

The Perfect Hip Hinge

Inactivity and too much sitting creates tight hips. This means when bending over, the movement is initiated from the lower back rather than from the hips.

The best way to teach disassociation between the hips and lower back is to practice the movement pattern, and to create more mobility in the hips. Luckily, you can create more mobility in the hips by practicing the hip hinge!

The hip hinge is, in general, any flexion or extension originating at the hips that involves a posterior weight shift. With the hip hinge, the spine stays neutral and bending at the hips, which relieves stress off the lumbar spine and can prevent a whole host of injuries. If there is pain in the lower back when lifting

off the floor or other daily activities, it is more than likely the movement is coming from the lower back.

In learning the hip hinge pattern, the biggest thing to remember is that the movement is not a squat. A squat has **MAXIMAL** knee bend and **MAXIMAL** hip bend. The hip hinge has **MINIMAL** knee bend and **MAXIMAL** hip bend. Try to remember this as you practice the movement.

The hip hinge requires practice, practice, practice! Practice as much as you can, to engrain the movement into your brain, so when the time comes to use load, form will not be sacrificed. This movement pattern is the foundation of the deadlift, which is the hip hinge with load.

Three exercises that can help you establish this pattern are:

01
**Dowel
Hinge**

02
**Wall
Hinge**

03
**Handcuff
Hinge**

Dowel Hinge

- Place a dowel on the back, making sure it touches 3 points: head, upper back, and tailbone (or sacrum).
- From there, with feet hip-width apart and knees slightly bent, sit back with the hips, shifting bodyweight backwards. Maintain contact at the three points.
- If contact is lost on any of the points, the movement is being done incorrectly and you should return to the beginning position.
- Aim for 15-20 reps for 3-4 sets.



Wall Hinge

- Stand in front of a wall, about 3 inches away. Set your feet hip-width apart, with hands on the crease of the hips and knees slightly bent.
- From there, with knees slightly bent, sit back with the hips, shifting bodyweight backwards, focusing on pushing hips towards the wall. Stop when butt hits the wall.
- Do a few reps from 3 inches away, and once comfortable, step another inch away from the wall and repeat the same movement.
- Aim for 15-20 reps for 3-4 sets.



Handcuff Hip Hinge

- Clasp a kettlebell or dumbbell behind the back, like being handcuffed.
- From there, with feet hip-width apart and knees slightly bent, sit back with the hips, shifting bodyweight backwards. Focus on pushing the dumbbell or kettlebell backwards.
- Aim for 15-20 reps for 3-4 sets.



Coaching Cues:

- Knees are always kept slightly bent (about 10% bend, for reference).
- Keep chin/neck neutral, do not look up, as this will initiate movement from the lower back.
- Pull shoulders back and down (towards the spine).