

The Muscle-Up: Your First Strict Rep

From ten pull-ups to over the bar.

An eight-week block for the bar muscle-up, built on a ladder of seven rungs, with a chapter on rings for when the bar is yours. Strict first, then everything else.

READ THIS PAGE FIRST

Are you ready for this?

A muscle-up is a pull-up, a transition and a dip, and the transition is a skill you cannot muscle through. This block assumes the pull-up and the dip are already yours. Test that first.

Entry standards

TEST	STANDARD
Strict pull-up	2 × 10, dead hang to chin clearly over the bar, no kick, no short reps on set two.
Dip	10 on parallel bars, shoulders to elbow height, no bounce.
Hanging knee raise	2 × 12, knees to hip height, no swing. This keeps the legs still under the bar.

IF YOU MISS ONE

Do not start. Run *Calisthenics: The First 12 Weeks*, or its density block alone, until all three are true. Transition work on a pull-up base that is not there yet is eight weeks of failed attempts and sore elbows.

The four rules

- 01 Height before transition.** Until your chest reaches the bar on a strict pull, transition work is practice at failing. Block one is height.
- 02 Attempts are a test, not a workout.** Three at most, only in week 8, only fresh. A failed attempt rehearses the miss, loads the elbows and leaves you too tired for the drills that build the rep.
- 03 Elbows have a vote.** The transition loads the elbow in a new position. Pain that changes your technique means go back a rung.
- 04 Write it down.** Pull height, negative seconds, drill reps. Progress here is small and weekly, and invisible without a log.

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SECTION 01

The rep in three parts

Every failed muscle-up fails in one of three places, and each place has a different fix. Learn to name where yours fails before you train it.

1 · THE PULL

From a dead hang to the bar at your lower chest. Not your chin: your chest. The muscle-up needs about 20 cm more height than a pull-up, and it needs it fast, because the transition is easiest at the top of a rising pull, not at the top of a slow one.

2 · THE TRANSITION

The moment the shoulders pass from below the bar to above it. The wrists roll over the bar, the chest leans forward, and the arms change from a pull-up position into a dip position. It lasts half a second and it is where almost everyone gets stuck.

3 · THE DIP-OUT

From chest on the bar to straight arms above it. A deep straight-bar dip, leaning forward. If you have 10 clean dips this is the easy part, as long as you arrive in a position to do it: chest over the bar, not beside it.

What limits each part

PART	USUALLY LIMITED BY	TRAINED WITH
Pull	Explosive pulling strength through the top half of the pull-up, and lat strength to keep pulling once the elbows pass the shoulders.	Chest-to-bar pull-ups, explosive high pull-ups
Transition	Timing and the wrist roll, then the strength to keep the bar close while the body goes around it. It is a skill first and a strength second.	Negatives, the kipping drill, then strict attempts
Dip-out	Pressing strength from the deepest position of a dip, with the bar against the chest and the torso leaning forward.	Deep straight-bar dips

THE ONE IDEA THAT MAKES THIS WORK

The bar does not move, so the body has to go around it. Every cue in this guide is a version of that sentence: pull toward the bar, not up past it; lean over it, do not push away from it; keep it against your chest through the transition. When a muscle-up stalls at the top, a gap between the bar and the body is a more common cause than a weak pull.

Why strict, and why first

A kipping muscle-up uses a swing to supply the height and the timing. It is a legitimate movement, and it is easier. It is also a way to never learn the transition, because the swing carries you through the hardest half-second before you feel it. A strict rep teaches the position. Once you own it, the kip usually comes within a few sessions. Learned the other way round, many people keep a swing they struggle to take out.

SECTION 02

The bar ladder

Seven rungs from a strict pull-up to a strict muscle-up, and two beyond it. Each rung has a standard. You own a rung when you hit its standard in three sessions in a row, not once on a good day.

TO THE FIRST REP

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 1 | Strict pull-up · 2 × 10 |
| 2 | Chest-to-bar pull-up · 2 × 10 |
| 3 | Explosive high pull-up · 3 × 5 |
| 4 | Deep straight-bar dip · 2 × 10 |
| 5 | Negative bar muscle-up · 3 × 3 |
| 6 | Kipping muscle-up drill · 3 × 5 |
| 7 | Strict bar muscle-up · 1 |

BEYOND IT

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| 8 | Strict slow bar muscle-up · 3 × 3 |
| 9 | Weighted bar muscle-up · +25% BW × 1 |

Rungs 5 and 8 are done slow on purpose: 3 to 5 seconds through the transition. A negative you can drop through in one second has not been done.

How the ladder and the weeks fit together

The ladder is the order you own things in. The weeks on pages 6 and 7 train several rungs at once, because they use different strength. Rung 1 is the entry test on page 2, so you start the block owning it. Block one trains rungs 2 to 4 together: pulling height and the dip-out do not compete for recovery. Block two adds rungs 5 and 6 on top and tests rung 7 in week 8. If you arrive at block two without rungs 2 and 3, repeat block one. The calendar is not the program.

HOW YOU CLIMB, DOUBLE PROGRESSION

Each rung has a rep range on the week tables. Hit the top of the range on every set, then add reps or move to the next rung and reset to the bottom. One set short, you stay. The standards in the ladder are the top of the range, held for three sessions.

What is deliberately missing

Bands, jumping muscle-ups and low-bar drills are useful and are not in the block. The negative teaches the same path with more control, and the kipping drill teaches the same timing with more honesty about how much swing you used. If you already have a band and like it, use it on the drill days in place of the kipping drill, and move to a lighter band as soon as every set is clean with the current one.

SECTION 03

The week

Three sessions, at least a day between them: two skill sessions and one strength session. Skill work goes first in every session, while you are fresh.

WEEK	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Every week	Skill A	--	Strength	--	Skill B	--	--

SKILL A AND B	REST	STRENGTH	REST
Warm-up: two easy ramp sets	--	Warm-up: two easy ramp sets	--
Power pull (high pulls or negatives)	3 min	Pull-ups: fewer reps, higher pull	3 min
Second pull (chest-to-bar or drill)	2 min	Dips on parallel bars	3 min
Deep straight-bar dips	2 min	Inverted or ring rows	90 s
Finisher: knee raises or a harder raise	90 s	Hollow hold, accumulate	60 s
		Optional: knee raises or a harder raise	90 s

3x

SESSIONS / WEEK

40 min

TYPICAL SESSION

2-3

REPS IN RESERVE

Rest is longer here than you are used to

Three minutes between sets of explosive pulls is not laziness. You are training the top of the pull to be fast, and a fast pull needs a recovered nervous system. Short rest turns a power set into an endurance set, and the first muscle-up is a single maximal effort.

RIR on skill days

RIR is reps in reserve, how many clean reps you could still have done when you stopped. On skill days it is 2 to 3 on every set: the last rep of a set of high pulls should look like the first. The moment height drops, the set is over, whatever the table says.

OPTIONAL · LOGGING IN THE APP

This ladder is in THYMOS under Bodyweight Skills as *Muscle Up*, same rungs, same standards, opened by the three tests on page 2. Both eight-week programs are there too, in Pro, and log into the ladder. Nothing in this guide needs the app. thymos.fit

SECTION 04 · BLOCK ONE

Weeks 1–4 · Height

No transition work yet. Four weeks of making the pull higher and the dip deeper, which is where most of the muscle-up actually lives. By the end of week 4 the bar should reach your lower chest on a strict pull.

Skill days A and B

WEEK	CHEST-TO-BAR	HIGH PULL	STRAIGHT-BAR DIP	FOCUS
1	3 × 5	3 × 3	3 × 5	Find your height. Film one set from the side.
2	3 × 6	3 × 3	3 × 6	Same movements, more reps. Bar closer on every pull.
3	3 × 8	3 × 4	3 × 8	High pulls should now reach sternum height on the best rep.
4	2 × 10	3 × 5	2 × 10	Standards week. Hit these three and rungs 2 to 4 are yours.

Strength day

Every few weeks the reps come down and the pull gets harder: strict, then chest-to-bar (C2B), then explosive high pulls. Every rep as fast and as high as you can; end the set when a rep falls short of the first.

WEEK	PULL-UP	DIP	KNEE RAISE	FOCUS
1	Strict 4 × 6	4 × 6	2 × 12	Every rep fast, from a dead hang.
2	Strict 4 × 5	4 × 6	2 × 12	One rep fewer, chin higher. Add rows: 3 × 10.
3	C2B 4 × 4	4 × 5	2 × 15	Chest-to-bar now: higher, not longer.
4	C2B 4 × 4	4 × 5	2 × 15	Same reps, the bar lower on the chest.

CHEST-TO-BAR

A strict pull-up that finishes with the bar touching the chest below the collarbones. Lean back slightly at the top and pull the elbows down and back, not just up. Only reps where the bar touches your chest count toward the set.

EXPLOSIVE HIGH PULL-UP

Pull as fast as you can from a dead hang. The point is height, not holding the top position. Sets of 3 to 5, three minutes between them. Each week, note how high on your body the bar reaches on your best rep. That number is your progress.

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

- Chest-to-bar: 2 × 10, every rep touching.
- High pull: the bar reaches the sternum on at least one rep per set.
- Straight-bar dip: 2 × 10, chest touching the bar at the bottom.
- Elbows and shoulders feel the same on Friday as they did on Monday.

Two or more false: repeat week 4. Starting block two without the height is the single most common way this block fails.

SECTION 05 · BLOCK TWO

Weeks 5–8 · The transition

Now the height is used. Negatives teach the path down through the transition, the kipping drill teaches the timing up through it, and high pulls stay in to keep the height. Week 8 is the test.

Skill days A and B

WEEK	NEGATIVE	KIP DRILL	HIGH PULL	FOCUS
5	3 × 1	3 × 3	3 × 3	Negatives at 5 s. Feel where the wrists roll.
6	3 × 2	3 × 4	3 × 3	Drill: less leg every session. Count it.
7	3 × 3	3 × 5	3 × 3	Standards week for rungs 5 and 6. Still no attempts.
8	2 × 2	2 × 3	--	Deload Monday, attempts Friday. See page 9.

Strength day

WEEK	PULL-UP	DIP	STRAIGHT-BAR DIP	FOCUS
5	High 4 × 3	3 × 6	2 × 6	Explosive high pulls: as high as the bar lets you, every rep.
6	High 4 × 3	3 × 6	2 × 6	Same reps, higher. Straight-bar dips live here now.
7	High 5 × 2	3 × 5	2 × 5	Fewest reps, highest pull. Skill-day volume peaks too; sleep.
8	Strict 2 × 5	2 × 5	--	Deload. Lighter on purpose. Do not skip it.

NEGATIVES

Jump or step to the top, arms straight. Lower until the bar is at your chest, then lean back and let your shoulders sink below the bar as the wrists roll back under it. Keep lowering to a hang (page 8). Three to five seconds in all, slowest through the transition. Step down after each rep; rest three minutes between sets.

THE KIPPING DRILL

A small swing, then the same pull and lean as the strict rep. It is here to teach the timing of the lean, not to get you over the bar by any means. Each session, use less swing than the last. When a rep goes over with almost none, you are one or two weeks from the real thing.

NO ATTEMPTS BEFORE WEEK 8

Not one. An attempt in week 6 tells you what you already know (that you cannot do it yet) and costs the freshness the drill needs. The negatives say when you are close: when the transition on the way down feels controlled rather than survived, the way up is near.

SECTION 06

The transition in detail

Half a second, four things at once. The table is the way up; the negative, going down, is below it.

PIECE	WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENS	THE CUE
The bar path	The bar travels from in front of the face to under the chest without leaving the body. A gap between bar and torso at the top makes the transition much harder.	Pull to the bar, then lean over it.
The wrist roll	At the top of the pull the wrists turn over the bar so the hands end up on top of it rather than hanging from it. A false grip starts the wrists on top and removes most of the roll; on the bar it is optional.	Knuckles forward at the top.
The lean	The chest comes forward over the bar as the pull peaks. Too early and you pull away from the bar; too late and you are pulling straight up into nothing. It coincides with the wrist roll, not after it.	Chest over, not up.
The elbows	In the pull, drive them down to your ribs, as in any pull-up. As the chest goes over the bar, take them back behind you, where they sit at the bottom of a dip. Then press up. If one arm gets there first, you get the chicken wing.	Pull-up elbows, then dip elbows, both together.

The negative, step by step

1. Start on top of the bar, arms straight, and lower until the bar touches your chest, as in a dip.
2. Slowly lean back and let your shoulders sink below the bar while the wrists roll back under it. Make this the slowest part.
3. Keep the bar against your body and lower to a straight-arm hang.

The chicken wing

One arm gets over the bar first and the other follows. It works, and many first reps look like it, but it twists the load onto the trailing shoulder, which is a common way to hurt it. It comes from not enough height, so the body finds a way through, or from an uneven grip. Fix the height first (a week back in block one is not a failure), then the grip: both hands the same distance from the centre and gripping the same way, every set. You cannot feel which elbow leads, but a side-on phone video shows it: film one set a week.

GRIP

Shoulder width or a little narrower. A wide grip may make the pull feel stronger, but it makes the transition harder, because the elbows have further to travel. Wrap your thumbs around the bar.

BREATH AND BRACE

Breathe in at the bottom, hold it through the pull and the transition, out on the dip-out. The hollow position from your knee raises keeps the legs from swinging forward as the chest goes over; if they swing, the brace has let go.

SECTION 07

Attempts and the retest

Week 8 has two jobs: let the fatigue of block two drain, then find out. Attempts are the last thing in the block and the least of it.

DAY	WHAT YOU DO
Mon	Deload skill session: 2 × 2 negatives, 2 × 3 drill, everything easy, then leave.
Wed	Deload strength session: 2 × 5 pull-ups, 2 × 5 dips. No knee raises, no rows.
Thu	Full rest. No "just a few pull-ups".
Fri	Attempts. Warm up with 2 easy pull-ups, 2 easy dips, one negative. Then up to three strict attempts, three minutes apart. Stop at the first rep that goes over, or after the third that does not.

THE THREE-ATTEMPT RULE

Three, not five, not "one more". The first attempt is the one that counts: it is the only one you are fresh for. The second and third are for a technical mistake on the first, not for more effort. If all three fail at the same place, that place is your next four weeks, and a fourth attempt would only have told you the same thing while adding elbow stress.

Reading the result

IT WENT OVER

No kick, chest over, arms locked. That is rung 7. Do not do another one today. Next week, start rung 8 on page 13: one strict rep per skill session, then two, and slow it down.

CHEST REACHED THE BAR, STUCK THERE

The transition. Height is fine. Repeat block two, and add one week of negatives at 5 seconds with a pause at the transition point. This is the most common result, and a good one: the height, which takes longest to build, is already there.

CHEST NEVER REACHED THE BAR

Height. Repeat block one from week 3, with high pulls at 3 × 3 and three full minutes of rest. Do not repeat block two until the week 4 standards are met, because they were not.

What counts as a rep

Dead hang start. A little body swing while you set up is fine; a kick, or a hip drive that throws you at the bar, is not strict. Chest over the bar, then straight arms at the top. One elbow over before the other still counts, but it is a fault to fix before you chase a second rep. Decide the standard now, before the attempt, the same way the baseline works in [the twelve-week guide](#): a standard you change after the fact is not a standard.

SECTION 08

When you stall

A stall on a skill is information about which part of the rep is behind. The table names the part. The fix is nearly always a rung back, not a rung forward.

SYMPTOM	MOST LIKELY CAUSE & FIX
High pulls stopped getting higher after week 2	Rest too short, or pulling tired. Three full minutes, skill work first in the session, and drop the chest-to-bar volume by a set for a week. Height is a power quality and power does not improve under fatigue.
Negatives feel like falling, not lowering	Not enough strength in the transition position yet. Do partial negatives: from the top, lower only until your chest reaches the bar, hold two seconds there, then step or drop down. Each week, lower under control a little further past that point, until you can lower all the way.
The drill only works with a big swing	The lean is late. Practise the lean on a low bar you can stand under: pull, lean, roll the wrists, step through. Then take that timing back to the drill with less leg than feels enough.
Elbows or biceps complaining, inside of the elbow especially	The transition load, arriving before the tendon is ready. Drop the negatives first, keep the high pulls, and shorten the range on straight-bar dips. Pain that changes your technique is not something to train through. Two weeks of block one is cheaper than two months off.

The five most expensive mistakes

- 01 Attempting the rep every session and calling it practice.
- 02 Starting block two with a pull that does not reach the chest.
- 03 A wide grip, chosen because the pull-up may feel stronger that way.
- 04 Learning the kip first, then spending a year trying to take it out.
- 05 Training the muscle-up on top of a heavy pulling day instead of first.

WHAT A GOOD BLOCK LEAVES BEHIND

Before the attempt, the evidence should already be there: a high pull that reaches the sternum, a negative you can slow down at will, a drill rep that goes over with almost no swing. If all three are true, the attempt is likely to go. If none is, the attempt will not rescue it, and the block that fixes the missing one is on page 6 or 7.

SECTION 09 · RINGS

Rings: the false grip is the whole difference

A ring muscle-up has no bar to roll the wrists over, so the wrists start on top. That is the false grip, and it turns the transition from a trick of timing into a matter of position. Harder to learn, easier to own.

WHAT CHANGES

The rings move, so the transition is not around a fixed bar but through a pair of hands that turn in as the elbows come back. The dip-out is deeper than on a bar, and the catch at the bottom of the dip is what you lower into on every negative. Stability, not height, is the first limiter: the rings can move in any direction, and keeping them close takes strength a fixed bar never asks for.

WHAT STAYS THE SAME

Pull toward the hands, lean over them, elbows back together. The three-part rep, the two blocks, the rest, the RIR and the three-attempt rule are identical. A strict bar muscle-up carries over the pull, the lean and the dip-out. It does not carry over the stabilising strength the rings demand, which is why the ring ladder starts where it does.

The ring ladder

TO THE FIRST RING REP

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 1 | Ring pull-up · 2 × 10 |
| 2 | False-grip dead hang · 3 × 30 s |
| 3 | False-grip ring row · 2 × 10 |
| 4 | False-grip pull-up · 2 × 5 |

CONTINUED

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| 5 | False-grip pull-up to chest · 2 × 5 |
| 6 | Deep ring dip · 2 × 5 |
| 7 | Negative ring muscle-up · 3 × 3 |
| 8 | Strict ring muscle-up · 1 |

The false grip

The ring sits across the heel of the hand, not in the fingers, with the wrist bent over the ring so the heel of the hand sits on top of it. It hurts at first, in the wrist and the skin over the pisiform bone, and the hang on rung 2 is there to make it stop hurting before you load it. Tape helps in week one. Do not skip to the row because the hang is boring: a false grip that opens halfway through the pull opens at the transition, every time.

ENTRY STANDARD FOR THE RING LADDER

A strict bar muscle-up, or the bar block's week 4 standards plus 2 × 10 ring pull-ups. Rings without the height are the same failed attempts as the bar without it, with a sore wrist added.

SECTION 10 · RINGS

The eight weeks on rings

Same week, same days, same rest. Block one is the false grip and the height; block two is the deep dip and the transition. The strength day does not change from the bar program.

Weeks 1–4 · Grip and height, skill days A and B

WEEK	FALSE-GRIP HANG	FG ROW	FG PULL-UP	FOCUS
1	3 × 10 s	3 × 6	--	Grip only. Rings at chest height for rows, feet on the floor.
2	3 × 20 s	3 × 8	3 × 2	First false-grip pull-ups. Grip stays locked or the set is over.
3	3 × 30 s	2 × 10	3 × 4	Rungs 2 and 3 should be yours by Friday.
4	3 × 30 s	2 × 10	2 × 5	Standards week. Add pull-up to chest: 3 × 3, rings to the sternum.

Weeks 5–8 · The transition, skill days A and B

WEEK	FG PULL TO CHEST	DEEP RING DIP	NEGATIVE	FOCUS
5	3 × 3	3 × 3	3 × 1	Negatives lower into the deep dip and stop there. Feel the catch.
6	3 × 4	3 × 4	3 × 2	Full negatives, 5 s, rings turning in as the elbows come back.
7	2 × 5	2 × 5	3 × 3	Standards week for rungs 5 to 7. No attempts.
8	2 × 3	2 × 3	2 × 2	Deload Monday, attempts Friday, three at most.

THE DEEP RING DIP

Lower until the rings touch the outside of the chest, elbows behind you, then press. This is the position the transition arrives in, so it has to be a position you can press out of, not one you fall through. Rings turned out at the top, arms locked, before the next rep.

RING STALLS

Grip opens mid-pull: back to the hang, add ten seconds a week. Stuck at the chest: the lean is missing, pull the rings to the armpits, not the collarbones. Elbows flare in the dip-out: the dip is not deep enough yet; two more weeks of rung 6 before the next negative.

Rings that drift away from you on the way up mean you are pulling away from them: keep them close, travelling up the body toward the armpits. If one ring sits lower or wobbles more, that side's false grip has usually slipped. Fixing both makes the transition easier; neither does it for you.

SECTION 11

After the first rep

One rep is a beginning. The next four weeks decide whether it becomes a skill you own or a party trick that appears on good days. Slow it down, then load it.

RUNG 8 · STRICT SLOW

The same strict rep, done slowly on purpose: 3 to 5 seconds on the way up and 3 to 5 seconds on the way down, slow through the transition both times. The standard is 3 sets of 3 slow reps.

Two skill sessions a week. Start with 3 sets of 1 slow rep, then 3 sets of 2, then 3 sets of 3, resting three minutes between sets. Drop the negatives; the way down of every slow rep already is one.

A rep you can do slowly is a rep you control, so it holds up when you are tired or on an unfamiliar bar.

RUNG 9 · WEIGHTED

Start only when rung 8 is yours: 3 × 3 slow in three sessions in a row. One slow rep is not enough. Weight on a transition you do not yet control makes the fault worse, not the rep stronger.

Use a dip belt and start at about 5% of your bodyweight, the same small start [the weighted guide](#) uses for pull-ups and dips. One strict rep per set. When a load goes over cleanly in two sessions, add 1.25 to 2.5 kg. The rung is one rep at +25%.

Weighted singles also build reps: once a strict rep with about 10% extra is solid, sets of two or three at bodyweight usually follow.

Reps, and the version everyone asks about

Sets of strict reps come from the slow rung and the weighted rung, not from grinding out sets of the full rep. Once 3 × 3 slow is done, test one set of strict reps at normal speed and stop when a rep loses form. The supinated (underhand) muscle-up, with the palms facing you, is a separate skill with a different transition and a much bigger elbow demand. Learn the standard rep first.

The ring ladder, past the first rep

BEYOND THE FIRST RING REP

9	Strict slow ring muscle-up · 3 × 3
10	L-sit ring muscle-up · 1
11	Weighted ring muscle-up · +25% BW × 1

SECTION 12

Eight-week log

One line per week. Best pull height, best negative, drill reps and how much swing, then attempts. Print it, or keep it on your phone; the format matters less than week 7 being able to see week 1.

WEEK	PULL-UP	CHEST-TO-BAR	HIGH PULL	SB DIP	NEGATIVE	DRILL	ATTEMPTS / NOTES
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							

For rings, use the same eight rows: false-grip hang seconds under Pull-up, false-grip rows under Chest-to-bar, false-grip pull-ups under High pull, deep ring dips under SB dip.

WHAT'S NEXT · LOAD

Past rung 9, the muscle-up is one more movement you add weight to, and the arithmetic is the same as for weighted pull-ups and dips. That is the companion guide, [Weighted Calisthenics: The First 12 Weeks](#).

WHAT'S NEXT · SKILL

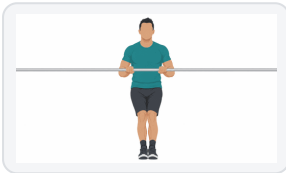
Front lever, planche and handstand work sit alongside this, not above it. The support and transition strength you now have is the base they need, and the ring dip is halfway to a ring support hold.

Written and published by THYMOS, a training log for people who keep records. Both ladders on these pages are in the app under Bodyweight Skills, with the same rungs and the same standards, if you would rather not track them by hand, and the guide works just as well on paper. thymos.fit

APPENDIX

How each movement is done

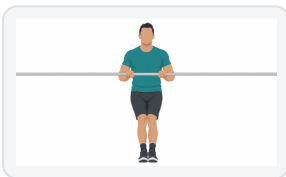
Every rung of both ladders above the pull-up, and the dip and knee raise from the entry standards, with the cues that matter. Look one up when a set feels wrong and you want to check the position before you add reps.



Chest-to-bar pull-up

BAR LADDER

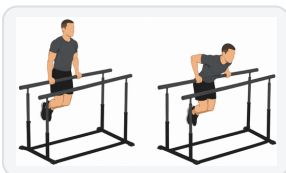
1. Hang from a pull-up bar with an overhand shoulder-width grip, arms straight and shoulders active, feet clear of the floor.
2. Pull up strictly and powerfully, leaning back slightly, until your chest (not just your chin) touches the bar. Exhale as you pull.
3. Lower under control to a straight-arm hang, keeping tension through the lats. Inhale as you descend.
4. Keep your lower body still with no kipping; pulling to chest height builds the extra range needed to clear the bar in a muscle-up.
5. Repeat for the prescribed reps. Strict chest-to-bar strength is a key prerequisite for the bar muscle-up.



Explosive high pull-up

BAR LADDER

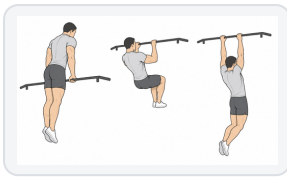
1. Hang from a pull-up bar with an overhand grip, arms straight, shoulders active, core braced.
2. Pull as explosively as possible, driving the elbows down hard to bring your chest or upper abdomen as high toward the bar as you can. Exhale sharply as you pull.
3. Lower under control to a straight-arm hang and reset before the next rep. Inhale as you descend.
4. Aim to pull higher each rep; the more of your torso you can bring above the bar, the closer you are to the muscle-up transition.
5. Repeat for the prescribed reps. Explosive high pull-ups build the pulling power that carries you over the bar.



Deep straight-bar dip

BAR LADDER

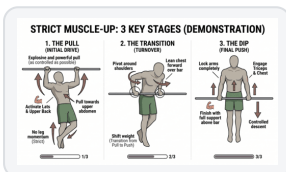
1. Start above a fixed bar in a support position with your arms straight, the bar at your hips or lower ribs, and your torso leaning slightly forward over the bar.
2. Bend your elbows and lower your chest toward the bar under control, keeping it close to your body and leaning forward. Inhale as you descend.
3. Press back up to straight arms, driving through the chest and triceps until you are supported over the bar. Exhale as you press.
4. Keep your core tight and shoulders down; the forward lean over the bar mimics the top half of the muscle-up.
5. Repeat for the prescribed reps. Deep straight-bar dips train the pressing portion that finishes a bar muscle-up.



Negative bar muscle-up

BAR LADDER

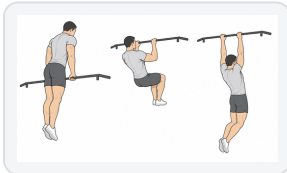
1. Use a jump or box to get on top of the bar in the support position, arms straight and chest above the bar, torso leaning forward.
2. Lower yourself slowly and under control through the transition: let your chest drop forward and down past the bar, then continue lowering into a hang over three to five seconds. Inhale steadily.
3. Fight the descent the whole way, keeping the bar close to your body as your shoulders travel from above to below it.
4. Keep your core tight to control the transition point where the movement is hardest.
5. Reset to the top and repeat for the prescribed reps. Negatives teach the transition path and build the strength to reverse it.



Strict bar muscle-up

BAR LADDER

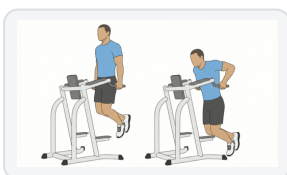
1. Hang from a pull-up bar with a shoulder-width overhand (pronated) grip, arms fully extended. Engage your core and keep your body in a slight hollow body position. This is your starting position.
2. Initiate the movement by depressing and retracting your scapulae, then explosively pull your chest toward the bar using your lats and upper back.
3. As your chest rises above bar level, lean forward and push your torso up through the transition by pressing down on the bar, converting the vertical pull into a vertical push similar to a dip.
4. Lock out your arms fully at the top so your hips are at bar height and your arms are straight. Exhale at the top of the movement.
5. Slowly lower yourself back to the starting position under control by reversing the motion: hinge at the elbows, lower through the transition, and extend back to a full dead hang.
6. Repeat for the prescribed number of repetitions.



Strict slow bar muscle-up

BAR LADDER

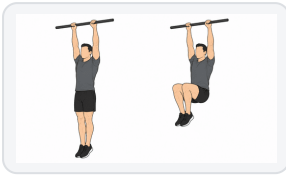
1. Hang from the bar with a false grip, arms straight and shoulders active, no leg swing. Brace your core.
2. Pull strictly and high, leaning back then forward to bring your chest to and over the bar without any kip. Exhale as you pull.
3. Transition smoothly and slowly by rotating your wrists over the bar and pressing your chest above it, then press out to straight arms in the support. Control every phase.
4. Lower slowly back through the transition to a hang under control. Inhale as you descend.
5. Repeat for the prescribed reps. The strict, slow bar muscle-up is the master step, requiring full pulling and pressing strength with no momentum.



Dip

ENTRY STANDARD

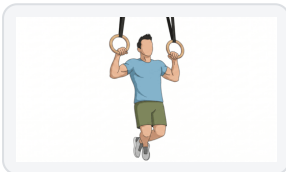
1. To get into the starting position, hold your body at arm's length with your arms nearly locked above the bars.
2. Now, inhale and slowly lower yourself downward. Your torso should remain upright and your elbows should stay close to your body. This helps to better focus on tricep involvement. Lower 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.



Hanging knee raise

ENTRY STANDARD

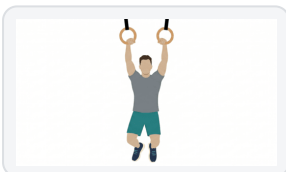
1. Hang from a pull-up bar with a shoulder-width overhand grip, arms straight and shoulders active, feet clear of the floor. Bend your knees to about 90 degrees. This is your start position.
2. Smoothly lift your knees up until your thighs are roughly parallel to the floor, keeping the right angle at 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.



Ring pull-up

RING LADDER

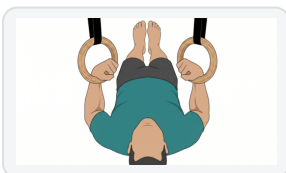
1. Hang from gymnastic rings with your arms straight and palms facing you or slightly turned in, shoulders active, feet clear of the floor.
2. Pull yourself up until your chin clears the height of the rings, allowing the rings to rotate naturally as you pull, keeping them close to your body. Exhale as you pull.
3. Lower under control to a straight-arm hang, controlling the unstable rings the whole way. Inhale as you descend.
4. Keep your core tight and the rings steady; their instability recruits more stabilisers than a fixed bar.
5. Repeat for the prescribed reps. Ring pull-ups build the stability and pulling strength that lead toward ring muscle-ups.



False-grip dead hang

RING LADDER

1. Set gymnastic rings at hanging height and take a false grip on each ring: rest the base of your palms on top of the rings with your wrists flexed over them.
2. Hang with straight arms, keeping the false grip locked so your wrists stay flexed above the rings and your forearms loaded.
3. Keep your shoulders active (not fully relaxed) and your core braced to limit swinging.
4. Breathe steadily and hold for the prescribed time, building tolerance to the demanding wrist position.
5. Release under control to finish. Aim for fifteen to thirty seconds; the false-grip dead hang conditions the grip that every ring muscle-up depends on.



False-grip ring row

RING LADDER

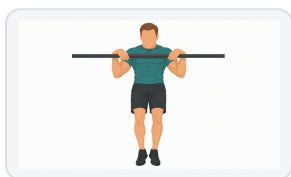
1. Set rings low and take a false grip on each. Walk your feet forward and lean back with straight arms so your body is at a diagonal, heels on the floor.
2. Pull your chest toward the rings by driving your elbows back, keeping the false grip locked and your body in a straight line. Exhale as you pull.
3. Lower under control back to the straight-arm diagonal, maintaining the false grip. Inhale as you descend.
4. Keep your core and glutes tight so your hips do not sag; lower the rings or walk your feet forward to make it harder.
5. Repeat for the prescribed reps. False-grip ring rows groove the false grip and pulling pattern at a manageable load.



False-grip pull-up

RING LADDER

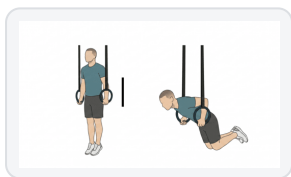
1. Hang from a pull-up bar with a false grip: rest the base of your palms on top of the bar with your wrists flexed over it, so your forearms are already positioned above the bar.
2. Pull yourself up, keeping the false grip locked and driving your elbows down, until your collarbone or lower chest reaches the bar. Exhale as you pull.
3. Lower under control to a straight-arm hang while maintaining the false grip. Inhale as you descend.
4. Keep your core tight and body from swinging; the flexed-wrist false grip may feel uncomfortable at first but is essential for the transition.
5. Repeat for the prescribed reps. False-grip pull-ups train the grip and pulling height that make the muscle-up transition possible.



False-grip pull-up to chest

RING LADDER

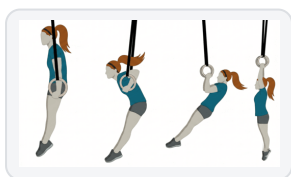
1. Hang from the rings with a false grip, arms straight, shoulders active, feet clear of the floor.
2. Pull up strictly and high, keeping the rings close to your body, until your chest reaches ring height. Exhale as you pull.
3. Lower under control to a straight-arm hang while maintaining the false grip. Inhale as you descend.
4. Keep your body from swinging and pull to full chest height; this extra range and the false grip set up the muscle-up transition.
5. Repeat for the prescribed reps. Chest-to-ring false-grip pull-ups are a key prerequisite for the ring muscle-up.



Deep ring dip

RING LADDER

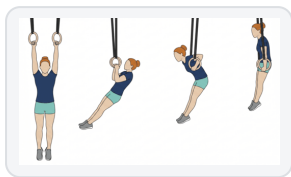
1. Support yourself on the rings with straight arms, rings turned slightly out, body upright and core braced.
2. Bend your elbows and lower your chest down between the rings as deep as your shoulders comfortably allow, keeping the rings close to your body. Inhale as you descend.
3. Press back up to a straight-arm support, turning the rings out at the top. Exhale as you press.
4. Keep your shoulders down and the rings from flaring wide; the deep range builds the pressing strength for the muscle-up finish.
5. Repeat for the prescribed reps. Deep ring dips (also called Russian dips when performed with a rolling forearm transition) strengthen the bottom position.



Negative ring muscle-up

RING LADDER

1. Use a jump or box to reach the top ring support position with straight arms, chest above the rings, torso leaning forward.
2. Lower slowly and under control through the transition: let your chest drop forward as your shoulders pass from above to below the rings, then continue into a false-grip hang over three to five seconds. Inhale steadily.
3. Keep the rings close to your body and the false grip locked as you descend, fighting the hardest point in the transition.
4. Brace your core to control the ring wobble throughout the lower.
5. Reset to the top and repeat for the prescribed reps. Ring negatives teach the transition and build the strength to reverse it.



Strict ring muscle-up

RING LADDER

1. Hang from the rings with a false grip, arms straight, shoulders active, no leg swing. Brace your core.
2. Pull explosively and high, keeping the rings close, until your chest reaches ring height, then lean forward and rotate your wrists to bring your shoulders above the rings. Exhale as you pull and transition.
3. Press out of the deep transition to a straight-arm support at the top, keeping the rings turned in close to your body.
4. Lower under control back through the transition to a false-grip hang. Inhale as you descend.
5. Repeat for the prescribed reps. The strict ring muscle-up combines a false-grip pull, a smooth transition, and a ring dip.

Kipping muscle-up drill

BAR LADDER

1. Hang from the bar with a false or overhand grip. Set up a controlled kip by swinging into a small hollow-then-arch body movement.
2. Use the kip to drive your hips and generate upward momentum, pulling explosively and leaning forward to bring your chest over the bar and transition into the support. Exhale as you drive up.
3. Press out at the top to straight arms, then lower under control and reset the swing. Inhale as you descend.
4. Use the leg drive only to assist the transition; keep the movement controlled rather than wild, and aim to reduce the kip over time.
5. Repeat for the prescribed reps. The kipping drill teaches the transition timing that leads toward a strict muscle-up.