.nasm.org)
2. ACE - Bulgarian Split Squat (loaded variation) (www.acefitness.org)
3. NASM - Squat Alternatives: Bulgarian Split Squat (www.nasm.org)
4. ScottHermanFitness - Bulgarian Split Squat (played and visually reviewed) (www.youtube.com)