



Eric Hörst's "7-53" Finger Strength Hangboard Routine



Jędrzej



January 21, 2019



2 Comments

"After 8 weeks of training, my finger strength increased by 17%! Thanks again for your wonderful site and your help selecting a plan! I can't wait to go crush!"

**Carson (V8/7B)**

Boulderer (US)



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The "7-53" fingerboard protocol – quick summary

[The "7-53" climbing finger strength routine](#)

- A very time-efficient and effective finger strength training protocol

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[The "7-53" finger strength protocol summary table](#)

[Eric Hörst's "7-53" hangboard routine remarks](#)

[Eric Hörst's "7-53" strength protocol conclusions](#)

- Over the years Eric Hörst progressed from 22.5 kg to 41 kg added weight on a 14 mm edge.
- Highly recommended for both intermediate and advanced climbers
- Great preparation for the more strenuous one arm hangs
- Eric's favorite hangboard routine!

The "7-53" climbing finger strength routine

The "7-53" hangboard routine, was developed by Eric Hörst to effectively train maximum finger strength for rock climbing. The idea behind the 7-second time under tension (TUT) and the 53-second rest was explained in the T4C podcast [\[1\]](#). According to Eric, full recovery between two maximum hangs takes about 3 minutes and is divided into two phases [\[2\]](#)[\[3\]](#). In phase one, which is 50 seconds long, the mitochondria resynthesize ATP to restore phosphocreatine (PCr) intercellular stores. This phase is crucial, and it's enough to allow completion of at least another two hangs. The second phase, which takes the remainder of the 3 minutes, is not as important for strength training. These short 53-second rest intervals between three consecutive hangs are practically the only thing that distinguishes the "7-53" hangboard routine from the Eva López [MaxHangs](#) protocols, where the rest times between each hang are always three to five minutes [\[4\]](#).

The first sixty seconds of rest are crucial for phosphocreatine resynthesis and recovery.



Figure 1: PCr restoration dynamics according to [3].

The “7-53” fingerboard protocol details

1. Choose two to five different grip positions. Consider including:
 - Half crimps
 - Full crimps
 - Three-finger pockets
 - Two-finger pockets: index-middle (IM), middle-ring (MR) and ring-pinkie (RP) – advanced
 - Deep monos
2. For each grip position determine the amount of added or subtracted weight, allowing you to hang for 10 seconds.
3. For each grip position:
 - Hang for 7 seconds, rest for 53 seconds.
 - Complete a total of 3 hangs per set.
4. Rest 3 **TOP** tes and switch to the next grip position.



Table 1: The “7-53” finger strength protocol summary.

The "7-53" protocol	
Hang test time [s]	10
Margin [s]	3

MVC-7 load	92 - 97%
Sets	2 - 5
Positions/set	1
Hangs/position	3
Hang time [s]	7
Rest betw. hangs [s]	53
Rest betw. sets [min]	3
TUT [s]	42 - 105
Total time [min]	7- 23

Eric Hörst’s “7-53” hangboard routine remarks

- The number of sets can be varied between 2 – 5.
- Recommended holds:
 - 14 – 20 mm edges
 - 20 – 30 mm two-finger pockets
 - Deep tendon-friendly monos
- Initially focus on training the half crimp and open hand pocket positions.
- If you can’t complete all the hangs, reduce weight.

• Advanced climbers may consider:



• Doing additional sets of two finger pockets (open hand) and pinch grips.

Figure 2: Screenshot from a “7-53” hanboard routine training session video.

Eric Hörst “7-53” strength protocol conclusions

You can see that Eric is incorporating the concept of the 3-second margin (effort level) into his protocol. The same idea is used by Eva López in her [MaxHangs](#) protocols [\[4\]](#)[\[5\]](#)[\[6\]](#). According to Eric, the “7-53” protocol is very time-efficient; it takes only 12 minutes to go through three full sets. He claims to have improved from 22.5 kg to 41 kg added weight on a 14 mm edge over the years, and that this method is excellent preparation for one-arm hangs [\[7\]](#). This high-intensity-low-volume approach is consistent with the results of recent research, where it was shown that increasing the exercise volume does not necessarily lead to higher strength gains [\[8\]](#).

Time-efficient and easy to follow protocol that does not leave you feel worked or pumped.

Apart from Eric’s testimony, I was able to find some interesting opinions on The Rock Climber’s Training Manual [\[9\]](#). Most climbers in the forum agree that the “7-53” hangboard routine is indeed very time-efficient and easy to follow. No pump is reported, meaning that the alactic energy system is

TOP



the set is always a bit tougher than the first and the second one. However, I also never actually got pumped. No feeling of being “worked” is reported after the training session, compared with the standard [Hangboard Repeaters](#) protocol, but that's normal for maximum strength training – you shouldn't feel tired. Don't worry, gains will surely come, take Eric's word for it. After all, it's his favorite hangboard protocol!

If you have any questions or comments, feel free to contact me. Please subscribe to the blog, to keep up to date with the upcoming posts on cutting edge methods of climbing training!

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About the author

Jędrzej

A veteran hangboarder and a Moonboard fan, Jędrzej is crazy about training for climbing. There's nothing he likes more than trying out different protocols and applying the newly acquired skills on the wall. Jędrzej also enjoys playing the electric guitar, baduk, and reading articles on the science of sports training. He holds a Ph.D. in electrical engineering.

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2 thoughts on “Eric Hörst’s “7-53” finger strength hangboard routine”

PERT

DECEMBER 6, 2020 AT 3:58 AM

How often should we be performing this protocol?

[Reply](#)

JĘDRZEJ

DECEMBER 6, 2020 AT 11:35 AM

Hi!

A single set of the “7-53” protocol is quite intense but very quick. That gives you a lot of room to play around with the volume.

For example, you may want to do a quick session in the morning (say 2 – 3 sets) and then hit the gym or crag in the evening. I would repeat such a training day pattern up to three times per week. In any case, rest one day in between.

Alternatively, if you’re off-season, you may want to make hangboarding the cornerstone of your training program. You could then increase the volume of some of the hangboarding sessions, go through multiple positions and sets. It would make sense to rest at least two days after such an exhaustive effort.

Designing a well-balanced training program can be challenging. I often find climbers overtraining, getting injured, disheartened, and tired while making hardly any progress. A lot depends on your current training goals, fitness level, but more often than not, less is more.

It’s always good to start with a limited training program, like one hangboard session per week.

This allows your body to adapt to the new stimuli and reduce the chance of injury. If you see progress, that’s great; it’s all you need. When you feel like you’ve stopped improving, increase the volume. If the volume becomes too high, reduce it, and increase the load instead. The key is to be consistent and to have a reliable assessment procedure to monitor your progress every 4 – 6 weeks.

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