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CALISTHENICS BIBLE

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Bodyweight training is an amazing thing, it has always been poetry in motion for me. Some people like to call it working out, but I like to call it **RAW MOVEMENT**. It doesn't get any more primal and basic than bodyweight training and some people actually consider it to be a more effective training method than free-weights. With hundreds of benefits from no gym equipment to lower joint stress to natural range of motion and athleticism, you just can't go wrong. Moving external resistance is great, but you get a different and more unique feeling when you move your own bodyweight through space. Bodyweight training has a high level of neurological muscle activation that is hard to duplicate with other methods. The climbing, pulling, dipping, sprinting, holding, pushing and twisting are all a beautiful thing.

For countless decades people have been getting amazing results off of Calisthenics training alone:

GYMNASTS



When you think of bodyweight training one of the first things that comes to mind is Gymnastics. I have talked to many gymnasts and the majority of them haven't touched a weight in their life (neither do they care), but still possess great upper bodies due to the advanced exercises on the parallel bars, rings and pull-up bars.

They have mastered the art of advanced dips, chins, L-Sits and the list goes on. These people have mastered their own bodyweight and even though they train for performance they still have great muscle development with strength through the roof. On top of upper body relative strength, gymnasts have some of the strongest cores in the world.

CIRQUE DU SOLEIL PERFORMERS/ATHLETES



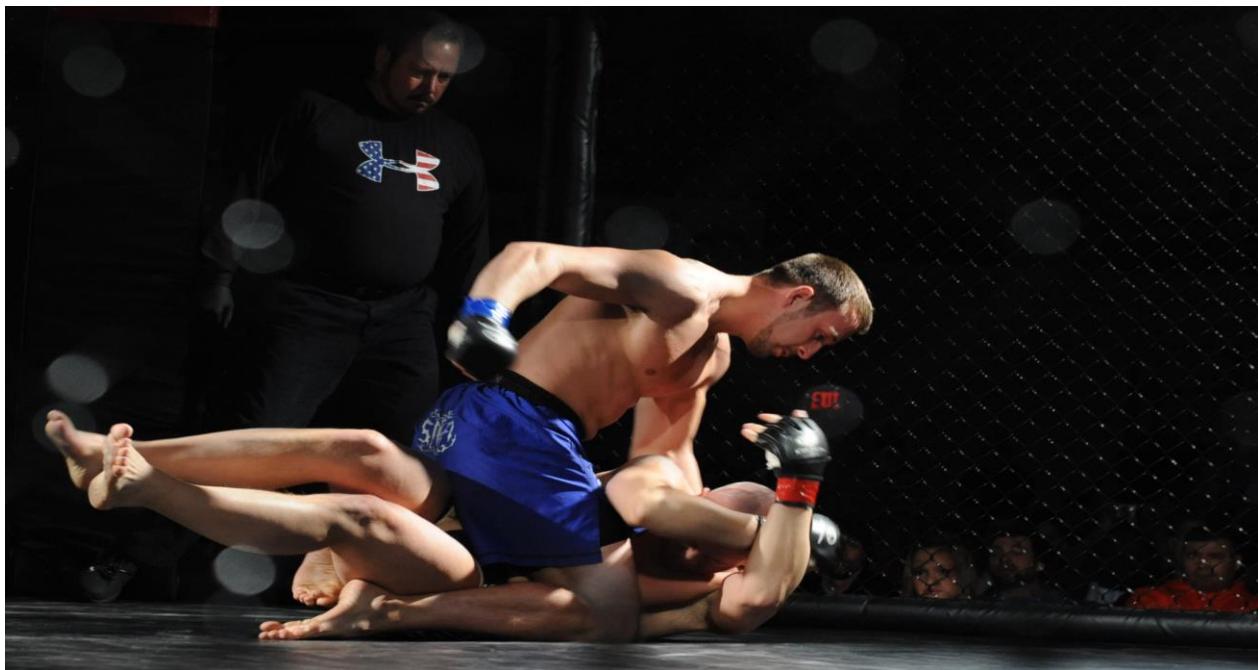
Cirque du Soleil athletes/performers are a little similar to the gymnasts with the way that they are built. They have very deep core strength from years and years of balancing with handstands and doing advanced exercises like Front and Back Levers. They also have incredible coordination, balance, explosive strength and they have nice physiques as well. I was amazed the first time I saw a cirque du soleil show and I always had a lot of respect for these athletes because they have really mastered their bodyweight.

CALISTHENICS STREET WORKOUT TRAINEE'S



Type in Calisthenics workouts on YouTube and you will see jacked people training in parks doing advanced exercises that take a lot of hard work and effort. Resistance is resistance and hard work is hard work, some of these people possess more impressive physiques than some of the strongest lifters in your local gym, at least as far as the upper body goes. Not to mention that a lot of these trainee's are also very creative and make up a lot of their exercises which is pretty cool to say the least.

FIGHTERS



A lot of fighters actually do a lot of bodyweight training because of all of the benefits such as moving better and becoming more explosive while putting on some muscle in the process. Fighters also incorporate a lot of neck bridging variations to help them develop a strong neck and help prevent possible concussions. Here at fitworldexposed we are very big on neck training, not only because of the safety benefits in combat sports but also because it looks badass.

SPRINTERS



Last but not least, we got the sprinters. Sprinters have extremely well developed lower bodies and some of them don't do any Squats, Leg presses or Romanian Deadlifts. They have very well developed glutes and hamstrings from years and years of high intensity sprinting which is great for hitting those fast twitch muscle fibers and training in an explosive fashion. You will rarely ever see a good sprinter with a pancake ass!

As a bonus, many Bodybuilders, Powerlifters, Strongmen competitors, Crossfitters and even some Olympic lifters incorporate some form of bodyweight training in their programs because there is so much to be gained from Calisthenics. If you keep reading below then you will really start to understand why these athletes incorporate so much of this style of training into their programming.

What are some of the benefits of bodyweight training?

1. Reduced risk of injuries during workouts in many cases

While it is true that every exercise has a risk vs. reward factor, bodyweight training tends to be very safe compared to a lot of weightlifting exercises. Some of the reasons are:

- You can move more freely as opposed to being locked in a machine or under a barbell.
- It's a more natural range of motion.
- There isn't any load so you won't have to worry about spinal compression and other stressors (although if you round your lower back excessively during exercises like hanging leg raises then it could be problematic).
- No equipment will fall on you because you are the equipment. Of course, there are some exceptions like falling on your face during a handstand push-up but in most cases it is safe if you use good form and don't go till failure.

2. More muscle recruitment = more fat burned (but there are some exceptions)

I know what you are thinking, more muscle recruitment? Don't we already get enough recruitment from weights? Yes you do, but not always. If you compare a stiff arm cable pulldown to a front lever you will be working many more muscles and stabilizers with the Front Lever, that's a fact.

There is nothing wrong with stiff arm pulldowns but I am just trying to prove a point.

Bodyweight exercises activate your whole body in every lift, there is no isolation in bodyweight training. Every bodyweight exercise is like a full body movement. This leads to great muscle activation and over time it'll lead to amazing gains and core development which can help prevent lower back pain that most people get in the future.

With so many muscles being activated during an exercise, you can imagine how much fat is being burned. This is good for everybody because fat doesn't do much for you.

3. Anytime, anywhere and its free!

How many times per week would you do a military press? Maybe once or twice per week? With bodyweight training, a similar exercise to the military press would be a Handstand Push-up and you can do it anytime and anywhere. This isn't to say that military presses are bad because I use them myself but those people with no gym membership who are really pressed for time might be more interested in this style of training. If you can't make it to the gym and you wanted to do 1-arm dumbbell presses or Bulgarian split squats, you could use your bodyweight and do 1-arm pushups and pistol squats and believe me, these are tough exercises. Don't ever think that just because you don't have weights that you can't get a good workout in. Not to forget that it won't cost you any money and it will save you time from going to the gym and back. Nobody should ever have an excuse because your body is the weight, that's why they call it body-weight training.

4. Bodyweight exercises help you move better

Take a look at how stiff some bodybuilders and weightlifters are, some of them can't even touch their toes or scratch their own backs. Do you want to be like this? I hope not. Bodyweight exercises help you move more smoothly. You'll notice that with a lot of bodyweight exercises in your program you will start to feel:

- Less stiff**
- More flexible**
- Less joint pain**

5. Easier on the CNS (Central Nervous System) and less soreness (but there are exceptions)

The sorer you are, the harder it'll be to train and you want to come to the gym feeling fresh. Bodyweight training doesn't get you as sore than weight training in most cases. This means that you'll be able to train more frequently than with weights. This could lead to more progress and more work being done over time because we all know that frequency and volume are very important for making progress.

You can't make consistent progress if you never feel 100%. Not to say that anything is wrong with being sore, but you will have more work capacity in everyday life if you aren't always sore. Don't get me wrong, bodyweight training

will still get you sore – I did pull-ups, inverted rows, levers and other bodyweight moves last night and my lats and core are sore, but you won't get as sore as with the weights.

Aside from the soreness, the CNS is something else that should be looked at as well because a drained and tired CNS could lead to bad workouts and less overall productivity. Bodyweight training is very CNS-friendly in most cases. If you were to compare heavy Barbel Rows with a lat emphasis to Closegrip Ring Pull-Ups then chances are that the Pull-Ups won't have as much of an affect on your CNS than the Barbel Rows. Deadlifts can take a lot out of you and leave you sore for a few days and there is nothing wrong with that but most bodyweight exercises tend to be easier on the nervous system in most cases.

6. Less psyching up

Do you ever get scared to do a certain lift like a Squat, Deadlift or Military Press? Well I'm not telling you to avoid these exercises because you have to face your fears but with bodyweight training you don't need to psych yourself up like crazy so it's less intimating to do something challenging – you just do it without even thinking about it, this builds character while building confidence. Single arm chin-ups are an extremely hard exercise but you won't need as much psyching up when you approach the exercise because you can't physically see the weight because you are the weight.

7. Easier to psychologically push yourself

It's definitely easier to push yourself to the limits when doing bodyweight exercises because if the exercise is way too difficult then you could easily stop the set without having to worry about putting any weight down or anything. If you are doing a bench press then you have to worry about racking the weight while getting the weight back up safely. If you are doing a 1-arm pushup and you can't go up another inch, you can easily put your other hand on the floor and stop the set. It's a lot easier to stop the set during bodyweight exercises and this dramatically decreases the injury risks.

The trick is not to get too comfortable and still do variations that challenge you.

Bodyweight training isn't a vacation from the weights; it should be just as hard as if you are doing it properly.

8. Functional strength with internal resistance

There are rarely any days where we are on machines or pushing weight up our chest like in a bench press but there isn't a day that goes by where you don't move our body. Bodyweight training teaches you how to move better. It helps you get flexible, gives you coordination, stability, strength, mental focus and other interesting feats. I like to call it **RAW MOVEMENT**. If you have bad lifting mechanics and can't even move properly with your own body, then you are setting yourself up for an injury if you start lifting weights right away because your foundation will be off. Learn how to move properly with your own bodyweight before adding extra weight.

9. Easy to program and integrate from a coaching perspective

If you are a coach who just started your own gym then you could understand that equipment is very expensive. Squat racks, benches, barbells, dumbbells and other equipment of that nature could be pretty expensive and machines are even worse. Leg presses, lat pulldowns, cable rows and are also extremely expensive if you choose to have them in your gym.

From a coaching perspective you want to save some money but without compromising the training sessions of your athletes. One of the best ways to do this would be to incorporate various bodyweight exercises into their training so that they can reap some of the benefits of Calisthenics and you won't be go bankrupt. Buying some dipping and pull-up bars are pretty affordable for the majority of coaches and you can do countless exercises on them that will deliver amazing results.

10. Variety

Weight training is fun, but eventually it does get tiring, draining and it could even get boring to a certain degree. This doesn't seem to happen as much with bodyweight training, it teaches you to love your body and the way you move. It is a style of training that you have to experience for yourself. It builds chemistry with

yourself and it makes you feel good. It has definitely had a serious impact on my life.

11. Results

Bodyweight training has all of these benefits, but the question is; does it work for building muscle and strength? Yes it does. In recent articles Olympic gymnasts, Barstarz and other Calisthenics-influenced individuals showed the world that you can build a great body with limited equipment. These people have phenomenal bodies and will put most athletes to shame. The only thing that matters at the end of the day is results and bodyweight training will provide that as long as you keep progressing.

The fast twitch fibers are the fibers that have the most potential for growth so if you think that you will reach your genetic potential with calisthenics by doing 80 rep push-ups, you won't because that is cardio.

I see the same people on the internet doing the same exercises over and over again without making the exercises any harder, they just do more reps. This method may be good for cardio but it won't last long for muscle building unless if you have the best genetics in the world or you are on drugs. Although it may work a bit at first because newbies can pretty much make progress by doing anything.

If you really want to make progress with Calisthenics then you have to keep training those fast twitch muscle fibers with exercises that can only be done in the 3-12 rep range and as high as 25 on the lower body exercises.

BASIC BODYWEIGHT REQUIREMENTS

Bodyweight training stands out from all of the free weights and machines, it requires creativity and it builds character. Calisthenics teaches you to love your body and love the way you move. Honestly speaking, as a coach I have noticed that **people get so caught up with moving heavy weights that they have lost sight of moving their own bodyweight.** If you aren't able to do the following exercises

with flawless form then you have absolutely no business even touching a weight in the first place. No exceptions and no questions asked!

- Pull-Ups x 5**
- Dips x 5**
- Push-Ups x 20**
- Bodyweight Squats x 25**
- Inverted Row (45 degree angle) x 10**
- Hip Thrusts x 25**
- Plank for 1 minute**
- Side Plank for 1 minute**

This list is actually on the very generous side as well because these are very basic level 1 bodyweight training exercises. Although if you aren't able to perform the exercises above then do not be discouraged because we are all trying to get stronger. We are all trying to improve and even the strongest people in the world have things to work on.

There are thousands of bodyweight exercises to choose from and they can be progressed or regressed, but today I will narrow it down to under 20 of my favorite bodyweight exercises for strength and muscle. These are the most bang-for-your-buck exercises in my experience and are great for building muscle and strength. Every exercise will be explained in great detail.



PULL-UPS/CHIN-UPS



The Pull-Up/Chin-Up is by far the best bodyweight exercise of all time and arguably the best lat builder in existence. Pulling ourselves up has been something that we have been doing since the dawn of mankind. Climbing trees, mountains and cliffs has been something that humans needed to do in order to survive. This exercise works the lats, mid traps, biceps, forearms, core and grip strength tremendously. EMG studies also show that the long head of the triceps and the chest also get some activation during this exercise as well which means that it hits a serious amount of upper body muscles making it the king of upper body exercises in my books.

I chose the Ring Pull-Up because its a lot safer on the shoulders, elbows and wrists because your hands could move naturally as opposed to being locked onto a straight bar. This is significantly harder too, but if you want to do Pull-Ups in the long run then I suggest you do them on rings, TRX or suspension straps for the sake of your elbows, wrists and shoulders. Rings or suspension straps may cost around 5-50\$ and I am sure that there are ways to make them yourself or maybe your local park has some already, but you'll be saving a lot of money compared to the people who will be getting or already have tendonitis and have to get surgery.

Some people may not even get affected by doing pull-ups on a straight bar, but why take the risk? Don't get me wrong either, I still do Chin-Ups, Pull-Ups with various grips on the straight bar from time to time but I do more neutral grip and ring work.

If you have no intentions in buying rings then you should do them on neutral grip handles because they will be a lot safer than the straight bar. The neutral grip handle is basically the handle when your palms are facing each other and it is a lot more shoulder, elbow and wrist friendly as well. If you don't have neutral grip bars then you could take a D-handle for a Lat Pulldown machine and put it in on the Pull-Up bar.

If you have no access to rings, neutral grip handles or a d-handle then you can grab the bar with one hand supinated and the other hand pronated, this will kind of give you the neutral grip effect. This style of Pull-Ups is known as the commando pull-ups.

If you still experience wrist and elbow pain from Pull-Ups with the straight bar then give the thumbless grip a try, it will help alleviate some of the pain. If you want to do wide grip Pull-Ups then the safest way to do them would be to do wide grip neutral grip Pull-Up handles (some gyms and Pull-Up bars have this).

Also for another safety and variety issue, you want to switch the widths and grips that you use every now and then so you don't get overuse injuries, this tip will save your elbows and you will thank me in the long run. This will also allow you to hit your back from various angles so that you can also get overall development while preventing possible injuries and variety is the spice of life anyways. I personally never go more than 4 weeks with the same grip and my wrists, elbows and shoulders have never been injured in a long time.

Whether you are Bodybuilding, Powerlifting, doing Strongman, Gymnastics, Calisthenics or a sport of some sort, some Chin-Up/Pull-Up variation belongs in your program. There are just too many benefits to be sleeping on this exercise. Pull-Ups are especially good for sports that require a lot of pulling such as rock climbing, swimming, tug of war and sports of that nature.

A friend once told me that having a Pull-Up bar in his house was like a cheat-code to becoming bigger and stronger because of the convenience and effectiveness of the exercise and I agreed with him 100%. Millions of wide and strong backs around the world have been built solely on Pull-Ups so this exercise is definitely number one and a must have on the list. Still don't believe me?

Here are some reasons as to why the Pull-Up is the king of all upper body exercises worldwide in the bodyweight training kingdom:

1. The best lat builder in existence

The lats are the biggest muscle in the upper body if you didn't already know and they can dramatically change the way your upper body looks. People think that huge biceps and a big chest will stretch out a t-shirt and they might to a certain degree but no other upper body exercise will stretch out your shirt more than the good old Pull-Up. Every upper body muscle is involved to a certain degree when performing pull-ups. The lats go from your armpits all the way down to your waist and really give you the illusion of width. The V-taper is something that everybody wants so this exercise must be taken seriously and should be a staple. If your t-shirt is a size medium and you want to fit in an extra-large shirt then pull-ups will help you get there if you get strong enough on them.

2. One of the best bicep builders

Chin-Ups build big biceps and that's a fact. I haven't met somebody who was able to do very strict Chin-Ups for higher reps who didn't have good arms. If you are trying to get bigger biceps then these must be a staple. In the past I have met people who have never done a curl in their lives but built biceps from Chin-ups that would put some bodybuilders to shame.

3. Amazing forearm and grip developer

Hanging your whole bodyweight from a bar can be very difficult especially if you are overweight and the forearms have to work very hard to hold you up as well. If you want to make your grip work even harder then you can fatten the grip on the bar by using FatGripz or you can eventually work up to One-Arm Chin-Ups.

4. One of the best core exercises that you could do

Your first times doing Pull-Ups you might notice that your abs are sore the next day, this is because your abs are working hard to keep your body upright while you are pulling yourself up. If you are very serious about getting a strong core and putting more emphasis on your abs then try doing L-Sit Chin-Ups, they are brutal!

5. Convenience

At the end of this book I have provided a list of over 20 places to do Pull-Ups from various poles all the way to trees so you have no excuse. This is good because even if you train at a gym you can stick to your main movements but on another day you can dedicate everything to Pull-Ups at home where you try various grips and hit different areas of your back, it will be brutal.

6. The best exercise for testing upper body vertical pulling strength

Lat Pulldowns don't even come close to Pull-Ups when it comes to testing absolute vertical pulling power. The Pull-Ups calls way more muscles into play such as your core as well and they look more badass too.

7. Extremely humbling if you are overweight

If you weigh over 220lb then chances are that Pull-Ups will not be as easy for you as they are for the person weighing 140lb. This will be a very humbling exercise for you but don't discouraged if it is really hard for you at first because your body will eventually adapt and you will eventually get used to the movement.

8. Long head of the triceps activation

This may surprise you, but the Pull-Ups actually work the long head of the triceps which are basically what makes your arms look big and gives it the illusion of size. The Pull-up is by no means a tricep exercise but you may still experience some tricep soreness after Pull-Up sessions which means that it is still getting some work because it is still somewhat involved.

9. From a coaching standpoint it is very easy to program

Pull-Ups only require a bar or rings so it is a great way for the coach to save a bit of money while the clients/athletes get phenomenal results. Its a win/win situation with happiness all over. If you are a coach you can also do fun competitions where you make two people hang from the pull-up bar at once and you tell them to go up

and down and the person who lets go of the bar first loses. Competition is healthy and it increases testosterone so make sure that you get your athletes to compete against each other.

Kind of off topic, but tug of war is also a great game because it serves as a horizontal row which complements the vertical pulling and is a form of manual resistance that breeds competitiveness.

10. Very fun exercise especially if you can do them weighted or with harder variations

I personally really enjoy doing Pull-Ups and find that they are one of the funnest and most brutal upper body exercises to do.

11. Could potentially help improve your Squat, Bench, Deadlift, Rows and Overhead pressing if you are into weightlifting.

Big and strong lats play a big role in improving your lifts and are important for providing a stable base. Not to mention that if you are serious about deadlifting heavy weights then you need strong lats because they help keep the bar close to your body.

12. Could easily be progressed or regressed for anybody

No matter who you are, there is a Pull-Up variation out there for you unless if you have a legitimate excuse or injury that doesn't allow you to do them. Pull-ups are too easy? Try single arm L-Sit Ring Chin-Ups for 10 reps. Pull-Ups are too hard? You can attach a band to a pull-up bar and loop it through your body so that you will have assistance for pulling yourself up and the stronger you get, the lighter you make the band and eventually you will be doing them without a band.

13. It has been a primal movement pattern for hundreds and thousands of years.

Humans did a lot more climbing back then than we do today. It seems like many humans have lost the ability to climb and pull themselves up, we have become weak.

Use the Pull-Up to your advantage at get your primal strength back!

Let alone pulling, who would have thought that after hundreds of years that some humans wouldn't even be able to hang from a bar or a tree?

The society we live in is made up make us weak and I can almost guarantee you that in a couple of hundred years that standing up is going to be very rare. This is due to the fact that humans are seated all day in their cars, in front of their computers and T.V.'s. Technology does everything for us so it makes sense but we will eventually suffer in due time

14. Easy to track your Pull-Up progress

Exercises like Pull-Ups are very straightforward and it is easy to track your progress. Remember that it is hard to keep track of your progress when you have too many exercises so for now on you will track your vertical pulling power progress with Pull-ups, simple.

15. Low risk and high benefits if you use gymnastic rings or neutral grip handles

If you use the straight bar to do Pull-Ups then you will eventually start to experience pain in your elbows and then your shoulders but if you play it safe and use gymnastic rings or neutral grip handles then the benefits definitely outweigh the risks.

16. Countless grips and variations to choose from to help you avoid overuse injuries and build the lats optimally.

There are so many different variations to choose from, I personally like:

-V-BAR PULL-UP SIDE TO SIDE

This variation is elbow and wrist friendly because it's a neutral grip and its great for the lats. I actually feel this version more than the straight bar variation. The way the exercise works is you'll put your head over on the left side on one rep followed by the right side on the second rep. To do this, you will need a VBAR, luckily many gyms have them. If you don't have access to a gym and you only have a pull-up bar then you can do them commando style and alternate your head from the left to right side on every repetition.

-RING PULL-UPS

These are great and probably even more joint friendly than the variation above, but it's also significantly harder because the stabilizers have to work harder. I like this variation because your hands can move freely as opposed to the straight bar.

-SHOULDER WIDTH NEUTRAL GRIP PULL-UPS

These work great for the lats and hit the biceps pretty hard as well. Nothing fancy with this variation, but it could deliver great results nonetheless.

-CLOSE-GRIP NEUTRAL GRIP PULL-UP

Very similar to the first variation that I mentioned, but this time you aren't going from side to side, the range of motion on this feels longer and the stretch I get in my lats when I do this variation is insane. I'm currently incorporating this variation in my program and it's sparking some new growth. This is the variation that I actually use the most in my training and I also get an amazing pump with this variation when I do it for higher repetitions.

-FATGRIP PULL-UPS

In all of my years of lifting, I have yet to find an exercise that humbles me as much as the FatGrip Pull-up. You think that you have good grip strength? Try these and watch a 15 rep max turn into 4 or 5 reps. I remember when I used fatgrips for my pull-ups in the summer of 2013 and then I went back to the regular grip it felt super easy and I had gotten a lot stronger. This may have been to the fact that the weakest link in my pull-ups was my grip strength but once I strengthened my grip I became a stronger puller.

17. Pull-Ups aren't extremely hard to recover from and they are easier on the CNS than Deadlifts and Barbell Rows

Pull-Ups are a great way to add volume and frequency to your program without frying your CNS.

18. They are easy on the lower back

I used to think that the best exercises for your back had to stress your lower back to a great degree (Deadlifts, Bent Over Barbell Rows, T-Bar Rows...etc) but then I added Pull-Ups in the mix which helped me get more frequency and volume without hurting the recovery of my lower back.

19. Pull-Ups look badass.

There is no denying the fact that pulling your own bodyweight up and down countless of times looks really badass.

20. Pull-Ups keep your body honest

The beautiful part about bodyweight training is that it's a detector of where you are at in your training. With all of these machines in the gym and even with free weights such as barbells and dumbbell's, we get so convinced that we are getting stronger and stronger. This may be true to a certain extent, but check this out:

If these were some of your stats in September 2010

- *Deadlifts: 135lb x 5*
- *1Arm Dumbbell Rows: 50lb x 8*
- *Pull-ups: 10*

And these are some of your stats in 2011:

- *Deadlifts: 225lb x 5*
- *1Arm Dumbbell Row: 85x8*
- *Pull-ups: 4*

Notice how the Pull-ups went down? If all of your weighted exercises are going up in weight, but your bodyweight exercises are going down then chances are that you are just getting FAT. You just have more weight to bounce off of you and less range of motion. The same thing applies if you could bench press more weight but you can't do as many dips as you used to do.

21. Improved posture if done properly

Deadlifts and Rows might be some of the best exercises for helping you improve your posture, but strong lats are also important for standing upright which is exactly what the Pull-Ups train if you do them properly. You could also

22. Results

They work. I have never met anybody who had a Pull-Up bar in their house who didn't have a decent back and I have never met somebody who was very good at Pull-Ups who didn't have a super wide back.

Pull-Ups for Beginners

If you are a beginner or if you just can't do a Pull-Up then it could get very frustrating. Luckily I am here to help you out, I'm not going to tell you that it's going to be easy but I can give you 3 exercises to help you get your first Pull-Up.

Its true that Pull-Ups are the king of upper body exercises but they can also be hard for people who are overweight or have weak upper bodies. Since the Pull-Up is a staple in my Calisthenics program it is very important that you are able to do them! Don't be discouraged if you can't do one because everybody has to start somewhere.

GETTING YOUR FIRST PULL-UP

1. Band Chin-Ups. These will help you do pull-ups for higher reps even if you can't do one. As you get stronger, you will use a lighter and lighter band. Eventually you will be stronger and you won't need the band anymore.

2. Chin-up Isometric Holds: These are great for improving your weak points of the chin-up. Isometrics could build strength too. Try to hold yourself up at the top for 10-30 seconds for starters. If you notice that you are weak at the top of the Chin-up then you could try doing isometric holds at the top to help you work on that portion of the lift that you have trouble with.

3. Inverted row A.K.A. Fatman Pull-up: The final exercise for helping you get your first pull-up is the inverted row which is also known as the fatman pull-up. These have a great carryover to your pull-up strength. If you do them with your elbows tucked you work more of the lats and mid back. If you do it with the elbow flared out to the side then you are targeting the upper back.

Get strong on these 3 lifts, give it some time, be patient and you will get your first Pull-Up.

The other big problem with Pull-ups is that you may be able to be doing them with a full range of motion but most people don't engage their lats in the movement and pull way too much with their biceps. The biceps are involved to a great degree but

the primary focus of the Pull-Up/Chin-up should be to focus on working out your lats which are the biggest muscles in the upper body.

One of the reasons why most people don't feel Pull-Ups/Chin-Ups in their backs is because you can't see your back muscles like you can see your chest so it takes a lot of visualization and what lifters like to call the "Mind muscle connection". I compiled a list of 30 tips that can help you learn how to feel your lats properly during Pull-Ups below.

30 TIPS TO HELP YOU FEEL YOUR LATS DURING PULL-UPS

1. Practice it in some way everyday! Either do research or do a set in a bathroom stall. If you want to get good at something then you can't do it once per week. Now I'm not telling you to do 100 reps per day, but you want to improve in a way that you don't hurt yourself. Once you understand the exercise and feel it in the right places then you could lower the volume and frequency, but when you're trying to learn a technique then it's good to do it often.

2. Keep your chest up the whole time, you won't feel as much tension in the back when your chest is caved in. Keep the chest up from start to finish. People always say you have to arch your back to feel your back working but a good cue is to keep your chest up and proud because that helps the back arch even more.

3. Lead with the elbows, the biceps shouldn't take over and your hands are nothing more than hooks. Grab the bar and pretend that they don't exist and that the way you have to initiate the movement is simply by pushing the elbows backwards, it works!

4. Concentrate and think about the muscle you are working the entire time (which is most likely the lats). This will put more emphasis on the muscle, don't think about anything else while you are doing the set. When you are trying to master the mind-muscle connection, concentration is key!

5. Stop standing so straight, it's ok for your legs to be a bit in front of you so you are pulling at a bit of an angle. You basically want to lean back just a slight bit and start pulling, this might help you get a better contraction. Most bodybuilders apply

this principle to the lat-pulldown but it also applies for the pull-up as well. Chris Jones from POG refers this as the "Gangsta Lean".

6. Stop training until failure. Many experienced lifters will tell you that going to failure on pull-ups could become counterproductive, it's one of those exercises where you want to leave one or two reps in the tank. Surprisingly, it's also one of the keys to being strong on pull-ups. If you go to failure then you will notice that your numbers will drop significantly.

7. Squeeze the lats at the top of each rep, this will help bring more blood into the muscle and also improve your mind-muscle connection.

8. Stop doing deadhangs and locking out your elbows, for elbow health it isn't a smart approach. Keep your elbows 99% locked, never 100% locked.

9. Stretch your lats after every set of pull-ups and for one minute at the end of the workout. This tip alone helps drive more blood into that area and helped improve my mind muscle connection. More blood in the muscle might also contribute to a better pump which is important for helping you learn the mind muscle connection. Many bodybuilders with very wide backs do this for 10-20 seconds between sets as well.

10. Focus on proper breathing when doing pull-ups, this will allow you to keep a solid core and it'll make it easier to maintain a more stable torso.

11. Keep your glutes squeezed throughout the entire set, this will help prevent excessive anterior pelvic tilt and will help you keep your body more stable.

12. Keep your core tight throughout the entire exercise, this will also prevent excessive anterior pelvic tilt and help you keep your body solid as well.

13. If you have an **anterior pelvic tilt** which is a hyperlordosis in your lower back then do a **posterior pelvic tilt** before starting the exercise and maintain it throughout the exercise.

14. Get a full lat stretch at the bottom of the movement while keeping your elbows soft and not completely locked. The key to pull-ups is to get a good

stretch in the lats during the eccentric component of the movement. People love to focus on the concentric part of the movement but the eccentric and the stretch is equally as important, some bodybuilders consider it to be even more important, the argument is debatable. One thing is for sure, they are both extremely important for pull-ups!

15. Get your chin above the bar, not everybody might be able to do this, but you want to try to avoid half reps.

16. DON'T SHRUG. No matter what you do, do not shrug. Shrugging during pull-ups is the ultimate sin and will result in crappy lat development! This will take a lot of the tension off of the target muscles and chances are that if you are shrugging then you are trying to cheat your way up. When you are at the bottom of the pull-up your shoulders shouldn't be touching your ears either.

17. Instead, keep your shoulders as far away from your ears as possible. This is a good trick to help you avoid constant shrugging and it's a cue that will help you do initiate the movement properly.

18. Keep your chin tucked. Many people can't get their chins over the bar so they hyperextend they're necks. This isn't good and will lead to forward head posture. Understand that your body follows your head, so keep your chin tucked. Keeping your chin tucked could also strengthen could also work some of the muscles in the front of your neck such as the sternocleidomastoid to a certain degree if you do it properly. A head in the right place could make a difference in your posture.

19. Keep your shoulders in your back pocket (Depressed).

20. The concentric part of the lift isn't everything, you still need to **pay attention to the negative and the pause at the top**. The pause at the top is very important for the contraction and the negative part of the lift is important for the stretch in the lats. The bodybuilders always repeat the same thing which is "stretch and squeeze". The lats stretch at the bottom and squeeze at the top. I am not a big fan of doing touch-and-go repetitions and you shouldn't be either.

Do yourself a favor and just do the exercise properly, eliminate the stretch reflex and stop bouncing from the bottom, the lats love getting a good stretch.

21. Get a coach to critique your form. You could show him/her face to face or you could take a video of yourself doing it, the point is that you have to get feedback from an experienced coach who knows to perform and coach pull-ups properly. He/she might be able to spot out tiny details and flaws in your technique that you didn't notice such as range of motion and other things of that nature.

22. It wouldn't hurt to lose some weight too. If you weigh 250lb then chances are that you will struggle more on pull-ups than someone who weighs 160lb. I actually saw somebody at the gym not long ago who was over 300lb, he attempted to do a pull-up and couldn't even do a dead hang for more than 2 seconds, go figure.

On the flipside, once you have a solid mind-muscle connection with your lats during pull-ups then being heavy could serve as an advantage to you because its like your wearing a weightvest so you will get a lot out of each pull-up.

23. Practice your mind-muscle connection with different grips. Try ring pull-ups, closegrip neutral grp pullups, shoulder width pull-ups and other variations. You want to learn how to feel your back in a variety of ways, one variation and grip isn't enough!

24. If you are really having a **hard time feeling your lats** when doing pull-ups, **try pre-exhausting your lats with 3sets of cable/band straight arm lat pullovers for high reps and then proceed to doing pull-ups.** The pump you will get is ridiculous and your mind-muscle connection will most likely be a bit better too.

25. Have somebody poke your lats while you are doing your pull-ups. This might help you feel your lats a little more.

26. Perform pull-ups first in the workout while your energy is high and you are still fresh.

27. Try band assisted pull-ups. These will help you do higher reps with assistance and might improve your mind-muscle connection because you'll be able to focus

on driving with the elbows.

28. Try isometric holds to blast your weak points. These are also a good option if you don't have access to a band. Let's say that you can pull yourself up but have trouble pausing at the top then you could try incorporating isometric holds at the top for time to increase your strength in that position. If you want to master the pull-up then you have to be strong in all parts of the lift.

29. Install a pull-up bar at your house (preferably with a variety of grips). I have yet to meet somebody who has a pull-up bar at they're house who doesn't have nice lats and good form on pull-ups. This will allow you to be able to practice them more frequently as opposed to once a week in the gym on a back day. I recently ordered a pull-up bar with neutral grip handles and it's good to have around.

30. Use thicker handles for improving your grip strength. If you don't have access to fatter pull-up handles then you could invest in a pair of FatGripz which will dramatically improve your pull-up grip. Grip strength is an underrated factor that comes into play when doing pull-ups, you are only as strong as your weakest link.

Bonus tip: Patience. Don't try to rush it, it takes time to learn certain things and you might not get it right away, but don't get frustrated. Hopefully these tips will help you because they have made a huge difference for me.

PARRALLEL BAR OR RING DIPS



If the Pull-Up is the king of all upper body exercises then the Dip is definitely the queen.

If you want triceps that resemble a horseshoe and a fully developed chest with cannonball front deltoids then you should try dips. I personally prefer ring Dips because they feel more natural and a more shoulder friendly because your hands can move freely around the pain and discomfort but its also significantly more difficult. Some people can't do dips because it gives their shoulders a lot of problems, for years I was getting injured with Dips and then I stopped doing them. I then found out about ring Dips and I felt zero pain in my shoulders.

If you Dip with an upright posture it will hit the triceps a lot. If you lean forward it will target more of the chest muscles. This exercise has been a staple in Bodybuilding, Powerlifting, Gymnastic and Calisthenics programs for decades on

end and its not going anywhere anytime soon. It's also very simple and could be done almost anywhere. If you want to do Dips safely then I would recommend that you invest in a pair of rings. Sometimes the parallel bars feel too far, sometimes they feel too close, but with the rings you can adjust them just the way that you want and work around the pain. You might not even need to use a weight vest or a dip belt for these because they require a lot of stabilization so you get more with less weight which is pretty much one of the goals in Calisthenics.

If you are a beginner and you cannot do dips then I would recommend that you get very good at Push-ups with your hands outside of shoulder width (for strength in the chest) and diamond Push-ups to strengthen your triceps. Once you are doing over 20+ reps on each of those then you can try out Dips. If Dips are still hard after that then just try them without rings on parallel bars and do quarter reps and as you get stronger try to go a little lower. I must warn you that I would never recommend that you go too low on dips unless if you want to seriously injure your shoulders. I personally like to go no lower than when my elbows and shoulders are parallel to the floor (some of you may not even be able to go that low). If you are looking for an advanced version of this exercise you can try an L-Sit Ring Dip where your legs hold the L position while you dip or you could try archer dips.

Dips are definitely a staple but even with the tips above you still might feel some shoulder pain, in that case let me help you out.



TIPS FOR LESS SHOULDER PAIN DURING DIPS

1. Don't add weight until you are able to do atleast 15-20 picture perfect reps.
2. Don't go under 5 reps on dips. For the most part, it isn't a power movement and doing so will only give you cranky joints. I like sticking in the 6-12 range in most cases.
3. Don't flare your elbows and do Dips extremely wide. You may feel it more in the chest but this is will cause havoc on the shoulders so it isn't worth it.
4. Control the eccentric, don't drop down to save energy to move back up. If you are dropping down then chances are that you are going too heavy. Slow and controlled reps work best for dips. They don't have to be too slow, but just smooth reps.

5. Don't go too low, for the most part, parallel is fine and some of you might not even be able to go that low.
6. Learn the difference between contracting the triceps at the top and squeezing your elbow. You want to feel the dip in the proper muscles, not the joints.
7. Use rings as often as possible for Dips. These allow you to move freely and you don't need to use that much weight for them to be challenging. Its always good to get more out of less weight whenever you can.
8. For extra resistance you can try using bands on your neck or just do harder variations with rings, archer variations, pauses and things of that nature. The bands will take off the pressure at the bottom (where your shoulders are vulnerable or might cause you pain) and add resistance to the lockout to strengthen your triceps. Stronger triceps and less shoulder pain will give you more happiness all around. Chains could work too if you hang them low and they touch the floor at the bottom of the movement
9. Never sacrifice technique for weight, reps or harder variations.
10. Try doing Dips in the middle or end of your workout. This will force you to drop a lot of the weight because you will feel pre-exhausted so you could get more out of less weight.
11. Squeeze your core and glutes for extra stabilization. A lot of people do Dips and rock all around which throw's their form off. You want to feel stable throughout the movement to increase the safety of the exercise and also hit your core more effectively.
12. Stop using momentum, kipping and using other muscles to complete the lift. Use the proper muscles to do the exercise, if you can't do that then chances are that you are going too heavy.
13. Stop Shrugging. This will just put the weight in other areas that we are not trying to target.

14. Be very mindful of your head position. Forward head posture looks terrible and many people who do dips perform them with a forward head posture. Try to keep your chin a bit tucked to avoid this.
15. Always stretch your pecs and triceps after dip workouts. If you don't stretch then the tight muscles will catch up to you and hurt you, you have been warned.
16. Don't do Dips more than 3 times per week. If you have sensitive shoulders and elbows then limit them to once and maximum twice per week. If you really want to do them more then slowly work up to it after a few months but don't start doing dips with a super high frequency if you are a newbie.
17. Never do Dips two consecutive days in a row. This is pointless. A better approach would be to do them on a Monday and maybe on a Thursday if you want. This rule is especially true if you have tricky shoulders and elbows.
18. Make sure that you are balancing Dips with a lot of Rows and Curls. Rows and curls will contribute to shoulder and elbow health. I always say that one can never get enough rows into his/her program, they are just that effective. As far as curls go, I like hammer curls a lot for keeping my elbows healthy (hammer curls can be done with your bodyweight too).
19. If you want to be extra safe, superset dips with a row or curl. This will bring bloodflow to the elbow joint so your elbows will be less vulnerable for injuries.
20. Don't do bench dips. Bench dips are the Voldemort of all bodyweight exercises and you should never even mention or talk about them. These are the exercise that destroyed my shoulders in the first place, not to mention many other peoples shoulders. If you can't do parallel bar dips then there are many other alternatives.
21. Stop thinking that elbow or shoulder sleeves will protect your shoulders from bad dip form because they won't.
22. Slowly get the triceps to stretch on the way down, then use them to go back up. Keeping tension on the tricep is good for preventing injuries. Make sure you are feeling your dips in the right places.

23. Have a few days per week where you stretch, foam roll, do soft tissue work..etc This will keep you healthy in the long run, trust me. I used to never do it and then it caught up to me. For the past year I have been doing a lot of stretching and soft tissue work on fridays and saturdays for about 45 minutes each time and I feel great. That doesn't mean that you will need 45 minutes each time, but you definitely have to find some time for that kind of work. I also like to use the lacrosse ball on my pecs, shoulders, triceps and do things of that nature to keep me healthy.

24. Get elbow and shoulder massages as often as possible. If you can't afford it then atleast try to do it once per year at the minimum. Massages can go a long way. If you want, you could also learn how to give yourself massages and just give your elbows and shoulders massages throughout the day when you are on the train or something.

25. If you are injury prone, make Dips a volume exercise where you do a total amount of reps per week. An example of this would be to do 50 reps of dips per week or something of that nature. You want to be able to do them in a way that helps you get stronger, while recovering properly while simultaneously sparring the joints.

26. Avoid too many straight bar exercises. This could stress out your elbows when it comes time to do dips. So try to sub in Barbel bench press with Dumbell Presses every now and then.

27. Remember to de-load. If Dips give you problems, but you still want to do them. Try doing them for 3 weeks and then replacing them with something like Push-ups on the 4th week.

28. If you just started doing Dips then don't rush into high volume or frequency too soon. Your connective tissue simply isn't ready and you have to slowly work up to it.

29. You don't have to include Dips in all of your programs, it's ok to take a break from certain exercises. Stop marrying yourself to certain lifts.

30. Try using fatter handles whenever you have the chance when performing Dips. Fatter handles in my experience are easier on the elbow than skinny pencil handles are. There also isn't anything that skinny in real life that we squeeze so hard either.

PUSH-UPS



It doesn't get any more old school than the good old pushup. The Push-up is one of the most shoulder friendly exercises you can do for your shoulders because the scapula can move freely and it is also one of the oldest exercises in existence. Yes it true that the Dip lets the scapula move freely as well but the push-up usually feels easier on the shoulders for most people. The less pain you feel when training the easier it is push yourself and make progress. If you want to build muscle and get stronger.

The combination of Push-ups and Dips have built big strong chests and triceps all over the world, there is a reason why these exercises are still relevant today, they made it past the test of time. Push-ups are already a very shoulder friendly exercise but the use of the rings makes the exercise even more shoulder friendly but it also increases the difficulty of the exercise as well. As a bonus, Push-Ups on the floor

can aggravate peoples wrists but when you are using the rings you are able to keep your wrists more neutral which will make it easier to push yourself without wrist discomfort.



Don't do 50 rep push-ups unless if you're doing cardio or a burn out set. You need pushup variations that challenge you in the 3-15 rep range. The more advance variations that I like are:

-1Arm Pushups

-Suspension Strap/TRX/Ring Pushups

-Behind the back clap pushups

-Diamond pushups (Feet on bench)

-Planche Pushup (If you're more advanced)

-Archer Pushup on Suspension straps

-Chest slap Pushups

-Alligator Pushups

There are many other reasons why push-ups are still and will always be one of the best chest exercises in existence, here are 20 reasons:

1. One of the best chest exercises for mass, strength, power, and explosiveness (depending on how you load and program it).
2. Great for overloading the front delts, big shoulders look cool and push-ups are known to give you big front delts.
3. Amazing triceps exercise, the close grip version is great too and won't give you elbow pain like most triceps extension exercises.
4. Push-ups are a closed chain exercise which means that your scapula can move freely which is essential for shoulder health, you don't get that with the bench press.
5. They work muscles around the scapula and the serratus muscles which is never a good thing because these muscle typically get ignored and people are too lazy to train them.
6. Push-ups work your core very effectively; it's like planking except your arms are moving.
7. Your lower back, glutes and hips have to work hard isometrically to help maintain proper alignment throughout the set. This is important because the push-up teaches you how to brace your core and stay tight, which is what you should be doing in every exercise.
8. Performing push-ups with your chin tucked can help teach proper head positioning during exercises such as deadlifts, chin-ups, shrugs and other lifts. This can also improve the forward head posture that many people suffer from. I can't stress this one enough because most people perform push-ups with neck extension. So doing the push-up this way can work certain muscles in the front part of your neck as well.

9. For people who have anterior pelvic tilt, it's a great exercise to help you correct it because it teaches you to squeeze your glutes and core as hard as possible while moving up and down. It teaches body awareness and how to move your body as a unit, which activates more muscle fibers.

10. They are a great assistance exercise for the bench press, especially if you start doing weighted progressions. Push-ups with heavy bands can increase your bench press lockout as well.

11. Push-ups can easily be progressed or regressed from a beginner all the way to the most advanced lifters.

12. From a coaching perspective, it's easy to program it because there is minimal equipment required (you might only need a weight vest and some chains).

13. If isolation exercises like chest flies, pec deck and cable crossovers hurt your shoulders, a good alternative would be a push-up variation that is suited for your fitness level. I stopped doing isolation exercises for my chest because some exercises that isolate the chest place too much stress on the shoulders in the bottom position.

14. Hundreds of grips, hand placements and variations to choose from to suit your goals and fitness levels. If you want a variation that puts more emphasis on the shoulders then I highly recommend that you try the handstand push-up.

15. It serves as a good chest activation exercise. Can't feel your chest when you bench press? Try doing some push-ups before to get a little pump in your chest, this will help you feel your chest more when you bench press.

16. Easier to recover from than the bench press. The bench press is a good exercise, but we can't only bench press or else we'd probably get injured. With the push-up you are able to add extra frequency and volume without destroying our joints. Push-ups are not as hard on the CNS so that's one of the reasons why you can do them more frequently.

17. The learning curve is easier than exercises like the snatch or clean and jerk.

18. From an injury prevention perspective, it's very safe for the shoulders compared to some other exercises, and you get to reap all of the benefits.

19. You need minimal equipment. People with no gym memberships can easily load a backpack with books and do push-ups at home.

20. Very humbling. You would be surprised, but there are some people who can bench press 315lb for reps and aren't able to do 20 picture perfect push-ups. They may be strong, but maybe not in all of the right places.

With so many benefits, it's hard to go wrong with this exercise. I love weight training with a passion, but some people look at bodyweight exercises and laugh because they don't understand the benefits. There's a reason why push-ups have maintained popularity for so many years, and the same thing applies for the pull-ups; they work. Include these in your program, it doesn't matter if you put them in at the end or the beginning, **the important thing is that you keep setting personal records and keep beating your last performance.**



Never underestimate the power of the push-up.

Then of course there are push-ups with a weight vest, chains or bands but I wanted to label the ones that required minimal equipment. Remember that Calisthenics is

training and progressing without the use of external resistance. Weighted Pull-Ups and weighted Dips are a weight training exercise just like how squats with weight on your back is a weight training exercise. Not to mention the fact that if you are buying this program its probably because you have a lack of equipment or you just want to get really good at bodyweight movements for results.

One of the problems I have noticed with Push-ups is that some people can't seem to feel them in their chest no matter how hard they try. If this is you then I have 8 solid tips for you:

1. Squeeze chest for 1 second at the top

This will also help you get more bloodflow into the chest area and will help with your mind muscle connection.

2. Focus on pushing your hands inwards without actually doing it

The load goes wherever you want it to go, not where it just “happens to go”. To get the most out of your chest activation, try pushing your hands inwards without actually moving them just like in the picture below. This is obviously a lot easier to do with a barbell than with dumbbells.

3. It's ok to have a slight flare in your elbows

If you flare out your elbows too much like the bodybuilders then you might feel the chest a bit more but you also put your shoulders in a very compromised position. If you want to still feel your pecs while keeping your shoulders healthy then try to do them with a slight flare with your elbows to reap all of the benefits.

4. Closegrip puts more emphasis on the triceps and less on the chest

If you want to work your triceps very hard then closegrip push-ups and dips with an upright body position will do that, but they aren't the best if you want to work your chest directly so widen your grip a bit outside of shoulder width so that you can get some good chest activation with minimal shoulder pain.

5. Control the descent

Many people will only focus on the concentric part of the rep while dropping the weight down which is a stupid idea because that means that you are using too much

weight and lifting with your ego. Not only that, but if you don't control the eccentric on dips then you could get seriously injured. Try to lower yourself down (without your chest touching the ground to keep constant tension) for 1 second just to be safe.

6. Do more warm-up sets

More warm-up sets will not only help you avoid some injuries, but you will also get a better chance to feel your chest before your working sets as opposed to rushing the warm-ups and just starting with your working weight.

7. Leave your ego at the door

Don't get me wrong, there is nothing wrong with failing, but there is something wrong with going overboard and thinking that you are superman. Going extremely fast and using bad form will also put you in survival mode so you won't even be focusing on your chest, this is what we want to avoid.

8. Do a slight pause at the bottom of every rep

I saved the best tip for last, **do a slight pause at the bottom without touching the floor with your chest.** Doing Push-ups with touch and go reps isn't necessarily wrong but it doesn't really maximize the chest involvement. When you do a slight pause and eliminate the stretch reflex you forcing the chest to work at the bottom to push you back up. The chest works at the bottom of the movement while the triceps work during the lockout.

When going for size you should always do a slight pause on push-ups, dips and any other chest exercises. This doesn't have to be a crazy pause either, just enough to eliminate the stretch reflex.

This tip doesn't only apply for chest training but anything else, you don't want to rely on momentum to do the work. Follow the harder path and reap all of the benefits in rewards.

Bonus tips: Remember to always stretch your pecs after you train them
There are many pectoral stretches out there, but the important thing is that you

stretch your pecs after you workout and a few stretches on off days could be beneficial in preventing some injuries down the road.

HILL SPRINTS



Hill sprints are like the king of lower body exercises in the Calisthenics world, the same way that squats are the king of lower body exercises in the world of weights.

Please tell me what the legs were designed to do? Run. What do you notice when you take a look at a sprinter? They have strong, fast, muscular, powerful and defined lower bodies. They may not look like Kai Greene or Jay Cutlers legs, but who cares? Unless if you have serious issues with your body, you should be running. It has many benefits, but the big reasons why are that they increase your testosterone levels (which slowly goes down as you get older) and they burn fat while building muscle in the posterior chain. You just cant go wrong with certain things.

Now there are many rumors out there that if you are skinny then sprints will “burn your muscles away”, this can't be any further from the truth. On the flipside it depends on how much you are running. If you do 1 or 2 sprinting sessions per week

that last 20-30 minutes then you wont lose size or strength, in fact you will gain some. If you were running 4 hour marathons a few days per week then I would be a bit worried.

Sprinting is a primal movement that humans have been doing since the dawn of mankind thousands of years ago when humans had to hunt and survive. Humans had to run a lot in order to stay alive from other humans or wild animals. Primal strength is very important to consider when training because you can never go wrong with the basics. Whenever you move your entire body at once you activate many muscle fibers as opposed to being in place and isolating. Sprints are a posterior chain dominant exercise, which means that they hit the hamstrings, glutes and lower back, they even hit the quads, core and calves to a great degree as well.

Why else are hill sprints effective for strength and muscle? They hit the fast twitch muscle fibers which have the greatest potential for growth. Hill sprints are actually safer than sprints on a flat surface because you can't go as fast and it forces you to shorten your strides as well (which also makes it more humbling).

Think of the hill sprint as the ring pullup and the flat sprint as the pullup on the straight bar. They are harder, but easier on the joints, especially the knees. I used to be “anti-sprinter” for a long time, but then I noticed that I was a loser because I was trying to avoid running. Sprints are probably one of the best things that you can do for healthy lungs as well. I am personally not a big fan of doing sprints for more than 30-45 seconds at a time (in one set of course). When doing sprints I like to keep the sets short, explosive and very intense.

There are more reasons as to why you should be doing hill sprints, but all you need to know is that they have to be done. Once or twice per week Before you sprint you want to make sure that you get a proper warm-up and that you aren't just going to the hill and sprinting at full speed right away. Just like how Deadlifting and Squatting with 100% of your load can be dangerous, the same thing applies to sprinting. I personally wouldn't recommend going 100% all out on sprints until you are more advanced and have more experience with sprints and more full body awareness or else the risks are simply too high. Sprinting can be very technical as well so don't think that just because you could sprint fast that you are automatically doing it correctly. It is a full body movement and believe it or

not, the arms are heavily involved in helping you generate force. If you just run as fast as you can without focusing on your form you can seriously injure yourself like I have done in the past. I was racing somebody on a hill and I didn't want to lose and I ended up pulling my groin muscle which was very painful and it took me a good 6 months for it to get back to normal. Go hard but do it smart and safely.

Before your sprinting workout you should do some dynamic warm-ups that consist of stuff like hip swings, over-unders, light jogs up the hill...etc

To get stronger and put on more muscle it is important that you keep progressing, how do you do this with the hill sprint? There are many ways to make hill sprints more challenging, here are 5 options:

- Find a steeper hill (this is my favorite option)**
- Try backpedal sprints up a hill (sprinting backwards is hard)**
- Weightvest hill sprints (this is an advanced variation for advanced trainees, if you have very questionable knees then this might not be an option)**
- Lateral hill sprints**
- Try to beat your time from last session.**

BODYWEIGHT ROWS



This exercise is basically a horizontal Pull-Up or a Reverse Push-Up and it is highly underrated. The photo above is the first progression, but as you get stronger you basically push your feet more forward. This exercise hits the middle and upper back depending on where you place your hands. For more mid back and lat work you want to keep your elbows tucked to your sides and for more upper back development you want to flare your elbows out the sides.

To make it harder, try putting your feet on a bench while making your chest touch whatever you are holding on every rep. There are many variations that you could use to make this a great mid back, bicep, forearm, grip and core exercise.

I like to progress onto:

-Single-Arm Inverted Row (Feet on bench)

-FatGrip Inverted Row

-3-Second Pause Inverted Row

-Archer Inverted Rows

-Front Lever Tucked Row

The big benefit of this exercise is that it doesn't stress the lower back like most rowing exercises, if you do this at the end of a workout it will also be very difficult. If the pull-up is the king of bodyweight exercises then why doesn't this exercise get the love it deserves?

HANDSTAND PUSH-UP



Handstand pushups are my favorite bodyweight shoulder exercise. I used to think that the only way to build big strong shoulders was by doing heavy shoulder presses and I was dead wrong. I prefer to do these on neutral grip pushup handles because I feel like I get wrist pain sometimes. Neutral grip handles put your hands in a safer position and your grip is also working as well so your killing two birds with one stone. If you don't have access to push-ups handles then its not the end of the world, just stretch your wrists after every workout so you don't accumulate too much joint stress. These work some of the opposite muscles that a pull-up do and build **HUGE** shoulders.

Coincidentally, it's an exercise that barely anybody could do. This exercise hits the shoulders, traps, triceps (they push your whole body), forearms (they support your whole body) and the core to a great extent.

Vertical pressing exercises target the traps more than horizontal presses do so don't be surprised if your traps are sore the day after handstand push-ups. Many people say that this is an easy exercise, but those are usually the people who do 20 reps with their elbows flared out to the fullest while doing quarter reps, that won't do anything for results!

Try keeping your shoulders tucked in (don't flare them out) and try to make your head skin the floor on every rep, now tell me if they are easy. The advanced variations that I like to progress on are:

-1-5 Second Pause Handstand Push-Ups

-Diamond Handstand Push-ups

-Closegrip Handstand Push-ups (on push-up handles)

-Freestanding Handstand Push-up (without wall assistance)

-Archer Handstand Push-Ups

-Increased ROM Elevated HSPU

Arnold used to do countless handstand pushups and he said that they contributed to his shoulder development and strength.

The only problem with handstand push-ups is that they don't do a really good job at hitting those rear delts but its ok because the next exercise will cover that.

REVERSE RING REAR DELT FLY



The rear delts are very small muscles in the back of your shoulders but are incredibly important for back aesthetics, shoulder health and your V-taper. Most people don't do any direct rear delt or upper back work and have huge front delts but small rear delts, I want what most people don't have, don't you?

Since we didn't really discuss any direct rear delt exercises, its only right that I show you one. Some people say that the problem with bodyweight training is that you can't hit the upper back effectively but this exercise does an amazing job at targeting these muscles and the contraction you will get from it is amazing. I like to lift with a very controlled tempo on these so I can feel the upper back working properly, this is by no means an ego exercise.

The trick with this exercise is to try and pull with your rear delts and not your biceps (keep your elbows slightly bent). The taller you stand on these, the easier it'll be, the more you put your feet in front of you while keeping your whole body straight, the more challenging it'll be.

With all of the handstand pushups and other pushup variations you will have some very developed front and side delts but the upper back and rear delts still need some form of fly motion for overall development. You will need strong rear delts and traps to stay you injury free and have healthier shoulders. These are also great for improving your posture as well which is very important for structural integrity.

Reverse ring flies could be suitable for beginners to advanced lifters. If you are really advanced and want a challenge, try to do this exercise with your back facing the floor while pulling with your rear delts and not your biceps. It's a humbling exercise if you follow the progressions.

PLANK



The Plank is one of the most classic and popular ab exercises out there that have really stood the test of time. This is an isometric lift which means that there is no concentric or eccentric component and there are countless variations to choose from all the way from beginner to advanced. In other words, you could do them on various implements (ex: elbows on an unstable surface), you could add weight on your back or you could even use one leg or arm at a time which adds more of a balance and oblique component to the exercise.

Last but not least, I like planks a lot as opposed to lifts like windshield wipers because the learning curve is easy and you can be a novice and get the form down very fast so its just a safer option for all of those trainers out there looking to

prescribe core lifts to clients who take longer to grasp certain exercises because the fact that there is no movement involved helps make it easier to understand as well.

SIDE PLANK



We discussed a few ab and core exercises, but the side plank targets the obliques which are essential for preventing lower back pain that we all get at some point in our lives. The obliques also help stabilize the lats and spine even more thus making it feel more stable as well.

Don't waste your time on the ab machines at the gym, bodyweight gymnastic type moves are the best for developing rock hard abs and obliques, gymnasts are quite aware of this and they have some of the strongest cores in the world! Side planks also recruit other muscles and work on your mental toughness because you have to hold the position for time, not to mention that obliques are important for improving your posture as well.

If you could go over 2 minutes then I would progress to a harder variation. Once this gets easy, try putting your feet on a bench. When the bench gets easy, simply loop your 2 feet through rings and you body will have to work twice as hard to

keep you stable. If this feels too easy then eventually you can throw on a weight vest. There are dozens of options for progressions.

Oblique work may sound a bit boring but you need and you should be doing some atleast once or twice per week.

FRONT & LATERAL LUNGES



Lunging variations are staples in the bodyweight world and are a solid way to train your lower body hard in a unilateral fashion.

Many athletes use them, but they are still a highly underrated exercise and they get a lot of hate because some experts say that they are bad for your knees. The truth is that many people don't get anything out of these because they go too heavy on them and their form looks terrible!

Unilateral exercises are great for correcting imbalances and they also stretch the hips which is known as strength stretching. You get to kill two birds with one stone with this lift. These are good to do for higher reps (10-20per leg). I like to put a pad on the ground and my rear leg for stationary lunges so that's a little pro tip for some of you with sensitive knees.

Key Tips:

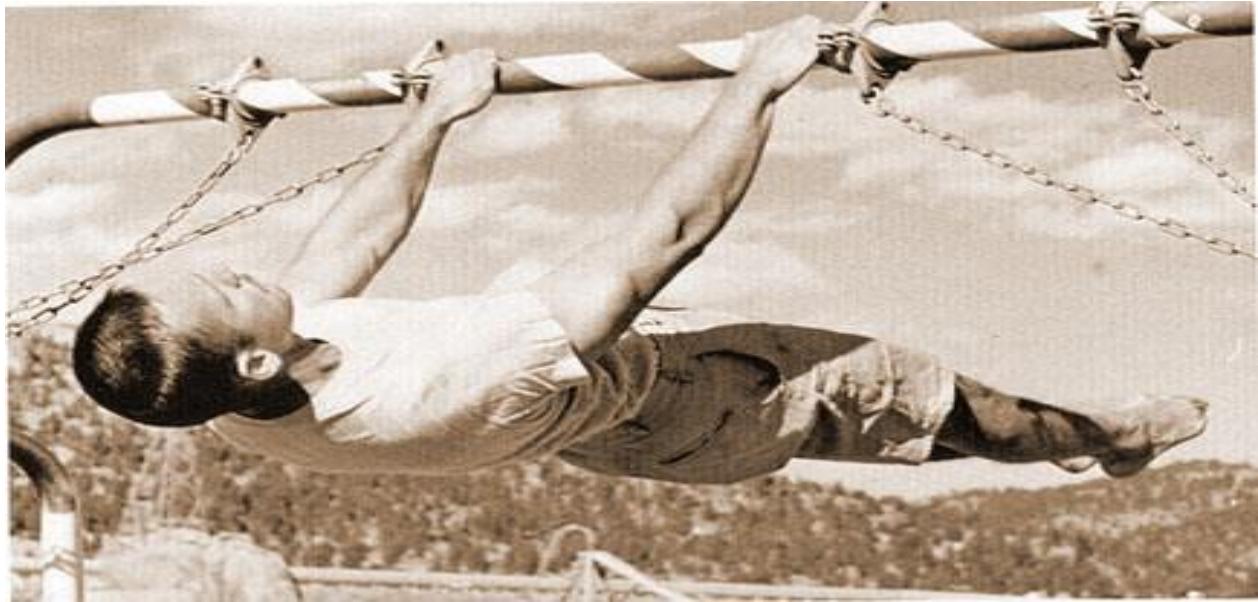
- Make sure you that you keep the weight of your front foot on your heel; this will help protect your knee.**
- Don't go too fast**
- Stay upright and don't hunch**
- Keep your balance**
- Higher reps work best (10+ each leg)**

Getting good at lunges is a good step for those who want to be able to do pistol squats too. It takes patience, but with enough smart training, you will get there.

The closer that you put your front foot to your body, the more you will target the quads. The further that you put your front foot from your body, the more that you will target more glutes and hamstrings. I like to do longer strides because it feels more comfortable for my knees and my hamstrings get a better stretch. I also like to do these in the middle or near the end of the workout. So be careful because these can aggravate the knees if your form gets sloppy, try higher reps without any weight just to get the feel of the exercise and then add weight or do harder variations once it gets too easy.

Many woman looking for stronger and nicer legs and better looking glutes need to get familiar with this exercise in a hurry!

FRONT LEVER



The Front Lever in my opinion is one of the most underrated bodyweight exercises. It is also one of the most badass looking bodyweight exercises that you can do on the pull-up bar or rings. The front lever is an isometric exercise done with your bodyweight where you are hanging off of a bar or rings with your arms straight while your body is parallel to the floor. This exercise can be modified to different variations where you are going from a deadhang to a front lever as well. This exercise can be progressed or regressed for anybody. It is kind of like the bodyweight version of a lat pullover.

The benefits of the front lever are:

- One of the best core exercise in existence.**
- One of the best lat exercises you can do.**
- Good lat activation exercise (for people who have trouble feeling their lats working during pullups or rows).**
- Good triceps exercise that works the long head isometrically without stressing the elbows too much.**
- The biceps, forearms and obliques also get some work as well.**

-Improves your Deadlifts, rows and pull-ups.

-You don't need a lot of equipment to do this exercise.

-Looks pretty badass.

Jason Ferruggia from the Renegade club likes this exercise as well and he even said that the front lever could change the way your lats look in as little as 6 weeks. Juice and Lord Vital from Beastmode also do them which makes the front lever an awesome exercise in my books. Lets face it, most people are too lazy to do ab work (such as myself) but if ab work helped you get bigger lats and triceps then suddenly ab work doesn't seem so boring anymore. Not to forget that it was one of Franco's favorite lat exercises along with pullups and rows. The beauty in this exercise lies in the simplicity of it, if you have a pull-up bar at home then you are good to go. Try out this exercise and let me know what you think, I promise you won't be disappointed.

As far as the progressions go, once you are comfortable with the tucked front lever then you could try doing front levers for reps where you start with your body straight and vertical to the floor and go up (with your whole body straight) until your body is parallel to the floor. This exercise is advanced but if you get good at it then the results could be great.

L-SIT



This is another exercise that is a staple in the gymnastics and Calisthenics circles. L-sits are an isometric exercise just like the plank and side plank are. This exercise mostly works the core and it takes a lot of strength to hold such a simple position. The arms and legs are actually working very hard as well in an isometric fashion. I like this exercise because it teaches your body to stay stiff which is the way it should be when you exercise, you would jump into a pushup will loose hips and abs would you?

The beautiful thing about bodyweight training is how humbling it is, I have yet to see somebody who could hold the L-sit position for a full minute. If you find that this exercise is too easy and you want a challenge then you could try incorporating L-sits into other exercises. Ex: L-sit Pull-ups/Chin-ups or L-sit Dips are great options.

High Step Up/High Lateral Step Up

The high step up is a phenomenal exercise for building up the quads and glute's. The high step up is one of the lost single leg exercises that many people don't talk about today and it is highly underrated but I am a big advocate of high step ups because of the strength gain, size aspect and all of the unilateral benefits as well. It is also one of the most knee friendly exercises in my opinion and if you suffer from

a lot of knee pain such as myself then you still might be able to do these absolutely pain free. This means that you can still use this exercise as one of your lower body tools to get great results with or without weights.

If it is such a good exercise then why do so many people do them and then stop? The reason why is because many people who perform high step ups in local gyms actually go way too heavy with bad form and get nothing out of them.

Let me explain, when you are doing step ups you are working one limb at a time because it is a unilateral exercise. You have one foot on a box/bench and one foot on the floor. You are supposed to use the leg on the box to drive yourself up without the help of the leg on the floor. The leg on the floor is basically only there for extra stability and more balance. Anyways, most people use the foot that is on the floor to help out the other leg by pushing on their toes which is basically cheating. We want to completely eliminate the cheating and work each limb properly.

A trick to work one limb at a time in an optimal fashion would be to focus on one leg at a time and when your back foot touches the floor you simply press off your heel instead of your toes so that there is no way to possibly cheat! Using your back foot's toes to push on the floor is very easy but watch how hard the exercise will be when you can only push off your heel. It will be very humbling but this is good. Whenever you do an exercise properly it may be humbling at first but the results will be worth it because you will be getting a lot more out of the movement.

Another thing is that your back foot shouldn't be on the floor for longer than 2 seconds, it shouldn't be a touch and go either but just enough to cut out the momentum and stretch reflex and then you go back up, your quads will be burning after a few reps if done properly.

I like to progress this exercise by simply making the step up box a little higher and once that gets easy then focus on higher reps. Note: The higher the box, the more the glutes are working. If you are using a very high box then trust me you won't even need to hold heavy dumbbells or have a barbel on your back because it will be extremely humbling especially if you use the 2 tips above.

Of course, you don't want to put the box up so high that you end up hurting yourself either. I also like to Lateral Step Ups because they hit the sides of the lower body in a different way than the other variation does. Most people train in the sagittal plane which is front and back while neglecting the side to side movements. Fitworldexposed encourages balanced programs so these are important and they are incorporated in the programs below.

PISTOL SQUATS



Lets get to the lower body; the pistol squat is a phenomenal exercise for developing the quads, hamstrings, glutes, hips and calves. Pistols are a unique exercise that also work on:

-Strength

-Flexibility

-Mobility

-Balance

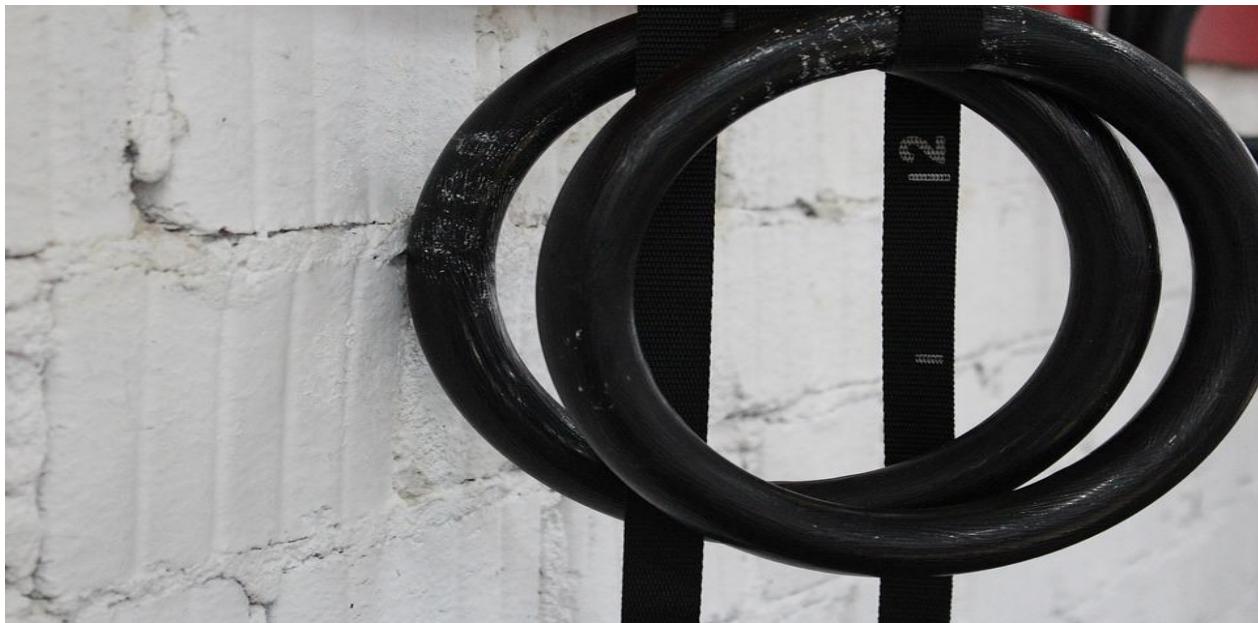
-Coordination

-Focus/Concentration

Many people can squat 400lb+, but can't even do 1 pistol squat, what does that tell you? They might be strong, but maybe not in all of the right places. Everybody needs strength, but don't neglect the other traits listed above. I personally like to do 20 rep sets on these. If you don't have the flexibility then try standing on a block. These can be EXTREMELY hard on your knees if you work into them too fast, try to ease into these for a few weeks or months and then you could try doing it from the floor but if you already have very questionable knees then I would skip this exercise altogether.

If pistols hurt your knees then you could still get great results with hill sprints, step up variations and Bulgarian Split Squats. Although if you want to still do pistol squats with less knee discomfort then you can pistol squat onto a higher box in order to shift more of the emphasis onto the hamstrings and glutes.

RING CHEST FLY



The Ring Chest Fly is like the dumbbell fly but with the use of your own bodyweight on rings or a TRX. The thing with chest training that most people don't understand is that push-up variations and dips may be enough for your chest development if you have good chest genetics but for most people you will have to

add in some sort of fly because the function of the pecs is to draw your arms across the midline of the body and this is exactly what the fly does.

The combination of various pressing and dip variations with flies is a good recipe for very developed pectorals. This is one of the best chest exercises but some people may experience some shoulder pain from this one even when they use good form, if that is you then you could just stick with presses.

Once this exercise gets easy then you could put your legs up on a bench or you can start experiencing with 1-5 second pause repetitions at the bottom of the movement (your chest will burn like hell).

TRX HAMSTRING CURL



Strong hamstrings are essential for athletic performance and preventing injuries, I love TRX hamstring curls because they can be done from beginner to advance with your bodyweight, they are very humbling. Its good to incorporate a lot of squats and lunges in your programs, but remember that knee flexion and hip extension are the functions of the hamstrings so you still have to train those functions because all of the squatting variations in the world will never be enough.

If you're a beginner then you could keep your glutes on the floor with this lift, but as you get more advanced you could have your glutes off the floor and then eventually you could be doing paused high reps with one leg at a time with the opposite leg close to your stomach and not on the floor: hamstring death.

BODYWEIGHT TRICEP EXTENSION



Since I haven't mentioned any exercises to hit the triceps directly I thought I would throw one in. The bodyweight tricep extension is a great exercise for isolating your triceps. I got the idea of this exercise with Hannibal for King and his triceps are one of his best bodyparts and he does this exercise in many of his videos. He did the exercise on the straight bar which can be problematic for those who have questionable wrists and elbows but a more elbow-friendly variation that is also significantly harder is the ring variation.

Why would you want to isolate your triceps you ask?

All of the pressing exercises that I listed above (Push-up and Dip variations) are all great for building the triceps, but if you really want to maximize tricep development then you should do some direct work for them (just like how you should add in a fly for optimal chest development).

Push-Up and Dipping variations are great but they call a lot of other muscles into play so you can't strictly focus on the triceps. When you are a beginner I wouldn't recommend any direct tricep work because they will grow just fine through pushing variations but after you get a bit more advanced then it might be beneficial to add in some extensions if you really want those horseshoes to grow.

Extensions have a pretty bad reputation and they can destroy your elbows if you aren't careful but one way to make all extensions a lot more elbow friendly would be by doing them on rings because your elbows can move more naturally and work around the pain.

The more upright you are standing the easier it will be. If you get to the point to where your body is parallel to the floor then you will be humbled. This may isolate the triceps but it also hits the core very well so be sure to brace up. Too easy? Try doing it with one arm at a time and eventually work your way up to higher reps. You can also try doing them with an underhand grip for a bigger tricep stretch if you want to try out new things in the longrun.

For overall safety and injury prevention purposes I would also recommend that you change your hand placement on ring extensions every now and then to prevent overuse injuries.

One month you can do them with a supinated grip and the next month you can try a neutral or pronated grip. If these hurt your elbows no matter how you do them then just drop them because it won't be worth it. In that case you can just stick to upright Dip and closegrip Push-up variations based on your levels of strength.

BODYWEIGHT BICEP CURL



The ring Bicep Curl is pretty much the same principle as the ring tricep extension except its for the biceps. When you first start training your biceps will get a great growth stimulus from chin-ups but as you get deeper and deeper into the game you might need to add in some curling variations for optimal bicep growth.

Once you get to the point where you can do these with your back parallel to the floor with ease then try doing them with one arm at a time for more of a challenge, most people can't do it for paused high reps (20+) so don't laugh at this movement!

SINGLE LEG CALF RAISE (preferably on a step)



The exercises that I have mentioned above for the lower body are all great, but none of them really hit the calves optimally that well in my opinion and we don't want to walk around with skinny calves so its important that we incorporate some calf work. More importantly, calf training is good for preventing unwanted ankle injuries so make sure that you are isolating those lower legs unilaterally for the best results!

Single leg calf raises on a box seem to get the job done just fine. The problem with calf raises on the floor is that the range of motion is too small and the stretch you get in your calves with the floor variation sucks compared to the one on an elevated platform. You obviously want to make sure that the box or platform is stable and you can even hold onto something if you want to strictly work on your calves without having to compromise and train your balance.

Something that is very important to know is that if you are doing exercises where you have to really balance yourself and you are putting a lot of your energy into that then the exercise automatically becomes less effective for hypertrophy purposes.

In my experience, calves also respond well to high, smooth and controlled repetitions. I also can't overemphasize enough how important it is for you to get a good stretch at the bottom of calf work, it is paramount!

Just to keep everything in proper balance, you also want to make sure that you do some shin raises so that you don't develop any ankle pain (which is what some people who only do calf work tend to experience).

BONUS

THICK HANDLE ATTACHMENTS FOR BARS OR TRX

Since I didn't really mention any way for you to get bigger forearms and a stronger grip I thought it would be nice to end the list on a good note. If you want bigger forearms and a stronger grip then you need to get familiar with thick handle

training. Training with handles that are anywhere from 2-3 inches will force you to hold on to the bar or rings very hard and your grip strength will improve.

Many parks have swingsets with very thick handles and they can be great because the handles over swingsets are usually made very thick. If you don't have access to any thick handles then you could purchase some FatGripz which will make any handle fatter, they are very convenient and durable.

My favorite exercises to include Fat Gripz on would be:

-TRX Pull-Ups

-TRX Inverted Rows

-TRX Dips

-TRX Push-ups

-TRX Chest Fly's

-TRX Rear Delt Fly's

-TRX Tricep Extensions

-TRX Ring Curls

-TRX L-Sits

It is a lot easier to put FatGripz on TRX handles than it is to put FatGripz on gymnastic rings so if you own a TRX then it could help a lot. Of course, you don't have to use the FatGripz on all of these exercises if you don't want to.

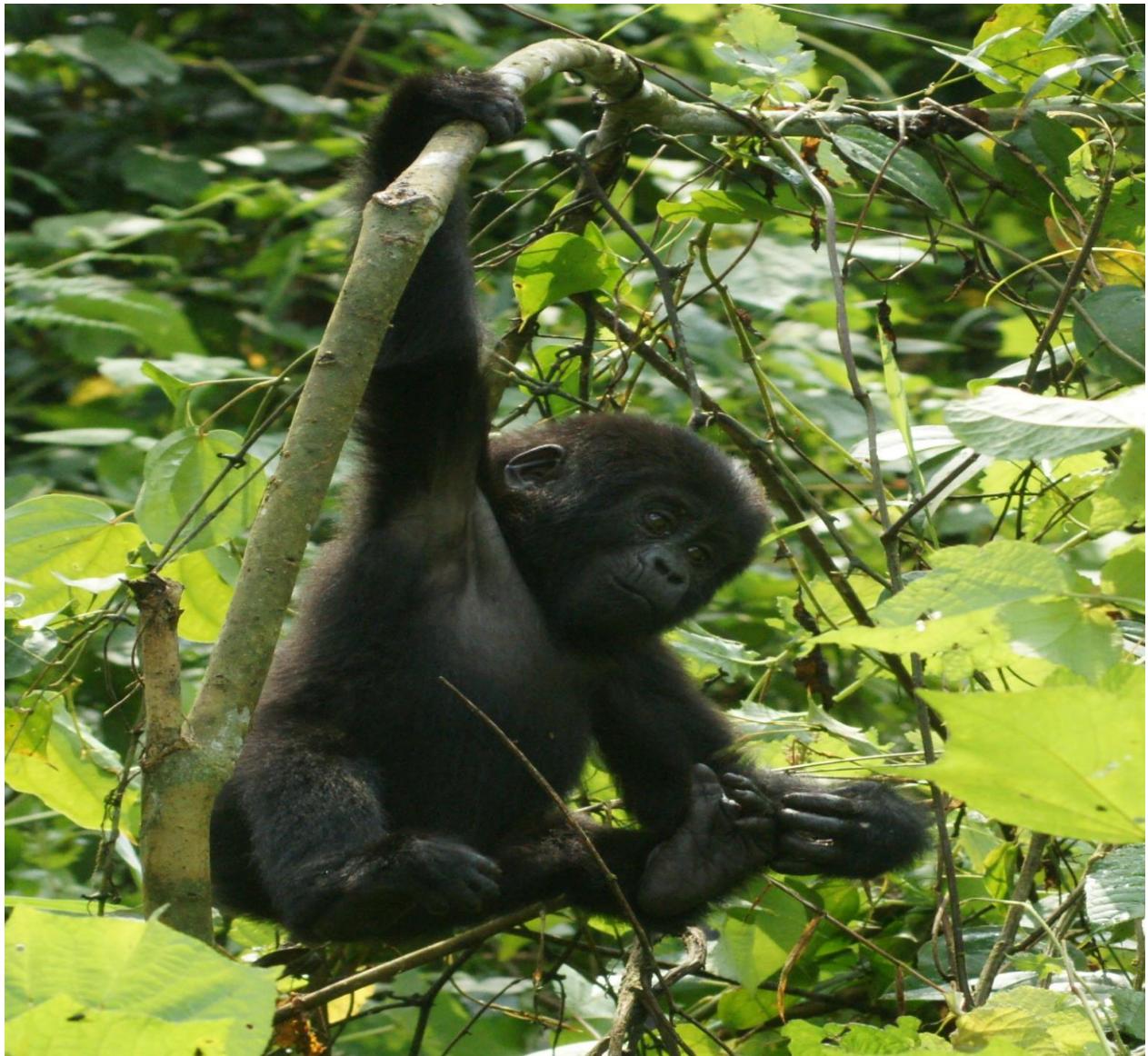
It really all depends on your goals and if forearm size and grip strength is really a priority for you or not.

CONCLUSION

So there you have it, my top 25-bodyweight exercises with some bonus tips. With the power of bodyweight training you have no excuses to not be strong. The world

is your gym. Nowadays there is a rumor out there that you have to belong to a big fancy gym with barbells and machines to be strong, it might be true to a certain extent, but there are many ways to get strong. Even if you don't have rings and Fat Gripz, you could still manage and get by, but they are good investments if you are serious.

Remember that if you are a beginner then you must learn how to move and control your own bodyweight before you start moving external objects. Even when you are advanced you still want to include bodyweight exercises to keep your joints healthy for the long run.



THE PROGRAM

RULES:

-THE REST PERIODS FOR EXERCISES BETWEEN EACH SET OF LEVEL 1-4 ARE ALWAYS ONE MINUTE TO MAKE LIFTS HARDER WHILE IMPROVING YOUR WORK CAPACITY.

-EACH WORKOUT SHOULD BEGIN WITH SOME FOAM ROLLING/LACROSSE BALL WORK (FOR SOFT TISSUE HEALTH AND PREPARATION), JUMP ROPE (TO PREPARE THE WHOLE BODY AND GET SOME BLOODFLOW), DYNAMIC WARM-UP WORK (LEG SWINGS, ARM SWINGS..ETC), ACTIVATION DRILLS SUCH AS GLUTE BRIDGES FOR GLUTE ACTIVATION AND BAND WORK SUCH AS TERMINAL KNEE EXTENSIONS, BAND PULL-APARTS, BAND DISLOCATIONS AND MONSTER LATERAL WALKS.

-EACH EXERCISE MUST BE EXECUTED WITH SOLID AND FLAWLESS FORM. IF YOU TRAIN WITH YOUR EGO THEN YOU WON'T SURVIVE THE NEXT LEVELS AND YOU WILL ONLY BE CHEATING YOURSELF AND YOU WILL GET INJURED WHILE GETTING WEAKER BECAUSE YOU WON'T BE PRACTICING/INGRAINING THE RIGHT TECHNIQUE. YOUR ECCENTRICS DON'T HAVE TO BE SLOW, BUT THEY SHOULDN'T BE SUPER FAST EITHER, CONTROL THE MOVEMENT AND DON'T LET IT CONTROL YOU.

-YOU MUST STAY AT A LEVEL FOR A MINIMUM OF 4 WEEKS AND THEN ONCE YOU FEEL LIKE YOU ARE READY FOR THE NEXT LEVEL THEN YOU CAN MOVE ON.

-YOU CAN'T SKIP ANY DAYS IF YOU WANT OPTIMAL RESULTS.

-IF YOU DON'T HAVE ACCESS TO A HILL OR IF IT IS RAINING ON YOUR CONDITIONING DAY THEN YOU COULD USE THE JUMP ROPE AS YOUR CONDITIONING, BUT A HILL FOR SPRINTING WILL GIVE YOU OPTIMAL RESULTS FOR CONDITIONING AND LOWER BODY MUSCLE (ESPECIALLY IF ITS A STEEP HILL). YOU COULD ALSO DO SPRINTS ON

A FLAT GRASS SURFACE BUT UNDERSTAND THAT THE INJURY RISKS DO GO UP SIGNIFICANTLY SO IT CAN BE A BIT RISKY FOR MY LIKING.

-FOR SPRINT DAYS, JUST MAKE SURE THAT YOU GET A TOTAL OF 5-15 MINUTES OF SPRINTING TIME. YOU SHOULD WARM-UP PROPERLY AND TAKE ONE MINUTE BREAKS BETWEEN SPRINT INTERVALS.

-AS FAR AS THE EQUIPMENT IS CONCERNED, YOU WILL NEED GYMNASTIC RINGS/TRX/SUSPENSION STRAPS, DIP BAR, PULL-UP BAR AND A BLOCK. THE BLOCK WILL BE USED FOR EXERCISES LIKE STEP UPS AND BULGARIAN SPLIT SQUATS. IF YOU CAN'T AFFORD THIS EQUIPMENT THEN YOU CAN EASILY GO TO A PARK CLOSE TO WHERE YOU LIVE AND IT WILL MOST LIKELY HAVE WHAT YOU NEED. GENERALLY SPEAKING, MOST PARKS HAVE PULL-UP AND DIP BARS WITH DIFFERENT HANDLES AND HAND PLACEMENTS TO CHOOSE FROM. ONCE THE EXERCISES GET MORE ADVANCED THEN YOU CAN SIMPLY BRING YOUR RINGS OR TRX TO THE PARK, SIMPLE.

*Note: Over 90% of the exercises in the programs were explained above in the previous chapters, but there still may be some exercises here and there that were not mentioned, but nonetheless many of them are self-explanatory, but you can search them up if you don't understand as well.

LEVEL 1

EXERCISES PER BODYPART

MID & UPPER BACK: RING INVERTED ROWS, TRX REVERSE FLIES

LATS: CHIN-UPS

CHEST: PUSH-UPS

ABS: PLANK, SIDE PLANK

SHOULDERS: PIKE PUSH-UP, HANDSTAND HOLD

**LOWER BODY: BULGARIAN SPLIT SQUAT, HAMSTRING PLANK,
LOW STEP UP, LOW LATERAL STEP UP, HIP THRUST**

TRICEPS: PARTIAL RANGE DIP/ISOMETRIC HOLD/BAND ASSISTED

BICEPS: RING BICEP CURLS

CONDITIONING: HILL SPRINTS

MON: PUSH/QUAD DOM/ABS:

TUES: PULL/HIP DOM/OBLIQUES

HILL SPRINTS

THURS: PUSH/QUAD DOM/ABS

FRI: PULL/HIP DOM/OBLIQUES

REST

REST

Monday: Push/Quad Dom/Abs

Handstand Hold w/wall assistance 3x 30sec-1min

Pike Push-Up 3x4-8

Elevated Push-up 3x5

Closegrip Diamond Pushup 3x8

Bulgarian Split Squat 3x15

Step Up (Box at mid shin) 3x15

Lateral Step Up (Box at mid shin) 3x15

Plank 3 sets of 1 minute

Tuesday: Pull/Hip Dom/Obliques

Chin Up 5x 3-6

Ring Inverted Row 5x 5-10

Ring Bicep Curl 3x10

Hip Thrust 3x12

Bulgarian Split Squat (Posterior Chain emphasis) 3x12

Side Plank 3x1minute

Wed: Sprints

Thursday: Push/Quad Dom/Abs

Handstand Hold w/wall assistance 3x 30sec-1min

Pike Push-Up 3x6

Elevated Push-up 3x6

Closegrip diamond pushup 3x6

Bulgarian split squat 3x15

Step Up (Box to mid shin) 3x15

Lateral Step Up (Box to mid shin) 3x15

Plank 3 sets of 1 minute

Friday:Pull/Hip Dom/Obliques

Chin-Up 5x5

Ring Inverted Row 5x8

Ring Bicep Curl 3x10

Bulgarian Split Squat (Posterior Chain emphasis) 5x12

Hip Thrust 5x12

Side Plank 3x1minute

LEVEL 2

EXERCISES PER BODYPART

MID & UPPER BACK: RING INVERTED ROWS FEET ELEVATED, TRX REAR DELT FLIES

LATS: PULL-UPS

CHEST: CHEST DIP, RING PUSHUPS

ABS: FEET ELEVATED PLANK, FEET ELEVATED SIDE PLANK

SHOULDERS: CLOSEGRIP PIKE PUSH-UP (PROGRESSION TO HANDSTAND), CLOSEGRIP HANDSTAND HOLD

LOWER BODY: BULGARIAN SPLIT SQUAT (FOOT IN TRX), TRX LEG CURL, KNEE HEIGHT STEP UP & KNEE HEIGHT LATERAL STEP UP, 1LEG HIP THRUST

TRICEPS: PARALLEL BAR DIPS

BICEPS: NEUTRAL GRIP RING BICEP CURLS

NECK: MANUAL NECK RESISTANCE

CALVES: SINGLE LEG CALF RAISES (ON A BLOCK OR STEP)

CONDITIONING: HILL SPRINTS

MON: PUSH/QUAD DOM/ABS

TUES: PULL/HIP DOM/OBLIQUES

SPRINTS + (NECK + CALVES)

THURS: PUSH/QUAD DOM/ABS

FRI:PULL/HIP DOM/OBLIQUES

REST

REST

Monday: Push/Quad Dom/Abs

Closegrip Handstand Hold 3 x 30sec-1min

Closegrip Pike Push-Up 5x5

Parallel Bar Dip (Chest emphasis) 3x10

Ring Push-ups 3x10

Elevated Closegrip Diamond Pushup 3x12

Bulgarian Split Squat (rear foot in TRX) 3x20

Step Up (Box knee height) 3x20

Lateral Step Up (Box knee height) 3x20

Elevated Plank 3 sets of 1 minute

Tuesday: Pull/Hip Dom/Obliques

Neutral Grip Pull-Up 5x10

Ring Elevated Inverted Row 5x10

Neutral Grip Ring Bicep Curls 3x10

TRX Hamstring Curl 4x10

Single Leg Hip Thrust 4x12

Elevated Side Plank 3x1minute

Wed: Sprints

Thursday: Push/Quad Dom/Abs

Closegrip Handstand Hold 3 x 30sec-1min
Closegrip Pike Push-Up 5x5
Parallel Bar Dip (Tricep emphasis) 3x10
Ring Push-ups 3x10
Elevated Closegrip Diamond pushup 3x10
Bulgarian split squat (Rear foot in TRX) 3x20
Step Up (Box at knee height) 3x20
Lateral Step Up (Box at knee height) 3x20
Elevated Plank 3x1minute

Friday:Pull/Hip Dom/Obliges

Neutral grip Pull-Ups 5x10
Ring Elevated Inverted Row 5x10
Neutral Grip Ring Bicep Curls 3x10
TRX Hamstring Curl 3x10
Single Leg Hip Thrust 3x12
Elevated Side Plank 3x1minute

LEVEL 3

EXERCISES PER BODYPART

**BACK: RING INVERTED ROWS FEET ELEVATED (ELBOWS FLARED),
TRX REAR DELT FLIES (BACK ALMOST PARALLEL TO THE FLOOR)**

LATS: RING PULL-UPS

**CHEST: RING CHEST DIP, ARCHER RING PUSH-UP, RING FLY
ELEVATED**

ABS: TUCK FRONT LEVER HOLD , SIDE PLANK (FEET ON RINGS)

SHOULDERS: HANDSTAND PUSH-UPS

LOWER BODY: SHRIMP SQUAT, STEP UP & LATERAL STEP UP (BOX

AT MID THIGH HEIGHT), SINGLE LEG TRX CURL, 1LEG HIP THRUST ON TRX

TRICEPS: RING TRICEP DIPS

BICEPS: TRX BICEP CURLS (BODY PARALLEL TO FLOOR)

NECK: MANUAL NECK RESISTANCE

CALVES: SINGLE LEG CALF RAISE ON BOX

CONDITIONING: HILL SPRINTS

MON: PUSH/QUAD DOM/OBLIQUES

TUES: PULL/HIP DOM/ABS

SPRINTS + (NECK+CALVES)

THURS: PUSH/QUAD DOM/OBLIQUES

FRI:PULL/HIP DOM/ABS

REST

REST

Monday: Push/Quad Dom/Obliques

Handstand Push-up 5x5

Ring Chest Dip 3x10

Archer Ring Push-Up (Feet Elevated) 3x10

Elevated Ring Chest Fly 3x8-15

Bulgarian Split Squat (Back foot in TRX) 4x20

Step Up (Box at mid thigh height) 4x20

Lateral Step Up (Box at mid thigh height) 4x20

Elevated Side Plank (Feet on TRX) 3 sets of 1 minute

Tuesday: Pull/Hip Dom/Abs

Ring Pull-up 5x10

Elevated Ring Inverted Row (Elbows flared upper back emphasis) 4x12

Rear Delt TRX Fly 4x12-15

TRX Bicep Curls (Parallel to ground) 3x10-15

TRX Hip Thrust 4x15

Single Leg TRX Hamstring Curl 4x15

Elevated Side Plank (Feet on Trx) 3x1minute

Wed: Sprints

Thursday: Push/Quad Dom/Obliques

Handstand Push-up 5x5

Ring Tricep Dip 3x10

1Leg Elevated Closegrip Diamond Pushup 3x10

Bulgarian Split Squat (Back foot in TRX) 4x20

Step Up (Box at mid thigh height) 4x20

Lateral Step Up (Box at mid thigh height) 4x20

Elevated Side Plank (Feet on TRX) 3 sets of 1 minute

Friday:Pull/Hip Dom/Obliques

Ring Chin-Up 4x10

Elevated Ring Inverted Row (Elbows flared upper back emphasis) 4x12

TRX Rear Delt Fly 4x12-15

TRX Bicep Curls (Parallel to ground) 3x10-15

TRX Hip Thrust 4x15

Single Leg TRX Hamstring Curl 4x15

Elevated Side Plank (Feet on Trx) 3x1minute

LEVEL 4

EXERCISES PER BODYPART

MID & UPPER BACK: RING INVERTED ARCHER ROWS FEET ELEVATED (ELBOWS FLARED), TRX REAR DELT FLIES (BACK COMPLETELY PARALLEL TO THE FLOOR)

LATS: RING ARCHER PULL-UPS

CHEST: RING CHEST ARCHER DIP, ELEVATED ARCHER RING PUSH-UP, RING FLY ELEVATED

ABS: FRONT LEVER HOLD, SIDE PLANK (FEET ELEVATED ON RINGS)

SHOULDERS: CLOSEGRIP HANDSTAND PUSH-UPS

LOWER BODY: SHRIMP JUMP SQUAT, STEP UP AND LATERAL STEP UP (BOX AT HIP HEIGHT), SINGLE LEG TRX CURL, 1LEG HIP THRUST ON TRX

TRICEPS: RING TRICEP ARCHER DIPS

BICEPS: TRX SINGLE ARM BICEP CURLS (PARALLEL TO GROUND)

NECK: MANUAL NECK RESISTANCE

CALVES: SINGLE LEG CALF RAISE ON BOX

CONDITIONING: HILL SPRINTS

MON: PUSH/QUAD DOM/OBLIQUES

TUES: PULL/HIP DOM/ABS

SPRINTS + (NECK+CALVES)

THURS: PUSH/QUAD DOM/OBLIQUES

FRI:PULL/HIP DOM/ABS

REST

REST

MON: PUSH/QUAD DOM/OBLIQUES

Closegrip Handstand Push-Up 5x5

Ring Chest Archer Dips 4x10

Foot elevated Ring Archer Push-ups 4x12

Foot Elevated Ring Chest Fly 4x15

Shrimp Jump Squat 5x20

High Lateral Step Up 4x25

Side Plank (Feet Elevated on Rings) 3x 90 seconds

TUES: PULL/HIP DOM/ABS

Archer Ring Pull-Ups 5x10

Ring Inverted Archer Rows with feet elevated (Elbows flared) 5x10

TRX Rear Delt Fly (Body parallel to floor) 4x12

Single Arm Bicep TRX Curl (Body parallel to floor) 3x12-15 (each arm)

Single Leg TRX Hamstring Curls 5x10 (each leg)

Single Leg TRX Hip Thrusts 5x10 (each leg)

Front Lever Wide Grip Overhand Hold 4x15-30 seconds

WED: SPRINTS + (NECK+CALF WORK)

THURS: PUSH/QUAD DOM/OBLIQUES

Closegrip Handstand Push-Up 3x5

Ring Tricep Archer Dips 4x10

Foot elevated Ring Archer Push-ups 4x12

Foot Elevated Ring Chest Fly 4x15

Shrimp Jump Squat 5x20

High Lateral Step Up 4x25

Side Plank (Feet Elevated on Rings) 3x 90 seconds

FRI: PULL/HIP DOM/ABS

Archer Ring Chin-Ups 5x10

Ring Inverted Archer Rows with feet elevated (Elbows flared) 5x10

TRX Rear Delt Fly (Body parallel to floor) 4x12

Single Arm Bicep Neutral Grip TRX Curl (Body parallel to floor) 3x12-15 (each arm)

Single Leg TRX Hamstring Curls 5x10 (each leg)

Single Leg TRX Hip Thrusts 5x10 (each leg)

Front Lever Close Grip Underhand Hold 4x15-30 seconds

BONUS:

PAST LEVEL 4...

Once you get to level 4 then what happens? Did you beat the game? Is it all over?

Hell no!

Once Phase 4 becomes easy for you then you are finally able to say that you are somewhat advanced in Calisthenics, not Cirque Du Soleil good but still good.

Of course there are other variations that you can use to make the exercises harder and if you know the next progression to the exercise and are knowledgeable on Calisthenics then you could actually create your own level 5 if you want.

For the others who want to keep progressing but don't know what to do past the stage 4 level then you have 3 options.

1. Find out and research more advanced variations to level 4 to create your own level 5. This is a great option if you are very serious on REALLY learning how to master your own bodyweight with minimal equipment and minimal expenses required. If you want to be able to do everything imaginable with your own bodyweight then I would go with this one. If you think that you have mastered the bodyweight world just because you have made it to level 4 then you have a lot in store for you. There are some extremely hard bodyweight exercises that I can't even do unless if I dedicate years and years to getting to those feats of strength. I haven't done these exercises but some good exercises and ideas for you to incorporate into level 5,6,7,8,9,10 and so on would be forms of these:

EXERCISE IDEA'S FOR LEVEL 5 AND BEYOND

MID & UPPER BACK: Single Arm Inverted FatGrip Ring Row (Feet elevated), Behind the Back Clap Inverted Rows, Rear Delt FatGrip Ring Fly (Feet elevated on bench)

LATS: Single Arm L-Sit Ring Chinups/Pull-ups with FatGripz, FatGrip Ring Muscle Ups, Behind the Back Clap Pull-up (on bar), FatGrip Sternum Ring Chinups, Ring Front Levers, Front Lever Pull-Up Combos

CHEST: L-Sit FatGrip Archer Ring Dip (Chest emphasis), One Arm Push-Up (on one foot elevated on high bench), Planche Push-ups, Triple Clap Push-Ups (feet elevated on bench), Single Arm Dips

ABS: Single Arm Front Levers, Dragon Flags, Human Flags, L-Sit On Rings with FatGripz, Windshield Wiper variations

SHOULDERS: Closegrip Handstand Push-Ups (without wall assistance), Clapping Handstand Push-Ups

LOWER BODY: Pistol Squats (advanced), Single Leg Glute Ham Raises, Back Levers

TRICEPS: Single Arm Dips, Single Arm Diamond Pushup (on one leg with foot elevated), L-Sit Archer FatGrip Ring Dip (Tricep emphasis), Triple Clap Diamond Push-ups, Double Clap Single Arm Closegrip Push-ups

BICEPS: FatGrip TRX Single Arm Bicep Curl (feet elevated high)(Supinated, Pronated or Neutral grip), Single Arm Front Lever Curl

FOREARMS: Use thicker FatGripz on all of the exercises listed above

FINGER STRENGTH: Ring Pull-Ups/Chin-Ups with 1,2,3 fingers, 3 Finger Push-Up variations

TRAPS: Upside Down Shrugs (On gymnastic rings)

NECK: Neck Bridge (Front, Back and Side Variations)(Only for the advanced)), Neck holds on a dip bar, Head Handstand Variations

CALVES: Single Leg Calf Raise Jumps (without upper body assistance)

CONDITIONING: Extremely Steep Hill Sprints, Sand Hill Sprints, Lateral or Backward Hill Sprints, Hand Walking, Advanced Crawling Variations (up a hill),

EXPLOSIVE: High Box Jumps (double and single legged) (on soft padded box)
As you can see the progressions can pretty much go on forever and you will pretty much be occupied for a lifetime! This is good because it means that there is always room for improvement.

The FatGripz are a great way to make all of the bodyweight exercises because of how hard it is to hold the rings/bar and how hard your grip has to work even harder. FatGripz should be incorporated after level 8 in my opinion.

The exercises listed above are not in one level in particular but I just mentioned some exercises that you will see past the level 4 stage if you choose to go that route.

2. Buy a weight vest when you find level 4 isn't challenging enough for you and go back to level 1, but with a 20lb weighted vest.



The best of both worlds: **WEIGHTED CALISTHENICS.**

This is how it goes, lets say you go back to phase 1 with a 20lb weightvest, you will do all of the exercises in phase 1 with the weightvest for a few weeks (or months) and when you are ready to advance then you will do phase 2 with your 20lb weightvest and then phase 3 and 4 with the 20lb weightvest. Then once you have completed phase 4 with a 20lb weightvest on all of your lifts then you will go back to phase 1 and do it all over again but with a 40lb weightvest until you get to phase 4.

This is a way for you to have unlimited progressions so that you can't complain and say stuff like "the program is too easy" or "weighted calisthenics is for sissies" because doing phase 4 with an 120lb weightvest for all of the lifts is extremely hard and it will take you years and years to get there but that's good because that means that you will basically have training goals for the rest of your life.

This is in my opinion the best option for those who are really trying build as much muscle as possible with Calisthenics. Technically it is bodyweight training with added resistance but hopefully you get my point.

I personally train with weights a lot, but I still incorporate a ton of weighted bodyweight exercises into my programming such as weighted dips, pull-ups, glute-

ham raises, back extensions, single leg calf work, neck work, abdominal exercises and stuff of that nature.

So the goal is basically to keep progressing and progressing until your weightvest has no more weight to hold. Some weightvests can go up to 80lb but I am sure that there are others that can go up to 150lb so you will be good for a lifetime, literally. For you super strong people who have maxed out their weightvests, you can try to put heavy chains on you in addition to the weight vest to add even more resistance or you can just buy a heavier weightvest. Another option would be to just buy a cheap dipping belt and strap weight on that way, the choice is yours but the important thing is that you get stronger.

There is no denying that if you got you can do neutral grip pull-ups, Dips, inverted rows and push-ups with an 120lb weightvest for 10 repetitions that your upper body will be close to its genetic potential. As for the lower body, if you could do Bulgarian Split Squats, Glute Ham Raises and Single Leg Hip Thrusts with an 120lb weightvest for 10 repetitions then you will have some huge legs too.

Don't think that these feats of strength are impossible either because a quick YouTube search will show you that it is possible, it just takes hard work.

3. Add Isometric holds at the hardest part of every repetition of your exercises.

This is probably the cheapest way to do it because you won't have to buy a weightvest and you won't have to invest time into customizing a new program but it is still a very effective method because it will get you a lot stronger while also adding more time under tension which will build some additional more muscle mass in the process because time under tension is one of the most important factors when it comes to muscle building.

A lot of the biggest bodybuilders out there (even the ones who aren't on drugs) tend to train in a way that their sets are anywhere from 15 seconds to a minute which is pretty long if you ask me, but it could still deliver great results nonetheless and it is an extremely humble way to train so be ready to be humbled.

The way it works is that once level 4 feels easy for you then you will go back to level 1 but you will add a 1 second isometric hold on every repetition where the exercise is the hardest.

On chin-ups you would hold the position at the top where you chin is above the bar for 1 second on each repetition. On Dips you would hold the bottom position for

one second where your elbows and shoulders are parallel to the floor for one second. On Single Leg Hip Thrusts you will hold the top position where your glutes are squeezing hard at the top for one second.

...etc

You obviously don't want to do one second pauses where the exercise is easy (ex: the top of a push-up or dip) because the whole goal of pause training is to make the exercise harder.

Once you have done level 4 with 1 second isometric contractions at the hardest part of the movement and feel like you are ready for the next level then go back to level 1 and do it all over again for a few weeks but with 2 second isometric holds at the hardest part of each repetition. The progressions never end and you will never need weight because you will just do longer isometric holds. Imagine if you were able to do 10 second isometric holds with ring pull-ups for 10 reps? Or Handstand Push-ups with 5 second Isometric holds at the bottom? That is super strong and it will be a very humbling experience!

FINAL NOTE FOR ADVANCED PROGRAMS

-All 3 options above are all great for building strength and muscle but it all depends on what kind of strength you want. If you want the strength to be able to do anything with your body then you should definitely go with number one and keep progressing to harder variations. This is the option that a true Calisthenic enthusiast would take. This option also teaches you to be more creative because you might be making up some exercises here and there or you can just go with some of the ones I wrote above.

-Number 2 is a great option for doing calisthenics with extra load which could serve as a good option for bodybuilding purposes. Technically it is not really considered "Calisthenics" training anymore, it is more like "bodyweight training with external resistance".

-Number 3 is another great way to build size and strength with the basics. This will build a lot of size because of the added time under tension which the bodybuilders preach to be important for mass.



COMMON CALISTHENICS QUESTIONS

What kind of body can I expect from Calisthenics?

As far as the body you can expect, I would say something like a gymnast but it depends on how you train, your diet and your genetics should also be taken into account. I generally say a gymnast because the gymnasts are known for their deep abdominal core strength and if you are doing exclusively bodyweight exercises then your core strength will go through the roof if you follow the right progressions. Also gymnasts don't have the biggest upper back, traps, legs and calisthenics doesn't really deliver those muscles that well, but that's just the kind of physique you'll attain from bodyweight training in most cases.

If I am doing an experiment where I am trying to see how much muscle I could build without ever touching a weight. I don't really care about strength

and I am more into aesthetics. What are some bodybuilding tips that you could give me for my Calisthenics program?

You basically want to take bodybuilding principles such as:

-Progressive overload with moderate reps 5-12

-Time under tension

-High Frequency

-High Volume

-Lower rest periods

-Pump Work

and just plug them into your Calisthenics program. Time under tension is very important according to bodybuilders and they are big advocates of that method. You should still do some work in the lower rep range like sets of 5 or even 3 so that you could get stronger because lets say that you could do One Arm Chin-Ups for 3x3 right now and in a year from now you are able to do 3x10, your lats will be a lot bigger.

Once you are done with the strength work then do some higher rep work with low rest periods and then at the end of the workout you should incorporate some pump work just to get some more blood in the muscles. Some good pump work exercises in Calisthenics for bodybuilding purposes at the end of a workout would be bodyweight tricep extensions, ring curls, calf work, rear delt raises or stuff of that nature.

Why do you recommend neck work in the program and how exactly do I train my neck on conditioning days?

Glad you asked, the neck in my opinion is one of the most neglected muscle groups and it could actually help save you from accidents and concussions if you get it

strong enough. As a bonus it looks really badass and the neck is showing at all times so its important that it looks good.

I am a simple man so I don't recommend any exercises that are too crazy. I personally like neck curls and neck extensions with your own manual resistance for high reps or with manual resistance from a buddy if you have someone who is willing to do it.

Although if you have a lot of experience with Calisthenics and you have been training intelligently for long then you could start trying out advance exercises like neck bridging variations or neck holds on a pull-up bar.

How do I do conditioning in the wintertime?

If you are a warrior then i would recommend that you just dress up warm-up and run up the hill anyways to build discipline and mental toughness. On top of that the snow will force you to take even slower strides which will make the exercise even harder which is good for you because that means that you won't have to bring a weightvest or anything like that.

If you have no intentions of doing conditioning work in the wintertime then you could do some high intensity jump rope work at home with short rest periods. Jump roping is very good for also building the calves so don't be surprised if your calves grow a bit as well. On your conditioning day don't forget to also train your neck and calves as well to have a complete physique.

Can I use a straight bar instead of a Pull-up bar?

If you only have access to a straight bar then its not the end of the world but the injury risks for your shoulders, elbows and wrist do increase, its your call though. I would invest an extra few dollars to get a Ring pull-up bar set or a pull-up bar set with various neutral grip handles attached. If you don't want to spend money then you could always go to a park close to where you live and look for neutral grip handles somewhere.

If you have no choice but to use the straight bar then a relatively safe variation is the one known as "commando style pull-up" where one hand is holding the bar with an overhand grip while the other hand holds the bar with an underhand grip. This variation is somewhat similar to a closegrip neutral grip pull-up, make sure to switch your hands on each set. To make pull-ups even safer you can try doing them with a thumbless grip.

I live next to a park, should I just workout there instead of at home?

There is something about training outdoors that is beautiful. You get some sun which is good for Vitamin D, you get fresh air and you feel more free and less isolated outside as opposed to being in a crowded room. I would recommend that you train in your park on nice days but when it rains then you could train at home. Just dress warm up on cold days to make sure that you don't get sick.

I want to be able to do a one-arm Push-up, what are the necessary steps I must take to achieve this goal?

Ever since the Rocky movie came out many decades ago, many people are curious about the one arm Push-up. Many want to be able to perform that feat of strength but don't know how to approach the progressions. Let me first say that it's a great exercise, especially if you are really limited with equipment. It works your chest, tricep, shoulder and core stability.

First things first, you have to have the strength to do regular Push-ups and lots of them. Once you are able to do 30+ reps with good form then you can move on.

The second step is to being able to do a Push-up with a medicine ball on one hand, but still close to your body. If you don't have a medicine ball then you can use a soccer ball or basketball too.

The better you get at one arm pushups with a medicine ball close to your body, the more you can put the ball further and further away from your side.

The next step after you can't put your arm any further away from your body would be to start deducting fingers. Once you are able to do 3 finger one arm medicine ball push-ups then you could try to do your first one arm Push-up. Basically the hand touching the ball is just assisting you and as you get stronger you ask for less help from your other hand until you are eventually doing the exercise with one hand on the ground with the assistance hand behind your back.

Another great way to do a one arm Push-up would be to incorporate one arm Push-up isometric holds in the places that you are weak. Remember to keep your core tight, chin tucked and don't sag your hips. It should look like a Push-up, but just with one arm. When you get to the one arm Push-up you may only be able to do them with your legs far away from eachother, but a good goal to shoot for would be to try to eventually get to 10 one arm Push-ups with your feet together.

There are many other ways to get to a one arm push-up with the use of bands or even partial reps. Pick one method and stick to it, the results will be good. I chose the medicine ball method because that's the method I used to do one arm Push-ups but all methods are effective if you follow the proper steps.

If I already train in a gym or have some heavy barbells and plates at home then can I incorporate some Calisthenics in the mix?

The answer really depends on your goals and desires. If you want to master bodyweight training then the external loads might not be necessary and you would be better off just doing harder Calisthenic variations. If your goal is to simply get stronger and build muscle then I would incorporate Squats to strengthen your lower body because bilateral movements can do a good job for packing on size (especially for the lower body).

Sprints, Step Up Variations, Glute Ham Raises, Pistols and exercises like that are great but if you want to build lower body muscle as fast as humanly possible without taking drugs then I think that the Squat would be your best bet. You can

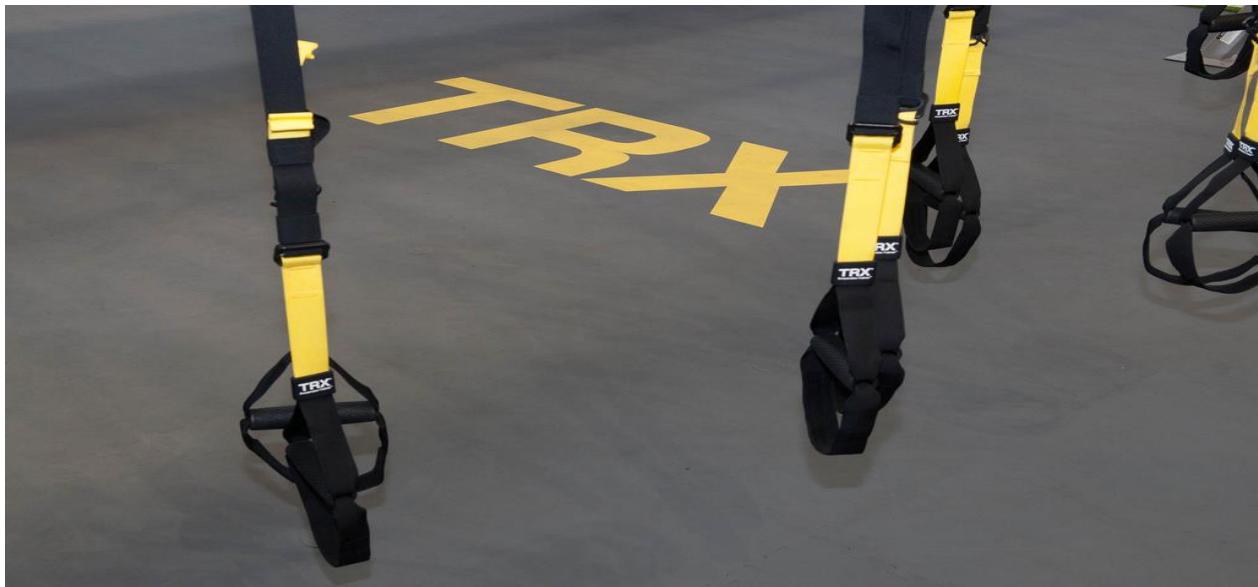
still get great legs without doing heavy back squats but it would take longer. Advanced bodyweight exercises do hit the posterior chain hard but I would be lying to you if I told you that Deadlifts weren't a good posterior chain exercise.

As far as the upper body is concerned I don't think it would be that necessary because you will get very far with Pull-Up/Chin-Up, Dip, Push-up and Inverted Row variations. I have met people who mostly only do advanced Pull-ups and Dips for their upper body training and they are jacked. Although I do think that one of the biggest disadvantages of Calisthenics training is that it doesn't do a lot for your traps. The traps are one of those muscles that love and respond very well to holding heavy weight and eventually the Calisthenics starts to do nothing for your traps.

In this case you can also add in some Snatch Grip Shrugs or High Pulls to build up your traps. These are one of my favorite trap exercises and they are very effective. Besides the Squat, Deadlift and Snatch Grip Shrug I think that you won't be missing anything else. Heck, you can still get great results if you don't own weights but since you have access to them then why not?

In conclusion, you don't have to marry yourself to one style of training because weight training is very effective so why not reap all of the benefits? I can't judge though because it depends on what your goals are.

Where is the best place for me to attach the rings/TRX?



There are many places that you can attach the TRX/Rings but I think that some of the best places would be a tree or something in your house that is high and sturdy. This program involves very minimal equipment so if you have to find a way to screw something into the ceiling so that you can hang your rings or TRX then so be it. Strong people find ways to make things work for them. If you train in a park then you can simply loop the TRX or Rings over swings, monkey bars or even a soccer net. You have to understand that even though the program says "Calisthenics", you still need bars to hang from and stuff of that nature.

What are some of the benefits of Calisthenics training for the elderly?

Lately I have been hearing people say "Older people need to lift weights for physical health". This statement is true, but I argue that the bulk of their training should consist of bodyweight training for the following reasons.

1. Bodyweight training can be a lot easier on the joints. You can get a lot of benefits from bodyweight training because you are getting more from less weight. Bodyweight exercises also use a lot of stabilizers and are a lot safer than machines where your body is put in a fixed plane of motion. Everytime you are getting more from less weight you are doing yourself a huge favor and you also aren't only training with the ego, which brings me to my next point.

2. Reduced ego pressure. I don't know about you, but at 70 years old I won't be so focused on lifting heavy and with my ego, but more focused on technique and just trying to stay as healthy as possible while getting stronger, bodyweight exercises can do that for you. Generally speaking, the ego pressure on bodyweight exercises is less high than on exercises like the bench press.

3. Easier to recover from workout to workout. Since bodyweight exercises can be a lot easier on the joints, you will be able to recover properly and hit your muscles with more volume and frequency as well.

4. Less risk for injuries. There is no point in getting hurt when you are trying to get healthy. Exercises like push-ups will always be safer than the bench press. It is also safer because if you want to end the exercise then you simply stop, you don't have to worry about racking the weight. You can push yourself exactly how you want, literally.

5. Less soreness. As you get older, your muscles will take longer to recover. Its not uncommon for people over 40 to only squat or deadlift 1-2 times per month. The lower back takes very long to recover too, but with the power of bodyweight training, you will be able to recover faster because you won't be as sore and the exercises are also easier on the CNS in my most cases.

6. More convenient. Some older folks may find it is a workout to simply get to the gym, but what if I told you that you can train at home and still get awesome results. You might only need a TRX suspension straps, a pull-up bar and a bench. You can make amazing progress with minimal equipment. Don't get too caught up in the hype, just because a gym has fancy equipment doesn't mean that people are getting results. What creates results is the effort that you put into training.

7. They produce great results. Lets talk the most important factor; results. Bodyweight exercises can do that for you in most cases depending on what your goal is.

Bodyweight training seems to have a lot of benefits but are there any Calisthenic exercises that you don't recommend and that could actually be very dangerous?

Yes, I love bodyweight training and I always preach about how exercises like Pull-ups, Push-ups, Inverted Rows, Dips, Planks, Back Extensions and other Calisthenic exercises are great, but below I will talk about the ones that I dislike very much. I see many people do these exercises and the majority of them get injured. These are what I like to call high risk and low reward exercises (atleast in most cases). Here is my top list:

1. Bench Dips



Bench dips are the exercise that destroyed my shoulders and caused me to take a 6-10 month break from pressing, I like to call them the Voldemort of bodyweight exercises. My shoulders are a lot better now but it was still a painful experience now that I look back on it. These put your shoulders in a very vulnerable position for an injury and you would be better off just doing regular dips on parallel bars or rings. If you are too weak to do Dips on parrallel bars then you could get good at push-ups, do band assisted dips, machine assisted dips or other options. The important thing is that you avoid bench dips, trust me on this one.

2. Vince Gironda Dips

These are Dips done with an extremely wide grip with your elbows flared out as much as possible. Yes it's true that you will feel it a lot in the chest, but they destroy your shoulders in the process. Just do regular chest dips instead with a forward lean, you will get similar results with less injuries.

3. Extremely Wide Pull-ups/Chin-Ups

I love pull-ups and chins, but some people do them so wide that the range of motion is too small which doesn't make them the best exercise for the lats. Not to mention that the straight bar and a really wide grip are pretty bad for the shoulders. If you want to do wide grip pull-ups then a smarter alternative would be to do a bit outside of shoulder width with a neutral grip so you can still go wide, get more range of motion so you will get a better stretch in the lats while sparing the shoulders a lot more. Another option would be to go a bit outside of shoulder width but with the rings, that's another option.

4. Behind the Neck Pull-ups

I never liked this exercise, you can pretty much get the same results from other pull-up variations without the downsides of the behind the neck pull-up. It puts your shoulders in an unnatural position and it is true that many people get great results from them but the majority of us don't. Most people only get shoulder injuries from behind the neck pull-ups and the only positive thing that I could think of about this exercise is that it looks a bit cool, but that's it.

5. Sit-Ups (with back on a hard surface)

Sit ups can be a good exercise, but most people do them on the hard floor which hurts the tailbone and could cause a lot of damage in the long term. The amount of pressure put on the disks can be just as bad as doing Deadlifts with sloppy form. You would be better off doing them on a decline bench, softer surface or doing something like Planks instead. Not to forget that this exercise really tightens up the hip flexors which are already tight from sitting down all day, not the best idea if you work a 9-5 office job.

6. Crunches (with back on a hard surface)

Crunches on a hard surface are kind of like sit-ups on a hard surface, they are bad for your lower back. You would be wise to eliminate this exercise altogether or research a more joint friendly way to do it.

7. Box Jumps (on a hard surface)

Box jumps are a great exercise for building explosive power in the lower body, but jumping on something like a brick or a wooden box is a bit too risky for my liking. The knees can take a lot of abuse when jumping on these hard surfaces and it isn't a smart approach for the long run if you are trying to progress injury free. Not to mention that if you miss the box and don't make it then it could scrape your shins and leave them very bloody (which has happened to me in the past when I attempted to jump over a part bench with one leg in my basketball days). A smarter alternative would be to do box jumps on a padded box. The padded box is very knee friendly and if you mess up and don't make the jump then the padded box won't scrape your shins.

8. Box jumps on unstable surfaces.

Not only are box jumps on a hard surface not safe for your knees, but jumping on high unstable surfaces is a perfect way to injure yourself. You could slip and fall on your lower back and have a career ending injury all because you were doing an exercise with high risk and low rewards. If you're going to jump on something, atleast make it a stable surface. A good alternative would be to get a high padded box for your box jumps to reap all of the benefits without the risks.

9. Kipping Pull-Ups

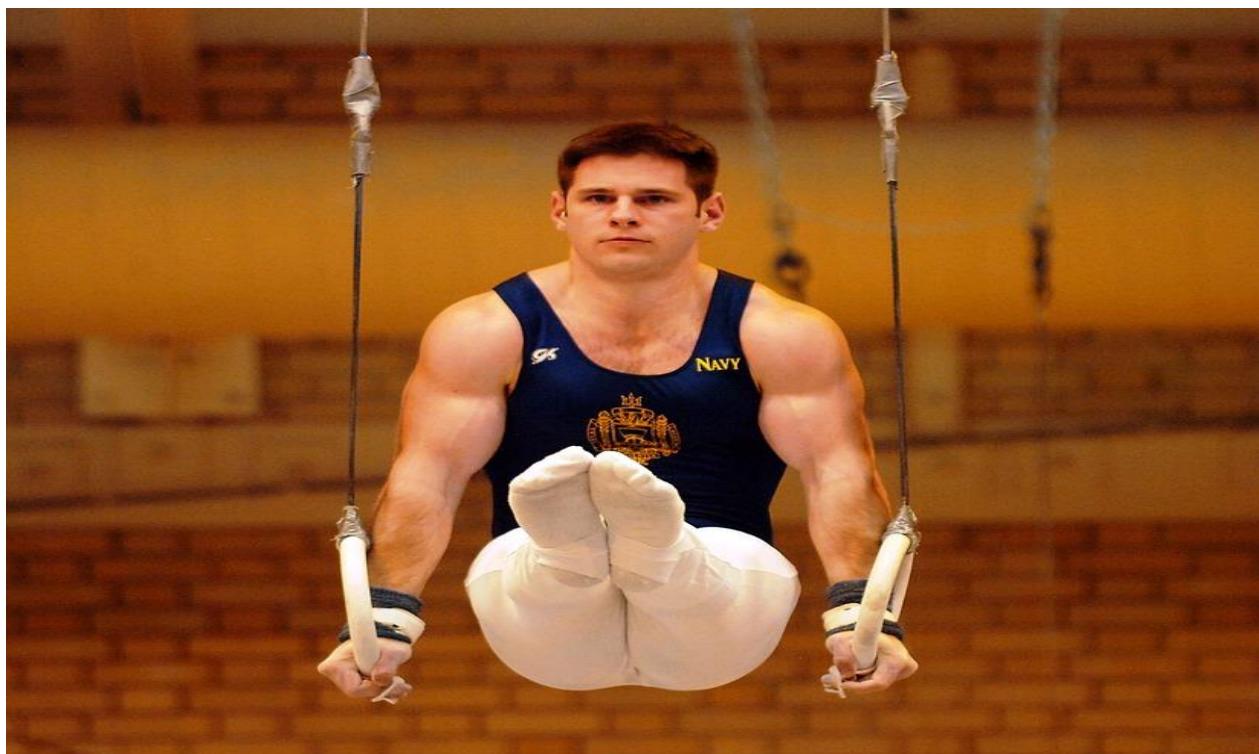
Kipping Pull-ups were popularized by CrossFit and are a very dangerous exercise if you don't know how to Kip properly. The kipping pull-up is actually a very advanced exercise, but many people would be better off just doing regular pull-ups with or without resistance. Unless if you do Crossfit, there is really no reason to put your joints through so much pain. The kipping pull-up is very dangerous for the shoulders (especially the rotator cuffs) if done incorrectly. Not only that, but

kipping pull-ups aren't even good for the lats and last time I checked, one of the main objectives of the pull-up was to build up the lats.

10. Kipping Dips

Crossfitters have also popularized the Kipping Dip which is basically like a kipping pull-up but only for dips this time. The Kipping Dips are very dangerous for the shoulders as well and the movement isn't very controlled unless if you are very advanced. Most people won't get anything but injuries from Kipping Dips and would be better off sticking to regular dips on gymnastic rings or parallel bars for safety purposes. The dip is already an exercise that has a reputation of hurting peoples shoulders so why make it even more dangerous?

Why do gymnasts have more jacked upper bodies than I do even though I have been doing Calisthenics for a few years?



Everybody who has watched the Olympics knows that the gymnasts have great bodies and can also put on one hell of a show. One thing that really stands out is

their incredible core strength. It is extremely hard to do a Maltese or an Iron cross. These feats of strength take a lot of dedication and decades of practice to really master. On Fitworldexposed, I try to promote bodyweight training as often as possible to remind people that there are no excuses. There are many bodyweight masters out there and the gymnasts are very high on the list. We can learn a lot by watching the gymnasts perform and looking at their lifestyles as well. Many gymnasts don't even touch weights and some of them have upper bodies that will make bodybuilders want to jump off a bridge. Here are 5 reasons that I came up with as to why gymnasts have such great upper body development.

1. They compete

Competing is a healthy part of life and it can also increase your standards when you are against others. Competition can also increase your testosterone and push you to your limits. I'm not telling you to start competing in gymnastics (although it wouldn't be the worst idea if that's what you are into), but understand that people who compete could be stronger than people who don't because they are fighting for the first place. When you train and don't compete, it's a different ball game. Of course, there are many different ways to compete, I used to have a gym partner and we would always go head to head and try to outlift each other. Competition is healthy and it makes people feel alive. The main reason why competing is good is because it gets you out of your comfort zone, it also gives you a reason to train hard.

2. They practice a lot and treat strength as a skill

Practicing a lot is similar to the GTG (Greasing the groove) which is great for getting good at movements while also building up a lot of frequency and volume throughout the week. Also, if you want to get good at something like a handstand, one day per week like in the bodybuilding magazines isn't going to cut it. If you are trying to get better at pull-ups then practice them often and follow the next tip below as well.

3. Most gymnasts don't train till failure

Similar to the olympic weightlifters, most gymnasts aren't training until failure which helps them train more frequently in a fresher state. Training to failure is very popular in bodybuilding circles, but it could also make you a lot more sore which wouldn't benefit the gymnasts because they are trying to train and practice as often as possible in a fresh state.

4. They perform different forms of bodyweight exercises which are proven to build muscle + there is a lot of T.U.T. (Time under tension)

Bodyweight training is generally easier to recover from than weights in most cases. You can't do closegrip bench presses everyday, but gymnasts do a lot of dips on the dip bars and are able to recover just fine from session to session. Top that off with the fact that bodyweight exercises are great proven muscle builders and that they aren't going to failure, this is a great recipe for upper body strength and size. No wonder the gymnasts have such nice arms.

There is also a lot of time under tension which we all know is very important for putting on muscle mass. Its not uncommon for gymnasts to be doing extreme tricks and advanced moves on the rings for over 30 seconds without stopping.

5. They follow the bodyweight progressions

I recently wrote an article called "The reason why most people don't get much out of Calisthenics" and mentioned how people don't follow through with the progressions and eventually give up. It's a lot easier to grab a heavier weight than it is to progress into a more advanced bodyweight exercise. Remember that the results will be amazing if you are able to follow through with the progressions, not to mention that you will have a bulletproof core to show for it, so work hard but be patient.

Conclusion

Gymnasts are just a small piece of the puzzle, there are other people who have amazing bodies without even touching weights such as Calisthenic street trainees, rock climbers, some sprinters and the list goes on. This article was just to shed a bit of light on the fact that you shouldn't underestimate the importance of bodyweight

training. You may say that some gymnasts are lacking lower body size and strength and that you can't get nice legs without weights, but a quick look at the legs of sprinters will change your mind. Weights are great, but at the end of the day resistance is resistance and you can still get great results with your own bodyweight. Start applying some of the gymnast principles to your training and watch your body grow.

With so many benefits to bodyweight training, why is not as popular as weight training with external loads?

The fitness industry is a big industry, especially since the last 10 years. More and more businesses are getting affiliated with this industry because there is a lot of money involved and with things like Bootcamps, Crossfit, Bodybuilding and Powerlifting, they are trying to find new ways to put their hands in our pockets. I will give you 3 big reasons why Calisthenics isn't super popular.

1. HARDER TO SELL GYM MEMBERSHIPS

Its obvious that if more people are training at home, in parks, or outside then it will result in less money for the public gyms. Public gyms are great and I go to one myself, but not everybody can afford to pay 300\$+ per year. Gyms don't want you to know the power of Calisthenics, they just want you to buy their memberships.

2. HARDER TO SELL GYM EQUIPMENT

When you have people training in their homes, in parks or outside then chances are that they aren't investing money in expensive barbells, dumbbell's, kettlebell's, squat racks and expensive machines like 2000\$ leg presses. The fitness industry wants you to buy these expensive products and while they do have a lot of value and I do use them myself, not everybody can afford them. Even if some people can afford them, not everybody is willing to spend so much money when they are just trying to get in shape. The fitness industry is prepared for people like this, so they have pull-up bars, gymnastic rings, neutral grip push-up handles and other

bodyweight equipment, but it doesn't profit as much as the weights and machines do.

3. PEOPLE START TO REBEL AGAINST WEIGHTS

I don't know what it is about bodyweight training, but the people who are really good at it start to rebel against weight's and say stuff like "I built my body without weights" or "You don't need weights to get big". Then next thing you know, you have hundred's and thousands of people in park's or training at home which results in less money for the fitness industry which is exactly what they don't want.

CONCLUSION

The magazines and media will tell you all kinds of things, but don't think that you have to belong to a fancy gym to be big and strong. It could definitely help, but I've personally seen people get huge with nothing but bodyweight exercises. Don't expect that you will look exactly the same way as somebody who is doing heavy squats and deadlifts, but you can still have a healthy and respectable body. Resistance is resistance and if you are following the proper progressions and getting stronger with a good diet then that's what matters.

I heard that weighted Calisthenics could potentially be dangerous, what are your thoughts on adding external resistance to bodyweight exercises?

I always preach about the importance of bodyweight training and how you can get a great body without touching a weight, but a very controversial topic on the internet is whether weighted calisthenics is good or not. Calisthenics is training without external loads and only the use of your bodyweight with exercises like Dips, Pull-ups and Sprints. So the question is; is weighted calisthenics a good idea or not?

YES/NO

I'm giving you another black and white answer today and I will explain why.

YES, WEIGHTED CALISTHENICS IS A GOOD IDEA:

Weighted calisthenics is a great idea if you are able to maintain proper form with the added resistance. It can be a great way to challenge your muscles if you aren't interested in doing a harder variation of the exercise. Adding weight is only one way of progressing a pull-up. Other ways could be Single arm pull-ups, isometric hold pull-ups, L-sit pull-ups, Fatgrip Pull-ups and the list goes on. Adding weight isn't the only way to progress, but it is a very popular way and for a good reason too.

With weighted calisthenics, it is easy to track your progress. Sometimes it could get hard to remember your records on 3 second pause pull-ups. So yes, I am all for weighted Calisthenics as long as you aren't sacrificing form or range of motion for weight. It's also a good idea if you start with light weights at first to get your connective tissue ready for the stress. I've seen people jump straight from pull-ups with no weight to pull-ups with a 45lb plate. This jump is way too big, you would be better off starting with a 5lb plate and slowly working your way up, that would atleast be my approach.

At the end of the day it really depends on what your goals are. If you want to really master moving your body through space then I wouldn't recommend weighted Calisthenics. If you don't care about mastering your bodyweight and you just want to get jacked then give weighted calisthenics a try.

NO, WEIGHTED CALISTHENICS IS NOT A GOOD IDEA

This is for the people who are doing pull-ups and dips with a lot of weight but are sacrificing form and range of motion. This is also for the people who can't do a lot of reps with they're own bodyweight but want to add weight. I've seen people who weren't even able to do 8 proper pull-ups or dips, but they want to add weight right away. This is a bad idea and if you do this then you are setting yourself up for an injury because your connective tissue won't be strong enough or prepared for the

stress. Not only will you be setting yourself up for an injury but you won't even be getting stronger or bigger because your form is off.

These people would be better off by doing bodyweight exercises until they could atleast get 15 picture perfect reps and then maybe they could think about adding external resistance

Generally speaking, I wouldn't add weight to a bodyweight exercise unless if I can do 15 picture perfect reps, no momentum, no cheating and the proper muscles working with no forced reps. Once you are able to do that for exercises like pull-ups and dips for example, not only would it be a good idea to add weight, but your connective tissue will be a lot more prepared for the external loads.

Conclusion

So yes, weighted calisthenics is a great idea but just as long as you don't sacrifice form for weight and slowly work up to it. I am all for weighted calisthenics, it could be with chains, bands, weighed vests or even a backpack. Remember to lift with the proper muscles and not your ego for maximum results and the least amount of injuries. Be on the lookout because I will be writing an article about the difference between training with bands, vests and chains.

I have been doing Calisthenics for a few years and my friend noticed that I have a bad forward head posture, how can this be fixed?

When it comes to fitness and health all the way to how people will judge your physical appearance, posture is essential. With all of the use of computers nowadays it's not uncommon to have a forward head posture which looks terrible on men and women. The reason why it looks terrible is because the muscles are not in the right places. Unfortunately there are many activities that lend themselves to the forward head posture such a biking and other day to day tasks.

Not only will better posture reduce your chances of getting injured, but it will also make your shoulders, back and chest look 100x better.

Luckily, the way to solve this isn't as hard as you may think. It will take a lot of awareness and hard work but you will be rewarded with better posture. The first drill that I would recommend would be chin tucks against a wall. This drill will help you get your neck back into its proper place. It's a very simple drill that you can do throughout the day. Try doing one set of one minute holds throughout the day and week. Don't force anything, just try to imagine that your chin is being pulled into the wall. I love this drill and use it myself. Your body follows your head and if you have forward head posture then it messes everything up.

Below I will show you 3 common exercises that people usually perform with a forward head posture and I'll be showing you how to fix these mistakes.

DIPS

The forward head posture in dips is very common especially in the bottom position. You want to keep your head somewhat neutral even when you are in the bottom position, it will take some practice but it will definitely be worth it.

PUSH UPS

Most people do push ups with a forward head posture which is a shame because it's an exercise with so many benefits. People who watch videos of people in the army doing push-ups think that the right way to perform the movement is with the neck hyperextended and looking at the leader but this is wrong. In theory, the best way to perform the push-up when trying to improve forward head posture would be to look down at the floor with the head neutral to the spine.

PULL UPS/CHIN UPS

Last but not least, the Pull-Up/Chin Up. If I had a dollar for everytime I saw somebody do a Chin-Up with their chin hyperextended over the bar, I'd have a lot of dollars. The problem with this exercise has a lot to do with the name. "Chin up" means that you have to get your chin over the bar but some people who can't perform this exercise properly will use a forward head posture to try and finish the rep. This is such a common mistake but it can easily be fixed by leaving your ego at the door and using the strength of your lats to get your chin above the bar. You want to focus on keeping your chin tucked when doing chin ups and pull ups. The

exercise should actually be called "Chest-Up" because keeping your chest up really the important thing to remember when you are performing this movement.

It's funny because it was actually hard to find pictures of people who had proper head positioning when doing dips, push-ups and pull-ups on Google. Search it for yourself and you will notice that most people perform these exercises with a forward head posture without even knowing it. It doesn't stop there, we didn't even get to the weight training exercises like Deadlifts, Rows, Shrugs and other lifts. I hope you learned something and try to apply this principle to all of your lifts, from planks all the way to curls. If you are cautious and start now then you will be fine.

What are other ways to make bodyweight exercises harder without adding external loads?

Weight vests are one of the best tools for training out there but not everybody can afford them and the same thing applies for bands and chains. Of course, a backpack with weights could work but it could also feel a bit awkward. Let's discuss more affordable and effective approaches to make bodyweight exercises more challenging. Check it out below:

1. BETTER TECHNIQUE (BETTER R.O.M., SQUEEZE, RIGHT MUSCLES WORKING...ETC)

There is no point in trying to make the exercise harder if your technique needs work, this is common sense. Get better contractions, a pain free range of motion and things of that nature and you will be on the right track.

2. HARDER VARIATIONS OF THE EXERCISE WORK WELL

If you can do a regular push-up for 15 reps then try to elevate your feet on a chair to make the exercise harder. If you are able to do handstand push-ups for high reps then maybe you can try to do diamond handstand push-ups. Pull-ups feel too easy? Try archer pull-ups, you get the picture. One thing that is important is that you should never skip progressions. If you can do 15 push-ups, then chances are that

you can't do handstand push-ups. You will have to get proficient with push-ups with your feet elevated first.

3. ISOMETRIC HOLDS FOR 3-5 SECONDS WHICH ARE ALSO KNOWN AS PAUSED REPS

I love isometric holds because they bring more blood into the muscle and they're humbling as well while testing your strength. Don't have access to a weight vest for pull-ups? Are you able to do 15 perfect reps? Try pull-ups with a 3-5 isometric hold at the top (and bottom if you want) of each repetition. I also like this method because it prevents you from using any momentum. It's hard to cheat with isometric hold training but the harder it is, the more you will get out of the exercise.

4. LESS TIME BETWEEN SETS

If you are only waiting one minute between sets then the exercises will be a lot harder than if you wait 2-3 minutes between sets. This could be a tool that you use to make your workouts last less time and make the exercises harder. Bodybuilders are very big advocates of short rest periods and I have been experimenting a lot with short rest periods and have been seeing some good progress so far.

5. CHALLENGING YOUR GRIP WITH A THICKER BAR

If you do pull-ups, rows, push-ups, l-sits, dips and other bodyweight exercises while holding onto a thick bar you will notice that it humbles you. I know people who are able to do 10+ pull-ups with a 45lb plate, but it's can't even get 10 reps with a 2.5 inch bar and no additional weight. If you're in the park and you find a swing set with a thick handle then you can do pull-ups there if you want a challenge. These will increase your grip strength and also increase your forearm size.

6. DOING THE EXERCISE AT THE END OF THE WORKOUT

Think that less time between sets is hard? Try doing an exercise at the end of a workout. I kind of got this from the old school "pre-exhausting" bodybuilding philosophy. You don't have to do this, but it's just another tool in the toolbox so

it's there if ever you need it

Why is bodyweight training so hated on and underrated?

There is one reason why many people aren't taking bodyweight training seriously and are judging its effectiveness.

They aren't following the proper progressions to advance their calisthenics, they get impatient and go back to the weights. It's a lot easier to grab a heavier dumbbell or add more weight to the barbell than it is to progress to a more advanced bodyweight move. Most people aren't ready for that kind of commitment so they just forget about bodyweight training altogether. It sucks for them because they are missing out on a lot. Hopefully you aren't. The message is that I highly recommend that you follow through with the progressions of bodyweight training, the results will be worth it. With all of A.D.D. out there it's hard to focus on one thing, nobody wants to put the time and work in. It's easier to add weight to your shoulder press than it is to go from handstand pushups to diamond handstand pushups. Gymnasts are living proof that if you keep striving on advancing your progressions, you could reach greatness.

Don't give up because it's too hard, embrace and strive for new challenges to push yourself to the limits.

There are many terms in the lifting world such as "GTG (Greasing the groove)" and "The ladder method", would you mind explaining what they are?

GTG (GREASING THE GROOVE)

This was a term invented by Pavel Tsatsouline that basically means that you take one exercise and make it a priority by performing it many times throughout the day and throughout the week (while still doing your other workouts, but the GTG exercise is the big priority). GTG doesn't mean that you're only doing pull-ups for a month, not at all. It means that you will be doing the exercise several times per day while still doing your other program in the gym or at home. This is convenient

if you have a pull-up bar at home because you're not going to go to the gym or the park to do 2 or 3 sets of pull-ups. This is a very effective method and you would be surprised to see how well it works for bodyweight exercises like pull-ups. When doing GTG, you want to remember a few key points.

-NEVER go until failure (leave one or two reps in the tank). This means that if you are able to do 5 or 6 perfect reps then you should only do 4 reps.

-DON'T do GTG for longer than a month (you will most likely get some overuse injuries by then).

-GTG can work for weight training exercises, but I rather do it with bodyweight exercises because I find it more convenient. Bodyweight exercises are also easier on the joints and easier to recover from. I feel like I am always in a fresher state with calisthenics and I also don't get as sore as I would with weights. My favorite exercises to try the GTG method with would be pull-ups, dips, push-ups, levers, inverted rows or handstand push-ups.

-Have 1-3 rest days when you are on a GTG program.

-If you are doing GTG for pull-ups, don't be scared to change the grips up every few days for extra variety (same thing applies for other exercises as well).

-Depending on how many other exercises you do besides pull-ups, you might want to lower your volume and frequency just a bit. If you are doing tons of pull-ups GTG style then it wouldn't be the best idea to do even more pull-ups during your actual gym workouts.

-Don't do GTG with more than one exercise. It's either pull-ups, chin-ups, push-ups, dips, inverted rows, or handstands, but not all of them. Maybe you could do GTG for pull-ups in September and GTG for push-ups in November. One thing at a time. If you put your focus with GTG on too many exercises at once it makes it harder to concentrate on one thing. "Jack of all trades, master of none".

-For safety purposes, **always include a lot of rowing exercises in your program** because if you do too many push-ups or pull-ups and not many rows then

it'll affect your posture and you will probably get injured. If you are limited with equipment then inverted rows are your best bet.

GTG is also great for people with busy schedules. If you work a busy job and you are always on call then I suggest that you buy a pull-up bar to hang up under a door in your house with various grips. This style of training would probably be more suitable for you. Also, for fathers or mothers who have kids and don't have time to train, GTG is a great way to still train, but just in a more spread out fashion.

GTG is a very effective method for building muscle and strength. Put in the work and the results will be worth it. I have a pull-up bar at my work and I do GTG at work and my pull-up numbers are definitely increasing. GTG sends signals to your body that you have to get stronger on that lift. It also makes sense because you don't get good by doing something once per week, you have to practice. If you have a hard time feeling your lats during pull-ups then doing GTG with pull-ups can help a lot.

THE LADDER METHOD



The ladder method is a great way to increase your total workout volume in a session. Here's how it works. Let's say that you take the Pull-up for example:

You are able to do 3×12 Pull-ups.

With the ladder method, you cut your total amount of pull-ups in half which means you will be doing 3×6 (instead of 3x12). Now 3×6 with ladders is more than it looks like. One ladder looks like this:

1 pullup + 2 pullups +3+4+5+6=21 total pull-ups. This is 1 ladder. (10-25 second break between pullups) and 2-3 minute rest between ladders.

If you do the math, 3 ladders will equal to 63 pull-ups. If you would have done the regular amount of pull-ups with 3×12, you would have only gotten 36. You almost doubled the volume with the ladder method. Now you get a better idea of how it is so effective for building up volume.

Before you start doing ladders, there are a few key things that you must know:

- Ladders work very well with bodyweight exercises like pull-ups, dips, push-ups, inverted rows...etc**
- Never take ladders till failure, every rep has to look clean and perfect**
- Only pick one exercise to do your ladders with**
- Lower your total workout volume when incorporating ladders**
- Don't do ladders for more than 4 weeks, your joints might not be able to tolerate them.**

Conclusion

Ladders aren't mandatory, they are just another tool in the toolbox for when you want to increase your volume. Another benefit of training with latter's is that they are good for people who want to get a high volume workout in a short amount of time.

I have a girlfriend and I want to get her to start training but she is scared of the idea of the gym and weights because she thinks that she will get bulky. I want to train with her, would Calisthenics be a good idea?

We always hear the same old training myth's when it comes to female training:

“Weight training will make me look bulky”

“I don’t want to look like a man so i’ll just run on the treadmill”

“I just want to tone up”

“I’ll do high reps to burn off the fat”

...etc

The list goes on and on forever. I will be explaining why women should be incorporating calisthenics into their program. It's one simple reason that could really make a huge difference in a woman's body physically and also change the way she thinks about her training.

Bodyweight training exercises such as Push-up's, Pull-up's, Dips, Planks, Inverted Rows and other exercises look a lot less intimidating to woman but they still produce great results.

I know you are thinking, "What the hell is he talking about?", but let me explain. **There are many women who don't attack a bench press or squat and other weight training exercises because they fear that they will get bulkier which is probably the biggest myth in fitness if I had to only pick one.** Lifting heavy weights actually burns more calories and builds muscle faster and more effectively than treadmills and other low intensity machines.

"**Muscles**" are also one of the key words that women are afraid of . Women like to link the word muscle to masculinity, but the truth is that women should not be scared of getting more muscular. So as a result of all of the myths, we have women all around the world who are scared to even touch a heavy weight. It's like some women are strong but just aren't willing to push themselves on the weighted exercises.

Back to the calisthenics statement above, I think that women would really benefit from calisthenics because they won't be as scared to attack exercises like Push-ups, Pull-ups, planks, dips and other bodyweight exercises because there is no weight. In calisthenics, you are the weight and I also doubt that women are scared of themselves so it would be a great way for women to get results and increase the intensity without always second guessing what they are doing. Then when they see that they are getting great results with the bodyweight exercises, they will finally start to understand that you have to lift something somewhat heavy to make progress. If a woman weighs 130 and she has to do pull-ups then it will be somewhat hard for her but she won't be as intimidating as doing something that requires a heavy weight in her hand.

The funny thing is that women wouldn't even be able to look like men even if they trained 10 times harder than men, it's just physically impossible. Men have higher testosterone levels, it's not good or bad, but just the way it is.

On top of that, everybody should be able to perform basic exercises like dips, push-ups and pull-ups before even focusing on weights anyways. You have to build some sort of foundation and if you just start off your first year of training with exercises like the bench press when you can't do a proper push-up then it defeats the purpose. Focus on the fundamentals and then you can advance to other methods.

Conclusion

Let's throw all of the myths about female training out of the window and for all you women out there, start working out with more intensity, you won't get "bulky" unless if you are in an incredibly high caloric surplus, I promise you.

If you are confused about which bodyweight exercises you should be doing, focus on the basics like Push-ups, inverted rows, Pull-ups, Bar dips, plank variations, hip thrusts, sprints and others. Don't be scared to train hard, embrace the challenges and the results will be great.

I have a 9 year old child who is very hyper and active and I am just curious to know if Calisthenics would be an appropriate activity for him to partake in for overall health and safety?

There are many debates on the internet of whether children should be training or not. My simple answer in most cases is yes. Kid's should be moving and exercising as opposed to playing videogames at home. Parks and playgrounds were built for a reason.

More specifically, children should be doing **Calisthenics** instead of weight training so that they could build a solid foundation while they are young while simultaneously sparring their joints. There is no approximate age for when lifting weights is best, but it wouldn't be the best idea to have a 4-11 year old kid to start

doing deadlifts and military presses, that's for sure. I would NEVER recommend heavy exercises like weighted squats, deadlifts and military presses to a child under 10, there is just too much spinal compression for somebody at such a young age and it definitely isn't worth the risk.

Calisthenics are easier on the joints and some children actually do some bodyweight training without even knowing it. Exercises on the monkey bars, running and climbing are all forms of bodyweight training and are great for children. If you happen to have a child or a very young trainee then it would be smart to start them off with the basics while they are young and to help them build that foundation too. Exercises like push-ups, planks, inverted rows, running, bodyweight squats, jumping, monkey bar work and climbing are a great place to start.

The important thing is that the child is having fun and enjoying what he/she is doing.

Kids who are active when they are young and play a lot are likely to be stronger, better coordinated and more athletic than kids who stay at home playing videogames. Start good habits at a young age so it becomes second nature. Training at young age is like learning a new language, the younger you start, the better off you will be. You want to learn the basics when you are young so that when you get older then you will already have more experience than the average kid and you will be one step ahead.

What if I can't afford gymnastic rings, a TRX system or a pull-up bar and I want to do Pull-ups and Dips?



Look, nothing in life is just going to land on your lap and sometimes you will have to improvise a bit, luckily I was able to compile a list of 40+ places for you to do Pull-ups and Dips. One of the other things that I like about Calisthenics is that it teaches you how to be creative and we all know that pull-ups and dips are the kings of upper body exercises so lets get places where you can do these exercises. The

list is no particular order but hopefully you can find somewhere to do pull-ups and dips close to where you live if you don't have the funds to buy the equipment.

Pull-Ups

1. Pull-ups and Chin-ups on a stable tree branch could work too. Out of all of the places to do pull-ups, this probably one of the most convenient places to do them because tree's are everywhere.
2. Pull-ups or Chin-ups could be done on street lights (Just make sure you avoid the police because you don't want to get a ticket).
3. Go to your local park and you could do Pull-ups or Chin-ups on the monkey bars. If you live close to a park then your best bet would be to do your calisthenics bible program there.
4. You could also do Pull-ups or Chin-ups on a soccer net, they usually have thicker handles so you can also work on your grip.
5. Swing sets are also a decent place to do Pull-ups or Chin-ups and the handles are usually thick too so you can get some grip work there as well.
6. Pull-Ups can also be done in bathroom stalls (please don't be this desperate).
7. Basketball rims, just make sure that you don't break the rim.
8. Pull-ups can also be done under bleacher seats if you walk around and go to the back of them.
9. Pull-ups can be done under staircases if there is any room between the steps for you to place yours hands.
10. If you happen to find a stable rock that isn't too high because you want to get down safely then it could be a great way to do pull-ups.
11. L-Sit Pull-ups and Chin-ups could be done under dip bars in the park (these are very humbling).

12. Pull-ups can be done under a barbel in the squat rack if you belong to a gym that doesn't have a pull-up bar.

13. Pull-ups and Chin-ups can also be done under a fence if the pole is high enough.

14. Pull-ups can be done over a door if you have enough of a strong grip and if you have enough room to fit your hands.

15. In extremely desperate cases, you could do pull-ups on a statue!

16. Pull-ups and Chins can also be done on a vertical and stable ladder.

17. If you know where to find ropes then you could do rope pull-ups. Warning: these can be hard on your elbows if you aren't experienced with pull-ups.

18. Pull-ups and Chin-ups could also be done on the subway poles if you are extremely desperate as well.

19. Chin-ups and Pull-ups can be done under the bus stop shelter.

20. You can do L-Sit Chin-Ups under saw horses as well (unless if you are very tall).

21. Some people have a piece of wood on their ceiling, if you do then make sure that it is stable enough to support your bodyweight.

22. Some shelters have a lot of bars which could be used for pull-up variations.

23. If you are lucky enough to have a stable sewage pipe that could hold your bodyweight then consider yourself lucky!

I am now going to discuss a different variation of the pull-up variation called the inverted row, but it is also known as the Fatman Pull-up so I decided to add this to the list. What you must understand is that pull-ups are a great exercise, but in order to have a balanced back and prevent injuries, you must include some rowing

variations just to make sure that you have all of your bases covered. A program without horizontal pulling is a recipe for disaster.

24. Fatman Pull-ups can be done in the park.

25. Inverted rows can also be done under a table as long as it is stable enough to support your weight.

26. Inverted Rows can also be done hanging from monkey bars, you can even put your feet over the bars to make it easier.

27. If you have a stable stick, you can put it between two chairs and do inverted rows.

28. If you have two saw horses then you can perform inverted rows. You might also need a stable bar or two, but these are pretty affordable.

29. You can do inverted rows under Dip bars in the park as well.

30. Inverted Rows can also be done under a stable hammick, these will feel like ring rows and they will be challenging. Just make sure that the hammick is stable enough to support your own bodyweight.

Dips

1. Many parks have parallel dip bars, hopefully yours does too! If it doesn't then keep reading below.

2. Dips in the corner of a kitchen counter.

3. Dips can be done in the corner of a fence. If the corners feel a bit awkward or pointy then you can put a shirt over it or skip this idea altogether.

4. L-Sit Dips can also be done on bike stands if they are up high enough.

5. Dips can be done between 2 stable tables as long as they are both the same height.

6. If ever the escalator stops, then you could try doing dips like that but if it feels too wide then don't even bother unless if you want screwed up shoulders.
7. If you happen to see any gymnastic rings hanging in a park or anywhere else then dips can be done there.
8. L-Sit Dips can be done between two benches (these are NOT bench dips). Bench dips are when the bench is in back of you but the L-sit dip between 2 benches is when you are between the two benches, there's a difference.
9. Believe it or not, you can actually do Dips on a straight bar, they are a lot harder and they are an advanced variation, but sometimes you have to make due with what you have. So technically you can do straight bar dips with a lot of the ideas I gave you for pull-ups.
10. If you are on a balcony with a corner that is high and stable enough then you can do Dips, just be very careful if you are on a high balcony, this one is for very desperate trainees.
11. If you have access to 2 saw horses then you can do Dips.
12. No Dip bars in your gym? Take 2 barbells and put them in a power rack.

13. You can do Dips between bunk beds, the cool thing about this is that you can adjust the bunk beds the way that you want so if you want to do closegrip Dips for your triceps then you could do that.

As you can see there are many places to do pull-ups and dips so now you have no excuses!

Are advanced exercises like Planches good for building muscle or not?

Honestly, no.

Yes it is true that the isometric holds do build some muscle, but it is not an optimal exercise is maximum muscle mass is the main goal.

One of the big reasons why is because the more an exercise has to do with balance, the less effective it is for building muscle. This is the reason why you rarely ever see extremely big people doing Planches.

The best exercises for building muscle are the basic movements like Pull-Up and Dip variations. They are so effective that pretty much every bodybuilder incorporates them into their programming. Planches, not so much.

I am not bashing the planche by any means because it is great for balance, coordination and building up your core strength as well but it was never really meant to be a muscle builder and I doubt it ever will be. Yes it is true that a lot of bodybuilders can't do planches but even if they were able to do them, they still wouldn't do them because they aren't a good muscle builder.

For option #2 above where I should use a weightvest for all of my exercises, does this also apply for jump rope work and hill sprints as well?

It is not as mandatory as with the exercises on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday but if you can incorporate the weightvest on sprints and jump rope work safely then yes you can but just increase the weight in very small increments if you do so that you don't injure yourself. Weighted sprints and conditioning is kind of like weighted calisthenics in the sense that your form has to be solid and you have to slowly ease into it. Get a coach to also look at your form and if it sloppy then you will know that you have to take a few steps backwards.

I am a Powerlifter and I just read your book and it seems like there is a lot to be gained from the incorporation of Calisthenics in my program. My sport is Powerlifting which is all about increasing my Squat, Bench Press and Deadlift. What are some Calisthenic exercises that could help assist these lifts (if there are any)?

To increase your Squat, Bench and Deadlift, you have to practice those lifts often, that's first off.

You can't get better at speaking English by speaking in french. The only problem is that once you get passed the beginner phase, you can't only do the big 3 because

you will get injured pretty quickly. You need some "assistance" and "accessory" exercises that will help improve your lifts. The reason why you can't always do the big 3 is because a lot of heavy barbell work could wear and tear you down pretty fast if it's all you do especially if you are strong. When you are very strong the max attempts will take a lot out of you.

A smart approach would be to do the main movement at the beginning of your workout (Squat, Bench or Deadlift) and then assist it with other exercises that aren't as hard on your joints and CNS. Dumbbell exercises are great for this but bodyweight exercises are also perfect for this because they could help you add extra frequency and volume without destroying your joints, hurting your recovery and they still give you a good training effect.

Below I will show you how bodyweight exercises could increase your big 3, starting with the squat.

SQUAT:



-Hill Sprints: These develop your explosiveness and your posterior chain strength which are extremely important for squats. Jim Wendler once said that Hill Sprints helped his squat out and Jason Ferruggia said that it's rare that people who do a lot of sprinting don't hit PR's when they get back to squatting heavy.

-Glute ham raises: These develop your posterior chain and are a staple in many Powerlifting circles. Many lifters actually do their Glute Ham Raises before Squats and feel a lot stronger. Its good for knee flexion and hip extension so you are killing two birds with one stone as well. The only problem with this exercise is that it requires a glute-ham bench but if you are a powerlifter then you might have it in your gym.

My gym doesn't have a glute ham raise machine but you can do them with the lat pulldown, Pete Rubish style.

Another option if you don't have access to one would be to find a way to hook your feet under something stable so that you can try to replicate a glute ham raise machine. This method may not be exactly like the original GHR but it could still get the job done. These are easy on the joints and the spine so you could do GHR's three times per week and not run into any recovery issues.

-Back extensions 45 degree and horizontal: Back extensions are great for hitting the posterior chain as well. If you are a powerlifter then your gym most likely has this but if you don't have access to it then you can easily just put your feet under parallel dip bars and your hips over the dip bars to replicate a horizontal back extension. Remember that when you are powerlifting you have to try to strengthen the weakest link in the chain. Sometimes people will have very strong legs but it is their lower back that will give out first, if that's you then throw in some back extensions.

-Plank variations are essential for squats because it's hard to lockout a heavy weight with a weak core. Obliques are very underrated for locking out heavy weights as well so you can do some advanced Side Planks where your feet are attached to a TRX if you are ready for it.

BENCH PRESS:



-Ring Dips: These will develop your triceps like nothing else. For more emphasis on the chest simply lean forward a bit and for building up your tricep's just stay upright. If you have a weak lockout then focus on your triceps but if you have trouble getting out of the bottom then you should try ring dips with a chest emphasis to strengthen your chest. A bigger chest will also make the range of motion a little smaller which doesn't seem like much, but every inch and pound counts when you are powerlifting.

-Pull-ups: To bench press heavy weights you will need a strong foundation, in other words, big and strong lats could help improve your bench press if you do them properly.

-Push-up variations (Ring, Handstand, Explosive): Push-ups are great for adding more volume without destroying your shoulders. The Handstand Push-up could actually serve as a great assistance lift for the bench press as well because everybody know's that increasing your relative vertical pushing strength will automatically increase your horizontal pushing strength. This is the reason why lifters will notice that when they increase their Military Press their bench press increase automatically. It's funny because benching heavy won't have a big carryover to your vertical presses.

-Wide Grip Inverted Rows on Rings: These will train your upper and mid back which is very important when trying to bench heavy weights. Since your lats will

get stronger from pull-ups I would recommend that you do inverted rows with your elbows flared out to the sides so that you will work your upper back. Inverted Rows on rings with the elbows flared out is a very humble movement but it will get your upper back bigger and stronger in the process.

Deadlift:



-Glute ham raises: These are a staple for many powerlifters because they strengthen the posterior chain without loading the spine. These are great for assisting your squat but they are great for assisting the deadlift as well since you need strong glutes and hamstrings for power.

-Back extensions (45 degrees and horizontal): These will add some volume and frequency to your training without destroying your joints in the process.

-Front Levers: Front levers are kind of like straight bar pullovers and they teach you how to engage the lats for the deadlift. Some people actually consider this exercise to be the deadlift of the calisthenics world! These also work your core to a great degree along with the long head of the triceps. The combination of increased lat, core and tricep strength will definitely assist you during the deadlift. The role of the lats in the deadlift is to help keep the bar as close to you as possible and the role

of the core is to stay tight throughout the movement for heavier loading potential and protect the lower back. These are two things that the front lever helps you to a great degree, don't sleep on this exercise!

CONCLUSION

Calisthenics could increase your Big 3 lifts, but you have to focus on getting stronger with progressive overload if you really want to see a difference. Never underestimate the power of bodyweight training.

Why do you preach and talk so much about Calisthenics?

If you have been keeping up with the website then you know that I have a passion for bodyweight training which is also known as Calisthenics. The website is called Fitworldexposed to expose all of the myths to the fitness world, but **our other objective is to show people that you don't have to belong to a gym to be big, strong, healthy and in shape.** A gym could definitely help and I go to the gym myself, but not everybody has the time or money, so what are they supposed to do? Some people have kids, some people work 50 hours per week while others live an hour away from the gym. Everybody has their own situations. The point that I am trying to make is that health is like an education, it should be accessible for everybody. It won't fall on your lap, but everybody should have the access to get strong. **You don't have to have a lot of money to be strong, you can't buy health and strength, you have to work for it.**

There are many people who tell me that they can't be fit or in shape because of the lifestyle they live, but you could be strong with minimal equipment and not that many hours per week. The results may not be optimal because you only get what you put in, but it's better than nothing. **The funny thing is that these people will say that they don't have time for training, but they spend countless hours on facebook, twitter, instagram, playing videogames, watching T.V., checking e-mails every two seconds, waking up late everyday and hanging out with people they don't like but they don't have time to take care of their own body?!** At the same time I can't judge, if that's the way people want to live their lives then there's nothing I can do about it. I can only motivate and inspire so many people with my

energy. Just don't get mad about the way you look, feel or perform if you aren't putting in the work and effort. **You could never complain about things that you aren't working for.**

I'm here to tell you that training doesn't have to be a chore, it could be fun and actually enhance your life if you are doing an activity that you love. The big reason why I promote bodyweight training so much is because it's free, but it still produces amazing results if you put in the effort and work. Bodyweight training helps you move better, improve creativity and improvisation while building chemistry with your own body. **There are no weights, you are the weight.**

Type on Youtube stuff like "New york calisthenics", "Ghetto workout" or "Barstarzz", you will see people who train in bar parks instead of gyms. Some of them probably can't afford it and some of them probably can, but that isn't the point. A lot of these people got big and strong without the gym, they have great bodies and incredible levels of strength. At the end of the day effort is effort and nobody could take your hard work away from you.

I want fitness and health to be more accessible, i'm tired of people saying that they can't train and they complain about how they are weak and don't have the body they want. There are no excuses, you can do whatever you put your mind to.

Why are Pull-ups and Dips so effective and could you provide a list of Pull-Up and Dipping mistakes so that I do the movements properly without injuring myself?

Pull-ups and Dips both share something that most exercises don't have, it is moving the whole body through space at once. When performing Pull-ups and Dips your whole body is moving up and down which activates many more muscles than being seated on a machine, the full body tension and neuromuscular activation with these two exercises are unmatched and no machine can ever compare, ever. These are some of the reasons why the two exercises have been popular for so long and why they are considered the Squat and Deadlift of the upper body.

I will show you many mistakes that people make with these lifts and I will provide tips to minimize the risk of the injuries while getting stronger on these lifts as well.

1. Adding too much weight too soon. I always say that you should be able to do 15-20 picture perfect reps on pull-ups or dips to finally have the right to add weight. This will make sure that your joints are finally prepared and that you aren't just rushing it.

2. Using too great of a range of motion. The range of motion on Dips shouldn't be too extreme, but some people really push it, parallel is fine for the most part. Pull-ups require a good range of motion, but some people take it to another extreme and lock out their elbows. Your elbows should be 99% locked, they should still be soft at the bottom position.

3. Neglecting the ring variations. Ring variations of Chins and Dips give your wrists a lot of freedom so they could work around the pain, they are also harder which is good because you won't need as much weight to get the job done.

4. Using handles that are too skinny. Skinny handles aren't the best thing for the elbows and the pain will most likely catch up to you in the long run so why take the risk?

5. Sacrificing form for more reps. For strength or size, it is better to do 5 picture perfect reps than do 10 sloppy reps, remember that.

6. Making Pull-ups and Dips a power exercise in the 1-3 range. I've come to the conclusion that pull-ups and dips aren't the best options for power exercises and there are better alternatives. 1 rep maxes for pull-ups and dips usually just lead to cranky elbows and beat up shoulders. I personally like to stick in the 5-15 rep range with these exercises, but there are always exceptions.

7. Hyperextending the neck throughout the movement. This is so common, especially in the Dip. Try to be very mindful of your head positioning when performing these movements. You want to keep your chin tucked in and don't hyperextend your neck on chin-ups like most people do to get your chin above the bar, use your lats to get up there.

8. Not keeping the glutes and core tight. Most people swing and aren't squeezing

their core and glutes during the movement. Keep your core tight to prevent a shaky set.

9. Not stretching lats and biceps after chin workouts and chest and triceps after dip workouts. Not stretching the muscles you train could lead to tightness and it'll catch up to you overtime.

10. Choosing variations of the exercise that are hurting you. I personally don't do wide grip dips or wide grip pull-ups, since they hurt me as well. I stick with closer grip dips and closer grip pull-ups. These actually hit the biceps and triceps very well in case you didn't know. The range of motion also feels longer too.

11. Too much leg swinging and momentum. This isn't crossfit, use the proper muscles to get you up and down, stop relying on momentum or else you won't build any more muscle or get any stronger.

12. Not changing the variations often enough. Some people will do widegrip pull-ups for 5 years straight without even noticing it, I like to stick to a grip for about 3-8 weeks and then change it up to another grip.

13. Changing the variation too often. Some people change their grip too often. When you do this you are not teaching your body how to progress a movement because you are always changing it. To get good at something you have to do it often, but you have to find the balance and not overdue it.

14. Too many dips and pullups, not enough rowing. Many of us got caught in the trap of thinking that pull-ups and dips are all that we need for a good upper body, but you can get injuries down the road if you aren't including a ton of rowing variations. You should also being more rowing than vertical pulling for overall health.

15. Not changing up your rep range from time to time. People will do the same old 3x8 or 4x6 over and over again. Sometimes it's ok to try a new rep range. Maybe something like 3x12-15 for pull-ups and dips could change things up and spark some new growth if you aren't strong in that rep range.

16. Always taking your sets until failure. If you want to get good at these two exercises then try to avoid training till failure. Not only will going to failure stall your progress but going to failure means that you keep going even though your form gets sloppy. Sloppy form can lead to injuries if you aren't careful. It would be wiser to do 10 clean reps instead of 12 sloppy reps. Trust me, most people who are really good at pull-ups and dips always go atleast 1 rep short of absolute failure. Not going to failure is also easier on your CNS as well so you aren't burning yourself out.

17. Not focusing on the mind muscle connection and the contraction. The MMC and the contraction are extremely important when trying to put on muscle and make the right muscles do the work. You want to feel the proper muscles working otherwise you are just spinning your wheels.

18. Not tracking your PR'S and trying to beat your last performance. If you did 10 pull-ups and 10 dips last week but aren't striving to get 11 this week then you aren't maximizing your time in the gym or at home. You have to try to beat your last performance or atleast attempt to. Even if you do 10 pull-ups again this week but with better form, that's still a PR. Keep progressing and you will see results. Sometimes you have to fix your form and take a few steps back but as long as you are progressing you will be fine.

19. Not taking a break from Dips and Chins from time to time. Some programs would benefit from not having chins or dips just to give your body a little break from those movements. You don't want to get overuse injuries so sometimes you have to play it safe. Elbow tendonitis is very common and many people get them from doing the same movements over and over again. Although if you are doing Pull-Ups and Dips on rings then they will be a lot easier on your shoulders, elbows and wrists than if you were abusing those 2 exercises with the straight bar.

20. Not getting coaches to critique your technique on Chins and Dips. If you want to improve anything then it's important to get somebody to critique you. Make sure that the coach you are asking knows a lot about training and actually know's what he/she is talking about.

21. Going extremely wide on chin-ups and dips. Wide grip Chins and Dips aren't the best idea in the world for people who have injury prone shoulders. Some may be able to do them pain free but most people will get some sort of pain from wide chins and dips done for long periods of time. A bit outside of shoulder width will work just fine on pull-ups and some bodybuilders like Dorian Yates actually say that the closer grip gives your lats more range of motion and a bigger stretch which could result in more growth.

22. Not respecting the variation. Some people will be doing tricep dips with a straight posture but once the set starts getting heavy then they will start doing a forward lean just to get all the way up, this is not good and if that's the case then maybe you are not going to get the results you are looking for.

23. Resting too long at the bottom of the pull-up or at the top of the dip. If you are taking over 10 seconds to continue the exercise then chances are that you are resting in that position. It's like when people are doing squats, but they stay at the top position for 30 seconds, **rest when the set is done, not when you are in the middle of it.**

When do you recommend stretching?

I personally never recommend stretching at the beginning because stretching when you are cold can only make things worse. I recommend that you warm-up properly with some foam rolling, lacrosse ball work, dynamic work and activation drills as well and stretch the muscles that you just trained after your workout.

I am very convinced that Calisthenics is one of the best ways to train for results and great health, but can you give me a list of some of the possible disadvantages of bodyweight training?

Everybody knows that I have a passion for training. I will always love weightlifting but lately I've been loving bodyweight training. Weightlifting does have its disadvantages but today I want to talk about the disadvantages of bodyweight training.

1. LOWER BODY TRAINING FOR MASS

Go watch all of the videos of people who train with strictly bodyweight movements, you will notice that they have phenomenal upper bodies from all of the chins, dips, pushups and other exercises but their lower body won't be as impressive as far as muscular development goes. They still have developed lower bodies and they are definitely explosive from all of the box jump variations (bilateral and unilateral) and hill sprints, but they lack mass. Let's say if you REALLY want to add a few inches to your legs with bodyweight exercises, it will be very hard and you will start to stall after a while. You will make progress with:

-Pistol Squats

-Glute Ham Raises (unilateral or bilateral)

-Bodyweight leg curls (unilateral or bilateral)

-Bridge variations

-Lunges

-Cossack squats

...etc

for a while but it leg mass might stall after a while (unless if you are very heavy).

These are all great movements, but eventually you will have to add weight to see a difference. Pistol squats won't build up the legs like squats with a barbell on 2 legs and that's the truth. You can't do pistol squats and expect to get the same results as someone doing a back squat, that's ignorant. The legs are very strong muscles and eventually in your bodyweight quest you will get to a point where you need to add some sort of weight in order to build more size. It might not be for a long time, but the day will eventually come. Although this does not apply to the upper body.

At the same time it all depends on what you want because if you are able to do 20 single leg glute ham raises, 20 single leg TRX hamstring curls, 30 Pistol squats, fast sprints on an extremely steep hill and box jumps on a high box then your legs will still have jacked legs. I just think that you won't get to your lower body genetic potential without Squatting, leg pressing and Romanian Deadlifting heavy weights.

2. POSTERIOR CHAIN STRENGTH AND POWER WITH CALISTHENICS CAN ONLY GO SO FAR.

This rule is pretty similar to the one listed above, you will make a lot of progress in explosiveness in power with:

-Box Jumps (unilateral or bilateral)

-Hill Sprints

-Sprint variations

-GHR

...etc

These are amazing exercises, but eventually after years and years, the results might not be optimal. You would need some sort of weight for RDL's, Olympic lifts or other free weight exercises if you really want to reach your potential. If this wasn't the case then you would see a lot more athletes training without the barbell, but that simply isn't the case.

3. GRIP STRENGTH STARTS TO LAG AFTER A WHILE FOR EXTERNAL LOADS

Your grip strength for external loads is something that will eventually start to lag. It's true that you can easily add thick handles or FatGripz to your pull-ups, inverted rows and other exercises; this will improve your relative grip strength. When it comes time to carrying heavy objects then I don't think that your grip strength will

be as good as it could be even though you might be able to do one arm pull-ups with 3 inch fatgripz. Want to be very strong at carrying heavy objects? Practice carrying heavy objects, it's that simple. Want to hang onto thick bars for longer periods of time? Do pull-ups with fat handles.

You can't have one without the other. For well-balanced grip strength, you need to be able to lift your own bodyweight and external loaded objects as well to maximize and get to your grip strength potential.

4. TRAPS WILL START TO LAG AFTER A WHILE

When you think about trap exercises and bodyweight exercises, what comes to your mind? There are a few movements such as the handstand shrug, inverted shrugs and upper back ring exercises would work too but eventually your traps will start to lag because the traps need some heavier resistance to grow at their full potential.

The traps love and respond very well to holding heavy weights. You can make progress with a lot of these exercises but sooner or later you will need to throw in a weighted exercise for optimal results and maximal trap growth. The traps are meant to handle very heavy weight so if you want to get them bigger or stronger then you'll eventually need more than your own bodyweight.

You can build some amazing traps with the use of barbells and reach your genetic potential for trap development without Calisthenics but it doesn't go the other way around. Some of the best trap exercises are Rack Pulls, Snatch Grip High Pulls and Dumbbell Shrugs.

I guess that big traps and calisthenics just don't go that well together.

Conclusion

So there you have it, there may be some disadvantages here and there but guess what? Weights have their own disadvantages too, every style of training is going to have some flaws here and there.

I heard that you seriously brought up the width of your lats by doing high volume Pull-Ups, can you explain your story?

I remember it like it was yesterday, I was studying for finals at school and my stress was going through the roof. I barely had time to sleep, but worst of all I couldn't find much time to train due to the heavy workload of essays, assignments, tests and orals.

When you are in the training game it is good to always have some sort of goal. Improving my compound lifts and getting a thick and wide back were at the top of my priority list as far as training was concerned. I then thought to myself, "What can I do during this stressful school period to make the best with the time I have to get closer to my goal?"

High Volume Pull-up and Chin-Up Variations.

Luckily I had a pull-up bar in my room with many different grips and handles to play with. The plan was to do 300 pull-ups or chin-ups a day for a full week. It didn't matter if it was underhand, neutral grip, over and under grip or overhand, as long as I got 300 pull-ups a day for a week. Since I was very pressed for time I would do my workouts with Pavel's GTG (Greasing the groove) style which meant that I would spread the workload throughout the day. I would wake up and do 50 chin-ups, then if I saw any kind of bar that I could hang from throughout the day then I would do more, then before bed I would do however many I was missing. After a few days I noticed my back was getting a lot wider and it felt good.

After the week was finally over I thought that I was going to have more time on my hands so I would be able to get back to the gym but I actually got even more work to do for school but I didn't stress and I told myself, "What will happen if I do 300 pull-ups a day for another week?". I did them again for a second week and believe it or not I even did it a third week. That means that I did a total of 6300 pull-ups in only 21 days which is a lot of volume. The crazy thing was that I didn't even get any elbow pain from repeating the same movement over and over again. This is probably due to the fact that I was using good form, wasn't doing them weighted, wasn't training till failure, was changing the grips and wasn't doing any other

exercises besides some dips here and there so I managed to recovery pretty well. At the end of the 3 weeks I got a few things:

-More mental toughness and discipline from doing the same thing over and over even though sometimes I didn't want to.

-Wider lats which gave me a nicer v-taper. Don't get anything mixed up, you won't automatically get a v-taper from high volume pull-ups but I definitely added a bit of size in that area because I basically did a 3 week pull-up specialization program.

-Bigger arms as well. The chin-up and pull-up work the biceps to a great extent but did you know that the triceps have to contract with the lats during pull-ups? They aren't the main muscle you should be feeling but they still get some work which is why I would wake up with sore triceps on some days from doing a lot of pull-ups. My forearms also got a little bigger as well.

-My back also got a bit of thickness even though I was only doing vertical pulling. There is a myth out there that Pull-Ups and Chin Ups are only good for back width (which may be true to a certain extent) but you can still get a bit of thickness as well but don't count on it too much. In my training experience and the experience of many other lifters as well, back thickness comes from a lot of rowing and deadlifting.

Since there is no Deadlifting in the Calisthenics programs that I provided then you will be getting your back thickness from the inverted row variations and the Rear Delt Ring Flies can help as well but the rows will give you the most bang for your buck.

What valuable lesson did I learn through my experience?

I learned about the importance of high frequency and volume for muscle growth.

If you want to be good at something, which in this case is to bring up my lats, how will I see maximum progress by training them only once per week? In one year we might get sick a few times, have weeks off from school or work, possible de-loads,

rest weeks and the list goes on. Lets just say that the average gym rat trains 45 weeks out of the year (it might be less but I am being a bit generous). This means that if you follow the rules of some of the bodybuilders and the “experts” and follow split routines where you train a muscle group once per week then you will only be hitting your legs 45 times per year or your back 45 times per year.

45 workouts might sound like a lot but if you put it into perspective there are 365 days in a year and you trying to bring up a muscle group but only hitting it 45 times in a year which is nothing. I don’t care if you are doing one very hard workout for that muscle group per week, the frequency is still very low for a drug free lifter. I think that a muscle should be hit atleast twice per week if you want to bring it up and this could even go up to 3, 4 or even 5 days if done intelligently.

On the flipside, we have to be realistic and understand that you can only bring up so many muscle groups at once. I’d say that you can only really focus on one or two muscle groups at once during specialization programs. Will the other muscles still grow and get some good stimulation? Sure, but not every muscle group can grow at a super fast rate. You have to think about priorities. When you try to do too much at once you end up becoming the jack of all trades and the master of none. The same thing applies for maximal strength and size, you have to pick one for a few weeks or even months if you want to see some big improvements.

Back to the frequency topic, who’s going to have bigger legs, the person who does lower body workouts 45 times per year or the person who does them 90 times per year? The answer should be obvious. In this article I will explain to you with many examples of how frequency is one of the most important factors when trying to build muscle. I will go from the neck all the way down to the calves and explain in further detail.

NECK AND TRAPS

Take a look at most fighters, freestyle wrestlers, grapplers and you will see most of them have impressive traps and an impressive neck. The reason for their neck development is not only because they train them often, but because they need a strong neck to survive in the fighting environment. From a young age they have been doing a lot of neck bridges and things of that nature and slowly increased the

frequency and volume overtime to the point where their necks had no choice but to get bigger and stronger.

SHOULDERS

Take a look at people who have been swimming for a long time and you will notice that they have broad shoulders. My mom is one example and I have met people who used to compete in swimming who had great shoulder development as well as wide lats. Different ways of swimming hit your delts in different ways and kind of simulate front, side and rear raises to a certain degree. Type on google; "professional swimmers" and you will see that most of the swimmers have very developed deltoids.

LATS

Take a look at rock climbers and you will notice that they have great lat and forearm development. The reason for their wide lats is that the sport of rock climbing mostly involves vertical pulling. Pull-ups and Chin-ups are coincidentally the best lat builders in existence so it makes sense why they have such developed backs. To climb a mountain would be equivalent to doing hundreds of pull-ups. Along with wide backs they also have very strong relative grip strength from all of the holding and pulling they do.

MID BACK & UPPER BACK

Tug of war athletes have huge mid back and upper backs due to all of the horizontal pulling they do. The rock climbers above have big lats from all of the vertical pulling movements but doing tug of war is like doing a seated row, it is a horizontal pulling movement based sport so it makes sense that these competitors will have thick backs as well.

BICEPS

Arm wrestlers have huge biceps (obviously), they also have good forearms and good grip strength to go along with it. It is basically like a manual resistance curl and your biceps will definitely blow up if you are doing arm wrestling several times per week with strong people. Also if you compete you will eventually go up

against stronger people which will mean that your biceps will have to find a way to adapt, can you guess what happens after?

TRICEPS AND CORE

Gymnasts are known for their infamous triceps and also their strong abdominal's. They also have great bicep development from all of the straight arm work they do. One of the reasons why their triceps are so big is because they do a lot of work that simulates a dip so they do a lot of work on their hands which means that the triceps and core have to support their whole body. Gymnasts train several times per week so it makes sense why they are so jacked. Bodyweight exercises aren't as taxing and as hard on the CNS as exercises like the Deadlift so the exercises done by the gymnasts can be done with a high frequency and volume (most of the exercises).

FOREARMS

Construction workers have huge forearms because they are basically using their hands all day long. They are carrying heavy things, molding, screwing, chopping and all of the frequency adds up overtime and the body has no choice but to adapt to all of the workload, this will result in bigger forearms.

GLUTES AND HAMSTRINGS

Sprinters are known for having good hamstring and glute development, the reason for this is because sprinting is a hip dominant sport. The more you lean forward when you run, the more your hamstrings and glutes work. The more upright you are the more your quads work (just like in the front squat).

QUADS

Cycling is a quad dominant sport and the top cyclists definitely have the legs to show for it. The quads respond very well to different rep ranges and if the volume and frequency is high enough then they will grow as long as you keep progressing.

CALVES

Ballerinas are known for having huge calves and everytime I go to see dance shows I am always fascinated by the calf development of dancers who spend a lot of time on their toes. Being on your toes a lot will build up a lot of frequency and the calves coincidentally respond very well to high volume training. Arnold's calves were his worst body part and the way he brought up his calves was with high volume training.

Conclusion

I just wanted to share my experience because it was funny how I pretty much broke all of the rules in the book and made progress. After those 3 weeks I was finally able to see my lats from the front view which was an amazing feeling. Do I advise the readers of this site to be doing 300 pull-ups per day? Hell no, but I have no regrets on the whole experience either. All I am saying is that sometimes it is ok to break the rules and just test your mental toughness to see what you are really made of (as long as you do it in a smart way and don't go too overboard).

Most importantly, remember that as a drug-free lifter you can't bring everything up at once, you must specialize. What I am trying to say is that if you have any lagging bodypart then hitting it once per week is not enough.

If you look at the Calisthenics program above then you will notice that every muscle group gets hit twice per week which is great for making progress. If you want to make your lats (or any other muscle group for that matter) a stronger muscle as fast as possible then you have to do some specialization work. If you want bigger lats then do pull-ups 3x per week. Frequency is key.

I might have access to a weighted vest, but out of curiosity what is the difference between training with a weight vest vs. bands vs. chains?

A lot of people are curious to know what the difference is between training with a weight vest, chains, and bands. They're all great tools to use with your training (especially with calisthenics). Let's go over the 3 of these tools.

WEIGHT VESTS



Weight vests are a great tool for pull-ups, dips, inverted rows, push-ups and other body weight exercises. Let's go over using a 50lb weight vest on push-ups. The resistance will be 50lb on the eccentric, pause and concentric phase of the exercise. Which makes sense because the weight is around your body. When you are using a weightvest, the weight is the same throughout the whole exercise. Weightvests also aren't the most convenient thing to carry around and travel with because they can get pretty heavy.

CHAINS



Chains work a bit differently than weight vests do, although this depends on where you put them. If you wrap chains around you then it's similar too a weight vest. If you're doing push-ups with chains on your neck then you will notice that the chains will be on the floor at the bottom of the rep. Doing this will make the eccentric and pause easier compared to the concentric part of the repetition which is also known as the lockout. So it basically makes the exercise easier for the chest and harder for the triceps.

This is good for people with shoulder injuries too because the bottom position is where your shoulders are the most vulnerable. You can also do this with pull-ups and dips, just put the chain around your lower body. Quick note, if you put chains around your neck when you are doing dips with a chest emphasis you will feel more of the weight in your chest as opposed to just strapping a plate to a dipping belt. This is due to the fact that the load is placed in a different place.

Chains can be pretty heavy and can be just as annoying to carry around and travel as the weightvest is.

BANDS



Bands are pretty comparable to chains except they are lighter and easier to carry around. It's a lot more convenient to put 50lb bands in your bag than 50lb chains or a 50lb weight vest. Let's discuss doing push-ups with a band around your neck. Hold the other parts of the band with your hand then the eccentric and pause will become easier. This will cause the concentric part of the rep to become harder. Although the eccentric phase with a chain or two would be a bit heavier on your neck. Basically the chain is pretty similar to the band, its really the weightvest that is the outcast out of all three of the options.

CONCLUSION

Once again, there is no piece of equipment that is better than the other, these are all just tools and you use the right tools for the right job. If you want to put emphasis on your tricep lockout then you wouldn't use a weightvest because the weightvest keeps the resistance the same throughout the whole movement. If you want to improve your lockout then you would use chains or the bands.

At the same time, you can use a weightvest and chains or a weightvest and bands, it all depends on your fitness level and your goals.

What do I have to do to get bigger and stronger forearms from Calisthenics?

Well at first your forearms will get a lot of work and good stimulation from pull-ups, inverted rows and curling variations. Once you get a bit more advanced and you are well passed level 4 and can do it with ease then you can start incorporating FatGripz or thick handles into your training. These are basically grips that you attach to your pull-up bar, rings or TRX suspension straps to make the handle thicker so that when you hold onto it your grip and forearms will have to work a lot harder.

Once you have FatGripz 2.0 I guarantee that you will be good for a very long time but if you are extremely serious about getting bigger forearms and a stronger grip then you can eventually graduate to FatGripz 2.5 and eventually FatGripz 3.0 (if your hands can even hold it).



OUTRO

That's it folks! No more excuses! Training doesn't have to be as complicated as people make it sound and you can still get solid results without ever having to touch a weight. Although, I don't think you can reach your maximum leg and trap potential as far as size is concerned, the positives of Calisthenics definitely outweigh the negatives. I layed out all of the progressions and I think that I have given you enough progressions to pretty much last you a lifetime. A cool benefit is that you will save a ton of money through the years as well because gym memberships are getting expensive.

Aside from the training, you want to make sure that you get enough sleep and that your stress levels are as low as possible. Your nutrition is also very essential when trying to build muscle so make smart food choices and cut out the junk food that has no nutritional muscle building value.

Weight training isn't the only way to get big and strong, people all around the world have been getting phenominal results with the use of Calisthenics and you can too! Weights may be popular in your country or city, but there are places in the world where Calisthenics is actually the norm! Get strong, no more excuses!