

A TRAINING GUIDE

Calisthenics: The First 12 Weeks

From zero to real reps.

A complete beginner block built on six movement ladders, honest progression rules, and a record you can actually read. No equipment required to start.

READ THIS PAGE FIRST

What this is, and what it isn't

Twelve weeks, three sessions a week, six movement patterns. The point is not novelty. The point is that you finish week 12 stronger than week 1 and you can prove it.

IT IS

A structured beginner block for someone who can't yet do a clean pull-up. Every exercise has a ladder underneath it, so there is always a version you can do today.

IT ISN'T

A skill program. Front levers, planches and muscle-ups are not here. They sit on top of the base this block builds. Build the base first.

The four rules

- 01 Reps you'd be happy to film.** A rep standard you change halfway through the block makes the whole block unmeasurable. Decide now: full range, controlled, no kicking.
- 02 Leave reps in reserve.** Almost every set stops two or three reps before failure. Training to failure every session buys fatigue, not strength.
- 03 Test rarely, train often.** You test in week 1 and week 12. In between, you train. Testing whenever you feel motivated is how people spend a year at the same number.
- 04 Write it down.** Not because logging is virtuous, but because "did I do more than last time?" is unanswerable without it, and that question is the whole program.

Contents

01	Set your baseline	p. 3	06	Weeks 5–8 · Volume	p. 8
02	Equipment	p. 4	07	Weeks 9–12 · Density	p. 9
03	The six ladders	p. 5	08	Grease the Groove	p. 10
04	The week	p. 6	09	When you stall	p. 11
05	Weeks 1–4 · Foundation	p. 7	10	Retest & log sheet	p. 12

SECTION 01

Set your baseline

Ten minutes, once, before you train. These five numbers decide which rung of each ladder you start on, and they are the only thing week 12 gets compared against.

TEST	HOW TO RUN IT	RECORD
Dead hang	Hang from a bar, arms straight, shoulders active. Stop at the first slip.	Seconds
Pull-up	Full hang to chin clearly over the bar. No kick. If the answer is zero, that's a valid number.	Max reps
Push-up	Chest to fist height, body in one line, no sagging hips.	Max reps
Dip	Parallel bars or a sturdy bench. Shoulders to roughly elbow height, controlled.	Max reps
Squat	Bodyweight, thighs at least parallel, heels down.	Max reps

THE ONE RULE THAT MAKES THIS WORK

Write the standard down next to the number. "8 push-ups, chest to fist, 2s down" is a baseline. "8 push-ups" is a guess you will argue with in twelve weeks.

OPTIONAL · LOGGING IN THE APP

This block is also in THYMOS as a twelve-week program, the same ladders and the same weeks, if you would rather have the log kept for you than on paper. Set it up before session one and make these five tests your first entry. Nothing in this guide needs the app. thymos.fit

Reading your result

0 PULL-UPS

Normal, and this program is built for you. You'll start on rungs 1–2 of the pull ladder and spend the first block on hangs, scapular work and rows.

1–4 PULL-UPS

You have a base. Start on rung 4–5. Your limiter is usually volume tolerance, not strength.

5+ PULL-UPS

You're past the entry point for this guide. Run the density block (p.9) on its own, or move to the weighted program.

Retest date: week 12, not before

Put it in a calendar now. The most common way to waste a twelve-week block is to spend it testing instead of training. A max attempt costs recovery and teaches you nothing you didn't already know from your training sets.

SECTION 02

What to buy, what to skip

You don't need equipment to start. You do need reliable access to something you can hang from. Everything past that should solve a limitation you can name.

Worth it for almost everyone

ITEM	WHY
Resistance bands	Assistance on pull-ups and dips, added resistance elsewhere, warm-ups, isolation work, and later skill progressions. The single most useful purchase for a beginner.
Pull-up access	A doorway bar, park bar, or gym. Buy a bar only if you don't already have safe, reliable access. This program lives or dies on being able to hang.
Parallettes	Push-ups when wrists hurt, L-sits, handstand work, general pushing variety. Start low: high parallettes are less forgiving when you fall.
Foam roller & ball	Simple recovery. A small ball reaches trigger points around the shoulder blade that a roller can't.
Wrist wraps	Useful for heavy dips, cold-weather sessions and low-rep work. Don't wear them for everything, let the wrists do their job when support isn't needed.

BUY LATER

Dip belt, once you want to load pull-ups and dips past bodyweight. Better long-term than improvised loading.

Rings, a strong next purchase. Rings cover most of what a TRX does, plus ring dips, support holds and muscle-up progressions.

SKIP FOR NOW

Ankle weights, fine for specific accessory work, poor for loading pull-ups and dips.

Gloves, chalk usually solves the same problem.

Hand grippers, not required. Useful later, and they have alternatives.

FOUR QUESTIONS BEFORE YOU BUY ANYTHING

Does it unlock a movement you can't train now? Does it make progression easier to measure? Will you use it more than once a week? Is it stable and safe under fatigue? If it's not a clear yes, it becomes clutter.

Equipment should follow the program, not replace it. Buy the minimum that lets you train well for the next six to twelve months, then let your training history tell you what's actually missing.

SECTION 03

The six ladders

Six patterns, five or six rungs each. Start where your baseline puts you and move up one rung at a time, never by adding sloppy reps.

VERTICAL PULL

- 1 Dead hang · 20s
- 2 Scapular pull-up · 8
- 3 Inverted row · 12
- 4 Negative pull-up · 5 × 5s
- 5 Band-assisted pull-up · 8
- 6 Full pull-up · 5

DIP / SUPPORT

- 1 Bench dip, feet down · 12
- 2 Bench dip, feet elevated · 12
- 3 Negative dip · 5 × 5s
- 4 Band-assisted dip · 8
- 5 Full dip · 5
- 6 Full dip · 10

CORE

- 1 Dead bug · 10/side
- 2 Tuck hollow hold · 20s
- 3 Hollow hold · 30s
- 4 Hanging knee raise · 10
- 5 Hanging bent-leg raise · 10
- 6 Hanging leg raise · 8

HORIZONTAL PUSH

- 1 Wall push-up · 15
- 2 Incline push-up · 12
- 3 Kneeling push-up · 12
- 4 Full push-up · 10
- 5 Diamond push-up · 10
- 6 Decline push-up · 10

LEGS

- 1 Box squat · 15
- 2 Bodyweight squat · 20
- 3 Close squat · 15
- 4 Reverse lunge · 10/leg
- 5 Bulgarian split squat · 8/leg
- 6 Assisted pistol squat · 6/leg

HORIZONTAL PULL

- 1 Table row · 12
- 2 Inverted row, feet down · 12
- 3 Inverted row, feet elevated · 10
- 4 Ring / low-bar row · 12
- 5 Archer row · 8/side

HOW YOU CLIMB, DOUBLE PROGRESSION

Hit the top of your rep range on every set, then move up one rung and reset to the bottom of the range. If one set falls short, you stay and repeat the same rung next session.

A note on the top rungs. Assisted pistol squats and archer rows are skill work, not just harder versions of the basic movement. They load one side at a time and difficulty climbs steeply, so treat each as its own exercise with its own progress rather than converting it into a two-legged or two-armed number.

SECTION 04

The week

Three sessions, alternating A and B, at least one rest day between them. Over two weeks that's three A's and three B's. Miss one, don't stack it onto the next day to catch up, just carry on with the next letter in the sequence. Two sessions back to back buy you fatigue rather than the session you missed, and the alternation is what keeps every pattern trained.

WEEK	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Week 1	A	--	B	--	A	--	--
Week 2	B	--	A	--	B	--	--

WORKOUT A	SETS	WORKOUT B	SETS
Vertical pull (ladder)	See block	Dip / support (ladder)	See block
Horizontal push (ladder)	See block	Horizontal pull (ladder)	See block
Legs (ladder)	See block	Legs (ladder)	See block
Core (ladder)	See block	Core (ladder)	See block
Finisher: dead hang, accumulate	60s	Finisher: dead hang, accumulate	60s

BEFORE YOU START · THREE MINUTES, NOT LOGGED

Loosen the shoulders and hips, then do two easy ramp sets of the day's first movement, half the reps, no effort. That is the whole warm-up. It is preparation, not training, so it does not belong in your log and it does not count toward the week's volume.

3×

SESSIONS / WEEK

35 min

TYPICAL SESSION

2–3

REPS IN RESERVE

Rest between sets

90 seconds in blocks 1 and 2. Rest is not wasted time, short rest turns a strength set into a conditioning set, and in the first eight weeks you want the strength version. Block 3 shortens it deliberately, and only then.

SECTION 05 · BLOCK ONE

Weeks 1–4 • Foundation

The goal of this block is not to get strong. It is to build the tissue tolerance and technique that lets the next eight weeks work. Almost everyone starts too hard here and pays for it in week 6.

RIR is reps in reserve, how many more clean reps you could have done when you stopped the set. RIR 3 means you stopped three reps short of failure; RIR 0 means you could not have done another. It is your own estimate, not a measurement, and it is how effort is prescribed here because bodyweight training has no load to dial up or down. If you finish a set and genuinely don't know the number, you went too close.

WEEK	SETS × REPS	REST	RIR	FOCUS
1	3 × 6	90s	4	Find your rung. Everything should feel easy.
2	3 × 8	90s	3–4	Same rungs, more reps.
3	3 × 10	90s	3	First rung changes usually happen here.
4	3 × 10	90s	3	Consolidate. Do not add anything.

Choosing your starting rung

Pick the highest rung where you can complete 3 sets of 6 with clean technique and reps still in the tank. If set 3 gets ugly, you picked one rung too high. Going one rung too low costs you a week. Going two rungs too high costs you a month.

HOLD TIMES

For the hold-based rungs (dead hang, hollow hold), "3 × 8" means three sets and a target time, not reps. Add 5 seconds per week instead of reps, and climb the rung when you hit the target on all three sets.

NEGATIVES

For negative pull-ups and dips: jump or step to the top, then lower for 5 seconds. Five singles with a full rest is one set. These build the most strength per rep of anything on the ladder, and they cost the most recovery.

What "on track" looks like at the end of week 4

- You've moved up at least one rung on two of the six ladders.
- You are not sore for more than 48 hours after a session.
- Elbows and shoulders feel the same on Friday as they did on Monday.
- You know your rung and rep count for every pattern without checking.

If two or more of those are false, repeat week 4 before moving on. The calendar is not the program.

SECTION 06 · BLOCK TWO

Weeks 5–8 • Volume

A fourth set, a longer rep range, and one more rep in the tank spent. Same movements, same rest, more total work. This is where most of the twelve weeks' progress is actually made.

WEEK	SETS × REPS	REST	RIR	FOCUS
5	4 × 8	90s	3	Fourth set added. Expect the last set to feel new.
6	4 × 10	90s	2–3	Highest-fatigue week of the block. Sleep matters here.
7	4 × 12	90s	2	Second wave of rung changes.
8	3 × 8	120s	4	Deload. Lighter on purpose. Do not skip it.

Week 8 is a deload, not a week off

You keep the same rungs and the same movements. You simply do less of them, further from failure. The point is to arrive in week 9 with the fitness you built and none of the fatigue that was hiding it. People who skip the deload usually spend weeks 9 and 10 wondering why the numbers went backwards.

The optional fourth day

If sessions feel easy and recovery is genuinely fine, you can add one short session per week from week 6. It is not required and it is not "more is better". It is one extra exposure to the two patterns that are lagging.

OPTIONAL DAY D	SETS × REPS	RIR
Your weakest pull rung	3 × 8	4
Your weakest push rung	3 × 8	4
Core, one rung below current	2 × 10	4

Everything on day D stays four reps from failure. If it doesn't, it's a fourth workout, not an extra exposure, and it will cost you week 9.

SECTION 07 · BLOCK THREE

Weeks 9-12 · Density

Now rest comes down. Same sets, same reps, less recovery between them - then a deload and a retest. This is the block that turns strength you built into reps you can show.

WEEK	SETS × REPS	REST	RIR	FOCUS
9	4 × 10	75s	2	Rest drops first. Reps stay the same.
10	4 × 10	60s	2	Hardest week of the program. Technique first.
11	5 × 8	60s	1 last set	One genuinely hard set, the last one only.
12	2 × 6	120s	5	Deload, two sessions, then retest.

IF REST IS DROPPING, REPS MUST NOT

The entire point of a density block is holding output constant while recovery shrinks. If week 10's shorter rest costs you reps, stay at week 9's rest for another week. Cutting rest and reps at the same time is just doing less work faster.

Week 12 · The retest

DAY	WHAT YOU DO
Day 1	Deload session A, 2 × 6, everything easy.
Day 3	Deload session B, 2 × 6, everything easy.
Day 6	Full rest. No training, no "just a few pull-ups".
Day 7	Retest all five baseline numbers, same standards as week 1, warmed up but fresh.

Read the retest honestly

Compare the numbers against week 1 at the same rep standard. A higher number with shorter range is not an improvement, and you'll know. If the pull-up went from 0 to 3, that is a bigger jump than 8 to 11: the first rep is the hardest strength you will ever buy.

SECTION 08 · OPTIONAL

Grease the Groove

GTG treats strength as a skill: frequent, fresh, high-quality reps instead of occasional all-out battles. If you have a pull-up bar you walk past every day, it is the cheapest progress available to you.

The five principles

- F1 **Focused.** One or two movements and their close variations. Not your whole exercise library.
- F2 **Flawless.** Every rep should look like practice, not survival. Max strength needs high tension and clean execution.
- F3 **Frequent.** Every pass under the bar becomes a small practice opportunity.
- F4 **Fresh.** Avoid fatigue. If you're tired, stop. Bad reps violate the whole method.
- F5 **Fluctuating.** Same but different, small changes in variation or reps so you're not doing the identical thing every day.

HOW TO SET IT UP

Test a clean max once, then stop testing. Use about half your max per practice set, capped at five reps. Spread small sets through the day with plenty of rest. Train moderately hard, never to fatigue. If the movement gets too easy, add load or move to a harder variation, never add sloppy reps.

EXAMPLE · MAX 10

GTG set = 4 or 5 clean reps. Repeat it several times across the day as long as every rep stays fast and controlled. When a set starts feeling heavy, you are no longer greasing the groove. You are just adding another workout.

EXAMPLE · MAX 0

Use the rung below. Scapular pull-ups, a 10-second hang, or three inverted rows. The principle is identical: half of what you could do, spread across the day, always fresh.

Where it fits in these twelve weeks

Run GTG on one movement, usually the pull-up or push-up, alongside blocks 2 and 3, on non-training days or hours away from your session. Don't add it in weeks 1–4, and drop it entirely in week 12. Movements that need long setups, heavy warm-ups or high joint stress are poor GTG candidates.

Keep GTG reps out of your training totals. They are practice, not volume, and counting them will make a light week look like a heavy one.

SECTION 09

When you stall

A stall is information, not failure. The useful question is never "should I switch programs", it's "which of these four things is actually true right now".

SYMPTOM	MOST LIKELY CAUSE & FIX
Reps flat for 3+ sessions, everything else fine	You jumped a rung too early. Drop back one rung, rebuild to the top of the range, then climb again. This costs a week and saves a month.
Set 1 is strong, sets 3–4 collapse	Volume tolerance, not strength. Hold the rung, keep sets at the bottom of the range, and add one rep per set per week instead of chasing the top.
Everything feels heavy, including the warm-up	Recovery. Take the deload early. It works from any week. Sleep and food are doing more work here than programming is.
Elbows or shoulders complaining	Reduce range, load and frequency before it becomes a layoff. Drop the negatives first: they're the highest-stress rung. Pain that changes your technique is not something to train through.

The five most expensive mistakes

- 01 Testing max reps and calling it training.
- 02 Changing the rep standard mid-block, so no comparison is possible.
- 03 Adding movements instead of adding quality to the ones you have.
- 04 Keeping volume high while elbows or shoulders are irritated.
- 05 Not writing sets down, then guessing whether volume went up or down.

WHAT A GOOD BLOCK LEAVES BEHIND

Before the retest, the evidence should already be there: more total weekly reps, easier training sets, longer hangs, cleaner reps under fatigue. If none of that changed, the test won't rescue it, and if all of it changed, the test is a formality.

SECTION 10

Twelve-week log

One line per week. Rung and top-set reps for each pattern. Print it, or keep it on your phone, the format matters less than the fact that week 11 can see week 1.

WEEK	V. PULL	H. PUSH	DIP	H. PULL	LEGS	CORE	NOTES
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
11							
12							

WHAT'S NEXT · LOAD

Once you're past 8 clean pull-ups and 10 dips, adding weight is the natural next step, and the maths is less obvious than it looks. That's the companion guide, *Weighted Calisthenics: The First 12 Weeks*.

WHAT'S NEXT · SKILL

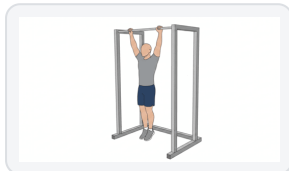
Muscle-ups, levers and handstand work sit on top of this base. They need pulling height and support strength you now have a foundation for.

Written and published by THYMOS, a training log for people who keep records. This block is available in the app as a twelve-week program if you would rather not transcribe the tables, and the guide works just as well on paper. thymos.fit

APPENDIX

How each movement is done

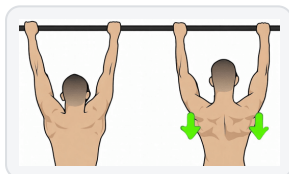
Every rung of the six ladders, with the cues that matter. Look one up when a name in the tables is unfamiliar, or when a set feels wrong and you want to check the position before you add reps to it.



Dead hang

VERTICAL PULL

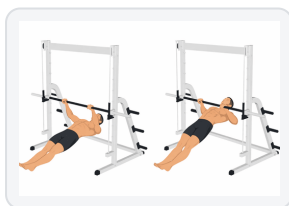
1. Jump up or step up to grab a pull-up bar with an overhand grip (palms facing away) at shoulder-width or slightly wider. Allow your arms to be fully extended and your body to hang freely. This is your starting position.
2. Relax your shoulder girdle completely, letting the weight of your body stretch the latissimus dorsi and shoulder stabilizers. Keep your core lightly engaged and your body still. Avoid swinging.
3. Hold this position for the prescribed duration, breathing slowly and steadily. Focus on maintaining a firm, even grip and keeping your wrists neutral.
4. When the set is complete, step or drop down carefully from the bar.



Scapular pull-up

VERTICAL PULL

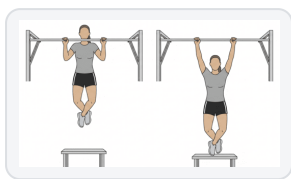
1. Hang from a pull-up bar with an overhand grip at shoulder width, arms fully extended. Your body should be in a straight, still position. This is a dead hang. This is your starting position.
2. Without bending your elbows at all, depress and retract your shoulder blades by pulling them downward and together. Your body will rise just a few centimetres as a result.
3. Hold the packed-shoulder position for a brief pause, feeling the contraction in the muscles between and below your shoulder blades.
4. Slowly allow your scapulae to elevate and protract back to the starting dead-hang position.
5. Repeat for the prescribed number of repetitions. The elbows must remain straight throughout. This is scapular movement only.



Inverted row

VERTICAL PULL

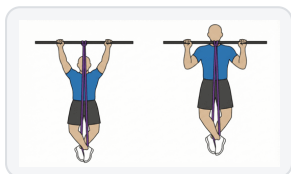
1. Position a bar in a rack to about waist height. You can also use a smith machine.
2. Take a wider than shoulder width grip on the bar and position yourself hanging underneath the bar. Your body should be straight with your heels on the ground with your arms fully extended. This will be your starting position.
3. Begin by flexing the elbow, pulling your chest towards the bar. Retract your shoulder blades as you perform the movement.
4. Pause at the top of the motion, and return yourself to the start position.
5. Repeat for the desired number of repetitions.



Negative pull-up

VERTICAL PULL

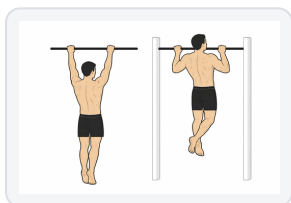
1. Jump up or use a box to get your chin above the pull-up bar with an overhand grip at shoulder width. Your arms should be bent and your chin should be above the bar. This is your starting position.
2. Take a breath in and begin lowering yourself very slowly, taking 3–5 seconds to lower from the top to the bottom. Resist gravity. Do not simply drop down.
3. Continue lowering until your arms are fully extended and you are in a dead-hang position.
4. Step down from the bar, reset, and return to the top position to begin the next repetition.
5. Repeat for the prescribed number of repetitions, maintaining the slow eccentric tempo throughout.



Band-assisted pull-up

VERTICAL PULL

1. Choke the band around the center of the pullup bar. You can use different bands to provide varying levels of assistance.
2. Pull the end of the band down, and place one bent knee into the loop, ensuring it won't slip out. Take a medium to wide grip on the bar. This will be your starting position.
3. Pull yourself upward by contracting the lats as you flex the elbow. The elbow should be driven to your side. Pull to the front, attempting to get your chin over the bar. Avoid swinging or jerking movements.
4. After a brief pause, return to the starting position.



Full pull-up

VERTICAL PULL

1. Grab the pull-up bar with the palms facing forward using a wide grip.
2. As you have both arms extended in front of you holding the bar at the chosen grip width, bring your torso back around 30 degrees or so while creating a curvature on your lower back and sticking your chest out. This is your starting position.
3. Pull your torso up until the bar touches your upper chest by drawing the shoulders and the upper arms down and back. Exhale as you perform this portion of the movement. Tip: Concentrate on squeezing the back muscles once you reach the full contracted position. The upper torso should remain stationary as it moves through space and only the arms should move. The forearms should do no other work other than hold the bar.
4. After a second on the contracted position, start to inhale and slowly lower your torso back to the starting position when your arms are fully extended and the lats are fully stretched.
5. Now repeat the same movements as described above except this time your torso will remain straight as you go up and the bar will touch the back of the neck instead of the upper chest. Tip: Use the head to lean forward slightly as it will help you properly execute this portion of the exercise.
6. Once you have lowered yourself back down to the starting position, repeat the exercise for the prescribed amount of repetitions in your program.



Table row

HORIZONTAL PULL

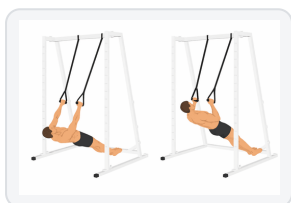
1. Lie under a sturdy table and grab the far edge with both hands slightly wider than shoulder width.
2. Brace your body in a straight line from head to heels and plant your heels firmly on the floor.
3. Pull your chest toward the underside of the table by driving your elbows down and back.
4. Pause briefly at the top, then lower under control until your arms are fully extended.



Inverted row, feet elevated

HORIZONTAL PULL

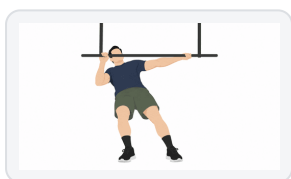
1. Set a bar, a sturdy table edge or two chair backs at roughly hip height and place a bench, box or second chair under where your feet will land. Hang beneath with an overhand shoulder-width grip and rest your heels on it so your body is parallel to the floor.
2. Pull your chest to the bar by driving your elbows back and squeezing your shoulder blades together. Exhale as you pull.
3. Lower under control until your arms are straight, keeping your body in one line from heels to head. Inhale as you descend.
4. Do not let your hips sag or pike; the flatter your body, the more of your weight the arms and back carry.
5. Repeat for the prescribed reps. Raising the feet to body height is the step above a standard inverted row.



Ring / low-bar row

HORIZONTAL PULL

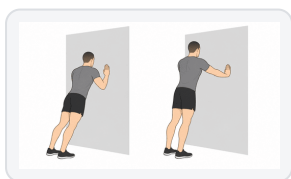
1. Hang a rope or suspension straps from a rack or other stable object. Grasp the ends and position yourself in a supine position hanging from the ropes. Your body should be straight with your heels on the ground with your arms fully extended. This will be your starting position.
2. Begin by flexing the elbow, pulling your chest to your hands. Retract your shoulder blades as you perform the movement.
3. Pause at the top of the motion, and return yourself to the start position.
4. Repeat for the desired number of repetitions.



Archer row

HORIZONTAL PULL

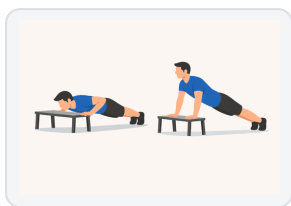
1. Hang beneath a bar, a sturdy table edge or two chair backs with a wide overhand grip, body straight and heels on the floor. This is your starting position.
2. Pull yourself toward one hand, bending that arm while the other stays nearly straight and slides along the bar for support, until your chest reaches the bent-arm side. Exhale as you pull.
3. Lower under control back to the straight-arm hang, then alternate to the other side on the next rep. Inhale as you descend.
4. Keep the support arm long but engaged and your hips level; the straighter the support arm, the harder the working side works.
5. Alternate sides evenly for the prescribed reps. Archer rows build the unilateral pulling strength that leads toward one-arm rows.



Wall push-up

HORIZONTAL PUSH

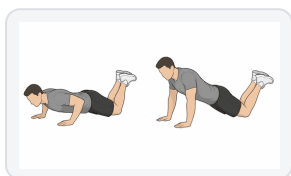
1. Stand facing a wall about arm's length away. Place your palms flat on the wall slightly wider than shoulder width, at shoulder height, fingers pointing up. Step your feet back so your body forms a straight line from head to heels leaning into the wall. This is your start position.
2. Bend your elbows and lower your chest toward the wall under control, keeping your body rigid and elbows tracking at roughly 45 degrees to your torso. Inhale as you descend.
3. Stop when your face or chest is close to the wall, then push firmly through your palms to press back to the straight-arm start position. Exhale as you press.
4. Keep your core braced and glutes tight the whole time so your hips do not sag or pike. Do not let your head jut forward.
5. Repeat for the prescribed reps. To make it harder, step your feet farther from the wall; this is the gentlest step and rebuilds pressing capacity for beginners or returning from injury.



Incline push-up

HORIZONTAL PUSH

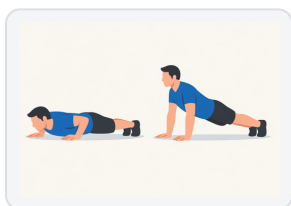
1. Stand facing bench or sturdy elevated platform. Place hands on edge of bench or platform, slightly wider than shoulder width.
2. Position forefoot back from bench or platform with arms and body straight. Arms should be perpendicular to body. Keeping body straight, lower chest to edge of box or platform by bending arms.
3. Push body up until arms are extended. Repeat.



Kneeling push-up

HORIZONTAL PUSH

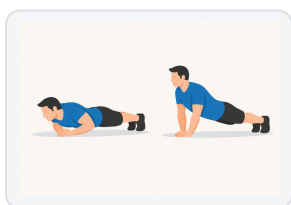
1. Kneel on a mat and place your hands on the floor slightly wider than shoulder width. Walk your knees back until your body forms a straight line from head to knees, weight resting on your kneecaps. Cross your ankles behind you. This is your start position.
2. Bracing your core, bend your elbows and lower your chest toward the floor under control, keeping elbows at about 45 degrees to your torso. Inhale as you descend.
3. Lower until your chest is a few centimetres from the floor, then press firmly through your palms back to straight arms. Exhale on the way up.
4. Keep a straight line from head to knees throughout, do not let your hips sag or pike, and keep your neck neutral.
5. Repeat for the prescribed reps. Kneeling push-ups reduce the load versus a full push-up; progress by shifting to half push-ups on your toes.



Full push-up

HORIZONTAL PUSH

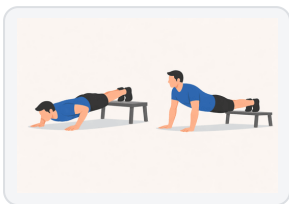
1. Get on the floor face down with your hands placed slightly wider than shoulder width apart. Keep your body straight from head to heels, forming a rigid plank.
2. Lower your body by bending your elbows until your chest nearly touches the floor. Keep your elbows at roughly a 45-degree angle to your torso. Inhale as you lower yourself.
3. Push yourself back up to the starting position by straightening your arms. Exhale as you push up. Do not lock your elbows completely at the top.
4. Keep your core tight and your body in a straight line throughout the movement. Do not let your hips sag or pike up.
5. Repeat for the recommended amount of repetitions.



Diamond push-up

HORIZONTAL PUSH

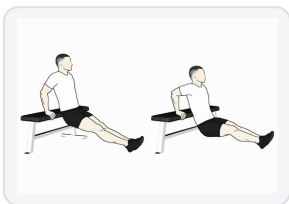
1. Start in a high plank with your hands close together under your chest so your thumbs and index fingers form a diamond shape. Keep your body in a straight line. This will be your starting position.
2. Bend your elbows and lower your chest toward your hands while keeping your elbows close to your body. Breathe in as you lower.
3. Press the floor away and return to the top plank position. Breathe out as you push up.
4. Maintain a tight core and neutral neck through each repetition.
5. Repeat for the prescribed amount of repetitions. Tip: If needed, perform from your knees while keeping the same hand position.



Decline push-up

HORIZONTAL PUSH

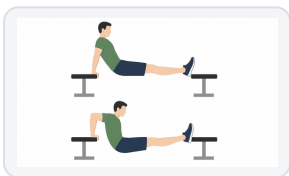
1. Lie on the floor face down and place your hands about 36 inches apart while holding your torso up at arms length. Move your feet up to a box or bench. This will be your starting position.
2. Next, lower yourself downward until your chest almost touches the floor as you inhale.
3. Now breathe out and press your upper body back up to the starting position while squeezing your chest.
4. After a brief pause at the top contracted position, you can begin to lower yourself downward again for as many repetitions as needed.



Bench dip, feet down

DIP / SUPPORT

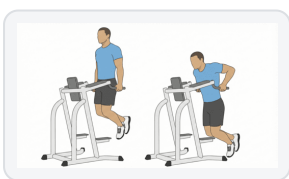
1. For this exercise you will need to place a bench behind your back. With the bench perpendicular to your body, and while looking away from it, hold on to the bench on its edge with the hands fully extended, separated at shoulder width. The legs will be extended forward, bent at the waist and perpendicular to your torso. This will be your starting position.
2. Slowly lower your body as you inhale by bending at the elbows until you lower yourself far enough to where there is an angle slightly smaller than 90 degrees between the upper arm and the forearm. Tip: Keep the elbows as close as possible throughout the movement. Forearms should always be pointing down.
3. Using your triceps to bring your torso up again, lift yourself back to the starting position.
4. Repeat for the recommended amount of repetitions.



Bench dip, feet elevated

DIP / SUPPORT

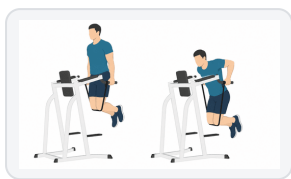
1. Set up two benches, chairs or sturdy surfaces roughly a leg-length apart. Sit on one, place your hands beside your hips with fingers pointing forward, and rest your heels on the other. This is your starting position.
2. Bend your elbows and lower your hips straight down, keeping them close to the bench and your elbows pointing back rather than flaring out. Inhale as you descend.
3. Lower until your upper arms are roughly parallel to the floor, then press back up through your palms until your arms are straight. Exhale as you press.
4. Keep your shoulders down away from your ears throughout; raising the feet shifts more of your bodyweight onto the arms than a feet-down bench dip does.
5. Repeat for the prescribed reps. This is the step between a feet-down bench dip and dipping on parallel bars.



Negative dip

DIP / SUPPORT

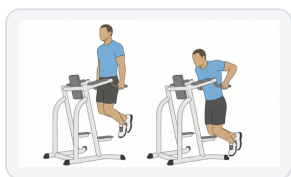
1. Step or jump to the top of a dip, arms straight and shoulders down, so you are supported over the bars. This is your starting position.
2. Lower yourself as slowly as you can, resisting the whole way, aiming for a controlled five-second descent to the bottom position. Inhale steadily as you descend.
3. Keep your elbows tracking back and close to your body, and your shoulders packed down rather than shrugging toward your ears.
4. At the bottom, step off and reset to the top rather than trying to press back up. Five slow singles with a full rest between them is one set.
5. Repeat for the prescribed reps. Negatives build the most strength per rep on the dip ladder, and they also cost the most recovery.



Band-assisted dip

DIP / SUPPORT

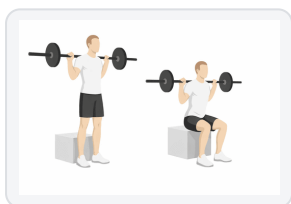
1. Loop a resistance band across the dip station handles so it hangs in a sling between them. Step or kneel into the band so it supports your knees or feet, then press up to a straight-arm support.
2. Bend your elbows and lower under control until your shoulders are roughly at elbow height, keeping your elbows tracking back and close to your body. Inhale as you descend.
3. Press back up to straight arms, letting the band help you through the bottom of the range where you are weakest. Exhale as you press.
4. Keep your core braced and avoid bouncing out of the bottom. A thicker band gives more help; move to a thinner one as you get stronger.
5. Repeat for the prescribed reps. Reduce the band assistance over time to progress toward an unassisted dip.



Full dip

DIP / SUPPORT

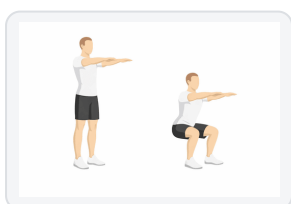
1. To get into the starting position, hold your body at arm's length with your arms nearly locked above the bars.
2. Now, inhale and slowly lower yourself downward. Your torso should remain upright and your elbows should stay close to your body. This helps to better focus on tricep involvement. Lower yourself until there is a 90 degree angle formed between the upper arm and forearm.
3. Then, exhale and push your torso back up using your triceps to bring your body back to the starting position.
4. Repeat the movement for the prescribed amount of repetitions.



Box squat

LEGS

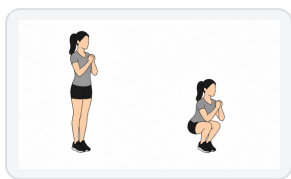
1. The box squat allows you to squat to desired depth and develop explosive strength in the squat movement. Begin in a power rack with a box at the appropriate height behind you. Typically, you would aim for a box height that brings you to a parallel squat, but you can train higher or lower if desired.
2. Begin by stepping under the bar and placing it across the back of the shoulders. Squeeze your shoulder blades together and rotate your elbows forward, attempting to bend the bar across your shoulders. Remove the bar from the rack, creating a tight arch in your lower back, and step back into position. Place your feet wider for more emphasis on the back, glutes, adductors, and hamstrings, or closer together for more quad development. Keep your head facing forward.
3. With your back, shoulders, and core tight, push your knees and butt out and you begin your descent. Sit back with your hips until you are seated on the box. Ideally, your shins should be perpendicular to the ground. Pause when you reach the box, and relax the hip flexors. Never bounce off of a box.
4. Keeping the weight on your heels and pushing your feet and knees out, drive upward off of the box as you lead the movement with your head. Continue upward, maintaining tightness head to toe.



Bodyweight squat

LEGS

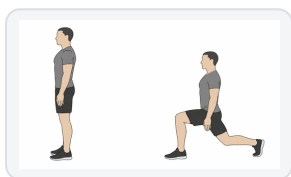
1. Stand with your feet shoulder width apart. You can place your hands behind your head. This will be your starting position.
2. Begin the movement by flexing your knees and hips, sitting back with your hips.
3. Continue down to full depth if you are able, and quickly reverse the motion until you return to the starting position. As you squat, keep your head and chest up and push your knees out.



Close squat

LEGS

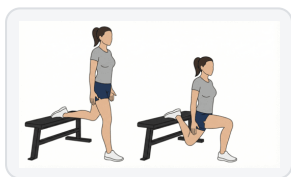
1. Stand with your feet together or nearly touching, toes pointing forward, arms extended in front for balance. Brace your core and keep your chest up.
2. Push your hips back and bend your knees to descend as deep as you can while keeping your feet together, until your hamstrings meet your calves. Inhale as you lower.
3. Drive up through your whole foot back to standing, squeezing your glutes at the top. Exhale as you rise.
4. The narrow stance challenges balance and pushes the knees forward, so keep your heels down and torso as upright as possible.
5. Repeat for the prescribed reps. Close squats prepare the balance and mobility needed for single-leg work; progress to uneven squats.



Reverse lunge

LEGS

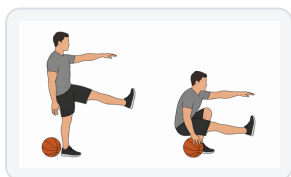
1. Stand tall with feet hip-width apart, hands on your hips or held in front for balance. Brace your core and keep your chest up.
2. Step one foot back and lower under control until both knees are bent to about 90 degrees and the rear knee hovers just above the floor. Inhale as you descend.
3. Drive through the front heel to push back up and return the rear foot to standing, exhaling as you rise.
4. Keep your torso upright, front knee tracking over the toes, and most of your weight on the front leg.
5. Alternate legs (or complete all reps on one side, then switch). The reverse lunge is joint-friendly single-leg training; add load or a deficit to progress.



Bulgarian split squat

LEGS

1. Position yourself into a staggered stance with the rear foot elevated and front foot forward.
2. Hold a dumbbell in each hand, letting them hang at the sides. This will be your starting position.
3. Begin by descending, flexing your knee and hip to lower your body down. Maintain good posture throughout the movement. Keep the front knee in line with the foot as you perform the exercise.
4. At the bottom of the movement, drive through the heel to extend the knee and hip to return to the starting position.



Assisted pistol squat

LEGS

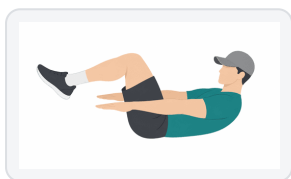
1. Stand on one leg near a sturdy upright, doorframe, or suspension strap you can hold. Extend the free leg forward and hold the support lightly with one or both hands.
2. Bend the standing knee and lower into a full one-leg squat, using the support only as much as needed to control the descent and keep the free leg off the floor. Inhale as you lower.
3. Pull and press just enough on the support to help drive back up to standing, putting as much work as possible into the standing leg. Exhale as you rise.
4. Keep your chest up, the free leg extended in front, and the standing knee tracking over your toes; use the least assistance you can manage.
5. Complete the reps, then switch legs. Gradually reduce how hard you pull on the support until you can perform an unassisted pistol squat.



Dead bug

CORE

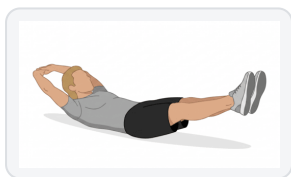
1. Begin lying on your back with your hands extended above you toward the ceiling.
2. Bring your feet, knees, and hips up to 90 degrees.
3. Exhale hard to bring your ribcage down and flatten your back onto the floor, rotating your pelvis up and squeezing your glutes. Hold this position throughout the movement. This will be your starting position.
4. Initiate the exercise by extending one leg, straightening the knee and hip to bring the leg just above the ground.
5. Maintain the position of your lumbar and pelvis as you perform the movement, as your back is going to want to arch.
6. Stay tight and return the working leg to the starting position.
7. Repeat on the opposite side, alternating until the set is complete.



Tuck hollow hold

CORE

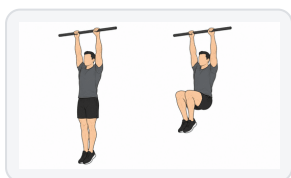
1. Lie flat on your back with your knees bent and drawn in toward your chest, and your arms reaching forward past your knees. Your entire lower back should be in contact with the floor.
2. Engage your abdominals by pressing your lower back firmly into the floor – this posterior pelvic tilt is essential and must be maintained throughout.
3. Raise your head and shoulders a few centimetres off the floor while keeping the knees tucked, so your body forms a shallow dish with the legs folded in.
4. Hold this position for the prescribed duration. If the lower back lifts off the floor, tuck the knees in tighter rather than holding a broken position.
5. Breathe steadily throughout. This is the regression of the hollow body hold: straighten the legs a little at a time as you get stronger.



Hollow hold

CORE

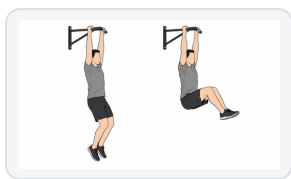
1. Lie flat on your back on the floor with your arms extended overhead and your legs straight. Your entire lower back should be in contact with the floor. This is your starting position.
2. Engage your abdominals by pressing your lower back firmly into the floor. This posterior pelvic tilt is essential and must be maintained throughout.
3. Simultaneously raise your arms, head, and shoulders off the floor (a few centimetres), and raise your legs off the floor together, keeping them straight. Your body should form a shallow dish shape.
4. Hold this position for the prescribed duration. Focus on keeping the lower back glued to the floor. If it lifts, either raise your legs higher or regress to a tuck hollow hold.
5. Breathe steadily throughout; do not hold your breath. Lower back contact with the floor is the non-negotiable cue.



Hanging knee raise

CORE

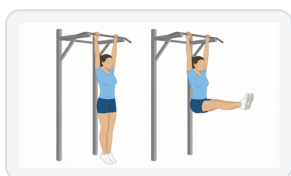
1. Hang from a pull-up bar with a shoulder-width overhand grip, arms straight and shoulders active, feet clear of the floor. Bend your knees to about 90 degrees. This is your start position.
2. Smoothly lift your knees up until your thighs are roughly parallel to the floor, keeping the right angle at the knees. Exhale as you raise.
3. Pause for one count, then lower your knees under control back to the hanging start. Inhale as you lower.
4. Keep your shoulders tight and your body from swinging; drive the movement with your abs, not momentum.
5. Repeat for the prescribed reps. Hanging knee raises start the hanging leg-raise progressions; straighten the legs over time to advance.



Hanging bent-leg raise

CORE

1. Hang from a pull-up bar with a shoulder-width grip, shoulders braced and feet clear of the floor. Bend your knees to about 45 degrees. This is your start position.
2. Keeping that fixed knee angle, lift your knees and feet up until your feet are opposite your hips. Exhale as you raise.
3. Pause briefly, then lower under control back to the hang without swinging. Inhale as you lower.
4. Keep the shoulders packed and core tight; hold the knee angle constant rather than tucking tighter.
5. Repeat for the prescribed reps. Gradually decrease the knee bend to progress toward hanging frog and straight-leg raises.



Hanging leg raise

CORE

1. Hang from a chin-up bar with both arms extended at arms length in top of you using either a wide grip or a medium grip. The legs should be straight down with the pelvis rolled slightly backwards. This will be your starting position.
2. Raise your legs until the torso makes a 90-degree angle with the legs. Exhale as you perform this movement and hold the contraction for a second or so.
3. Go back slowly to the starting position as you breathe in.
4. Repeat for the recommended amount of repetitions.