



One Arm Hangs Hangboard Training Protocol



Jędrzej



January 3, 2020



4 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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Quick summary

[One Arm Hangs hangboard training routine](#)

- A very intense finger strength training method
- **Pu** **TOP** stress on arms and elbows

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- Using a pulley system instead of an assisting rope allows you to train cross-body recruitment
- The half crimp is the preferred grip position, but other positions can also be trained
- The half crimp and the full crimp grip positions should be trained separately
- Increase edge depth if you need to subtract more than 30 lbs (13.5 kg) or can't hang for at least 5 seconds

One Arm Hangs hangboard training routine

The One Arm Hangs protocol was made popular by Chris Webb-Parsons, an Australian V15 boulderer [1]. The protocol is known for being a very intense training method, putting a lot of stress on both arms and elbows, so it should best be used only by climbers capable of bouldering in the upper V-range [2]. The One Arm Dead Hang can be particularly useful to climbers who are so strong that they need to add very high loads, even over 50 kg, to make their two-handed hangs challenging enough, and for whom reducing the hold size may at some point become painful [3]. Since the One Arm Hangs protocol is very different from any two-handed hangboard protocol, if you never tried it before, you are likely to notice quick strength gains, owing to the entirely new stimuli it provides. This can make One Arm Hangs the perfect tool whenever you need to break through a plateau.

A very intense finger strength training method, recommended for climbers who can boulder above V8.

One Arm Hang hangboard training protocol details

1. Choose a hold and adjust the load so that you can hang one-handed for 5 – 10 seconds.
 - Preferably use an edge and the half crimp grip position.
 - Other holds are also possible but are less recommended.
2. For the chosen grip position:
 - Hang one-handed for 5 – 10 seconds in the slightly bent arm position.

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3. Perform a total of 3 hangs for each arm according to step 2.
4. For the chosen grip position:
 - Hang one-handed for 5 – 10 seconds in the 90° bent arm position.
 - Repeat for the other arm.
 - Rest 2 – 5 minutes.
5. Perform 3 hangs for each arm according to step 4.
6. For the chosen grip position:
 - Hang one-handed for 5 – 10 seconds in the full lock-off position.
 - Repeat for the other arm.
 - Rest 2 – 5 minutes.
7. Perform 3 hangs for each arm according to step 5.

One Arm Hangs hangboard training routine remarks

- Make sure your arms are fully warmed up ready to take high loads.
- Best if you can do a one-arm pull up on a jug, or at least be able to comfortably lock-off with one arm for a couple of seconds.
- Using a pulley system to reduce the load may actually be better than using a rope for assistance.
- Keep your scapula retracted, particularly with the slightly bent arm hangs.
- Concentrate on preventing your body from spinning – if not using a rope for assistance.
- If you can't hang for 5 – 10 seconds on any hold, use a pulley system to reduce your weight.
- Start on a deeper edge, keep adding weight and work your way down to smaller holds.
- The optimum hang time is between 5 – 7 seconds – 10 seconds can be too hard on the shoulder.
- This is a strength training protocol, so rest as long as you need to be able to properly execute the hangs.

Table 1: One Arm Hangs hangboard training protocol summary.

One Arm Hangs	
Hang test time [s]	5 - 10
MVC-7 load	92 - 106%
Sets	1

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Positions	3
Hangs/position	6 (3/arm)
Hangs/set	18 (9/arm)
Hang time [s]	5 - 10
Rest betw. hangs [min]	2 - 5
TUT/arm [s]	45 - 90
Total time [min]	17 - 42

One Arm Hang climbing hangboard training cycle

- The training cycle below is the CWP training cycle adapted to using a pulley system, rather than an assisting rope.
- A typical cycle is 12 weeks long, broken into two 6-week blocks.
- Perform at least 2 sessions per week.
 - Weeks 1 – 2
 - Execute the protocol with 10-second hangs.
 - Use a pulley system to adjust the load properly.
 - Week 3:
 - Execute the protocol with 5-second hangs.
 - Increase the load accordingly, to make the 5-second hangs challenging.
 - Week 4
 - Execute the protocol with 10-second hangs.
 - Use the load from Weeks 1 – 2.
 - Week 5:
 - Execute the protocol hanging as long as you can.
 - Use a higher load than in Week 3, to fail in under 5 seconds.
 - Week 6:
 - Rest
 - Weeks 7 – 8:
 - Execute the protocol with 5-second hangs.
 - Use the load from Week 3.
 - Week 9: **TOP**



- Week 10:
 - Execute the protocol with 5-second hangs.
 - Use the load from Weeks 7 – 8.
- Week 11:
 - Execute the protocol hanging as long as you can.
 - Use a higher load than in Week 10, to fail in under 5 seconds.
 - Compare your maximum hang times with hang times from Week 5.
- Week 12:
 - Rest

One Arm Hangs load vs. climbing level

In 2018 an interesting study was published, in which bouldering level was related to one arm finger strength. For the tests the Beast Fingers GRIPPŪL apparatus was used, with a 19 mm edge, in-cut 15 degrees [4]. Unfortunately, the exact test procedure is not thoroughly explained, so it is difficult to relate it to results of other tests. It is known that in 2017 Alex Megos could hang one handed for 5 seconds on a 20 mm test edge with +18 kg. Since at that time he weighed 57 kg, the result was 132% [5]. I would expect that a V10 climber should be able to do at least a 5-second One Arm Dead Hang in the half crimp position.



Figure 2: One Arm Hang load vs. bouldering grade, 19 mm edge, in-cut 15 degrees, half crimp grip [4].

One Arm Hangs hangboard training protocol results and discussion

In the original version of the protocol, Chris Webb-Parsons recommends using a short length of rope for the assisting hand. The idea is to gradually release your grip on the assisting rope, to mimic the load increase your fingers experience during climbing when your other hand is letting go of the hold to move to the next hold. However, most resources recommend using a pulley system to reduce your

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not holding a rope lets you train your cross-body recruitment, as you need to prevent your body from spinning.

Unloading with a pulley system may actually be better than using an assisting rope, as it makes it easier to track the progress and lets you train cross-body recruitment.

The One Arm Hangs are an exercise for highly advanced climbers with ample experience in hangboarding. In the article found on trainingbeta.com, the protocol is recommended to climbers who can climb at least V4, but it seems to me that this is way too early. Such climbers can benefit much more from regular two-arm hangboarding, including Repeaters and Ladders [7]. In his interview for The Power Company Podcast, Steve Maish recommends one arm hangboard training to climbers who can boulder in the upper V range, at least over V8, and combining this protocol with bouldering or Moonboarding. As a rule of thumb, if you need to decrease your weight by more than 30 lbs (13.5 kg) to do the One Arm Hangs on a particular hold, then you should either increase the edge depth or stick with regular two-arm hangboarding for the time being [8].

While some resources recommend using the open hand hold position for the One Arm Hangs, the original protocol relies solely on the half crimp hold. Chris Webb-Parsons argues that the half crimp is the middle ground between the open hand and the full crimp hold position, letting you strengthen both grips at the same time [1][7]. Again, this may not be entirely true, as it was reported that even the crimp and the half crimp require separate training [2]. Also, the half crimp grip is rather difficult to maintain throughout a full 10-second hang, making it problematic.

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

References

1. Chris Webb-Parsons Hangboard Program, Climblox.com, Vimeo Mar. 06 2013 [\(link\)](#)↩↪
2. The Power Company Podcast, Episode 58: Comparing Hangboard Protocols with Steve Maisch, Sept. 21 2017 [\(link\)](#)↩↪↪
3. J. Banaszczyk, StrengthClimbing – Eva López MaxHangs hangboard routine for finger strength, Apr. 29, 2019. [\(link\)](#)↩

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5. iatticetraining.com, yc, Adam Ondra and Alex Megos, Sept. 7 2017 [\(link\)](#)↩

6. r/climbharder, Hangboarding: one-arm hangs vs. normal hangboarding, Jan 03 2016 [\(link\)](#)↩

7. One Arm Dead Hangs, www.trainingbeta.com [\(link\)](#)↩↩

8. r/climbharder, When to move to one arm hangs, May 04 2017 [\(link\)](#)↩

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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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4 thoughts on "One Arm Hangs hangboard training protocol"

MATT CHRISTIE

SEPTEMBER 27, 2021 AT 6:08 PM

Just started my first one arm hang cycle, and I've noticed something a bit odd about my grip positions. For my right arm, my half crimp position is significantly stronger than my open hand, and vice versa for my left. My open hand on my left hand is actually stronger than both my half crimp on my left and right hand. I tried taking some weight off so I could hold a half crimp with my left hand, and I had to take an extra 40 lbs off to be able to hold fully in the half crimp position – pretty much entirely because of my index finger. My other fingers can stay in the half crimp easily, but for some reason my curmudgeon of an index finger immediately falls into a drag position. So I am wondering – is it worth taking loads of weight off and spending probably a whole 6 week strength cycle just

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Horst would call it) and my right hand in half crimp. Or just train both in this open crimp position? Any advice would be much appreciated!

[Reply](#)

JĘDRZEJ

SEPTEMBER 29, 2021 AT 3:11 PM

Hi Matt!

First of all, you don't really need to obsess about numbers in regards to your finger strength – simply try to increase your strength in all your positions methodically, be it half crimp, open crimp, or pinches. When you climb, does the left-hand half crimp grip feel like the weak link? If so, you might want to pay it some extra attention, but otherwise, continuously develop both your open hand and half crimp positions in both hands – it should even out somewhat over time.

[Reply](#)

ALEX

OCTOBER 28, 2021 AT 10:21 PM

Hello, how many days of rest should well trained athlete need between this hangboard sessions?

[Reply](#)

JĘDRZEJ

NOVEMBER 19, 2021 AT 7:10 AM

Hi Alex!

It depends. Some elite professional climbers train every day and do multiple sessions. Intermediate to advanced climbers will typically train 3 – 4 times per week when it comes to regular folks. They take 1 – 2 days of rest between training days, on which they might engage in other activities, such as core and shoulder stability exercises. The typical answer, which might sound cliché, is “listen to your body,” but that works. A training volume that is too high is counterproductive and sooner or later leads to injury.

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