Film your form

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Your phone is the closest thing to a coach watching you lift. Set it at hip height, side-on for most lifts, film one set, and check it against a short list for each movement pattern.

Why it matters: You can't see yourself while you lift, and mirrors change how you move. A 30-second video shows depth, bar path and back position more clearly than any feeling.

Set up the shot

- **Height:** about hip height, on a bench, bag or small tripod.
- **Distance:** far enough to see your whole body and the weight, usually 8 to 12 feet.
- **Angle:** side-on for squats, hinges, lunges, presses and rows. Front-on to check knees, hips and balance.
- **Lighting:** light in front of you, not behind.
- **Mode:** normal speed. Slow motion helps for jumps and fast lifts.
- **Etiquette:** don't film other people. Ask the gym if you're unsure. See "Gym etiquette."

How to review

1. Watch once at normal speed for the overall picture.
2. Watch again, pausing at the bottom and top of a rep.
3. Compare the first rep with the last. Did form change as you tired?
4. Pick one thing to work on next session.

Checklists

Squat (side view)

- Feet flat, weight over mid-foot.
- Hips and knees bend together.
- Knees may travel past your toes; that's normal.
- Depth you can reach with a steady back position.
- Bar or weight moves in a fairly straight up-and-down line.
- Front view: knees track roughly over your toes, not caving in.

Hinge, such as a deadlift or Romanian deadlift (side view)

- Hips move back first; knees bend a little.
- Back stays long and braced, without big changes during the rep.
- Bar stays close to your legs.
- Hips and shoulders rise together on the way up.
- Finish standing tall, without leaning back.

Lunge or split squat (side and front)

- Front heel stays down.
- Torso fairly upright.
- Back knee drops toward the floor under control.
- Front knee tracks over the toes.

Push, such as a push-up or bench press (side view)

- Body or back stays steady; no sagging hips in push-ups.
- Elbows roughly 30 to 60 degrees from your sides, not flared straight out.
- Full range you can control: chest near the floor or bar to chest.
- Wrists stacked over elbows.

Pull, such as a row or pull-up (side view)

- Shoulders down and back as you pull.
- No big swing or jerk from the hips.
- Full range: arms straight at the start, elbows past your torso at the top of a row.

Carry (front and side)

- Tall posture, shoulders level.
- Steady, even steps.
- No leaning to one side.

What not to worry about

- Small differences between reps.
- Not looking exactly like an expert. Body shapes vary, so stances and depths vary too.

When to stop and ask for help

- Pain during the movement.
- A problem you can see but can't fix after a few sessions.
- Big differences between your left and right sides.

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