

**ATG**

**TEAM  
STANDARDS**

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Welcome to the first edition of the Team ATG Standards!

This is what I would do if my life depended on making athletes transform both in athleticism and bulletproofing over a 4-year period. This same framework can be applied to teams at any level.

## **PART 1: LOWER BODY STANDARDS**

These four steps are done 3 times through, twice per week...

### **STEP 1: TIBIALIS RAISE**

The muscle we're going to target with this exercise is your "tibialis anterior." The Latin word for shinbone is "tibia," and "anterior" means "front." So it's the muscle on the front of your shins.

All you need is a wall, so your entire team or class can start at once. You don't need any warm-up whatsoever to begin. We'll do 20 reps with full pause at the bottom and top of each rep. The farther your feet are from the wall, the harder it is. The closer they are, the easier it is.

You can [click here](#) to watch the video I made for this program, or look at the pictures below.

My feet are farther away, while my wife Alissa's are closer:





This is your first line of defense against shin splints and knee pain because it affects every step you take, as well as the most intense jumps and decelerations in sports. Getting stronger at this exercise allows you to handle force with *less pain* and greater athleticism.

Let's look at the muscle and when you use it...



When walking...



When jumping off one foot...





When approaching a two-foot jump...





20 reps should give you a serious burn!

So with a wall alone, you can get a world class workout for the front of your ankles and shins. And now with a stairwell alone we can do the same thing for the back of them!



## STEP 2: SINGLE-LEG CALF RAISE

Now we work the exact opposite of the Tibialis Raise.

[Click here](#) for its video.

The *goal* of the Single-Leg Calf Raise is 20 reps per side with pauses at bottom and top of each rep. By senior year, women athletes should be able to do all 20 reps without stopping, and male athletes should be able to do all 20 *with additional load* by holding a kettlebell or dumbbell.

If you hit failure, you simply stop and then match it on the other side. Even a few strict reps is productive!

But there's really nothing fancy about Steps 1 and 2. The idea is to be stronger than your competition on both sides of your lower leg.

Simply pause in the stretched position:





Then raise your heel as high as you can and hold that position for a moment:



Make it *strict* by using only a fist to balance, rather than opening your hand and pushing yourself up:



The last note worth mentioning is that if a trainee can't do a few good reps, they would be better off starting with two legs and working their way to 40 full reps, at which point they'd probably have more success working on one leg.

Most people will go all 4 years of high school without ever truly challenging their lower legs to be stronger, yet thousands if not millions of kids will have shin splints or knee pain, which stops them from competing their hardest. The worst cases will have knee surgeries, as I did in high school.

I didn't play a single game my senior season.

There was no senior prom for me. I was getting around on a walker and quickly becoming hooked on painkillers, completely depressed during what should have been an exciting time of my life.

Taking the time to create stronger athletes in the Team ATG Standards will allow a lot of kids to have much more exciting and fruitful lives.

Getting stronger lower legs improves our foundation, but there's still one more exercise which prepares us to succeed in more powerful performance exercises like squats...

### STEP 3: 3 LEVELS OF L-SIT

[Click here](#) for its video.

20 seconds is all you need here, and you don't need *anything* other than a floor!

The goal for male seniors is holding the body off the ground for all 20 seconds.

The goal for female seniors is holding it off the ground for at least a few seconds, but you'll see how that instantly scales to be easier...



Now by dropping one foot and alternating every 2 seconds, it's still tough, but not quite as tough:





And that gets easier by letting your butt rest down too:





So there are 3 distinct levels, and even with this entry level you modify difficulty by how far back (easier) or forward (harder) you lean:







What we are doing here is working on our hip-flexors. These are the muscles that pick up our legs.

With weaker hip-flexors, we run with more of a heavy, thudding stride. With stronger hip-flexors, we glide!

This means that over the course of a game, a season, a *career*, you will have less wear and tear on your joints because you won't be having to strain so hard to run.

With Steps 1 through 3, we have prepared our body to *handle* the performance we can gain from...

#### **STEP 4: ATG SQUATS!**

[Click here](#) for its video.

The beauty is this:

Not only can you get large groups into full range of motion squats... IT'S BETTER THAT WAY!

What? How could that be?

Most people's legs are built on knees that *cannot* handle their lower body power 100% pain-free.

By elevating your heels and using a dumbbell or kettlebell, you can immediately get large groups into *strict* squats that give more development to the muscles and tendons in and around the knees.

Can you do a full knee bend without your elbows touching your thighs or going between your knees?

When this picture below is PAIN-FREE, you change the rest of that person's life in relation to knee longevity:



A kettlebell also works:



This would mean the knees are not strong enough for the load:



As would this:



My life never would have been ruined by my knees from age 12 to 20 if I'd started like *this* on squats when I was first made to squat.

It was rehabilitating this ability that fundamentally saved my knees.

But in my case, I had to do so through the ATG Split Squat.

Click here to quickly learn the [ATG Split Squat](#).

The ATG Split Squat is a bonus in the Team ATG Standards program because it can correct someone who can't ATG Squat.

3 sets of 10 per side works great.

To quote Dr. Bahram Jam, a physical therapist and founder of the Advanced Physical Therapy Education Institute:

"Every joint in our body has synovial fluid in it. This is the oil in our body that provides nutrition to the cartilage. Two things are required to produce that fluid: movement and compression. So if a joint doesn't go through its full range - if the hips and knees never go past 90 degrees - the body says 'I'm not being used,' and starts to degenerate and stops the production of synovial fluid."

But in my case, I was too broken to do *any* full bending.



Reverse Step Ups saved me, and eventually made the ATG Split Squat pain-free, which eventually made the ATG Squat pain-free.

Click here to quickly learn the [Reverse Step Up](#).

So the Reverse Step Up is a bonus in the Team ATG Standards program because it can correct someone who can't ATG Split Squat.

3 sets of 20 per side works great.

All that being said, the first thing to try would be removing the weight on the ATG Squat:



And if you have the means, you can even do it assisted:



In fact, for any knee exercise you should not think in terms of I “can” or “can’t” but rather in terms of “what level?”

Loaded?

Unloaded?

*Assisted?*

And in the case of the ATG Split Squat: elevated? 6 inches? 12 inches? 18 inches? I’ve seen people start as high as 24 inches who can now do flat ground!

And in the case of the Reverse Step Up: less than 6 inches? 4 inches? 2 inches? I’ve seen *many* people who had to start at 2 inches who can now do 6 inches with 100% of bodyweight on back!

In terms of the Standards, I would coach these bonus exercises to within 4 years:

ATG Split Squat flat ground 50% bodyweight x 10 per side for males and 40% x 10 per side for females.

Reverse Step Up 6 inches 100% bodyweight x 20 per side for males and 80% x 20 per side for females.

But ATG Split Squats and Reverse Step Ups are *not* as easy to run on large groups.

The people I've seen successfully teaching ATG Split Squats and Reverse Step Ups to large groups are people who have achieved their Standards with form passed as PERFECT by me or my staff!

This brings us to a crucial point in the success of the Team ATG Standards program:

This program is on the app so the *coach* can work to the Standards himself or herself! By the coaches sending in their form videos and progressing to the Standards, they statistically 10X their chances of getting results for others, based on the numbers I've found from testing people taking the data only vs. getting coached.

But we're not done with ATG Squats just yet!

The *Standard* for ATG Squats only begins being worked on once a prerequisite of dumbbell or kettlebell equalling 25% of bodyweight for males or 20% for females is done for 3 sets of 20 with *strict* form.

At this point there's nothing wrong with continuing with dumbbell or kettlebell, but you open the door to amazing form and results from loading with a bar on back.

The Team ATG Squat Standards are 100% bodyweight x 20 for males and 80% x 20 for females!

There are limitless options of what you could use to elevate your heels. In the picture below I'm using two small dumbbell handles. There are more options in [The ATG Equipment List](#).



Doing 3 rounds of those 4 exercises, twice per week for four years, gives your groups a chance to make real transformations that not only change how much joy they get in their sport, and not only change how their joints will fare the rest of their lives...

...but also delivers the gift of students creating abilities they once didn't have, through their own hard work without any special advantages or expensive equipment.

This is a lesson that could change their lives in ways beyond sports and fitness.

Carrying through toward a tangible but *long-term* goal - *without justification for failure* - might be the biggest missing lesson in all of modern schooling.

## **PART 2: EXACTLY WHAT I'D DO NEXT...**

The 4 exercises above can easily be run on large groups from any school weight room.

The first thing I'd do next is buy a bunch of cinder blocks, PVC pipes, and doorstops from Home Depot.

With these 3 cheap items alone you can perform ATG Split Squats and Reverse Step Ups at *any* level...



Mastering the route of Reverse Step Up to ATG Split Squat to ATG Squat alone makes you a wizard at transforming knee health and athleticism.

And you could buy 40 cinder blocks, PVC pipes, and doorstops for the price of 1 exercise machine.

The cinder blocks can also be used to build the Full Range Push Up, which I would be building to 3 sets of 20 perfect reps for males as a prerequisite for Full Range Dips, with a Standard of 10 dips getting shoulders below elbows on every rep. I would also aim to progress females to 10 perfect push ups. You can see my pressing philosophy in [this video](#), and you can see an example of shoulder-below-elbow Dips in [this video](#).

In addition to Full Range Pressing, I'd be RELENTLESS about getting all males to 10 [Full Range Pull Ups](#). 3 sets to tap-out works great for those who can do Pull Ups. 3 sets of 5 using assistance to get up (via partner lifting your feet crossed behind you) and then controlling down at a 4-count works great to progress to the ability

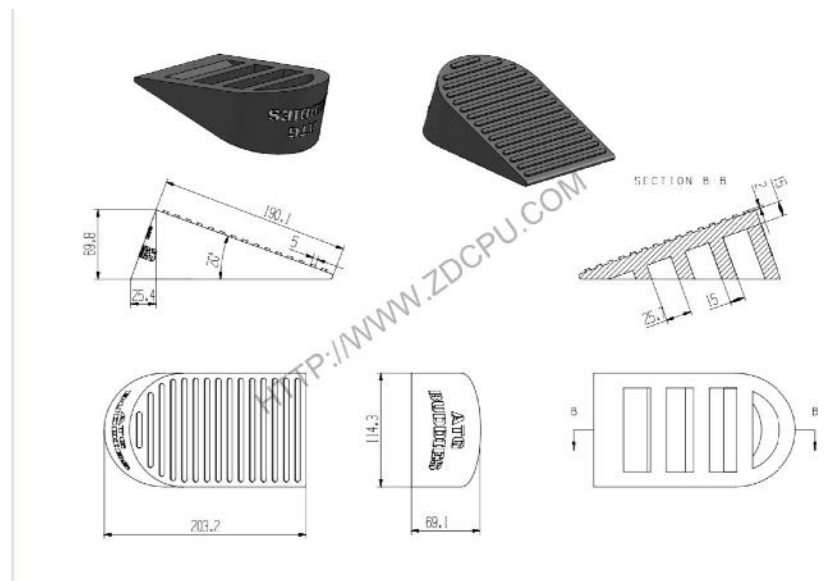


to do Pull Ups. I would want all my females to at least be able to do 1 full Pull Up on their own!

If you have a place to hang rings, they allow not only perfectly regressed Full Range Push Ups but also perfectly regressed Full Range Rows *and* your Dips and Pull Ups! If you don't have rings, you can use dumbbells for your rows, but I believe in *holding* the top position of each rep per [this video](#). Males would be expected to do 10 perfect reps with feet elevated, or 25% x 10 if using dumbbell. Females would be expected to do 10 perfect reps with feet on floor, or 20% x 10 if using dumbbell.



As for the doorstops mentioned above, I have found this concept to work so well for ATG Squats and ATG Split Squats that I have designed my own “ATG Buddies” which will be for sale on Amazon within a few months. I don't even care if someone copies my design because the intention is only to save people money and make the ATG system more accessible. These are much larger than regular doorstops but still stack together for convenient and minimalistic storage.



The final thing I would do is begin fundraising for 10 back extension machines, which combined cost only \$750.

[Click here for my equipment list with links.](#)

We almost all finish school and go out into the real world with weak, stiff, and imbalanced lower back muscles.

Building to 3 sets of 20 per side in a [Single-Leg Back Extension](#) with full pause at top and bottom of each rep can handle all that! I'd strive to get females to do this and males to be able to hold weight at the chest while doing it. Please note there should be a full break between each leg.

For extra lower body mobility, there are extensive minimalistic options in my Zero and Advanced Zero Programs. I would progress all my trainees to [palms to floor Elephant Walk](#) for the backside of the body. Keep in mind that the ATG Split Squat alone progresses you - by athlete standards - to world-class mobility for the front side of your lower body. For diligent students mastering the basics, I would add the cherry on top: [Nordics and Reverse Nordics](#), at 3 sets of 5 reps per week, being sure to alternate weeks on the Nordic being trained eccentric-only and to concentric ability, as show in the video.

For extra upper body mobility and shoulder bulletproofing, my two focuses would be the [Full Range Pullover or Bridge](#) and the [External Rotation in both short and long ranges](#). 25% for males and 20% for females is the max I'd allow for 10 reps in the Pullover, and 10% for males and 8% for females is the max I'd allow for 10 reps in the External Rotation. I would want to see these loads DOMINATED with control and range.

## CONCLUSION

None of these bonus abilities detailed in Part 2 would interfere with unwavering determination to get in the 4 Lower Body Standards of Part 1.

I would have a big public board showing who reaches the goals above.

Only the Tibialis Raise doesn't have a very precise measurement, but heck: these kids are in school and you could pull out a protractor and aim for 45 degrees!

If you wanted to follow my protocols *exactly* it would look like this:

Monday: Sport!

Tuesday: Lower Body: 3 Rounds

1. Tibialis x 20
2. SL Calf x up to 20 per side
3. L-Sit x 20 sec
4. ATG Squat x 20
5. ATG Split Squat x 10 per side
6. Reverse Step Up x 20 per side
7. SL Back x up to 20 per side
8. Elephant Walk x 20 per side

Wednesday: Upper Body: 3 Rounds

1. Full ROM Pull Up x 10 or assisted x 5
2. Full ROM Push Up or Dip x 10
3. Ring Row x 10 or DB Row x 10 per side
4. Full ROM Pullover x 10
5. DB External Rotation x 10 per side
6. Band or Cable External Rotation x 10 per side

Thursday: Sport!

Friday: Lower Body: 3 Rounds

1. Tibialis x 20
2. SL Calf x up to 20 per side
3. L-Sit x 20 sec
4. ATG Squat x 20
5. ATG Split Squat x 10 per side
6. Reverse Step Up x 20 per side
7. SL Back x up to 20 per side
8. Elephant Walk x 20 per side
9. Nordic x 5
10. Reverse Nordic x 5

This still leaves the weekend to work on whatever an individual athlete's weak points are.

I hope you enjoyed this first edition of TEAM ATG STANDARDS.

Yours in Bulletproofing,  
Ben