

CALISTHENICS PLAYBOOK

Learn Bodyweight Fitness Visually



FOREWORD

Looking back at the earliest days of [Gravgear](#), I realized our approach was flawed. Posting product images on Instagram felt intrusive, almost like spam. It went against my central belief: to offer value before asking for anything in return.

Growing up, I found two passions that ignited my spirit - calisthenics and drawing. The former unlocked the impressive capabilities of our bodies, and the latter brought my creative ideas to life. Suddenly, it hit me: why not blend these passions?

Thus, Yellow Dude was born - a fusion of fitness insights and playful sketches. The response was astounding. The content resonated so strongly that I devoted myself to creating these pieces for two years, rarely mentioning Gravgear. Yellow Dude didn't generate revenue, but it brought immeasurable joy.

The affection that Yellow Dude received indicated it was time for him to evolve into his own brand. This book marks that transformation. It is a curated compilation of our shared social media content, enhanced with refined illustrations and valuable insights from experienced coaches, offering a guide that is both enjoyable and actionable.

CONTRIBUTOR CREDITS



Meet William Soo ([@wsoo_mvmt](#)), a fitness coach with over 17 years' experience in calisthenics, mobility, handstands, and strength and conditioning. Starting off as a bodybuilder, William transitioned to calisthenics, sacrificing 7kg of muscle for improved bodily freedom. Nowadays, William displays an emphasis on exploration, focusing on gaining more ranges of motion to push the limits of the body and mind. Throughout his journey of setbacks and success, William uses his experience to guide others achieve their goals by providing simple, realistic, and thought-provoking advice.



Marcus Wong ([@mrwong_sw](#)) is a seasoned calisthenics athlete and coach. He has honed his skills for over five years and has a knack for the challenging Planche movement. Marcus found calisthenics at 15, a gym-less fitness enthusiast looking for a way to work out. Despite hurdles and injuries, he persisted and mastered the basics, then advanced skills like handstands and planche. Today, Marcus leverages his hard-earned insights to guide others on their fitness journey. He underscores safe and efficient training, helping others avoid the pitfalls he encountered. He sees his role as a coach as a way to share knowledge, which he views as the most rewarding part of his journey.

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DISCLOSURE

This content is here to help you make progress in your health and fitness journey. But remember, it's a general guide. We've based the advice on personal experiences, government guidelines, and scientific research.

But here's the thing - it's not a replacement for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. All workouts should be performed without pain. If you experience discomfort or have health issues, injuries or any other problems that could get worse with exercise, you should get in touch with a doctor or a personal trainer.

The content does not promote unhealthy body image or extreme workout routines. We've put a lot of work into providing accurate and clinically proven training recommendations and educational resources. But how you interpret and use this information is ultimately up to you.

We're proud of our work, and we hope it helps you. But we're not responsible for how you use the information. And just like any other resource, it may not have the most recent information. We've tried to make the advice in this content as helpful as possible, based on personal experience, government guidelines, and scientific research where we can.

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TL;DR: This is a fitness guide, not medical advice. Workouts should be pain-free. Seek professional help if needed. Exercise has risks. Content copyrighted by Gravgear Pte. Ltd.

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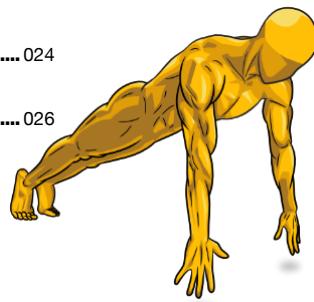
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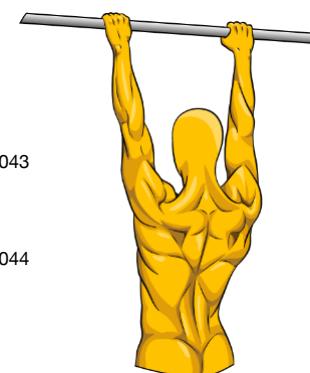


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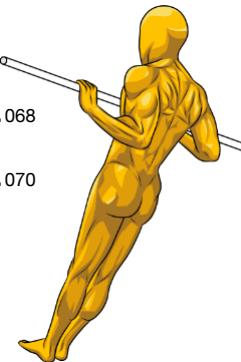
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OVERVIEW

The book unfolds with three key sections, each designed to help master a unique skill: one-arm push-ups, pull-ups, and pistol squats.

Each section is filled with at least seven workouts, progressing from straightforward to more challenging ones. Detailed tips accompany these workouts, with some even based on scientific research. Since many individuals tend to neglect pull-oriented workouts, the book introduces warm-up exercises specifically for the pull-ups section. These workouts prime your back muscles and prepare them for the main routines.

In the end, the Routine section lays out a gradual progression for all the workouts across each section. It provides a clear, step-by-step plan that makes mastering each skill more manageable.

PLANK HOLD	BANDED OVERHEAD PULL-APARTS	BODYWEIGHT SQUATS
SCAPULA PUSH-UPS	BANDED HORIZONTAL PULL-APARTS	NARROW STANCE SQUATS
NEGATIVE PUSH-UPS	BANDED PULL-DOWNS	DEEP SQUATS
NORMAL PUSH-UPS	BENT OVER BARBELL ROWS	BULGARIAN SPLIT SQUATS
WIDE PUSH-UPS	PASSIVE HANG	COSSACK SQUATS
DIAMOND PUSH-UPS	SCAPULA PULL-UPS	PISTOL SQUATS EASIER VARIANTS
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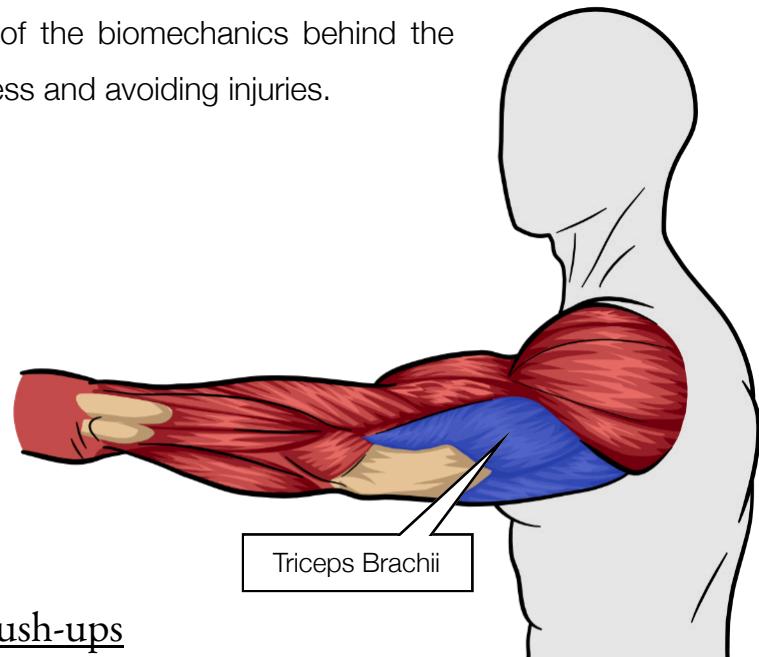
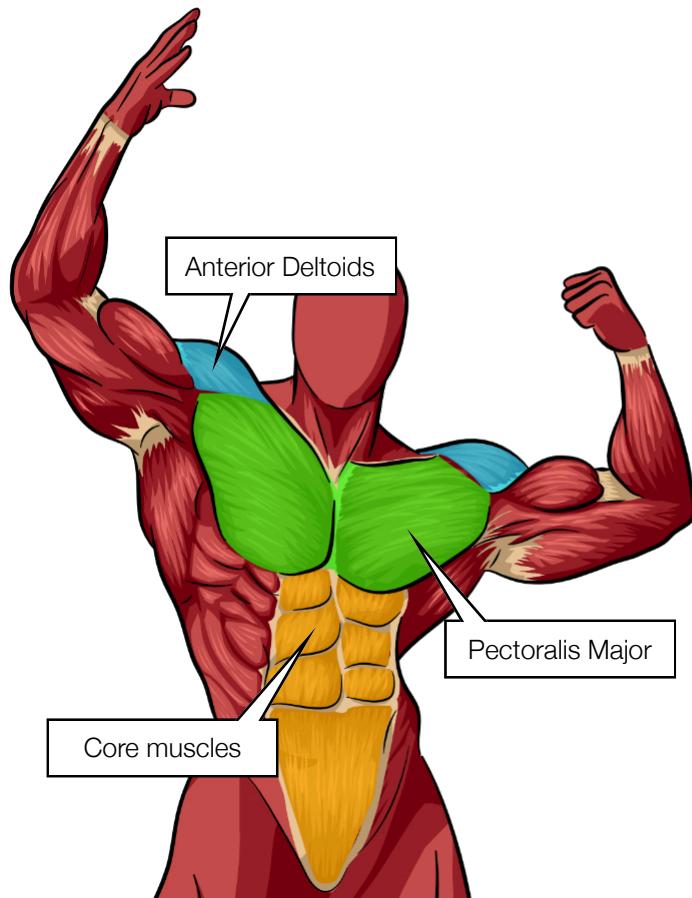
ONE-ARM PUSH-UPS

ONE-ARM PUSH-UPS PROGRAM INTRODUCTION

This program will help you learn to do a one-arm push-up. Regardless of your current fitness level, the plan is structured to guide you through each progression. It begins with the most fundamental exercise, the plank hold, which sets the foundation for all push-up variations to follow. By the end of this program, not only will you have learned to perform a one-arm push-up, but you will also have built a solid understanding of the biomechanics behind the movement. This understanding, we believe, is the key to maintaining long-term fitness and avoiding injuries.

01

PUSH-UPS

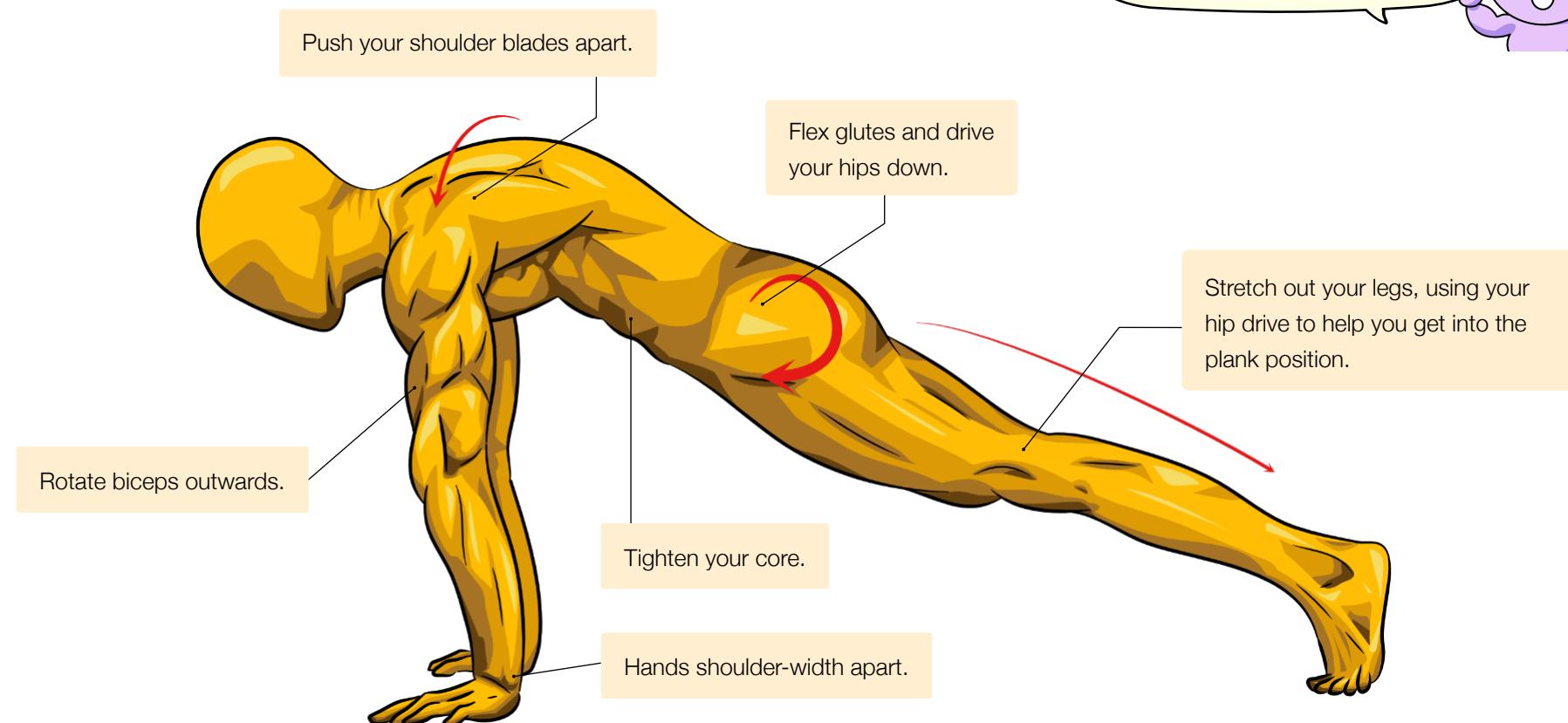


Targeted muscles in push-ups

The critical muscles put to work during push-ups are the pectorals (chest muscles), deltoids (shoulder muscles), and triceps (back of the arms). These muscles serve as the primary movers in the push-up action. However, it's important to remember that push-ups are a compound exercise, meaning they engage multiple muscle groups simultaneously. Additional muscle groups like the core and legs are also involved in maintaining proper form. Still, they aren't the main drivers of the movement.

PLANK HOLD

The plank hold is a foundational exercise that builds endurance and strengthens various muscle groups, including your core, shoulders, and glutes. It's an isometric exercise, meaning you maintain a single position for a specified duration. Mastering the plank hold teaches body control and stability, two vital elements of successful push-ups.

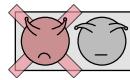


Remember to breathe. Try to keep your breath steady and even as you hold the plank. Holding your breath can increase blood pressure. It might even make you feel dizzy or light-headed.

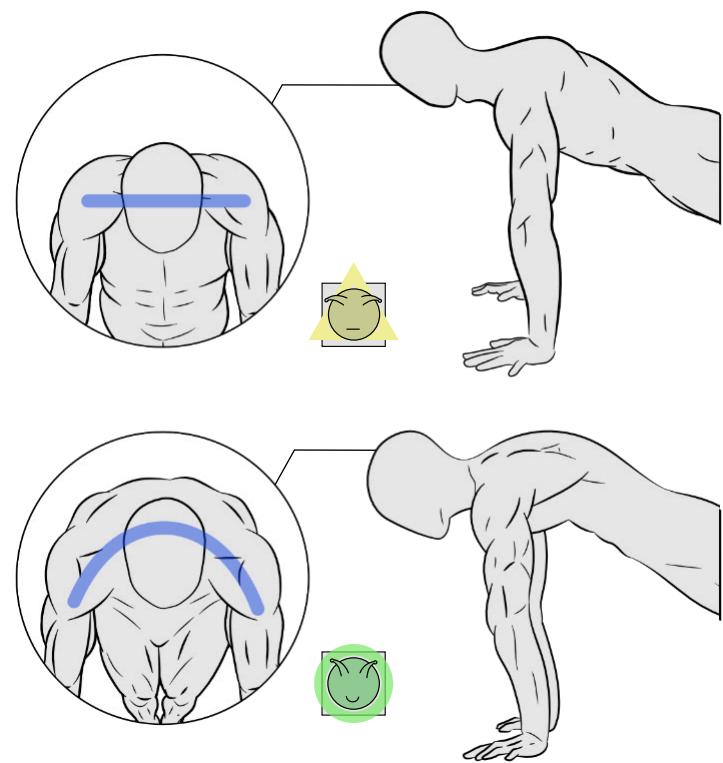
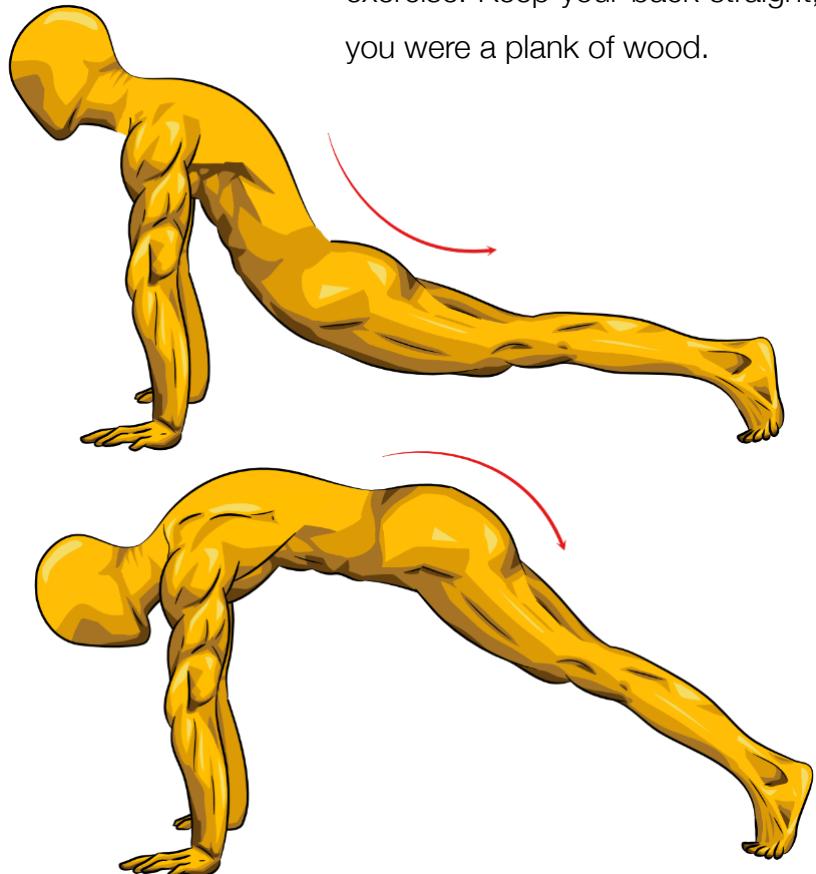


01

PUSH-UPS

NOTE Allowing the lower back to sag/pike

Sagging your lower back or lifting your hips too high (piking) can stress your back. It reduces the effectiveness of the exercise. Keep your back straight, as if you were a plank of wood.

**Push scapula outwards**

In a standard plank hold, many adopt a neutral shoulder position. Yes, it's doable and acceptable, but it could be better.

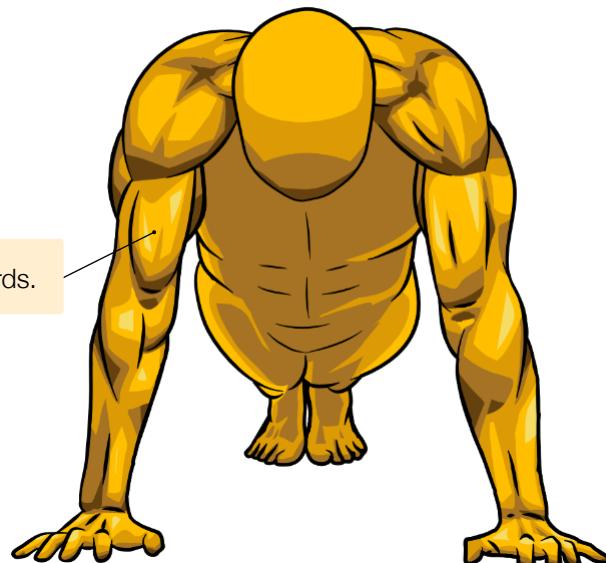
The scapula should be actively pushed outwards as much as possible, creating an inverted U shape when viewed from the front. This is for more than just form's sake. The chest muscles are contracted more intensely, leading to a stronger push. They are laying a solid foundation for advanced skills like the planche push-up or even the full planche (not included in this program).

SCAPULA PUSH-UPS

Scapula push-ups are all about the shoulder blades. The goal is to strengthen your scapular muscles. These muscles often get less attention but play a significant role in stabilizing your shoulder during push-ups.

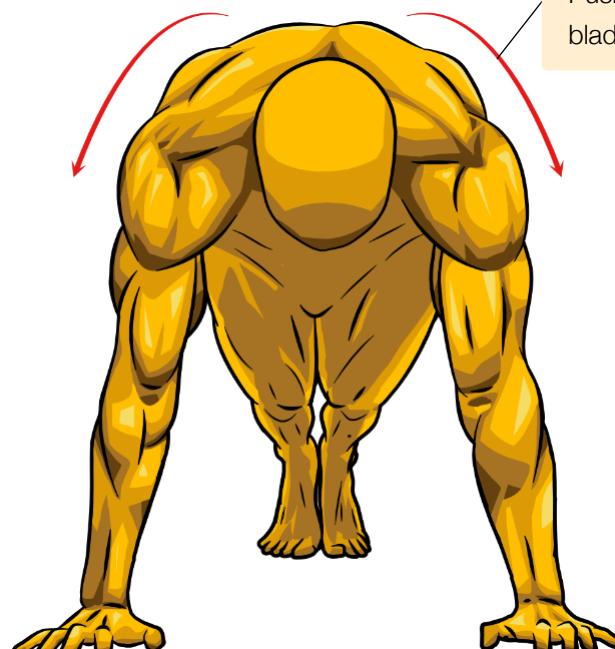
In a scapula push-ups, you maintain a plank position but focus on moving your shoulder blades in and out while keeping your arms straight. Remember, it's not a regular push-up. The elbow bending isn't involved here. It may feel tricky at first, but once you get the hang of it, you'll start noticing the improved shoulder stability in your push-ups.

■ Initial position

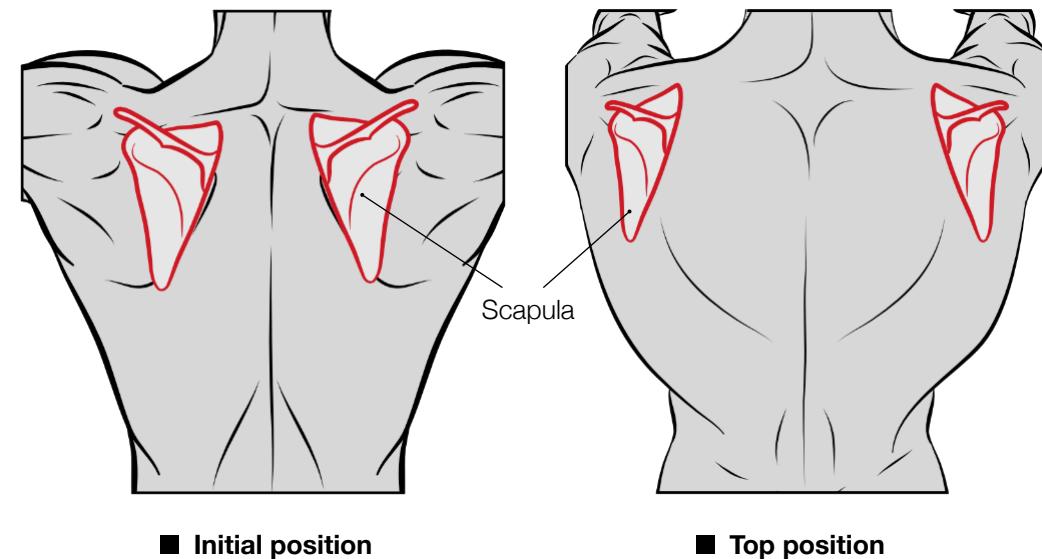


Hands shoulder-width apart.

■ Top position



◀ Hold 1 second at the top to complete 1 rep.



Scapula action

Initial position: Start with your shoulder blades lowered and squeezed together as tightly as possible. Keep your arms straight and your whole body engaged.

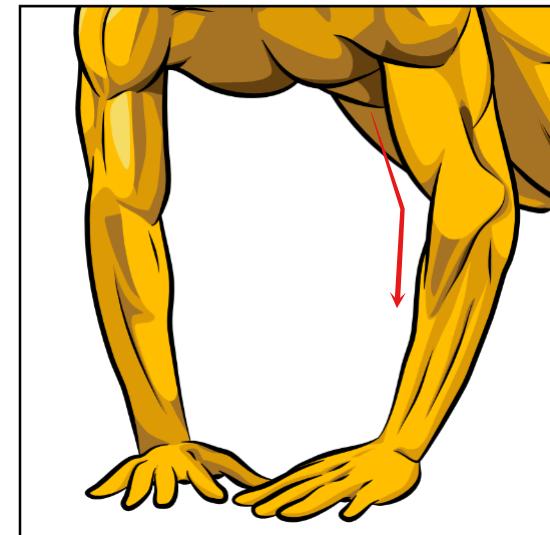
Top position: Aim for the maximum spread of your shoulder blades at the top. Why does this matter? The further the travel distance of your scapula, the more it works your stabilizing muscles.

Half-hearted scapula movements shortchange your progress. To boost strength gains, go all in with each rep - from the most profound depression to the fullest protraction of your shoulder blades.

NOTE Bending the Arms



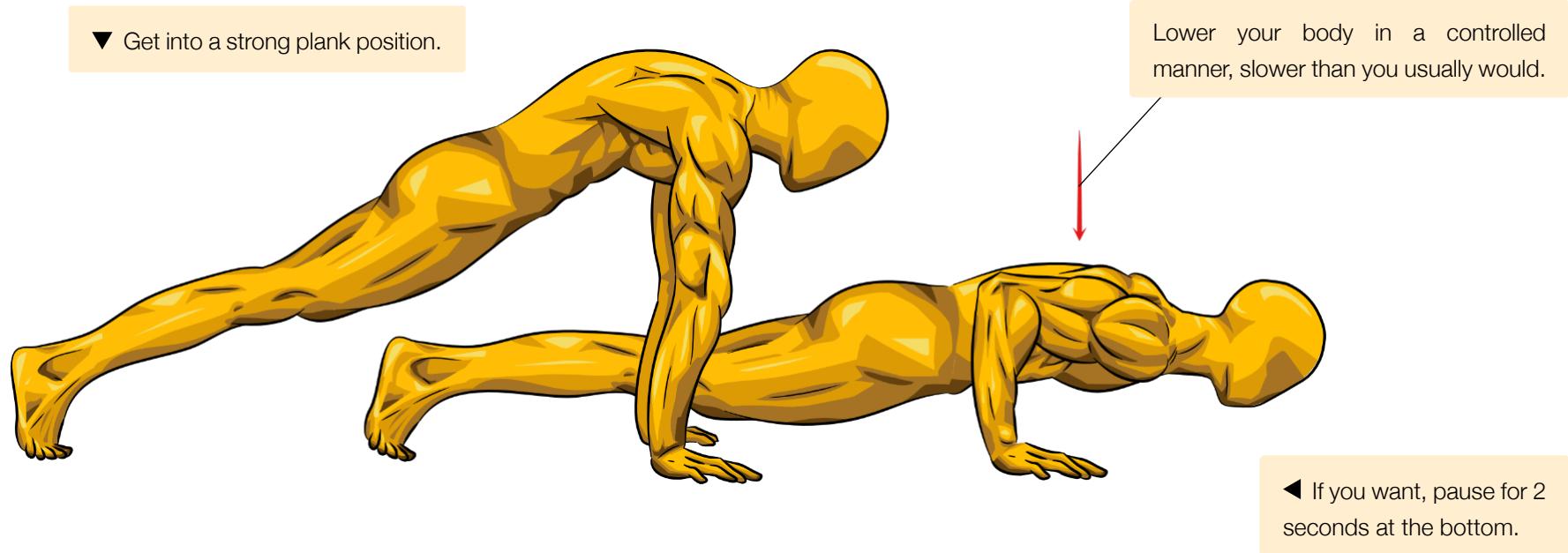
Bending the arms redirects the stress from the scapula to the triceps and pectorals, morphing the exercise into a traditional push-up. For scapula-focused push-ups, the arms must stay straight.

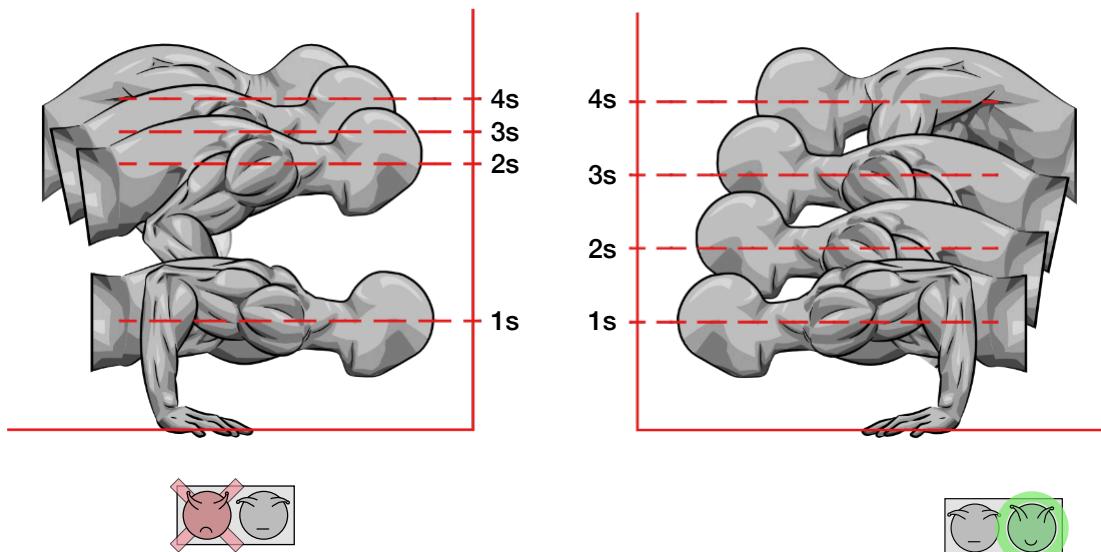


NEGATIVE PUSH-UPS

How about turning the push-up world upside down? Welcome to negative push-ups, the unsung heroes of strength training. These are about focusing on the lowering phase - the 'negative' half of the push-up - and performing it slower than usual.

Negative push-ups are all about controlled resistance. They're not just push-ups done in reverse. They train your muscles differently, teaching them to control the eccentric contraction - when your muscles lengthen while still under tension. This eccentric focus is not only a game-changer for muscle growth but also greatly boosts your overall push-up performance.



NOTE Controlled descent

The target is a steady, controlled descent that lasts between 3 to 5 seconds for each rep. Avoid rushing through the lowering phase. Instead, evenly distribute your descent throughout this time. For instance, if the aim is a 4-second descent, plan to lower about 25% each second.

This detailed approach requires more control and trains muscles to maintain strength as they lengthen. The slow, measured lowering keeps muscles under tension for longer, stimulating muscle growth and enhancing overall push-up strength.

Uncontrolled drop

An uncontrolled drop during a push-up often indicates a weak point in the eccentric phase. If you find yourself dropping suddenly instead of lowering smoothly, it's likely that you're spending too much time at one phase of the movement.



To get better, try to work more on the point where the sudden drop happens. It can also shorten the overall time you take to lower yourself.

Negative push-ups may feel more challenging than regular ones. But that's where the magic happens. Stick with it, and you'll soon see a marked improvement in your strength and push-up proficiency.

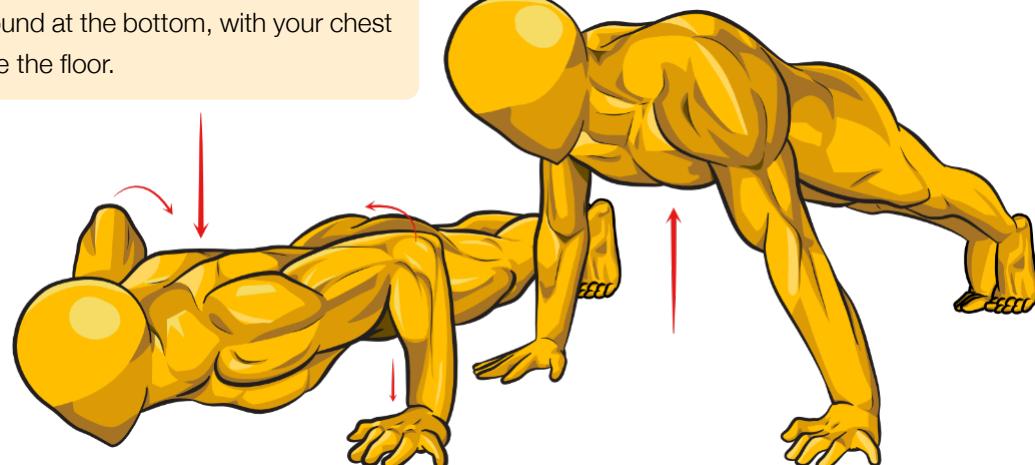
NORMAL PUSH-UPS

Having mastered the earlier push-up variations, you're ready for the gold standard of bodyweight exercises: the normal push-up. This classic move is a comprehensive body workout, enhancing strength and muscle definition. It's not just an upper body exercise; it also challenges your core. The power of the normal push-up lies in its simplicity. Although it may appear straightforward, it is the foundation for advanced exercises. Thus, mastering this respected move is crucial.

Positioning: Akin to a strong plank position: hands shoulder-width apart, core engaged, body straight from head to heels, and legs extended.

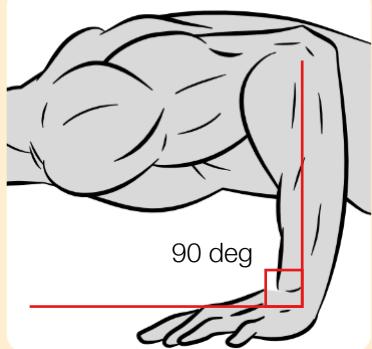


Descending: Start a controlled descent, maintaining elbow position close to the body and chest directed towards the floor. Your forearm should be nearly perpendicular to the ground at the bottom, with your chest just above the floor.

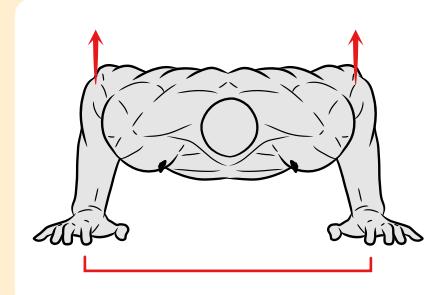
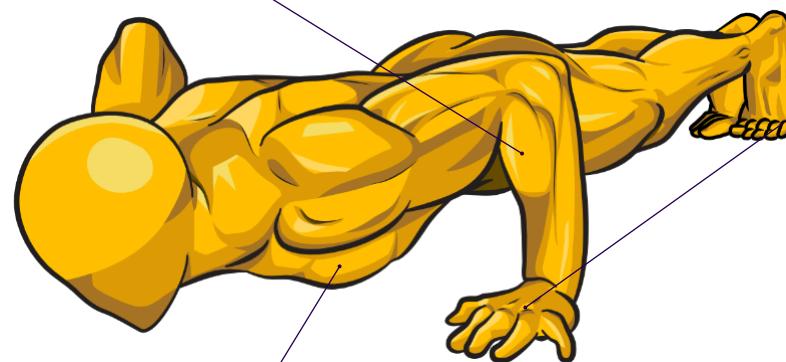


Ascending: Engage your chest, shoulder, and arm muscles to push your body back to the initial plank position. Remember to maintain full-body tension and controlled movement throughout the rep.

Descending



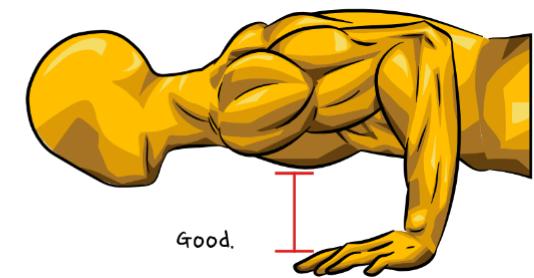
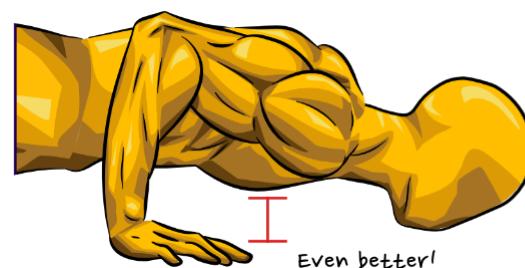
Forearms should align nearly perpendicular to the ground for a comfortable wrist position and to prevent elbow flaring.



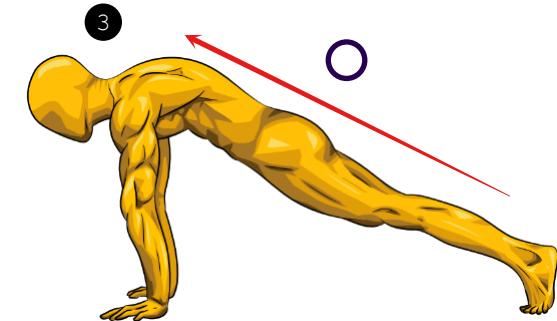
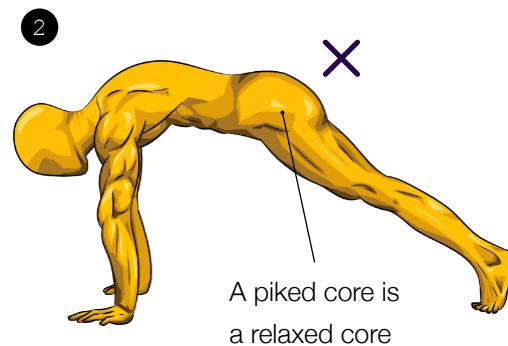
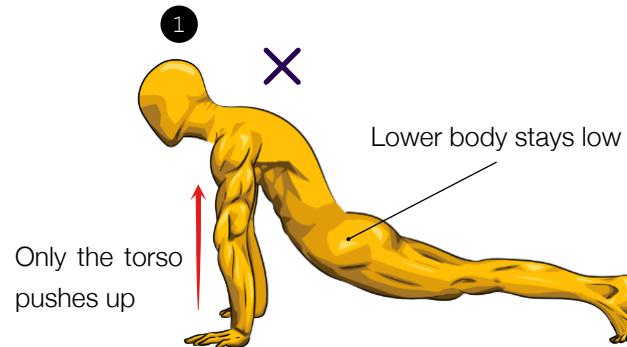
Place hands apart at shoulder width. From the front, forearms should appear straight up.

Optimal Chest Activation

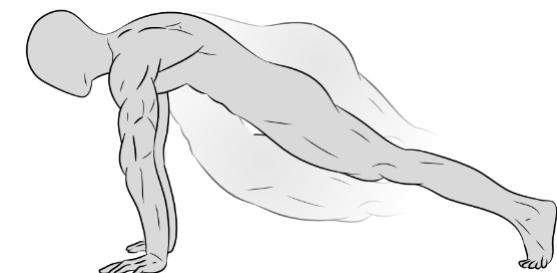
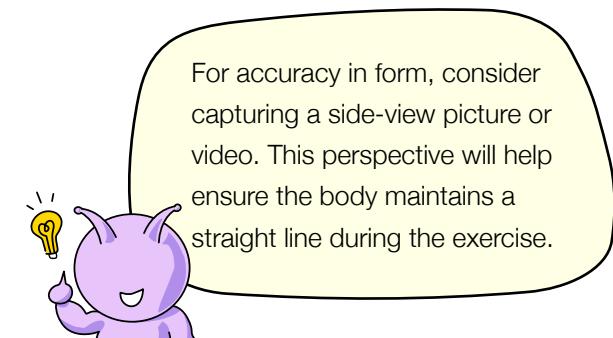
Strive to lower your chest just above the ground at the bottom of the push-up.

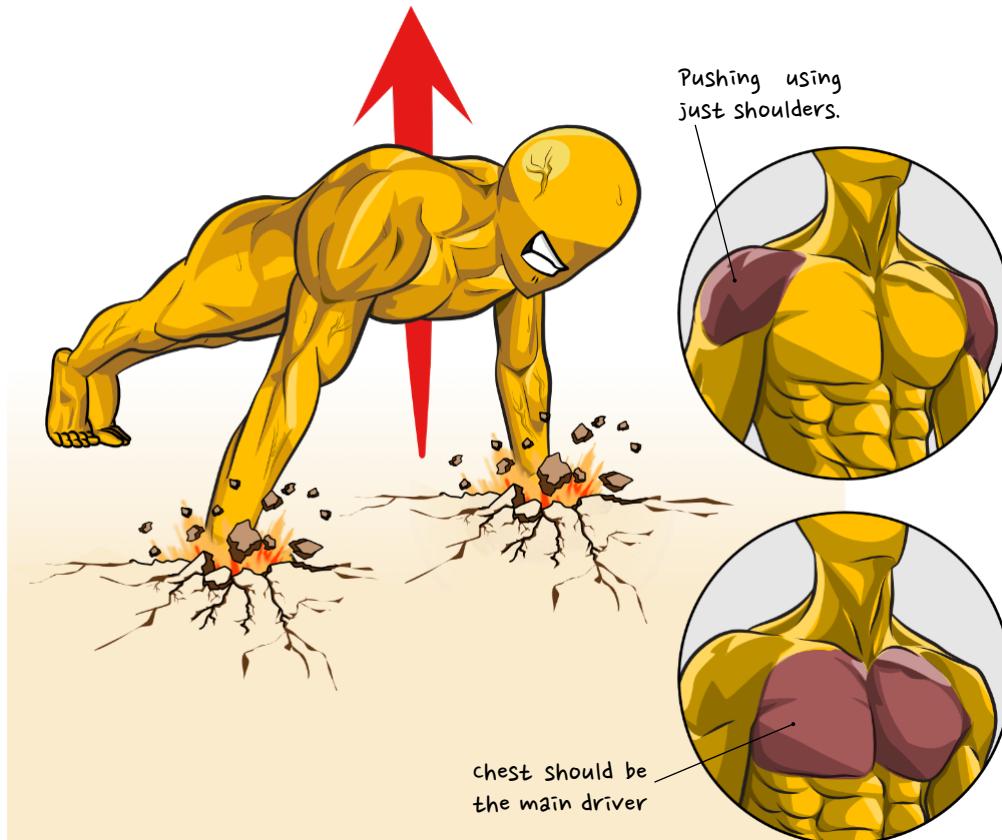


Ascending



- ➊ Sagging the core occurs when the midsection drops towards the ground. It is a default body mechanism as fatigue sets in, seeking to conserve energy. But sagging disrupts the proper push-up form, potentially straining the lower back and leading to an imbalance in strength development.
- ➋ Piking is when the hips lift too high, making the body resemble an inverted V shape. It's usually a sign of core weakness or another energy-saving tactic during fatigue. While piking might feel more manageable, it diverts the focus from the main muscles - chest, shoulders, and triceps - and unnecessarily strains the lower back.
- ➌ The golden rule for push-ups is to mimic a plank throughout the movement. The body should form a straight line from the head to the heels. It ensures the exercise is safe and effective, optimally working the intended muscles. It may be challenging, particularly when tired, but maintaining this form is essential for reaping the full benefits of push-ups.

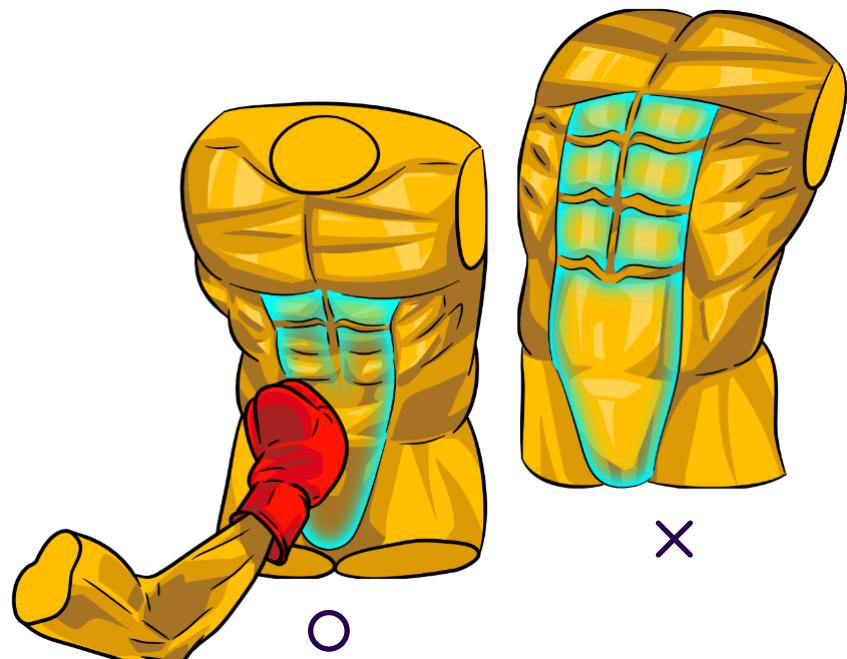


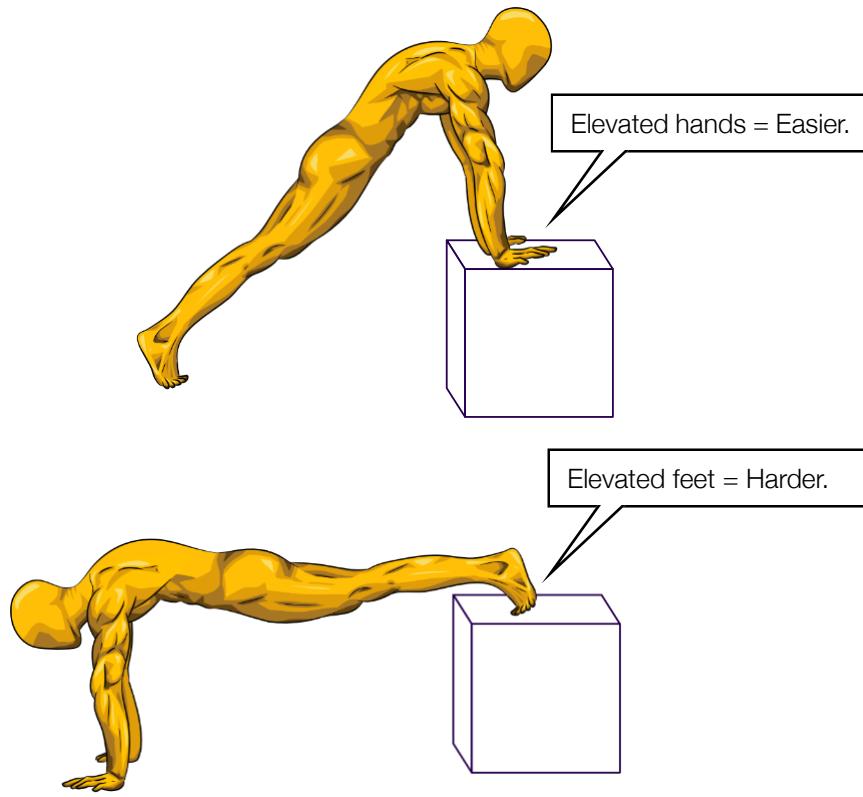


It's easy to rely too much on the shoulders when doing push-ups. This means the chest, a key muscle in push-ups, might not get enough work. A simple change can fix this. Instead of just lifting the body, push it hard against the ground. By doing this, we put the chest muscles to work naturally. Adding a quick, powerful push can make this even more effective. This way, the chest muscles are used more, which helps to do the push-up properly.

Embrace the core

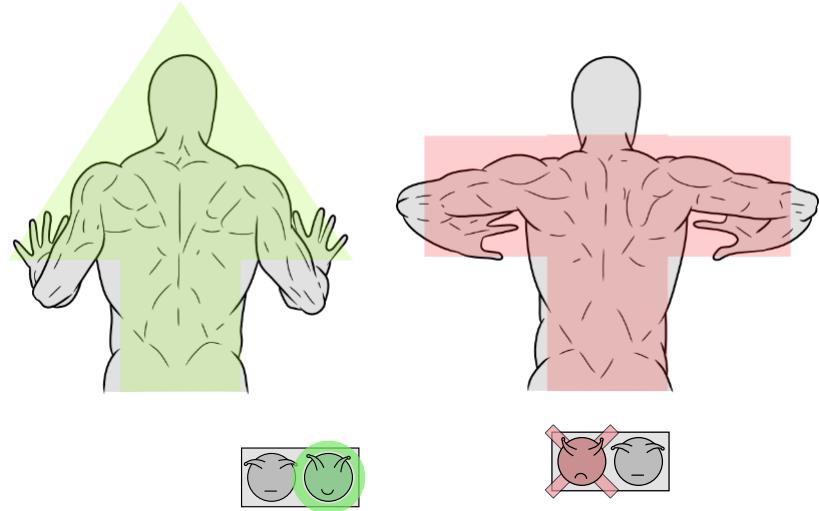
Core engagement in a push-up is fundamental. It ensures proper form and amplifies the exercise's impact. The 'core' extends beyond the abs. It encompasses the entire torso - back, sides, and pelvis. Visualize a punch heading toward the stomach. Instinctively tenses the abs, activating the core. Remember, also tighten the glutes. These tips, when combined, lead to a successful push-up execution.





Incline and decline push-ups change how hard your push-up workout is. When you do an incline push-up with your hands on a higher surface, it's easier. It targets your lower chest and upper arms more. Decline push-ups, with your feet higher, are tougher. They put more work on your upper chest and shoulders.

NOTE Be an arrow



Picture your body from a bird's-eye view as you prepare for a push-up. Ideally, your upper body should resemble an arrow, with your torso as the shaft and your elbows tucked in to form the tail. This configuration ensures your elbows stay close to your body.

If your elbows flare out to the sides, your upper body would instead form a 'T' shape. This isn't desirable, as it places undue strain on your shoulders. Stay arrow-like, not T-shaped, for a safer and more effective push-up.



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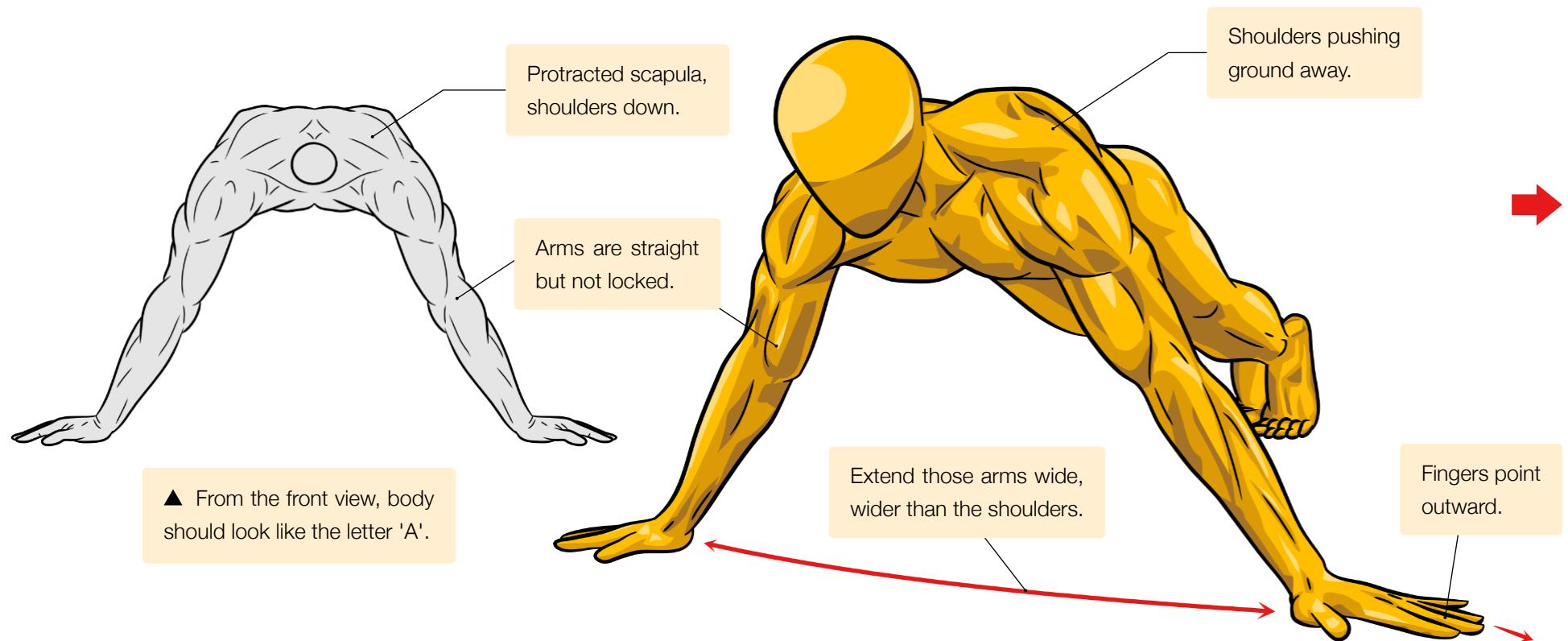
Achieving ten push-ups

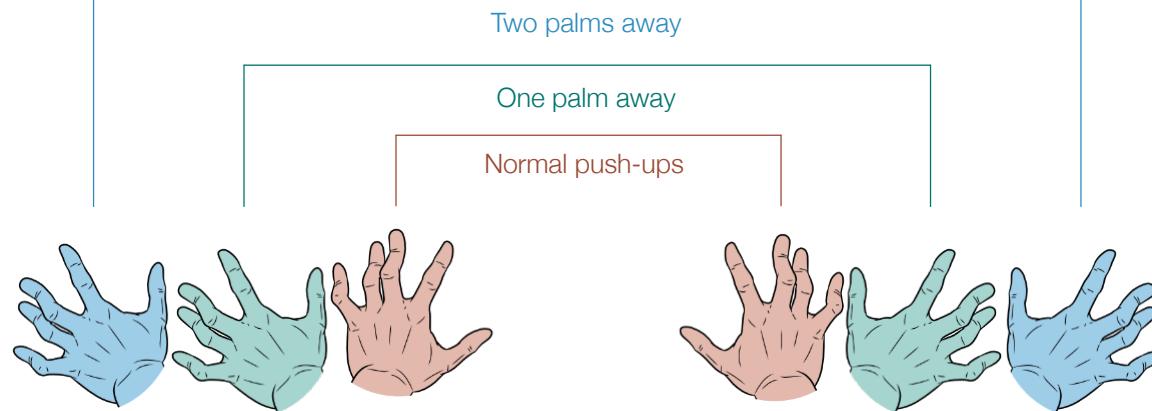
Aim to complete ten standard push-ups in a row with good form. Once you achieve this, you can continue with higher reps to build strength and endurance. However, since our goal is to master the one-arm push-ups, and you've established the basics, we should shift towards unilateral push-up variations that exert more pressure on each arm individually.

Consider exercises like wide, diamond, tricep extensions, explosive, and archer push-ups. It's essential to have balanced both arms' involvement in previous push-ups. Otherwise, the upcoming workouts will highlight any weaknesses.

WIDE PUSH-UPS

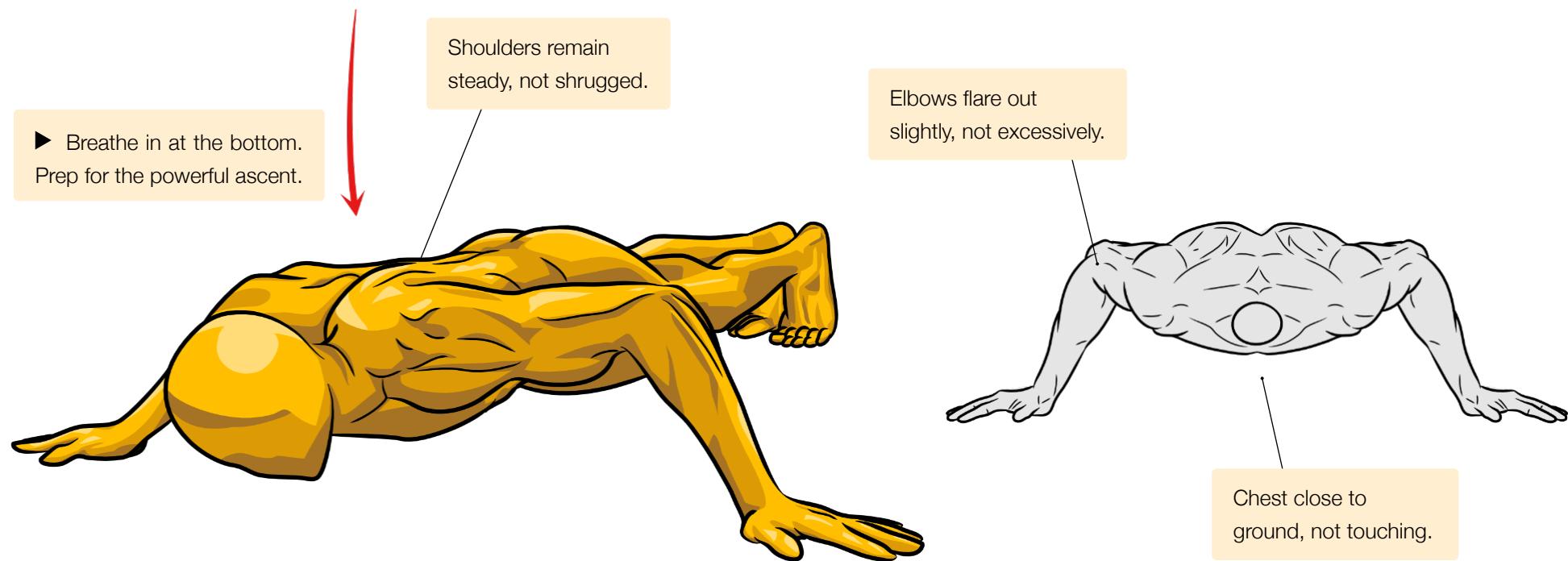
As you become proficient with the standard push-up, it's time for a new challenge - wide push-ups. Simply by broadening the hand placement, the emphasis shifts towards the chest and shoulders, enhancing their strength and endurance. You might be surprised how a minor adjustment to the classic form can result in a completely different experience.





Stretching arms wider intensifies the push-up, but overdoing it invites shoulder strain. Aim for a balance: challenging but feasible, with hands beyond shoulder-width.

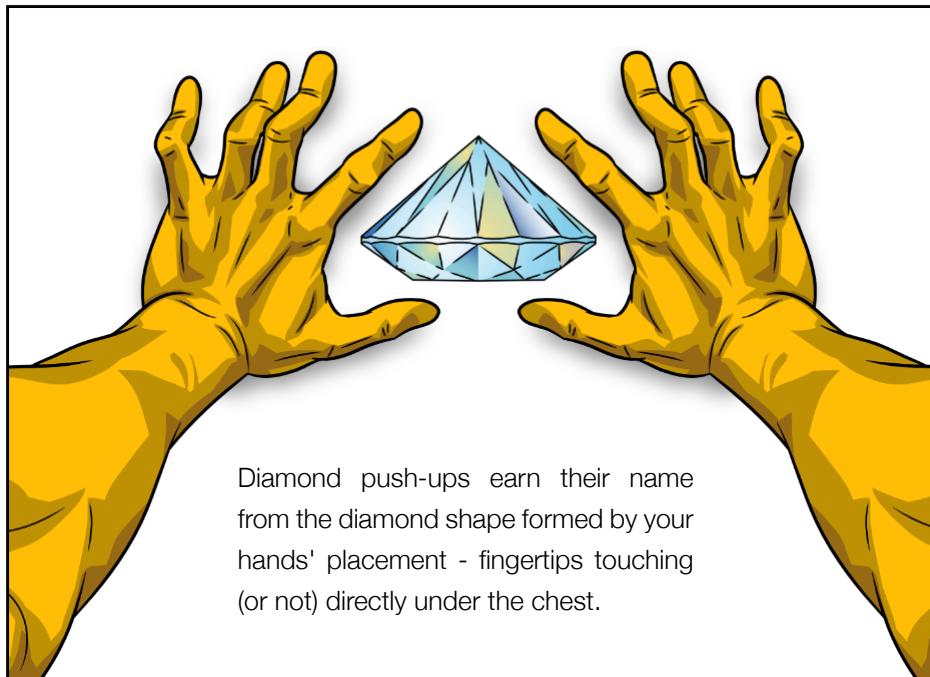
Measuring by feel may lead to inconsistency in hand placement. Instead, use the palm as a unit of measurement from the normal push-up position for precision and consistency.



DIAMOND PUSH-UPS

The diamond push-ups come next. Named for the diamond-shaped position of your hands, this exercise triggers the triceps and chest significantly more than shoulder-width and wide push-ups, according to a 2016 study.

Although similar to standard push-ups, the intensity of the diamond variant is higher. The unique positioning of the hands puts more strain on your triceps and inner chest. Thus, the diamond push-up exemplifies the versatility of the push-up family, showcasing how a minor adjustment can substantially alter the benefits of an exercise. The strength developed through diamond push-ups is integral to mastering the broader range of push-ups.

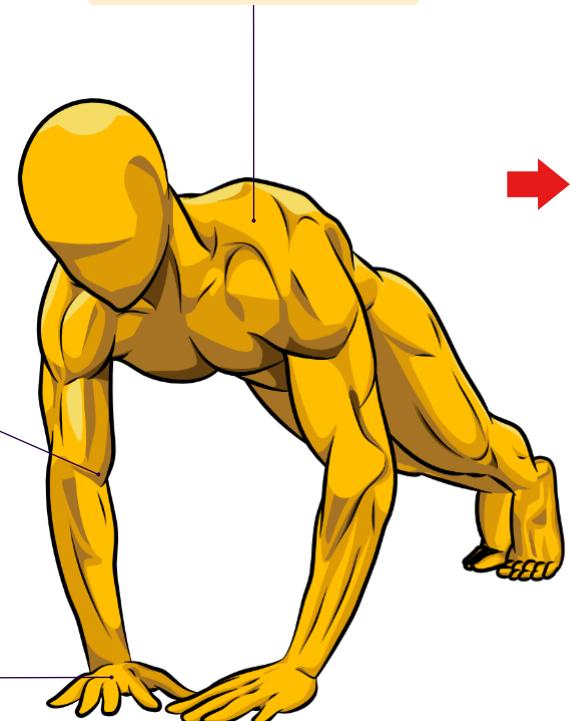


Elbow creases can be slightly inward-facing.



Effect of the push-up exercise at different palmar width on muscle activities. *J Phys Ther Sci.* 2016 Jan;28(2):446-9. doi: 10.1589/jpts.28.446. Epub 2016 Feb 29. PMID: 27064571; PMCID: PMC4792988.

Start in high plank, align shoulders over wrists.

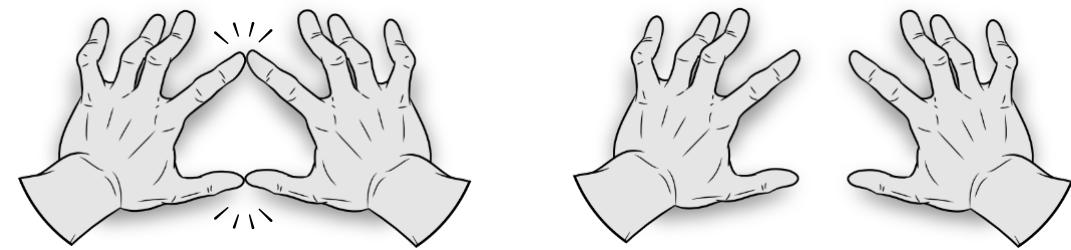


Is fingertip contact necessary?

They don't. The emphasis is on your hand's diamond or triangle shape, typically under your chest. The fingertip distance can vary based on comfort. This positioning targets the triceps and inner chest more than regular push-ups.

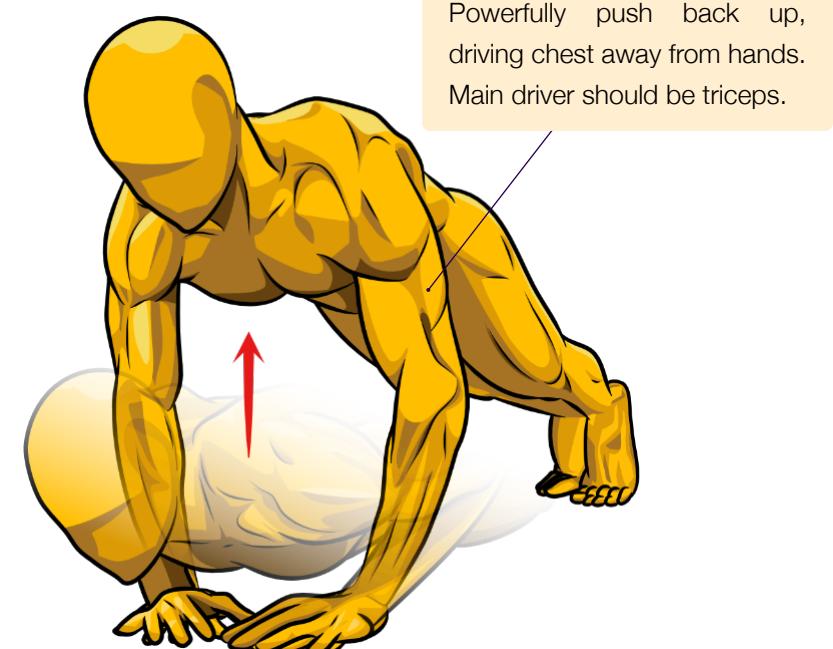
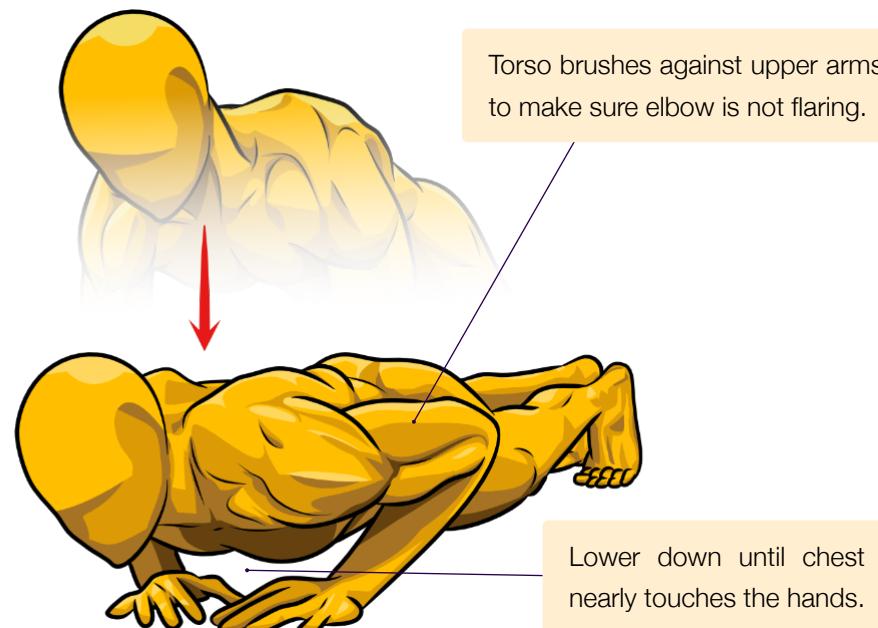
01

PUSH-UPS



○ This is good.

○ This is also good.



027

TRICEP EXTENSIONS

01

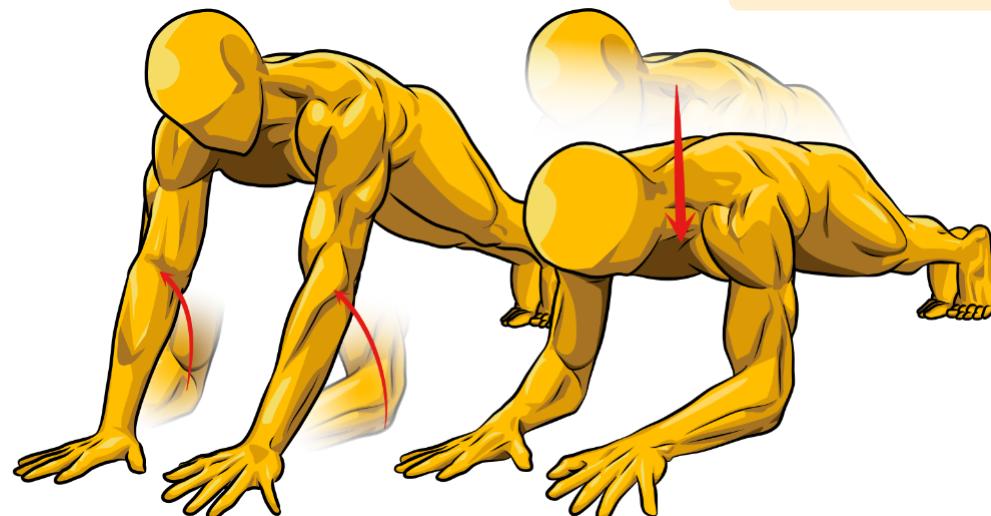
PUSH-UPS

Tricep extensions could feel unusual when you first try them, but they're fantastic for focusing on your triceps - muscles that are heavily involved in many everyday actions. These are compound workouts, so they hit multiple muscles simultaneously, which helps in building strength and muscle quicker. Just be aware of your wrists during this exercise; they can feel the strain, so a good warm-up is essential. To ensure comfort for your elbows, you might want to perform this exercise on a soft surface or a yoga mat.

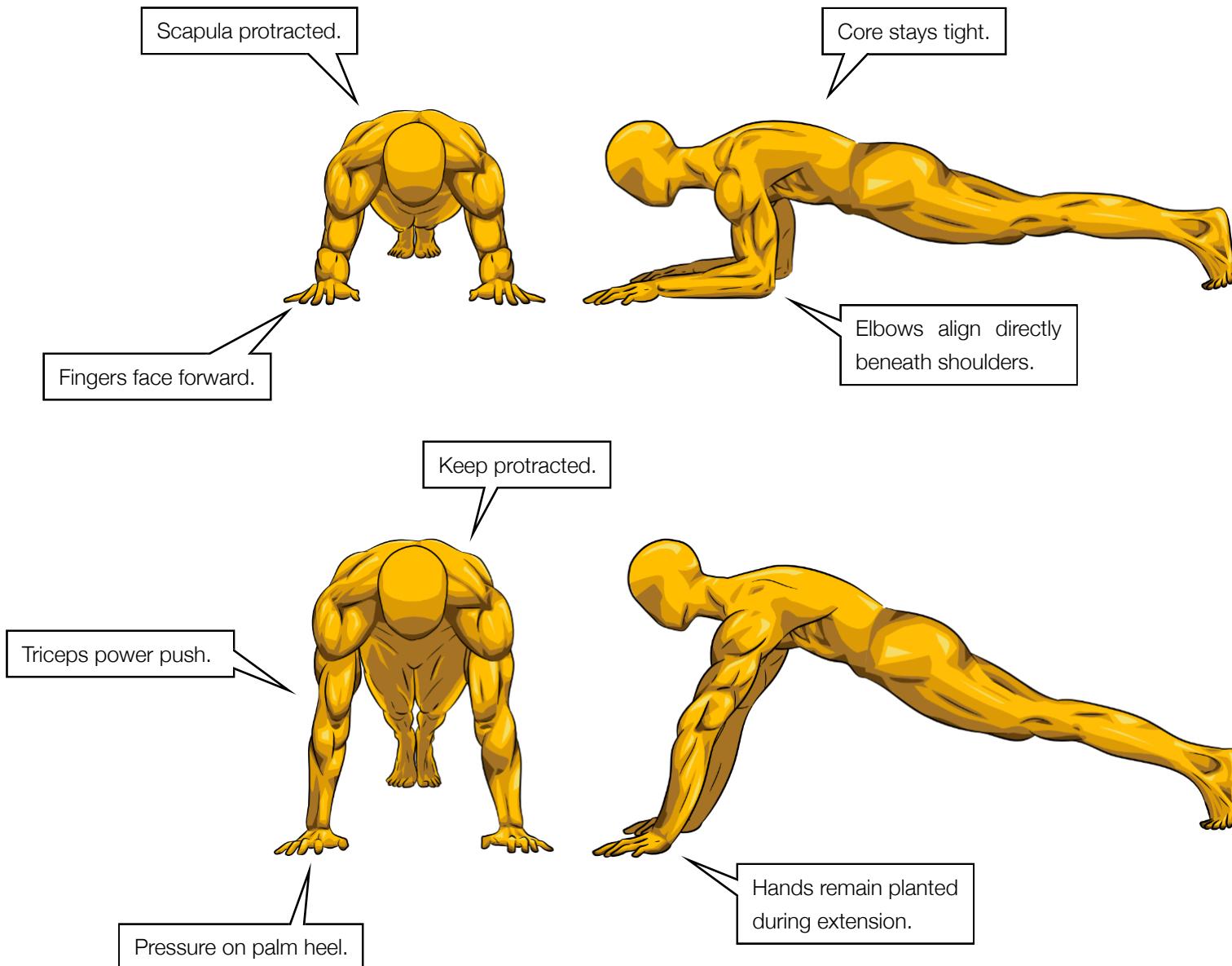
Elbow plank: Align elbows right under the shoulders, and plant the forearms flat, creating a stable base.



Extends triceps: Apply force through forearms and palms, engaging the triceps to power the upward motion, lifting your torso.



Return to elbow plank: Lower your body carefully, maintaining control as you descend back into the starting elbow plank position, preparing for the next repetition.

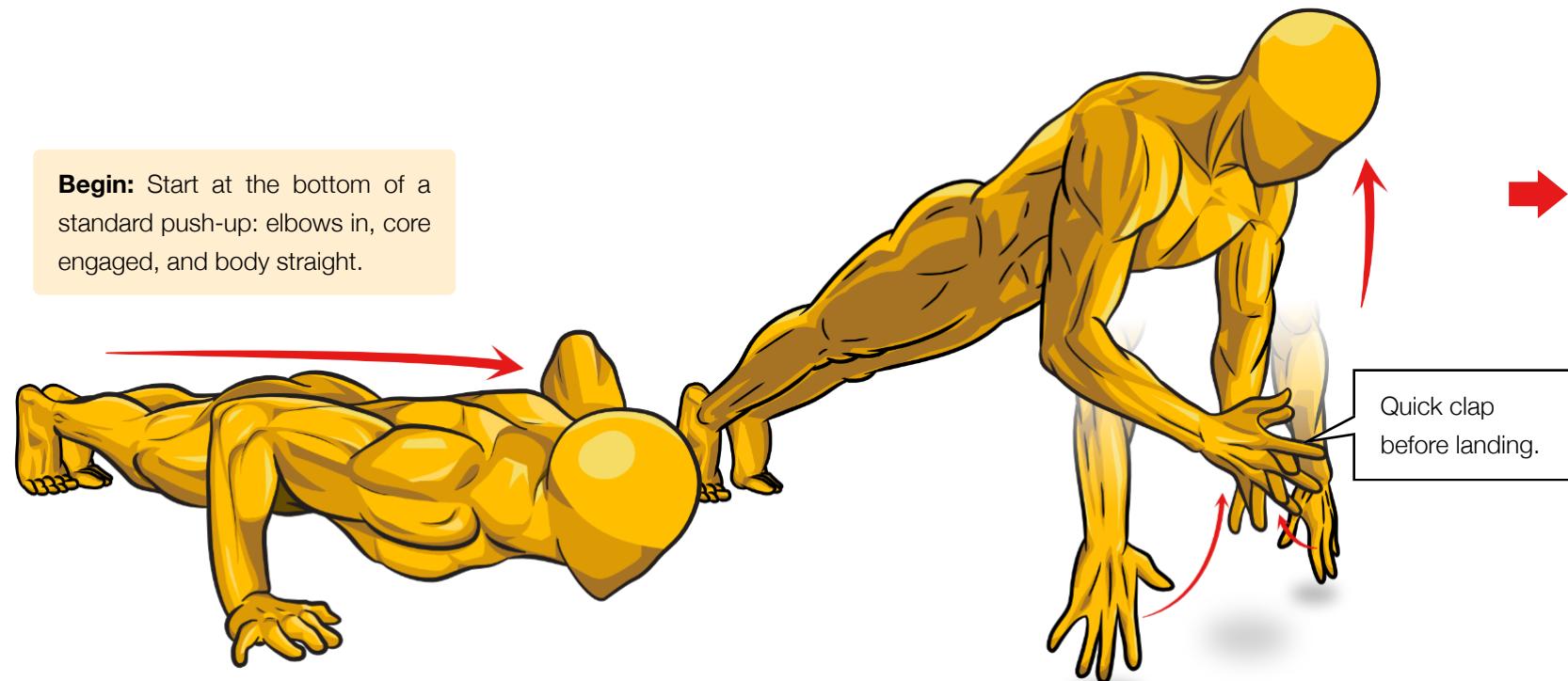


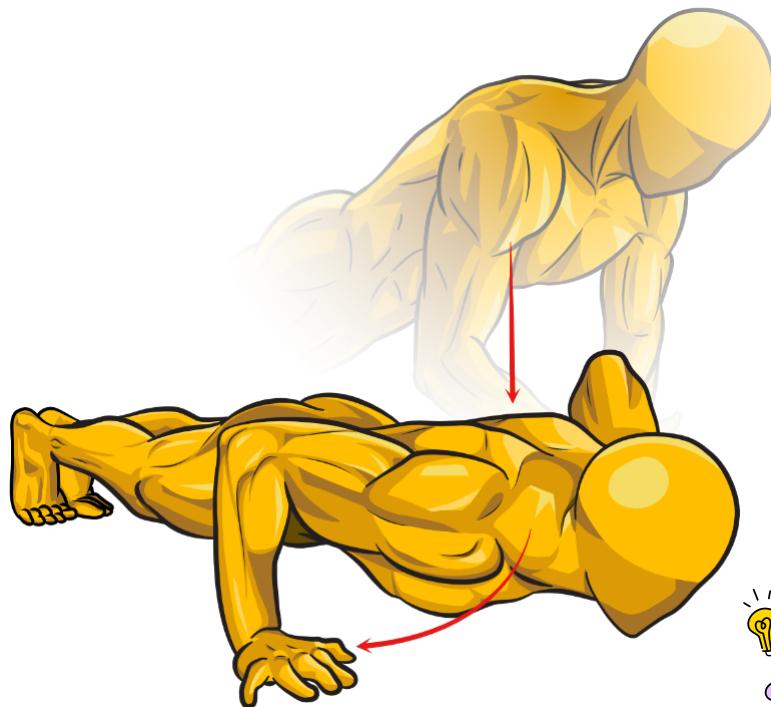
EXPLOSIVE PUSH-UPS

Explosive or plyometric push-ups introduce a thrilling element of power and speed to our program. These push-ups demand an explosive push from the bottom position, so forceful that it lifts your hands off the ground. This move isn't just about raw strength, explosive power, and swift reaction time.

Plyometric training such as this improves neuromuscular efficiency, essential in athletic performance. The strength, speed, and power developed through explosive push-ups equip you to take on more dynamic and challenging athletic adventures.

Explode up: Powerfully drive your hands into the ground, catapulting your body upwards.

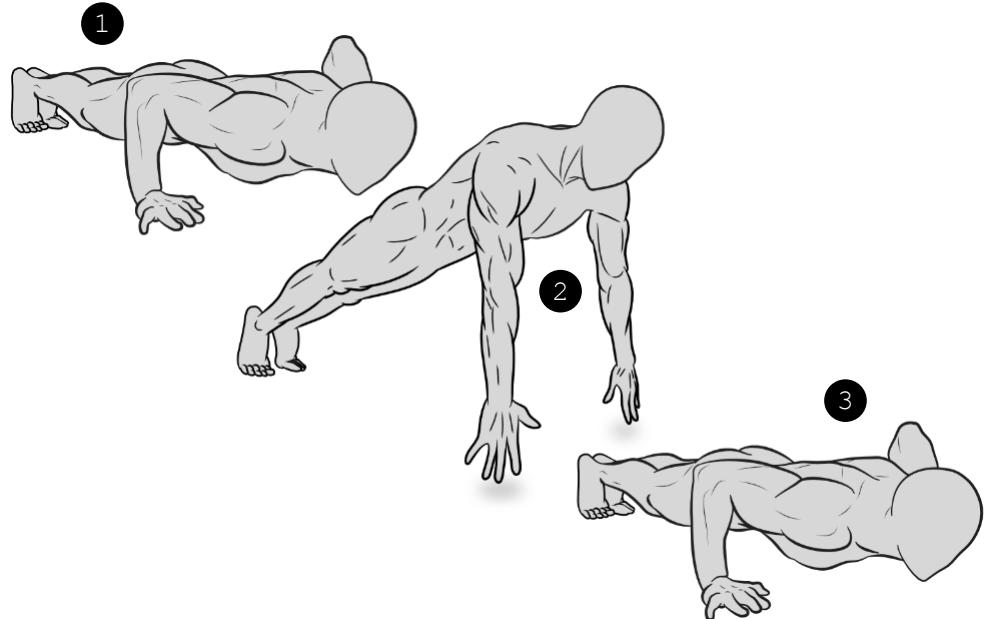




Landing: After the clap, swiftly spread your hands apart in preparation for landing. Aim to absorb the impact with your arms slightly bent. Carry the momentum to perform multiple reps.

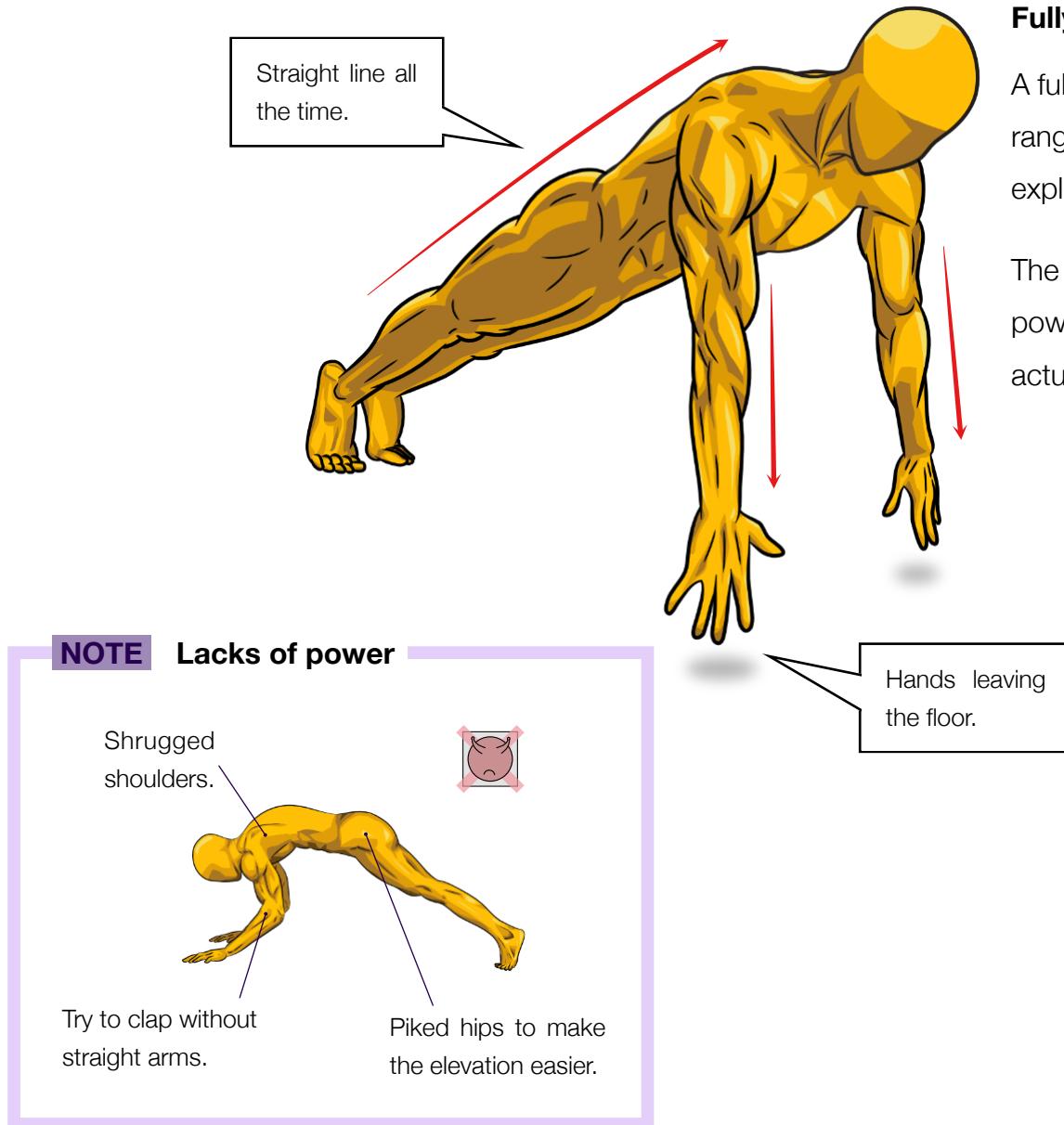
Start gradually

If you're new to this move, start by simply trying to push off the ground without the clap.



Here's the thing - most workouts in this book don't advocate using momentum, but explosive push-ups are the exception. It lets you channel that power and carry it to the next rep. Just make sure you go as low as possible before launching again.

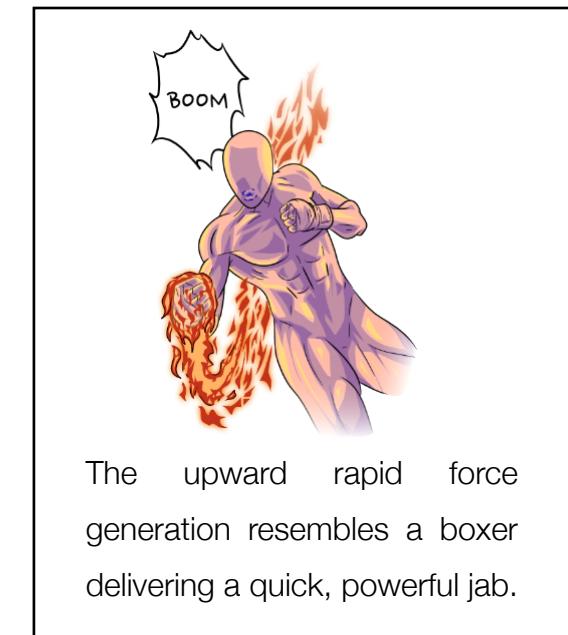
The exploding



Fully extend arm in the air before the clap

A full-extension ensures that you're using your arms' complete range of motion, allowing you to generate the most power and explosiveness.

The clap itself is a bonus, a testament to your generated power. But the push-up and the full extension are doing the actual work in building strength and power.



01

PUSH-UPS

The landing

Head

Keep it neutral, don't crane the neck. Ensures proper spinal alignment.

Elbows

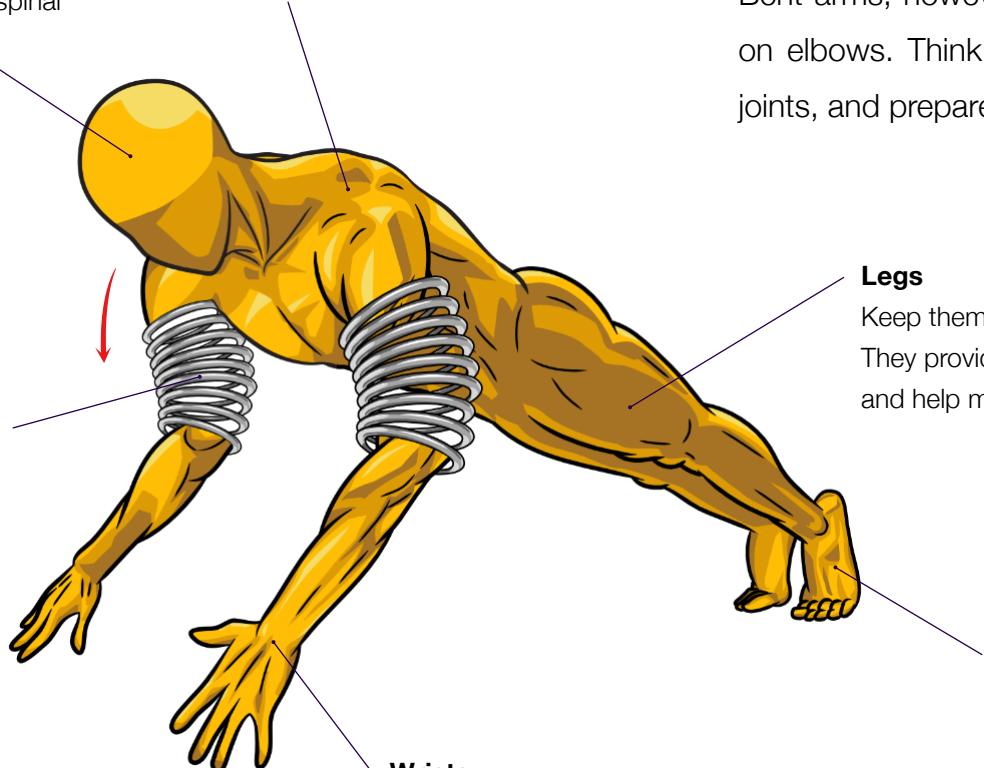
Slightly bent. Absorb most of the impact, similar to a spring.

Shoulders

Engaged, not slouched. Support upper bodyweight and control arm movement.

Wrists

Firm and stable. They act as a foundation, balancing the landing.



Land with bent arm

Incorrect landing after an explosive push-up can risk injury. Locked elbows upon landing are like stiff arms catching a heavy object – hard on the joints.

Bent arms, however, distribute the impact and lessen the force on elbows. Think of arms as springs. Absorbs force, protects joints, and prepares for the next rep.

Legs

Keep them straight and tight. They provide additional stability and help maintain the body line.

Feet

They should remain planted, providing a solid base. If they are moving, the balance may be compromised.

ARCHER PUSH-UPS

01

PUSH-UPS

The archer push-up is one step before our last exercise. It's a harder version where you stretch one arm out to the side while the other stays at chest level. This move looks like an archer pulling a bow, working out one side of your body more - a single-sided exercise.

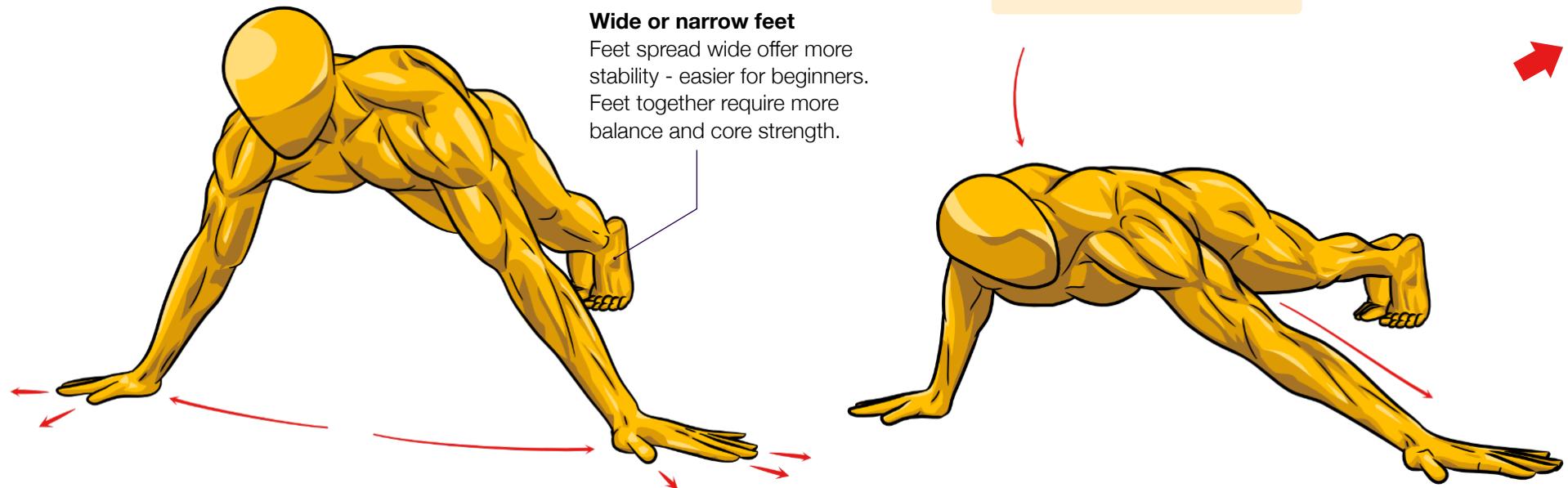
Because it focuses on one side, the archer push-up shows how important balanced strength is. This push-up can fix uneven muscles and help muscles grow evenly.

Begin: Start like you're doing wide push-ups: elbows straight, fingers pointing outwards.

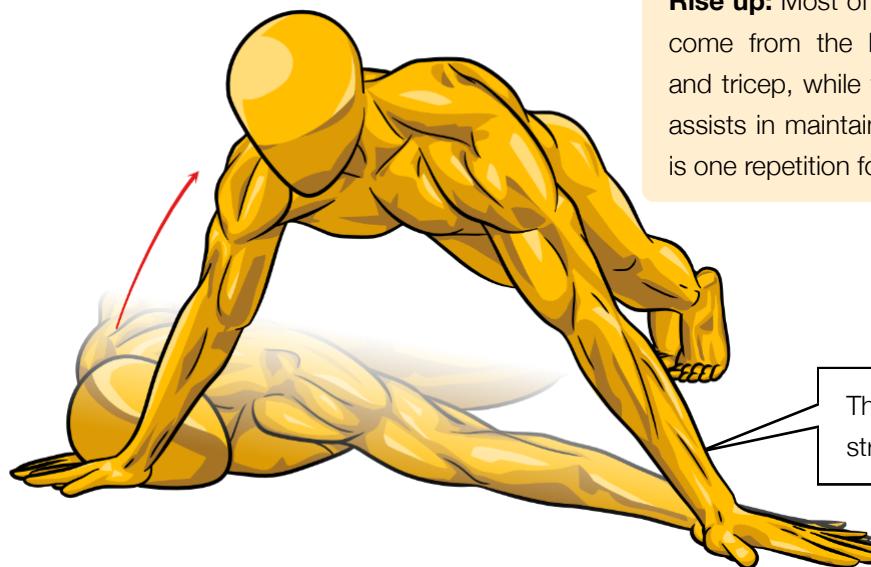
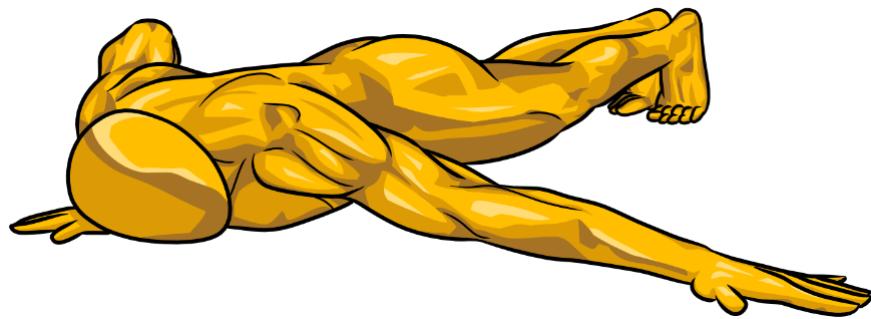
Wide or narrow feet

Feet spread wide offer more stability - easier for beginners. Feet together require more balance and core strength.

Descent: Sink on one arm's side as in a regular push-up while the other stretches out.

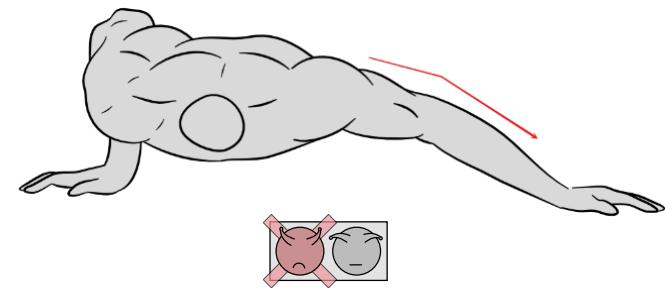
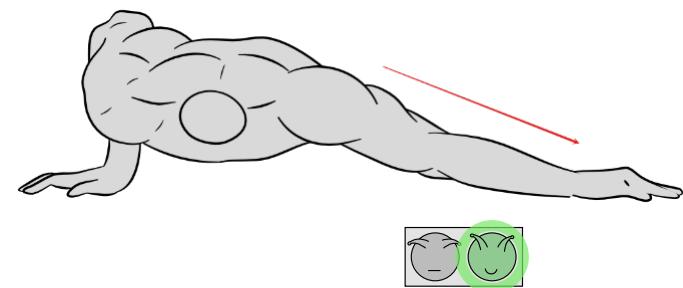


Bottom: Chest close to the ground, while the stretched arm lightly touches the floor (or not). The bent arm supports most weight.



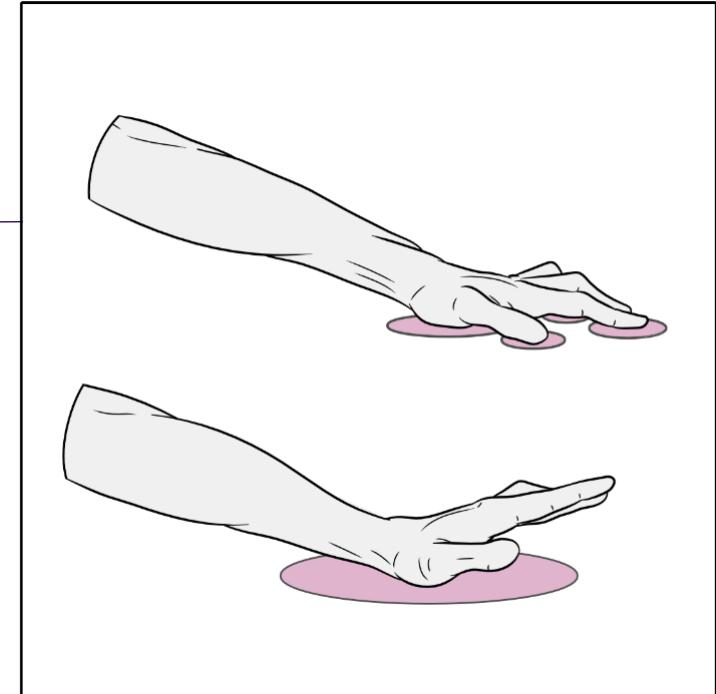
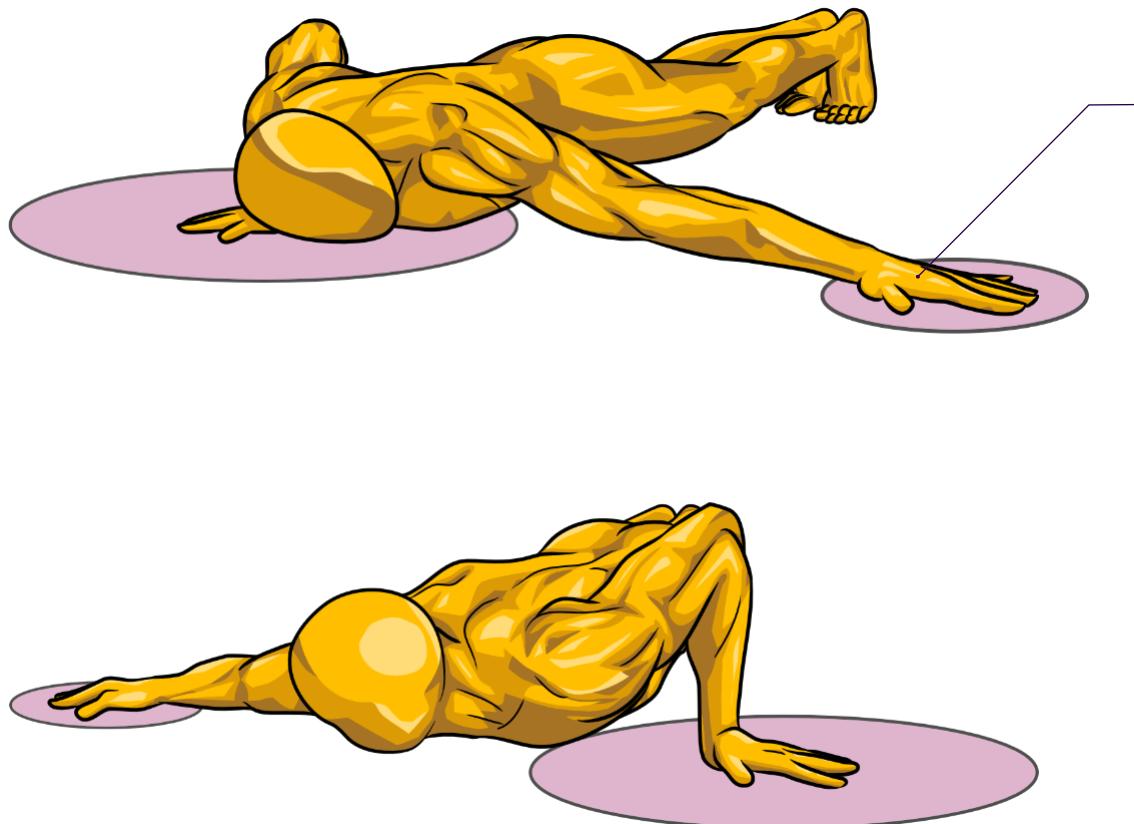
Rise up: Most of the power should come from the bent arm's chest and tricep, while the stretched arm assists in maintaining balance. This is one repetition for one arm.

NOTE Cheating on the elbow

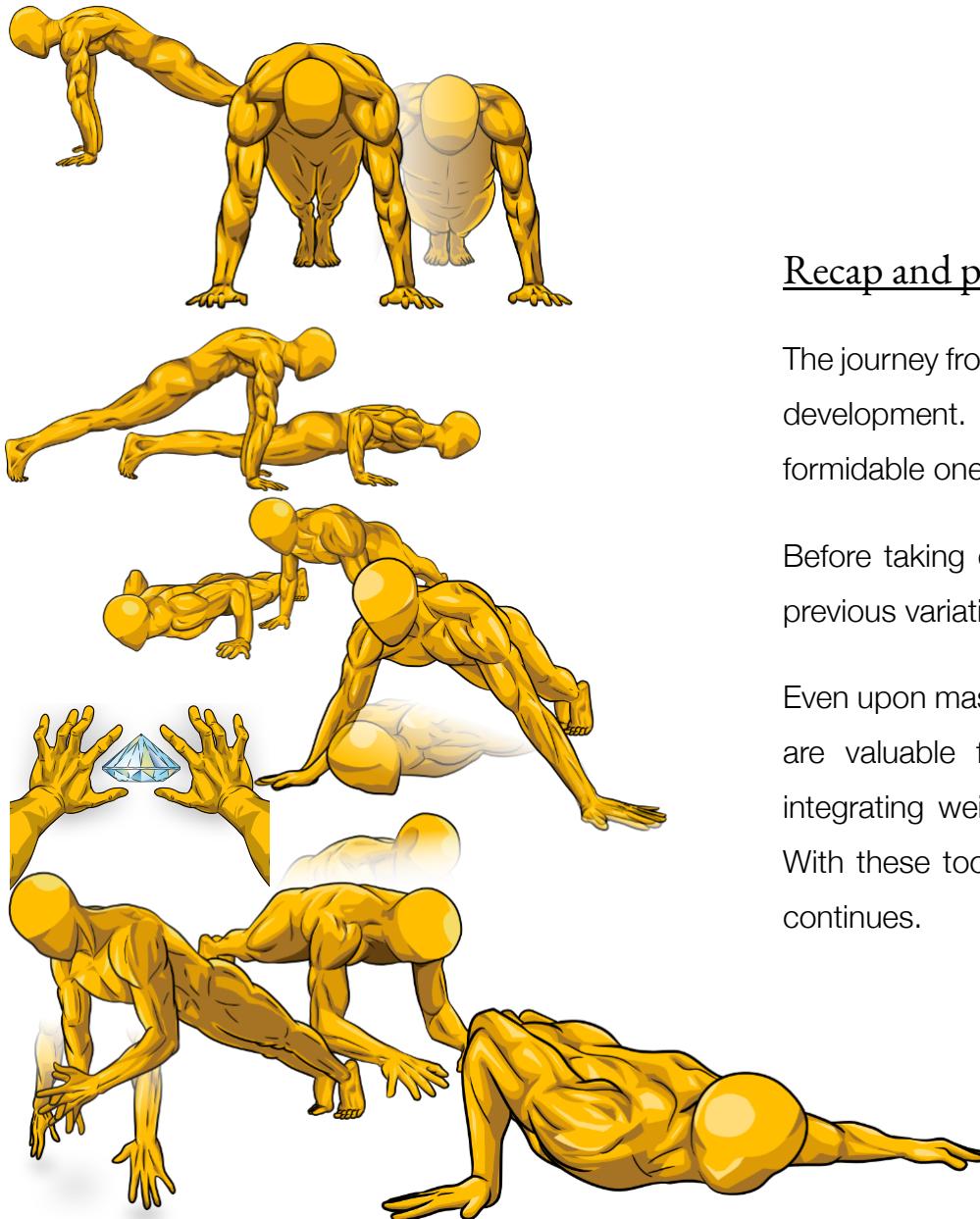


In the bottom position, it's tempting to bend the elbow of the extended arm to make the move easier. Resist this urge, as it reduces the intensity in the working arm. Keep the elbow of the extended arm straight to ensure every rep is consistent.

Pay attention to how your weight is distributed between the bent and straight arms. The bent arm should bear more load, with the straight arm providing balance and minor support.



To ensure the supporting arm stays straight, experiment with hand placement. Instead of placing the entire palm and fingers on the floor, try lifting the fingers and touching the ground with just the palm heel. This can help maintain the arm's straightness. Find the technique that works best for you.



Recap and preparation for one-arm push-up

The journey from a basic plank to advanced archer push-ups is all about progressive development. Each exercise acts as a crucial foundation, setting you up for the formidable one-arm push-up (OAPU).

Before taking on the OAPU, ensure the ability to perform ten solid reps of every previous variation. Rushing and skipping steps aren't options here.

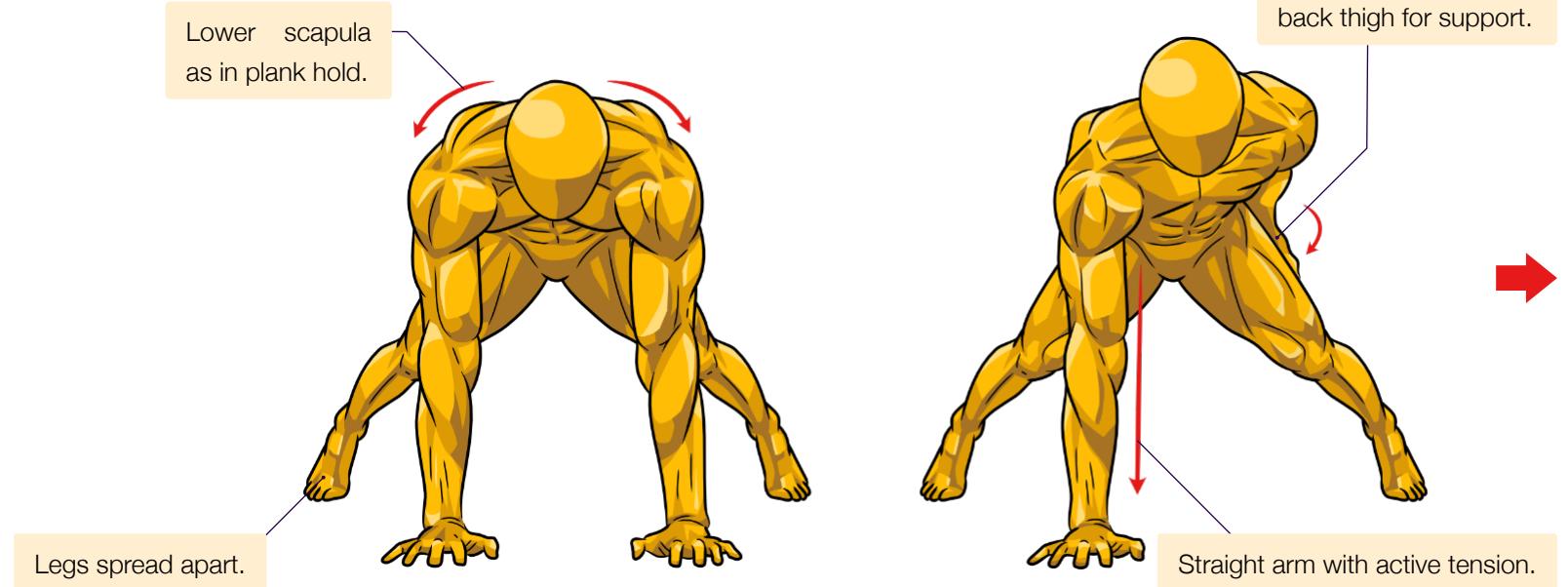
Even upon mastering the OAPU, don't discard these initial push-up variations. They are valuable for continuously reinforcing push-up fundamentals. Think about integrating weights into scapula push-ups for unlimited strength enhancements. With these tools, creating fun and effective workouts is limitless. So, the journey continues.

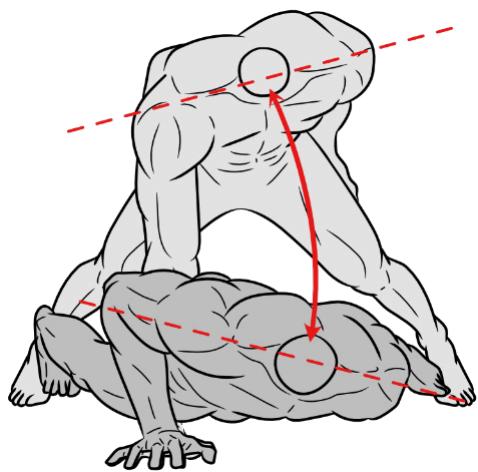
ONE ARM PUSH UP

Once you have a good foundation and mastery over the variations, we conclude our push-up series with the ultimate test: the One-Arm Push-Up (OAPU). This variant demands substantial strength, stability, and balance. It tests your arm and chest strength while engaging your core and honing your balance.

The OAPU isn't just the endgame of this series. It symbolizes strength, a testament to your progress, and a challenge for the future. At this point, this would be a matter of technique to achieve the skill. Attempt is vital, so keep trying until you understand how to execute the movement correctly.

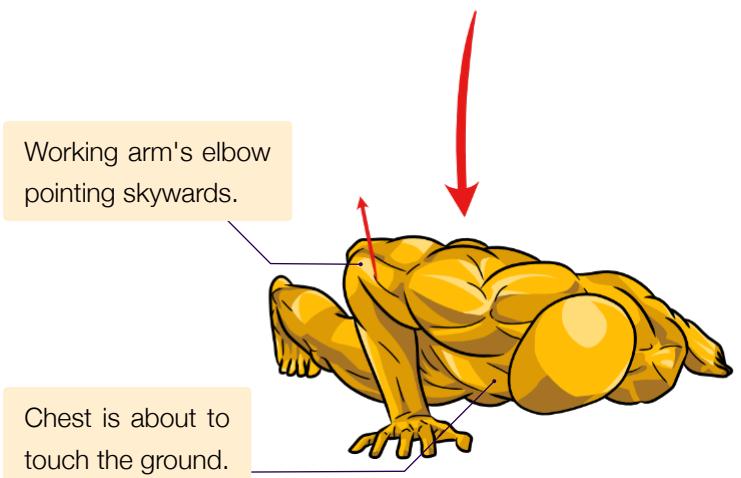
If it still feels too hard, start high with a wall, then use tables and chairs. Go lower each time. Soon, you'll be able to do it on the floor.



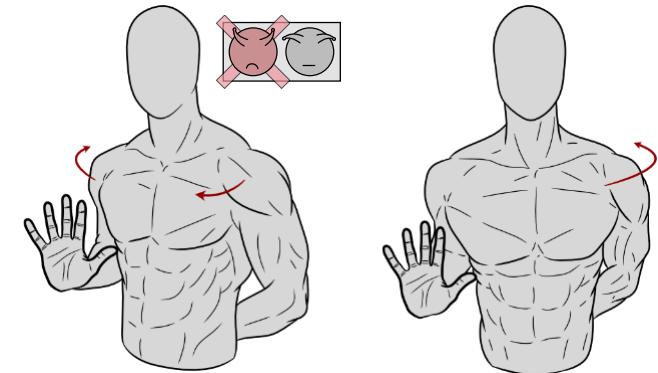


Maintain an even shoulder level throughout the exercise. Note that your shoulders don't have to be perfectly level; a slight tilt is acceptable and natural during this demanding exercise. Imagine balancing a glass of water on your shoulders to encourage uniform descent and ascent, ensuring an even intensity distribution across both arms.

▼ Descend with control. Rotate trunk slightly towards the working arm.



NOTE Trunk rotation



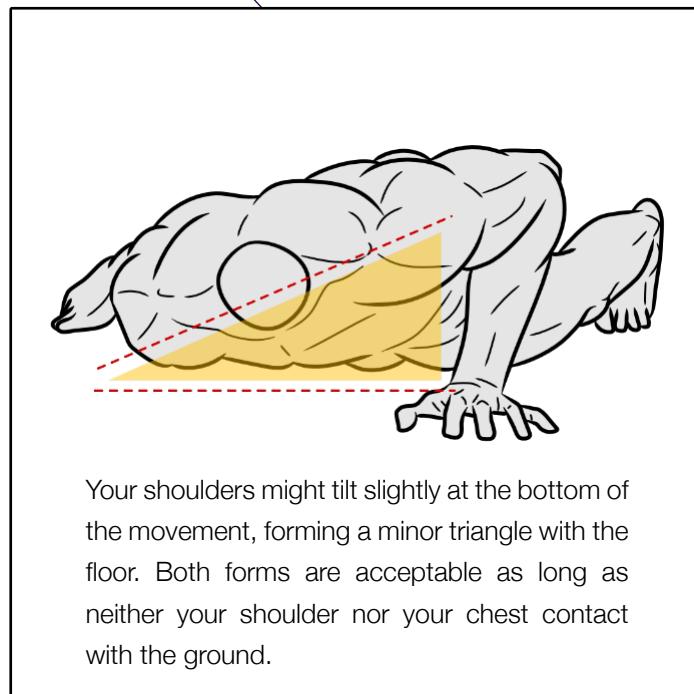
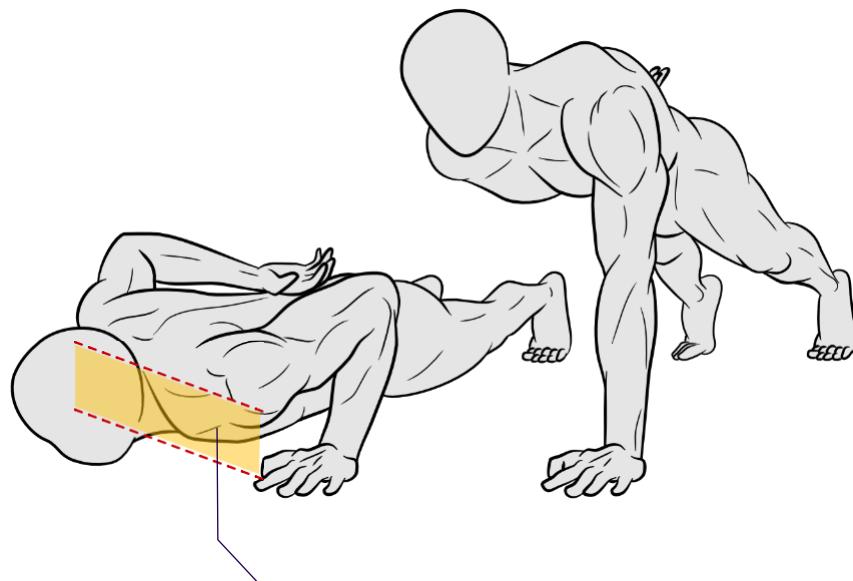
Excessive trunk rotation may be a sign of lacking core strength. You should always aim to lift the non-working side of your body away from the floor. Gravity will pull it back down, forming a gentle slope at shoulder level. Practice in front of a mirror or against a wall.



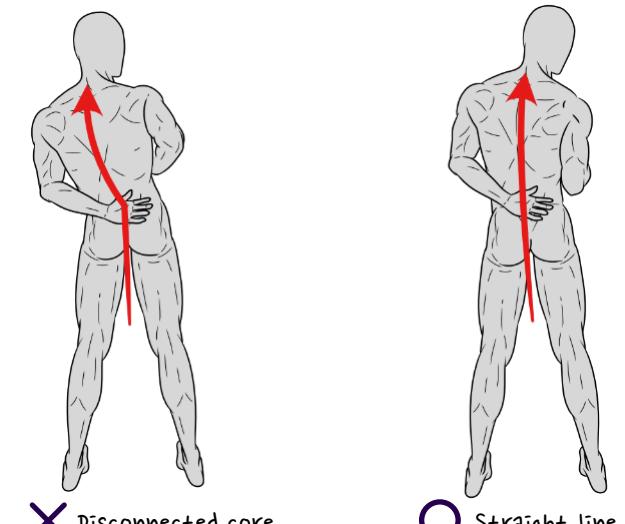
◀ Explode back up to the start. Your shoulder blade should slide away from your spine, and your arm should return to a straight position.

01

PUSH-UPS



Here we have another version of the OAPU with subtle modifications. Note how the shoulder level remains utterly parallel to the ground, both at the top and bottom positions. The working arm moves in a straight vertical line, with the forearm staying close to the trunk without swinging in or out. The resting arm is positioned on the back instead of the thigh.



Core alignment

✗ Disconnected core

○ Straight line

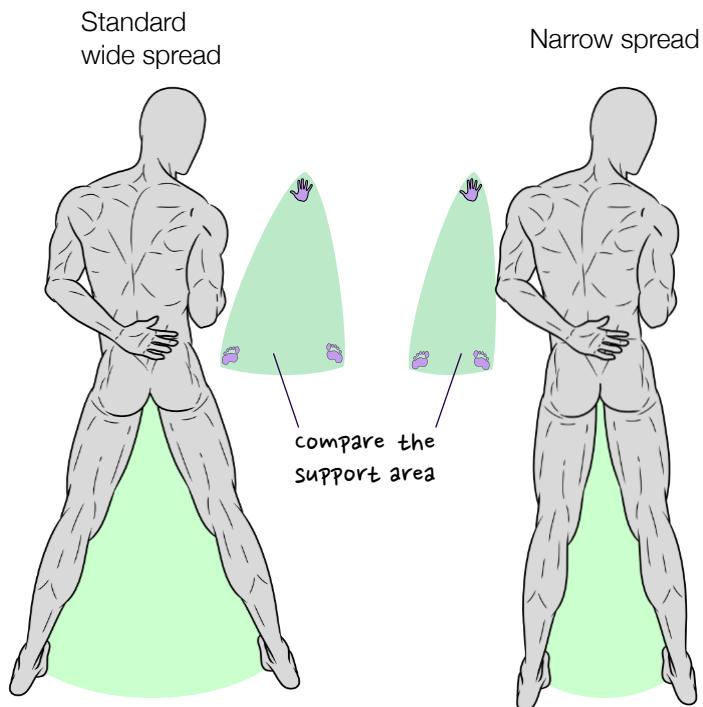
A common mistake with OAPU is letting the body bend or twist. Ideally, the body should form a straight line from head to heels. If the hips sag or lift more than the rest of the body, the core muscles aren't working hard enough.

Think of the body as one straight board. If it bends or arches anywhere, like in the middle, it's not straight anymore. The body should move up and down together, not in parts. The core isn't doing its job if the hips move before or after the shoulders.

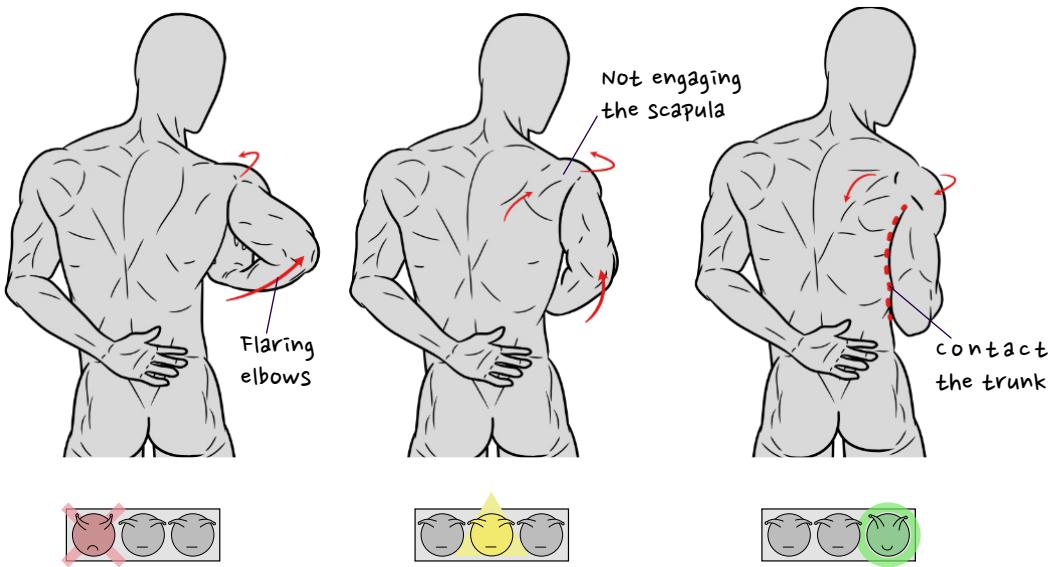
Choice of stance width

As the left image shows, a one-arm push-up is typically performed with a wide stance. This wide stance provides a more extensive support base, making it easier to maintain balance.

For an added challenge, you can bring your feet closer together. This reduces your balance base and significantly increases the difficulty of the exercise. With a narrower stance, your core, back, and working arm must put in extra effort to keep your body straight and lifted from the ground.



NOTE Positions of shoulder



In the left image, the elbow is flaring out from the body, leading to the working shoulder rolling forward and misalignment with the body.

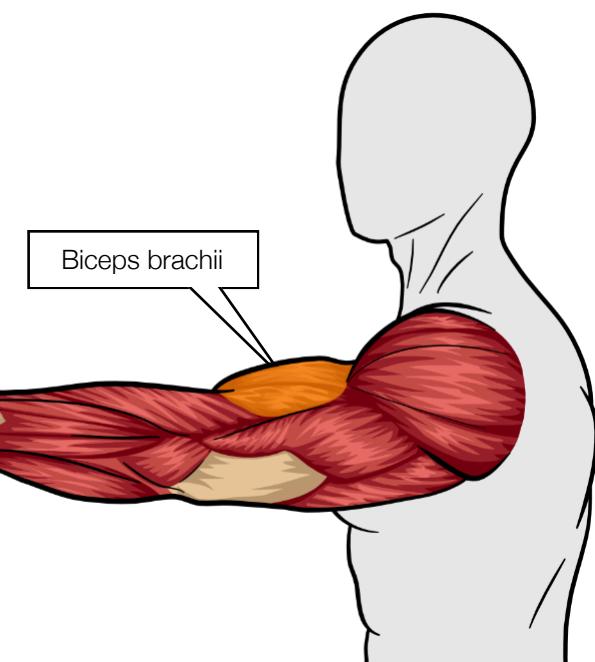
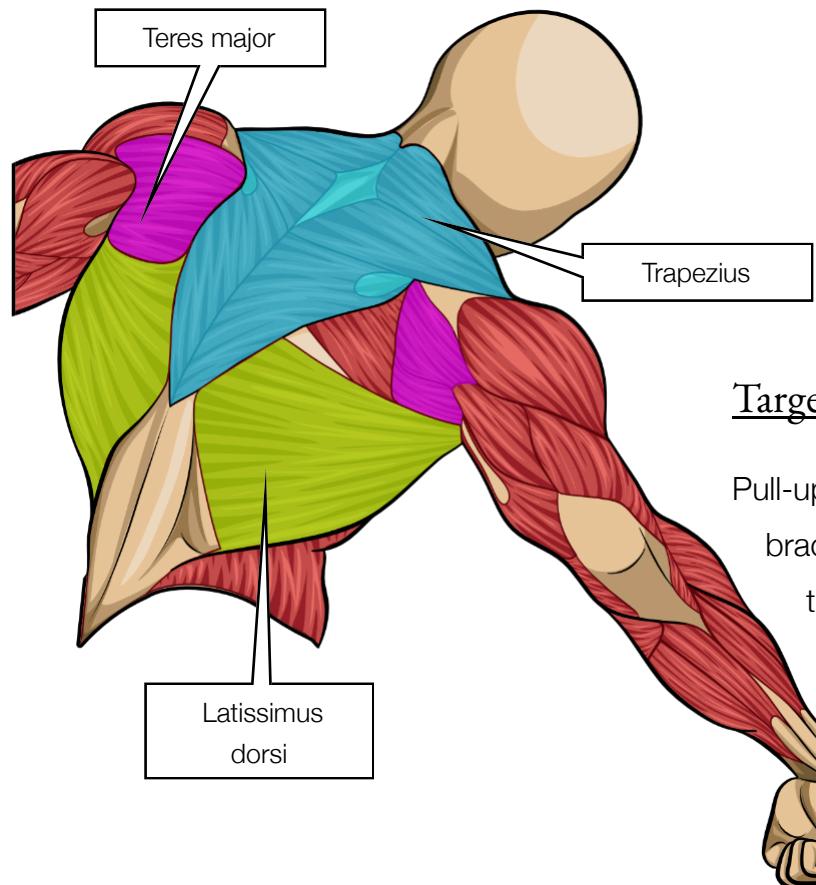
The middle image shows a slightly better position. The elbow of the working arm is closer to the body. However, insufficient engagement of the scapula causes the elbow to move upwards, resulting in over-activation of the trapezius muscles.

In the right image, the position is ideal. The inner side of the upper arm stays in contact with the torso, aligning with the direction of the body. The shoulder is back and down, and the elbow points up and backward. This position ensures proper muscle engagement and body alignment.

PULL-UPS

PULL-UPS PROGRAM INTRODUCTION

This program is your road map to mastering pull-ups, no matter where you start. We begin with the basics and ramp up the difficulty to suit all fitness levels. Pull-ups aren't just a test of strength, technique, and body control. You'll build the foundation for more challenging moves as you get better at pull-ups.



02

PULL-UPS

Targeted muscles in push-ups

Pull-ups mainly work on your upper body muscles, with the latissimus dorsi and biceps brachii taking the lead. Other muscles like the trapezius, teres major, infraspinatus, and teres minor support them. Anterior muscles like the chest and abs are also activated for stabilization when using good form. It is why pull-ups are considered one of the best upper-body exercises. When they get stronger, your back gets stronger too. It's particularly beneficial for counteracting the hunched shoulders common among those of us who frequently use screens or phones.

WARMUP EXERCISES

Every workout, especially ones like pull-ups, needs a good warmup. It prepares your body for hard work, helps you do better, and lowers the chance of getting hurt. The exercises we picked - Banded Overhead Pull-Apart, Banded Horizontal Pull-Apart, and Banded Pull-Downs - work your back muscles, shoulders, and arms. These are the muscles you use most in a pull-up.

We've noticed that most people have weaker back muscles than their front muscles. For example, many can do at least one push-up but not one pull-up. Plus, our back muscles are more complex than the front ones. So, use these warmup moves to slowly raise your body heat, make your joints flexible, and get critical muscles ready for the main workout.

Resistance bands

They are great for warmups and workouts. Light, portable, and affordable. Suitable for use at home, in the park, or on trips. It targets nearly all upper-body, core, and lower-body muscles. Intensity is adjustable with band thickness or tightness. Promotes controlled movements, lowers injury risk, and aids joint health. The bands are also handy for assistance, useful for offloading bodyweight to simplify movements like eccentric workouts; more details in later sections.



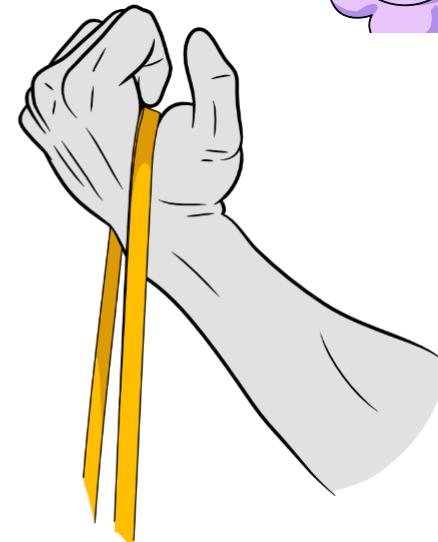
Thick bands

Ideal for working larger muscle groups like lats and quads due to higher resistance. They also provide substantial support when used for assistance.



Medium bands

Striking a balance between difficulty and control, these bands suit a variety of exercises, including overhead and horizontal pull-apart.



Thin bands

With the least resistance, thin bands activate smaller, weaker muscles without tiring them out. They're a good choice for beginners or those improving their form in exercises like banded pull-apart.

Bands, typically uniform in length and material, only differ in thickness, which affects their tension.

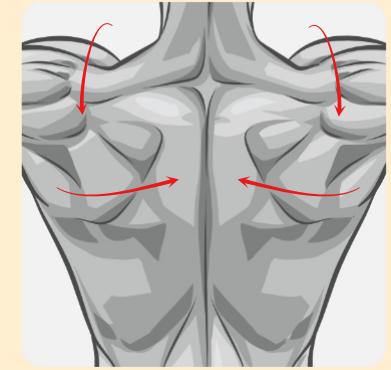


BANDED OVERHEAD PULL-APARTS

Banded overhead pull-aparts also fosters shoulder mobility and stability. Given the demands on the shoulders during a pull-up, ensuring these joints are warm and ready for action can significantly reduce injury risk. This warmup exercise also introduces the concept of scapular retraction and depression, a necessary movement for maintaining proper form during a pull-up. The pull-aparts teaches you to engage your back muscles, laying the foundation for future work.

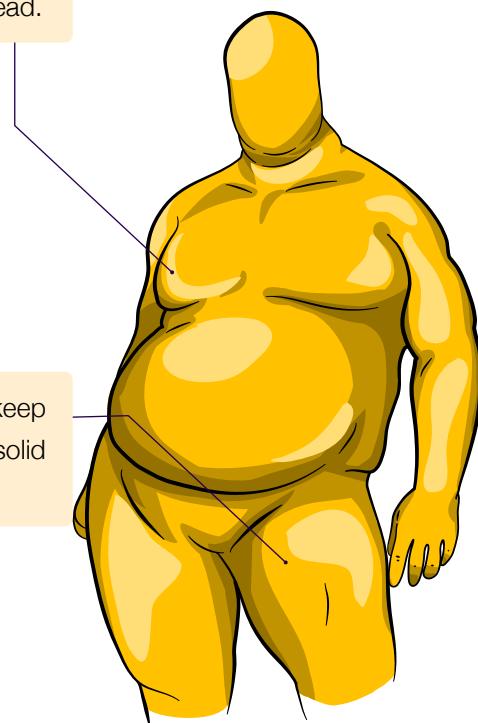
02

PULL-UPS



Focus on keeping your shoulders down and back.

Hold a resistance band with both hands. Arms extended straight out over your head.



Engage the core and keep your ribs in, creating a solid base for the movement.

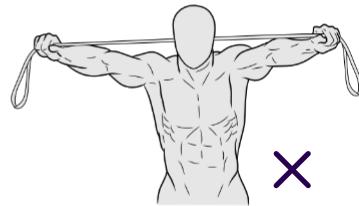
▼ With a firm grip and keeping your arms straight, raise it above your head and pull the band apart as if trying to break it.

Band touches the traps.



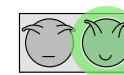
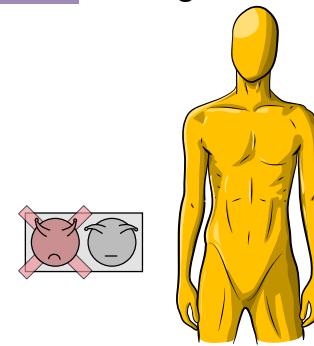


Don't let your ribs flare out. Keep the core engaged and ribs in.



Avoid shrugging or lifting your shoulders.

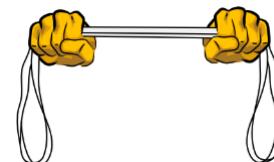
NOTE **Straight arms**



◀ Return to the starting position slowly, resisting the band's pull. This eccentric portion of the movement is just as crucial as the stretch.

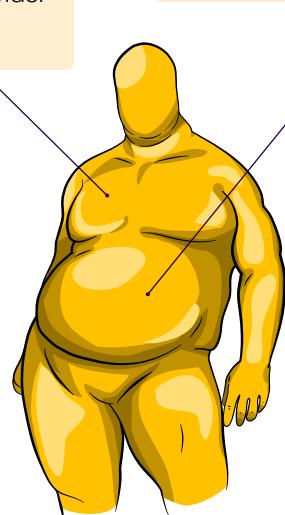
BANDED HORIZONTAL PULL-APARTS

Like its overhead counterpart, the banded horizontal pull-apart serves as an important warmup, stimulating the shoulder blade muscles and promoting scapular retraction and depression. What sets it apart is the targeted emphasis on the rhomboids and trapezius muscles, a key for maintaining the right form during pull-ups. The horizontal pull-apart offers more than just muscle activation. It enhances posture awareness by compelling an open chest and retracted shoulders — a position necessary for a well-performed pull-up.

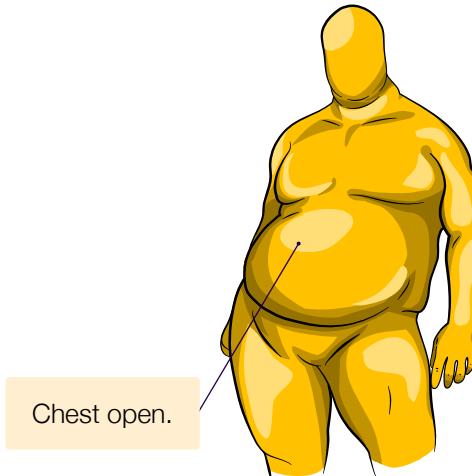


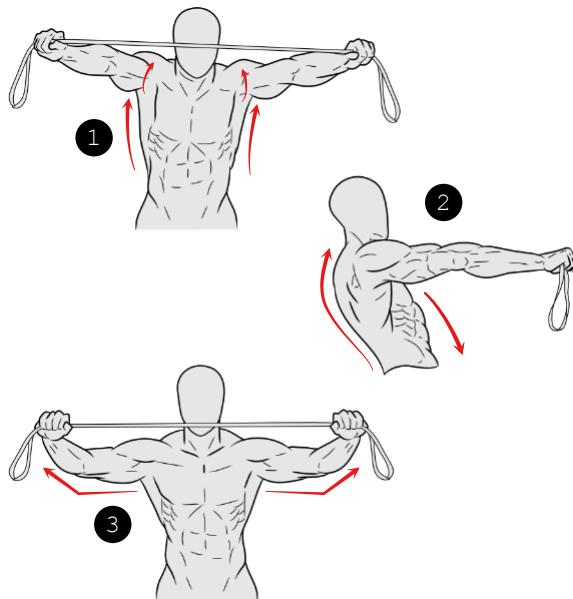
Narrower grip to make it harder.

Hold a resistance band at chest height in both hands, slightly wider than shoulder-width apart.

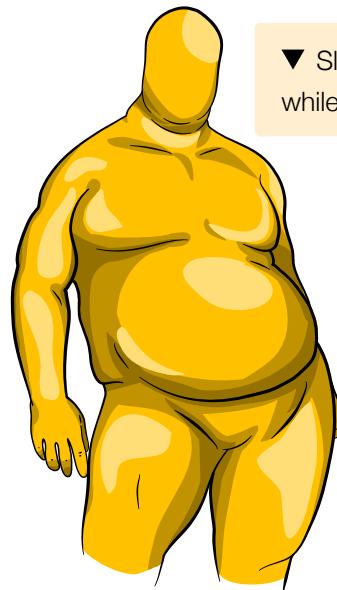


▼ Pull the band apart without bending the elbows, stretching it until your arms align with the shoulders.

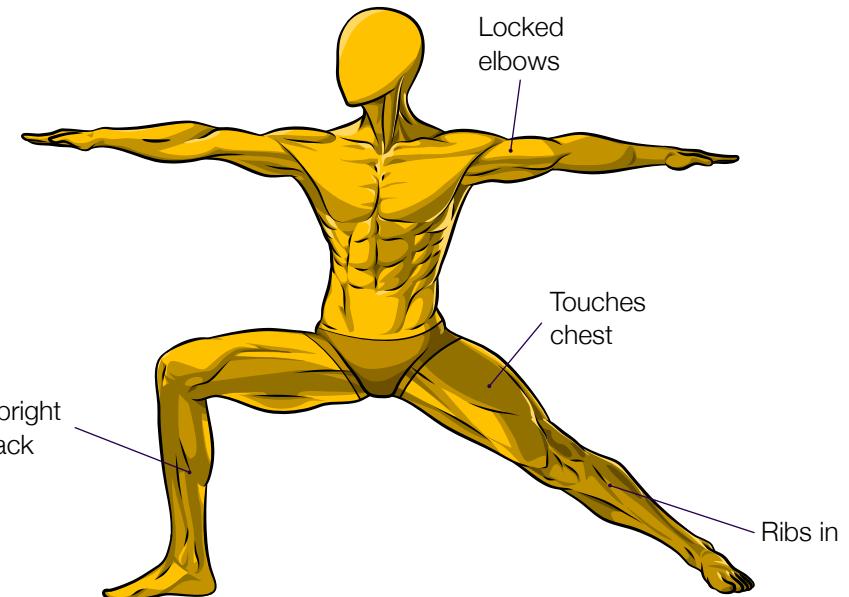




- ➊ Avoid shrugging the shoulders, which overly engages your upper trapezius muscles and neglects proper scapular engagement. Aim to keep shoulders down and back, fostering correct posture and reducing potential neck and trap discomfort.
- ➋ Avoid flaring out the ribs and arching your lower back, often signs of overcompensating for heavy resistance. Consider switching to a lighter band to maintain a neutral spine. It engages your core, protects the lower back, and targets the intended muscles effectively.
- ➌ Bending your elbows during the exercise decreases triceps involvement and reduces the tension on back muscles. Maintaining straight arms helps focus on the upper back, rhomboids, and trapezius.



▼ Slowly return to the starting position while maintaining tension in the band.



BANDED PULL-DOWNS

Banded pull-downs are an excellent warmup exercise as they closely mimic the motion of a pull-up, helping to prepare the body for the main workout.

They target the latissimus dorsi, one of the primary movers during a pull-up, and help engage the upper back, biceps, and muscles. The pulling motion also prepares the shoulder joints and elbows for more intense movements. The aim is to activate the muscles without fatigue, leaving the body primed to tackle the more demanding exercises in the pull-up program.

02

PULL-UPS

Set the band high enough so it does not lose tension at its shortest length (starting position).



Slowly return to the starting position, maintaining tension in the band.

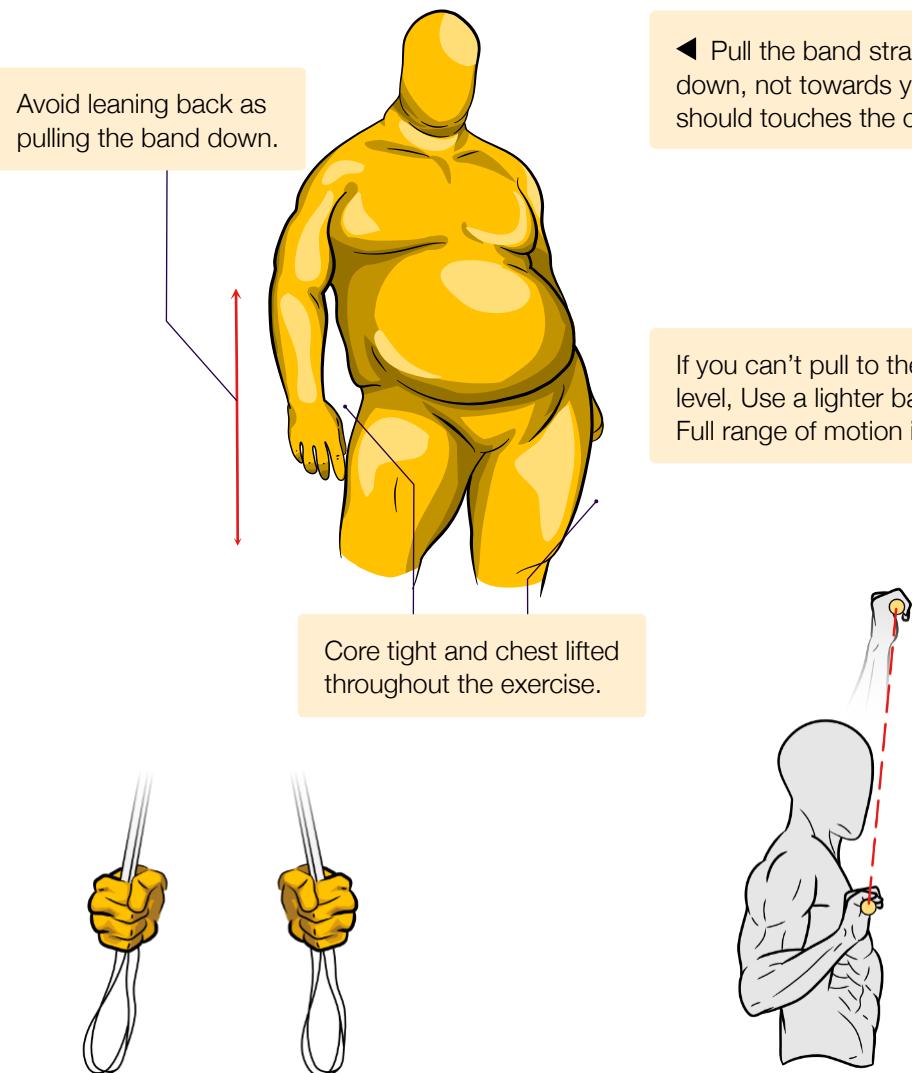
Attach a resistance band to an overhead point, such as a pull-up bar or a sturdy overhead hook.

Thread a stick or dowel through the band, holding it with both hands slightly wider than shoulder-width apart.

Keep body upright, engage core, and squeeze glute.

▼ Pull the stick down towards your chest, squeezing shoulder blades.



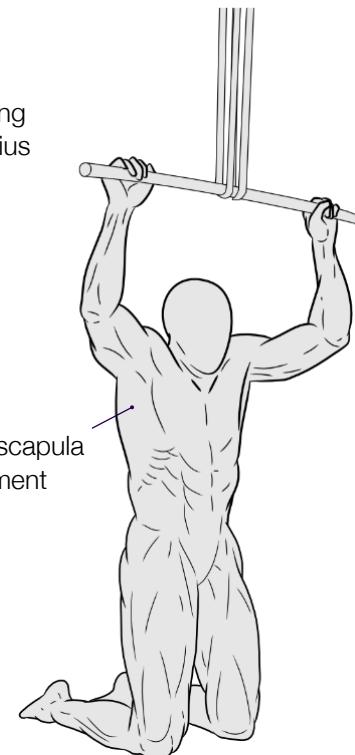
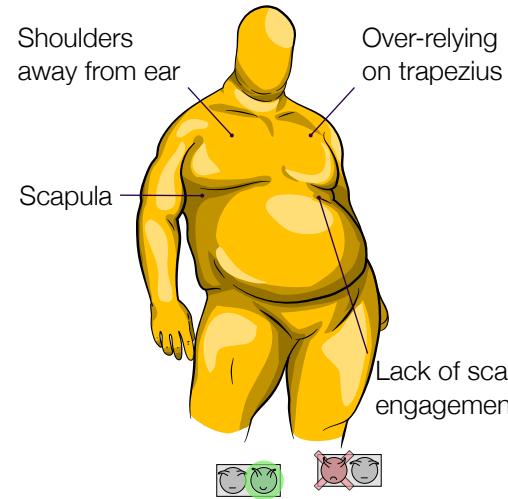


You can also perform this exercise without the stick. In this case, grip the band directly with your hands. It still provides a solid warmup; it just doesn't mimic the bar grip as closely.

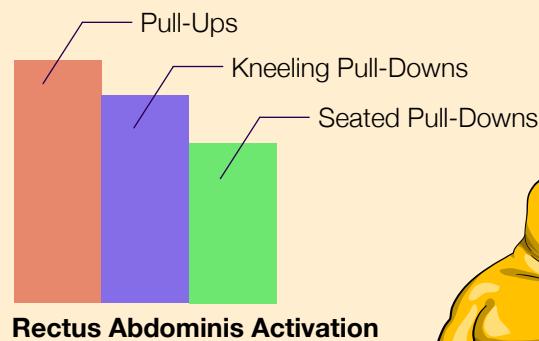
◀ Pull the band straight down, not towards you. It should touch the chest.

If you can't pull to the chest level, Use a lighter band. Full range of motion is key.

NOTE Shrugged shoulders



Elevated shoulders can induce an upward tilt of the scapulae. Instead, the scapulae should maintain a neutral or slightly downward position to stabilize the shoulder joint.



Research indicates that the rectus abdominis (RA) is more engaged during pull-ups and kneeling than seated pull-downs. It underscores the value of RA activation in banded pull-downs as part of a balanced upper-body routine.

Kneeling pull-downs, while boosting core stability, also provide a holistic upper-body exercise, making them a solid choice. Conversely, seated pull-downs, particularly with a thicker band, target back and arm muscles more directly. Therefore, the preferred position in banded pull-downs should reflect the muscle groups one aims to work on. Both kneeling and seated positions have distinct advantages based on individual fitness goals.



Jennifer K H, Daniel A J, Todd C. A Comparison of Muscle Activation during the Pull-up and Three Alternative Pulling Exercises. *J Phys Fit Treatment & Sports*. 2018; 5(4): 555669. DOI: 10.19080/JPFMTS.2018.05.555669



Easier for core, harder for pulling

The seated position focuses on the upper body and pulling movement. It minimizes lower body and core engagement, emphasizing arm and back muscles. However, the increased band tension makes pulling more challenging.

Harder for core, easier for pulling

In the kneeling version, core engagement is crucial for stability. This variation resembles a standard pull-up and enhances core strength and balance. However, the shorter band means less tension, easing the pulling movement.

MAIN EXERCISES

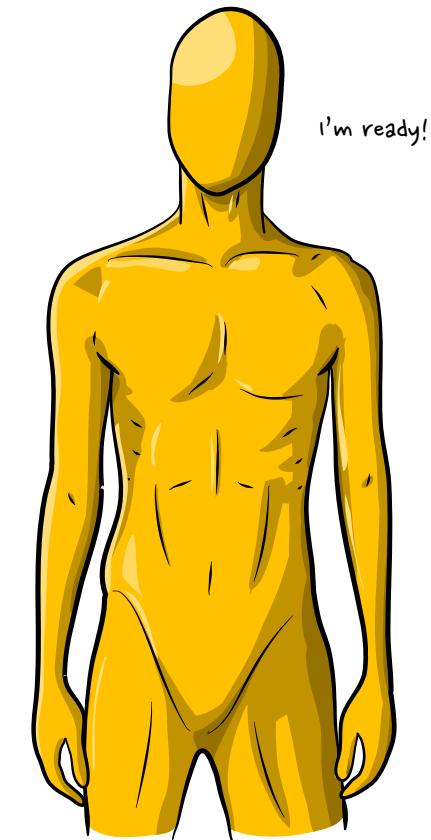
Once your body is primed and ready through our warmup, it's time to get into the meat of the program: the main exercises. These exercises are methodically structured to take you from beginner to advanced pull-up performer, regardless of your fitness level.

Starting with exercises like bent-over barbell rows and passive hang, we focus on building foundational strength and grip endurance. From there, we gradually progress to more pull-up-specific movements, such as scapular pull-ups, Australian pull-ups, and negative pull-ups. Each exercise is chosen for its ability to enhance your pull-up strength and contribute to functional fitness and overall muscle development.

As we move through the program, we introduce band assisted pull-ups and, eventually, the classic pull-ups. Each stage of the progression is crucial, and each exercise plays an essential part in your journey toward mastering the pull-up.

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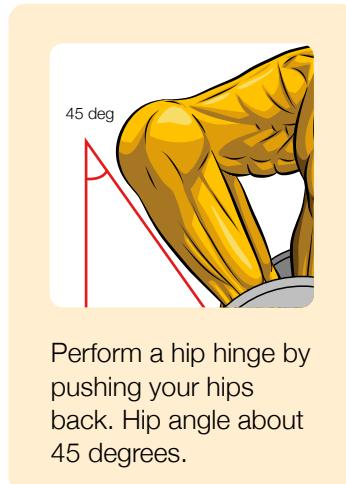


BENT OVER BARBELL ROWS

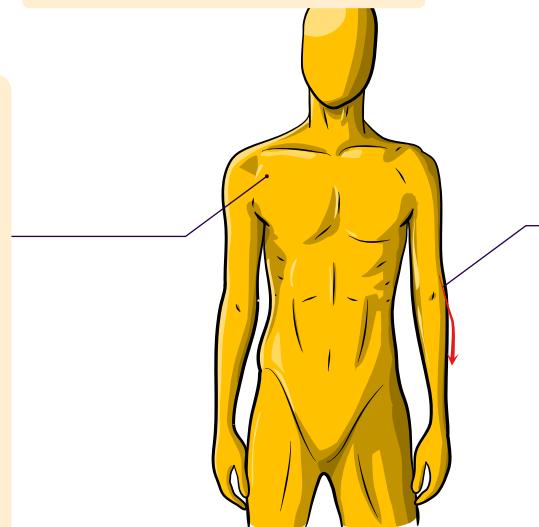
The bent-over barbell row is an essential compound exercise for improving their pulling force. This exercise targets many of the same muscle groups involved in the pull-up, including the lats, rhomboids, and biceps. However, one significant difference is that the bent-over row is a horizontal pulling motion. At the same time, the pull-up is a vertical pull.

This variation helps develop a more well-rounded strength profile. As you pull the barbell towards your abdomen, your lats and rhomboids engage to control the movement. Simultaneously, your biceps assist by flexing your elbows, and your core muscles engage to maintain balance and form.

Like all pulling workouts, pull your shoulder blades back and down.

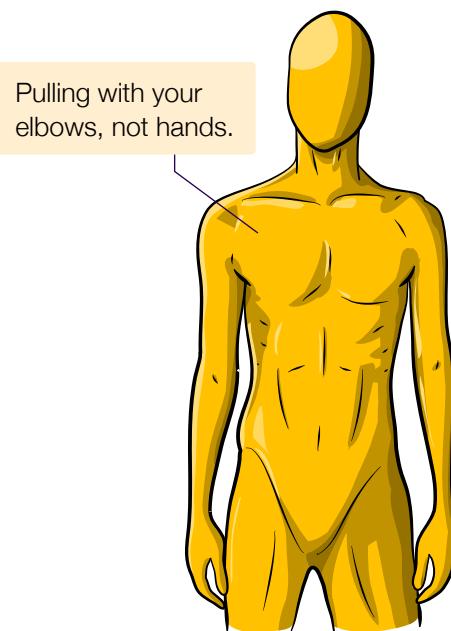
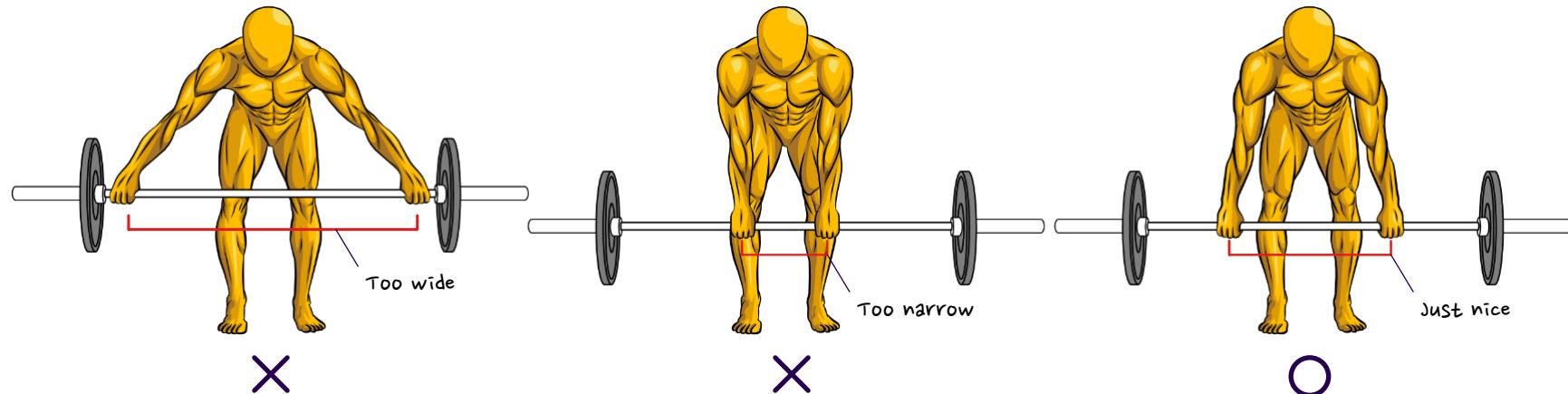


▼ Stand with your feet hip-width apart and hold a barbell with a slightly wide grip.



Torso should be close to parallel with the ground but slightly upright.

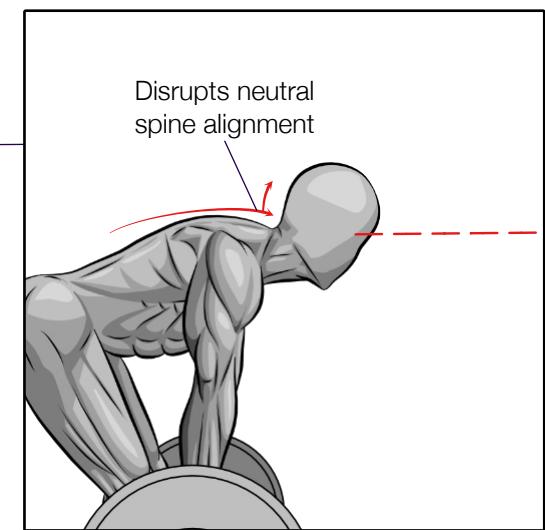




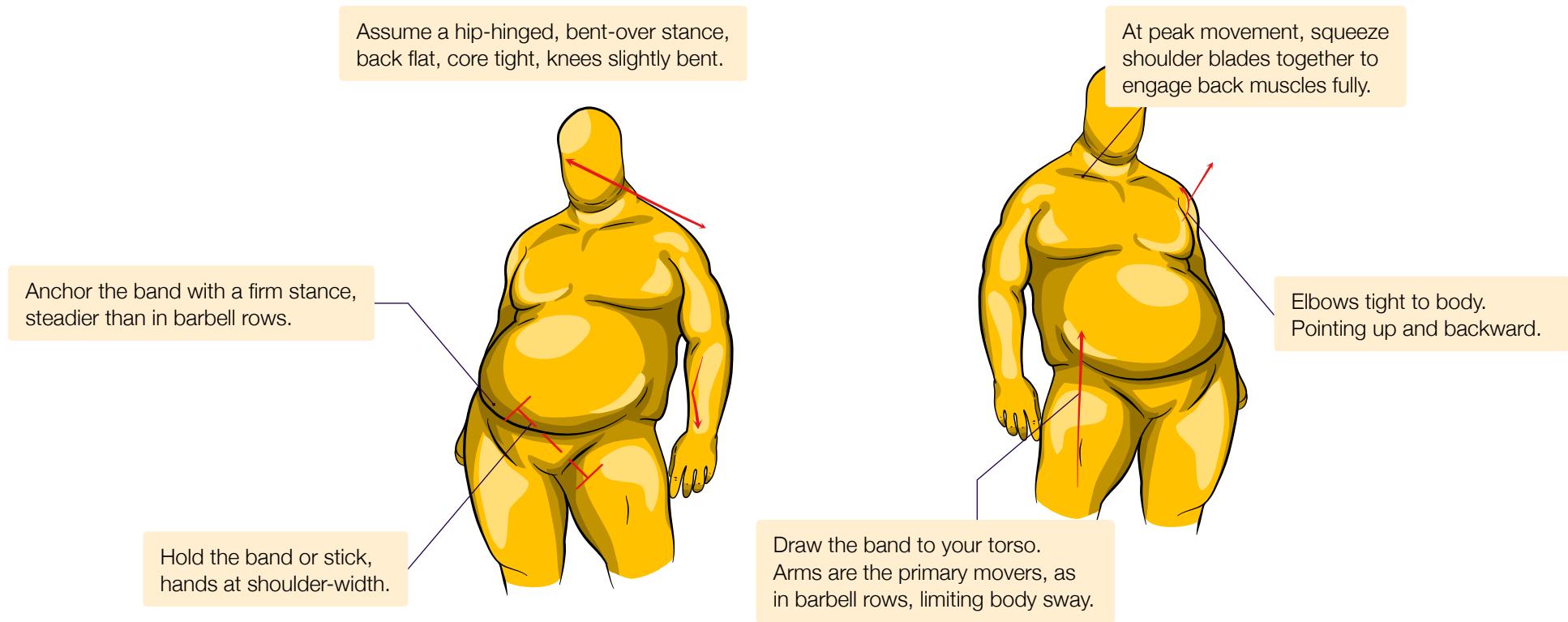
Pull the barbell towards belly.



Maintain neutral spine alignment by focusing on a spot on the floor a few feet ahead.



Looking forward strains neck muscles and pressures cervical spine discs, potentially causing injury due to disrupted alignment.



Alternative with bands

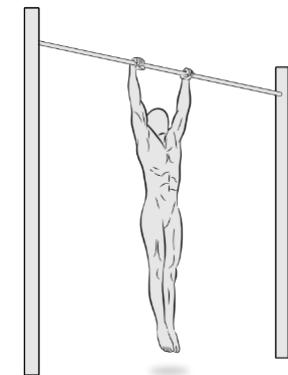
While bent over barbell rows are effective, they're not the only way to train these crucial pull-up muscle groups. Other equally effective options exist if you don't have access to a barbell or are looking for a change.

Banded bent over rows are an ideal substitute with a resistance band to offer the necessary strain. For those missing the grip and breadth of a barbell, simply loop the resistance band around a rigid stick like a broomstick. Doing so lets you modulate the resistance according to your comfort and mimic the barbell's sensation.

PASSIVE HANG

The passive hang is an underrated yet critical exercise in your journey toward successful pull-ups. Its primary goal is to develop grip strength, a crucial aspect of the pull-ups often overlooked during training. A firm grip on the bar ensures a stable base for moving the rest of your body.

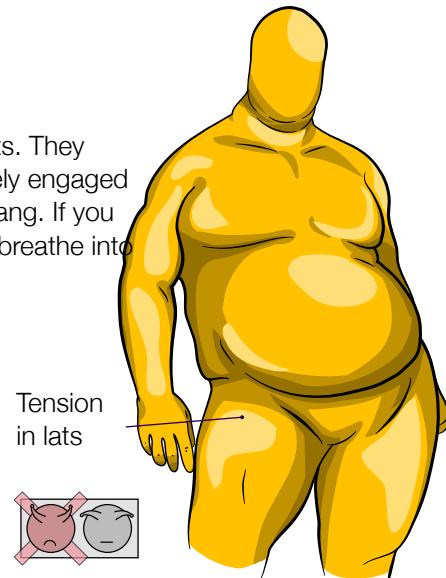
Remember, the small muscles in your fingers and hands work hard to maintain the grip. So, don't be surprised if your forearms feel the burn before your back or biceps do. Aim to increase hang duration as grip strength and endurance improve progressively.



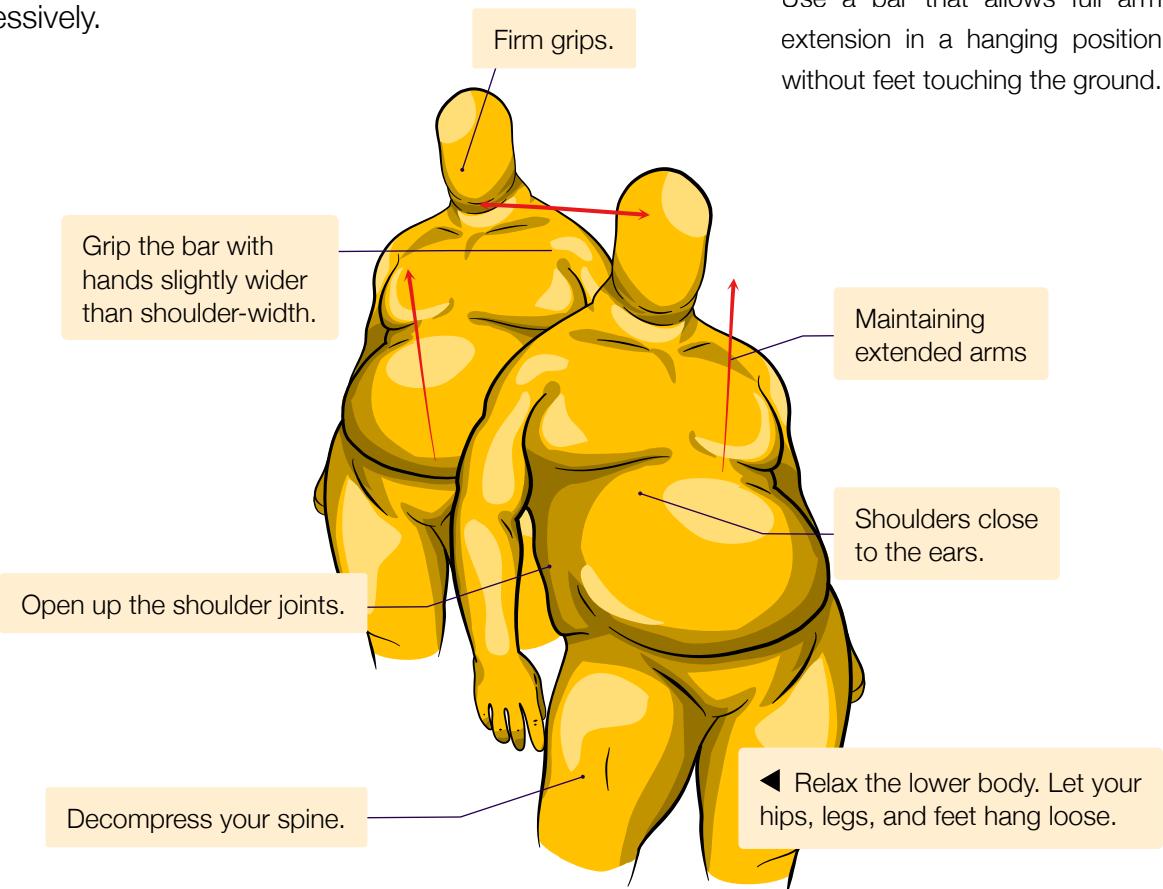
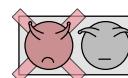
Use a bar that allows full arm extension in a hanging position without feet touching the ground.

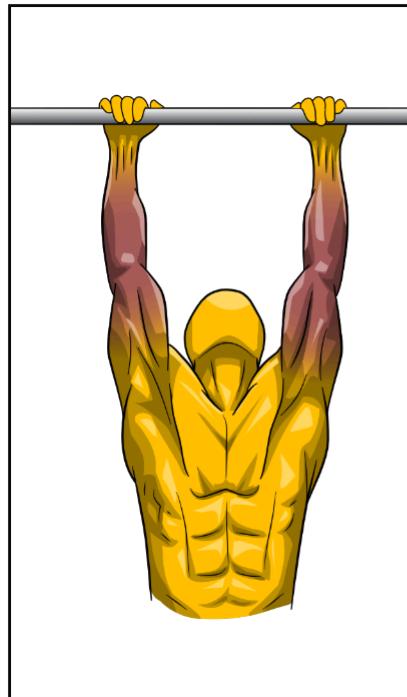
NOTE Active lats

Try to relax your lats. They shouldn't be actively engaged during a passive hang. If you feel tension, try to breathe into it and let it go.

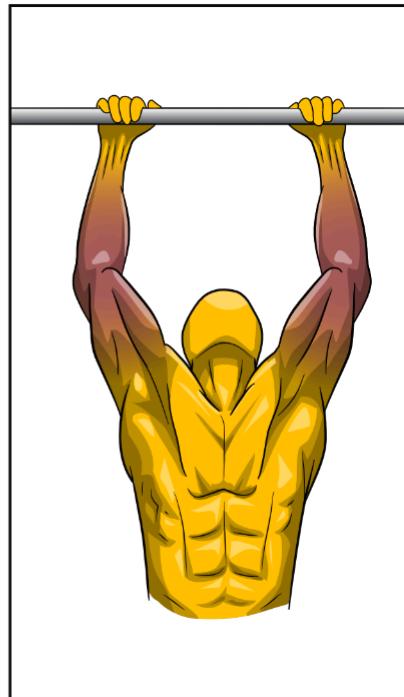


Tension in lats





Arms fully extended



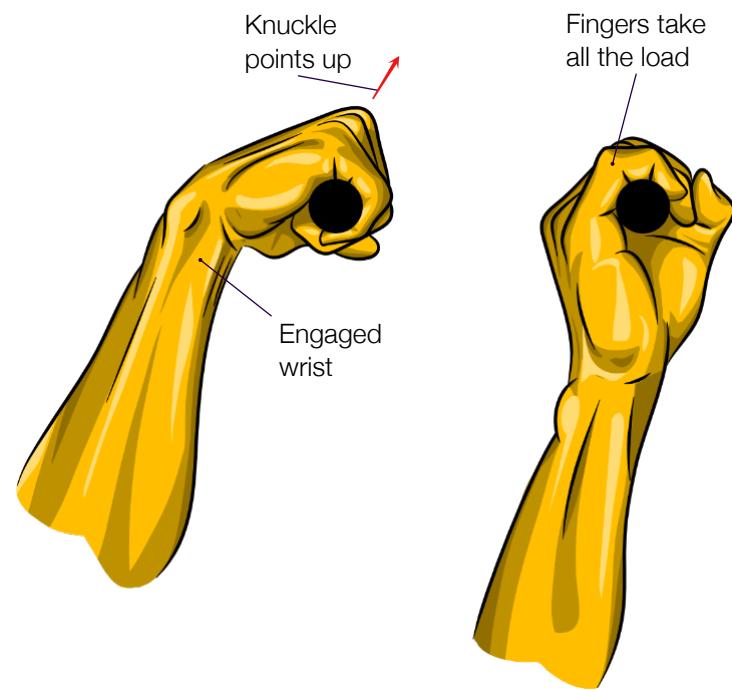
Not fully extended

Don't bend the arms

Bending your arms during a passive hang detracts from its effectiveness. It lessens grip strength and endurance training as your biceps and forearms inadvertently bear some load. The valuable stretch and decompression for your spine and upper body muscles are diminished due to the shortened hang length. Keeping your arms fully extended throughout the passive hang ensures maximum benefits.

Knuckles pointing up

Place your hand over the bar in each rep for a firmer grip. Your knuckles should point upward and slightly forward, with the bar beneath them for increased control and range of motion. Proper hand placement also balances the load between your hand and wrist, avoiding undue strain on fingers and preventing injuries while engaging your wrist.



Individual finger strength: are the ulnar digits "powerful"? J Hand Ther. 2004 Jul-Sep;17(3):364-7. doi: 10.1197/jht.2004.04.006. PMID: 15273677.



Use all fingers

Think our pinky and ring fingers are weak? Well, you might be wrong. A study titled "Contribution of the ulnar digits to grip strength" reveals that these fingers, also known as the ulnar digits, are crucial for our overall grip strength.

Now, we're not saying that you'll lose your ulnar digits. The critical point is understanding the importance of using all your fingers for a firm grip. Far from being the 'weak' ones, the pinky and ring fingers are vital in our hand strength.

You can instantly boost your grip strength without extra training by using all your fingers, especially the pinky and ring fingers.



Lose the little pinky, and your grip strength drops by **33%**.

Without the ring finger, your grip strength decreases by **21%**.

And if you don't have both these fingers, your grip strength falls by **more than half**.

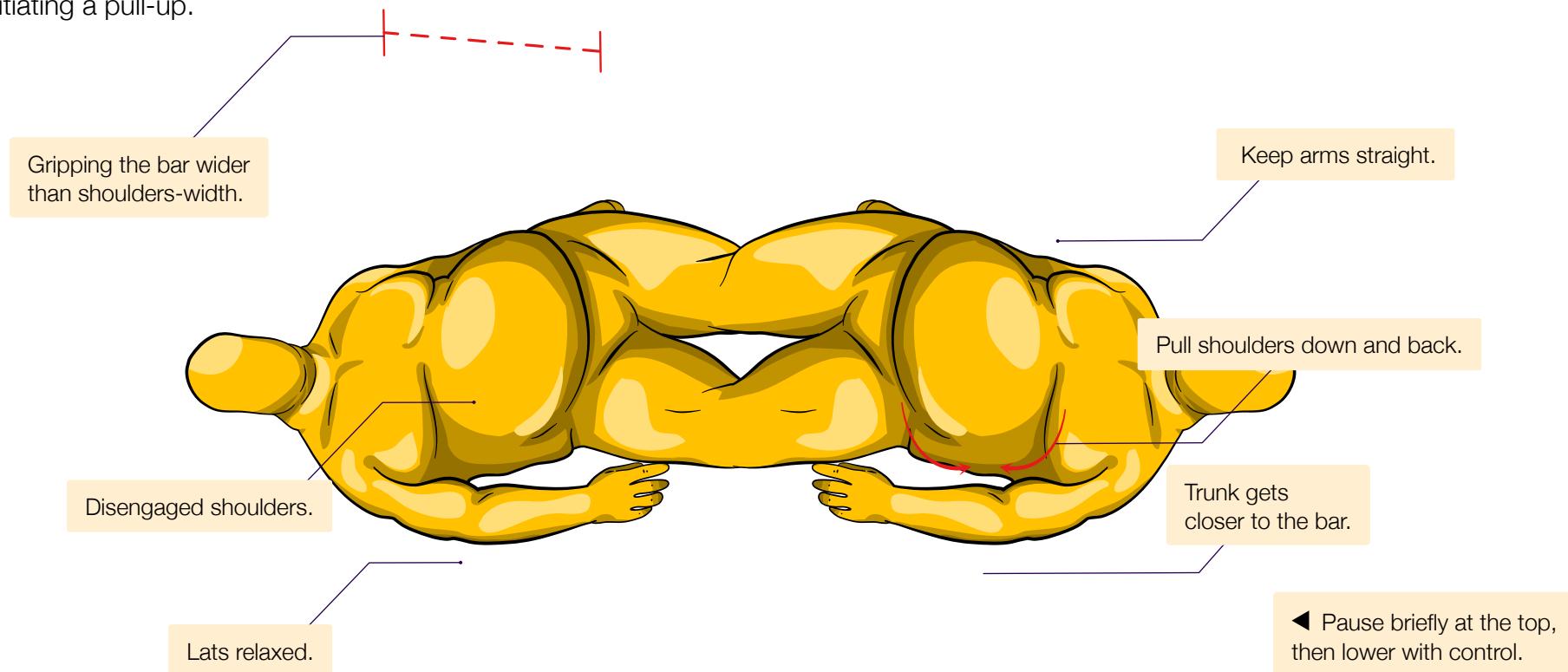
With the awareness of how all fingers contribute to grip strength, the next step is to squeeze the bar, engaging every digit. Imagine the bar as a wet sponge you're trying to wring all the water out of - that's how firmly you should grip it.

Doing so establishes a strong bond between your hand and the bar. This robust grip doesn't just enable more substantial pulling power and enhances your grip endurance, allowing you to pull harder and grip longer. It's a simple adjustment that can significantly impact your pull-up performance.

SCAPULA PULL-UPS

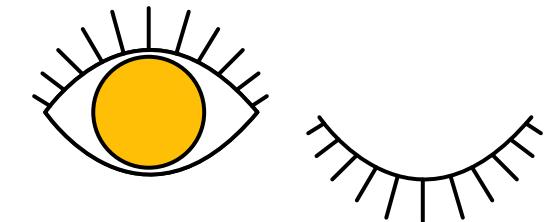
Aiming to isolate the scapula, this exercise is foundational to your pull-up training. The scapula, or shoulder blades, are the point of attachment for your upper arm bones, making them central to the movement of a pull-up.

In a scapular pull-up, you aim to move your body upwards using only the muscles that control the scapula, not bending at the elbow. It can be a difficult concept at first, but with practice, you'll start to feel how the scapula moves and how to control it. And this control is paramount when initiating a pull-up.



02

PULL-UPS

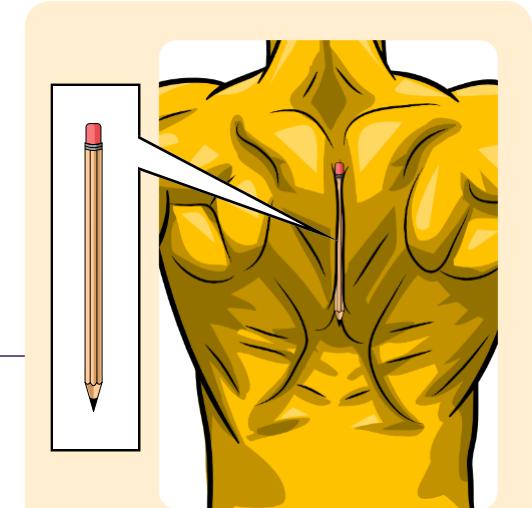
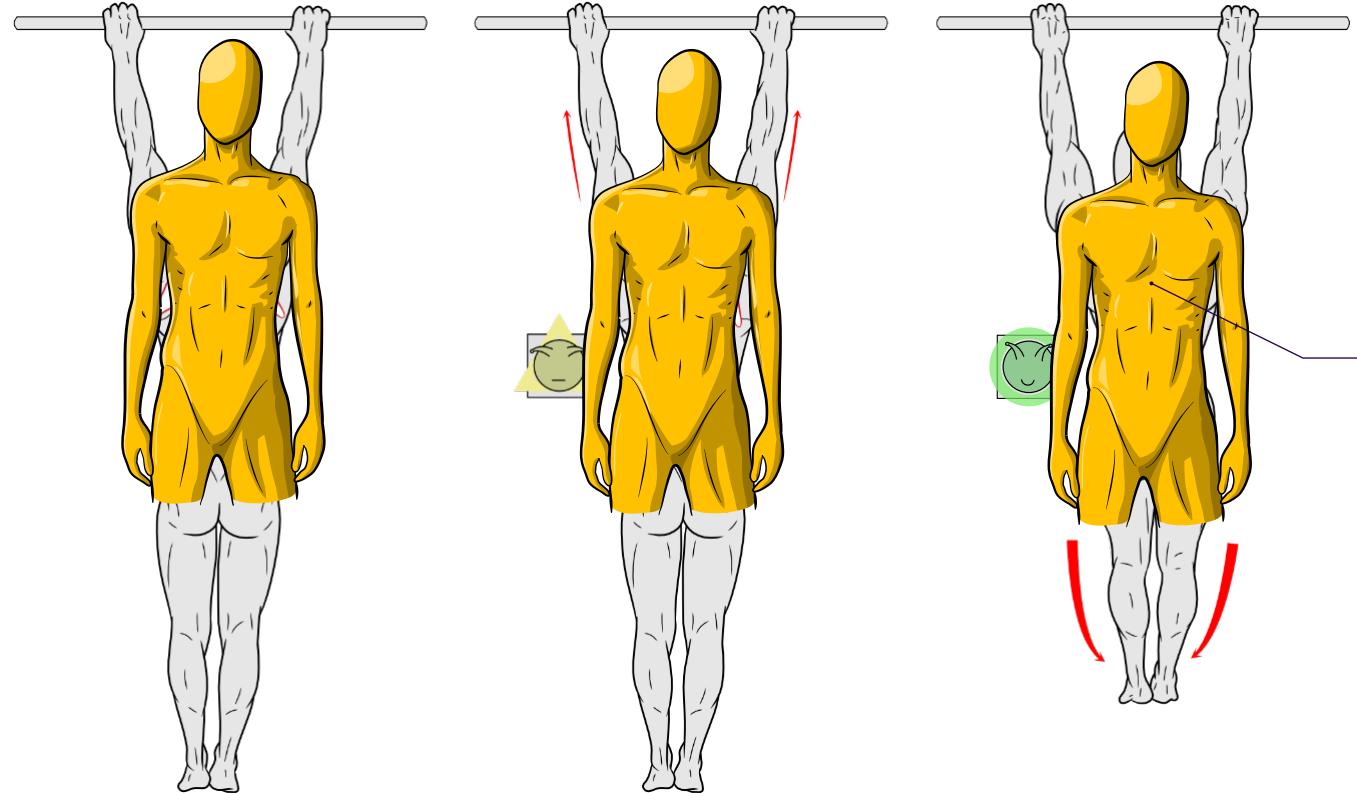


Close your eyes

Performing scapula pull-ups with eyes closed could help focus on muscle movements, particularly in the upper back and shoulders. It may improve body awareness, leading to more accurate execution of this specific exercise.

Retraction and depression

See how scapula retraction and depression works.



Imagine squeezing and burying a pencil with your shoulder blades.

Begin: Passive hang

Initiate from the passive hang position. Arms are fully extended, and the body is relaxed and motionless.

Good: Ears away

In scapular depression, the shoulders are pulled down and away from the ears, indicating muscle engagement while maintaining straight arms.

Best: Max squeezing

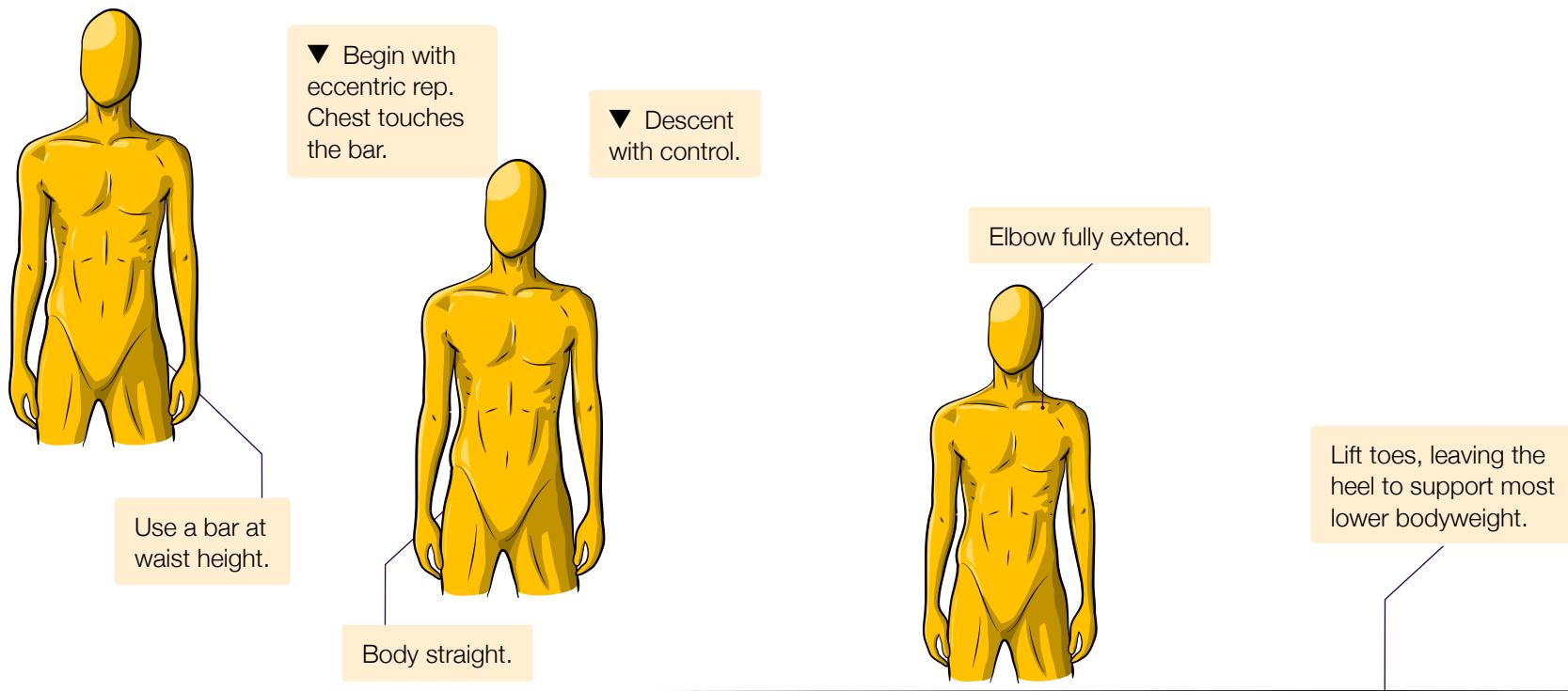
Along with depression, retraction brings the scapulae closest together. Observe the natural forward swing of the lower body.

Bending the elbow bypasses the engagement of back muscles and puts undue strain on the biceps.



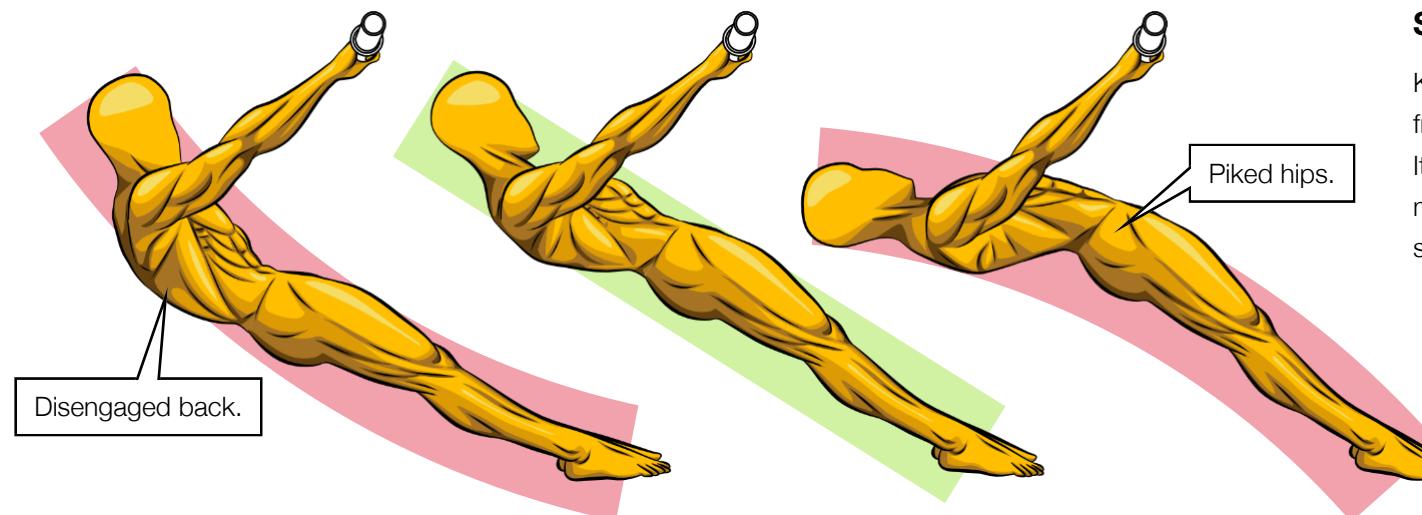
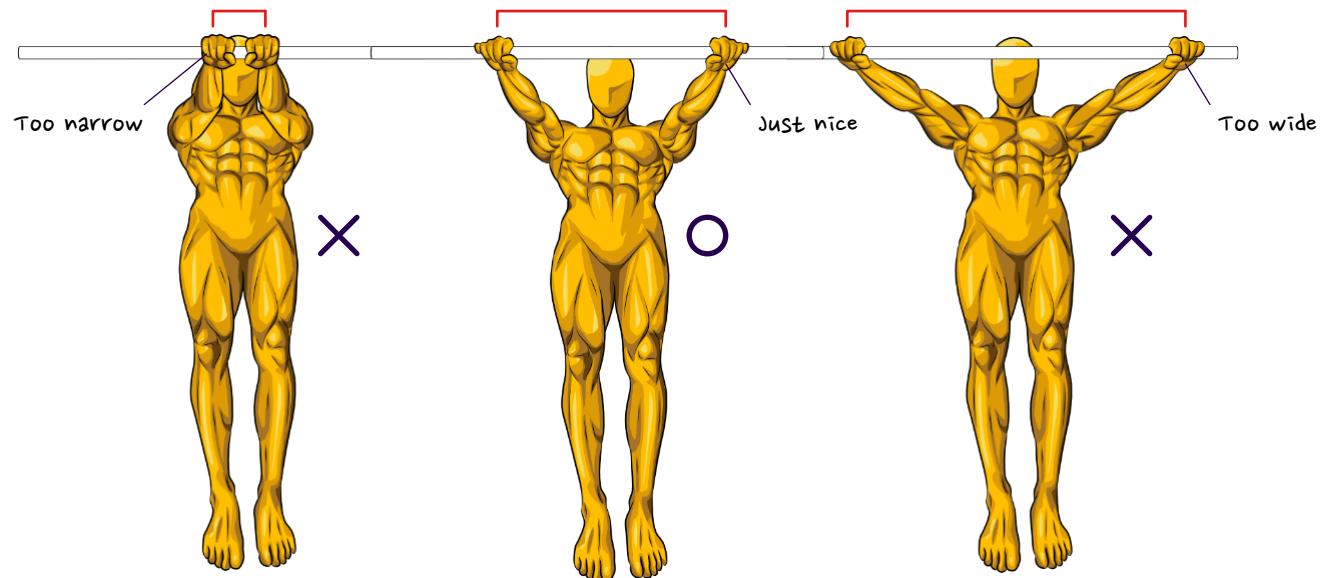
AUSTRALIAN PULL-UPS

The Australian pull-ups, named for its "upside-down" nature, is an accessible pull-up variant. Ideal for beginners, it helps build foundational strength in the back and arm muscles without requiring full bodyweight lift. Pulling the chest towards a waist-high bar activates the lats, biceps, and upper back. Since your feet touch the ground, you can gradually control the exercise intensity and progress. This exercise not only strengthens muscles but also ingrains proper motor patterns necessary for successful pull-ups.



Grip width

Gripping the bar wider than the shoulders helps with a greater range of motion. It also lets us use an under-thumb grip, which increases the pull force. You may try wider or narrower grip width after mastering this grip width.

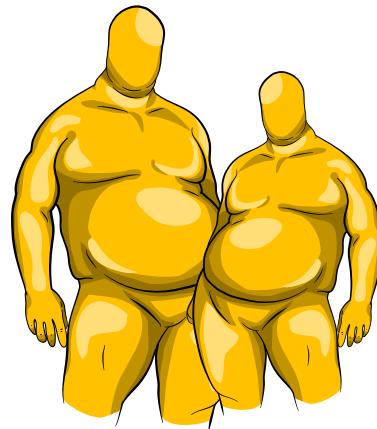


Straight line

Keeping the body straight needs some work from the hips, core, and back, but it's worth it. It helps keep the correct form, engages the muscles properly, and leads to effective and safer workouts.

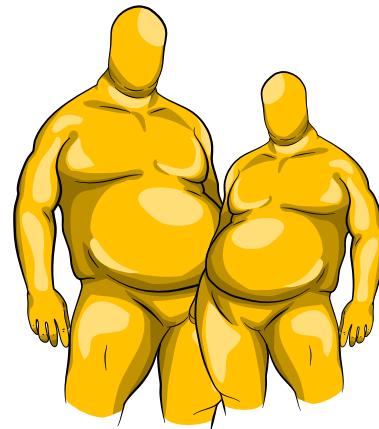
Adjust the difficulty

Australian pull-ups can be adapted for different fitness levels by adjusting your stance, the bar's height, and your body's angle. Here are three progressive levels to try:



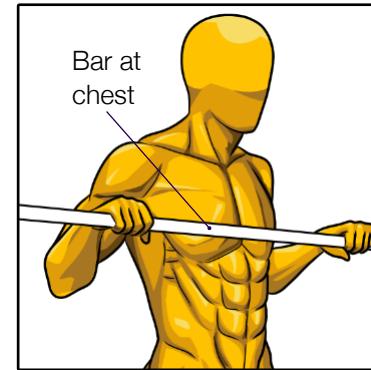
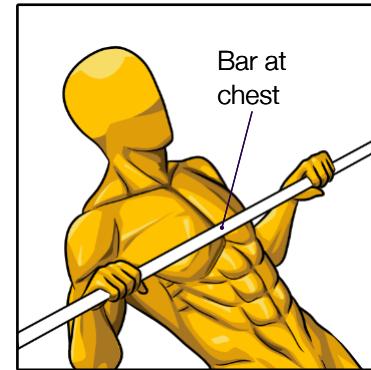
Easiest: Chest-level bar

Begin with the bar set at lower chest level. Step one pace forward from directly under the bar, positioning your body at a slight decline (feet in front, head behind). Lower your body by fully straightening your arms.

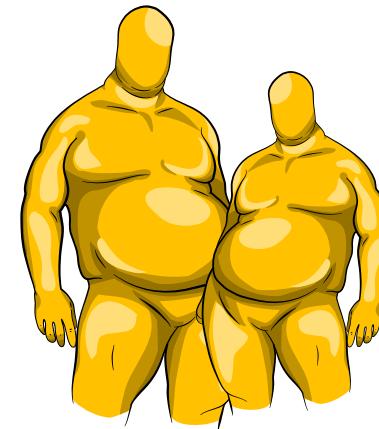


Normal: Steeper decline

Lower the bar to the waist level. Take another step to increase the angle of your body's decline. Begin the exercise with the bar at your lower chest level, then straighten your arms to lower your body.

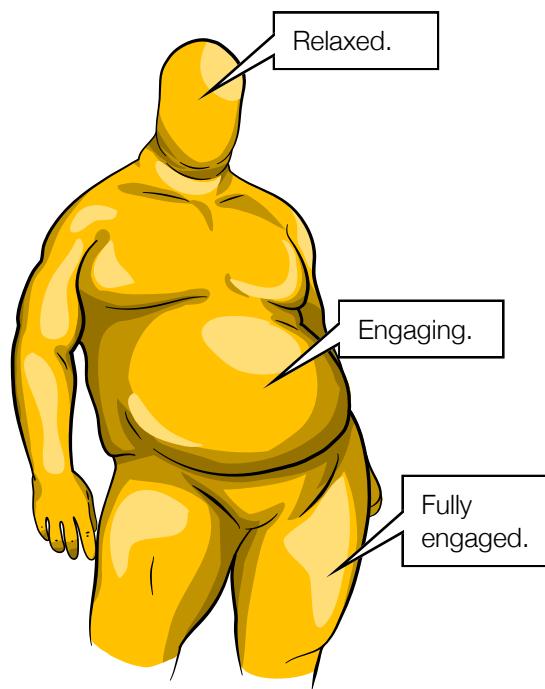


Always initiate the move with the bar aligned to the lower chest, regardless of whether you're declined or upright. It ensures proper body positioning, facilitating correct movement mechanics and optimal muscle engagement.



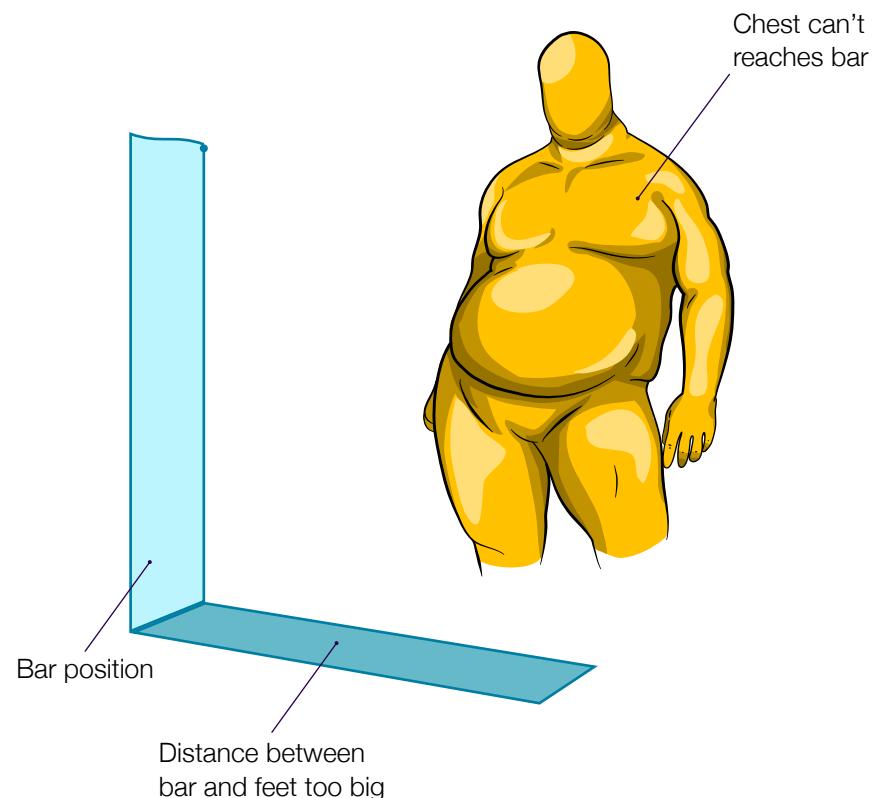
Harder: Elevated feet

Maintain the bar at waist level. Elevate your feet by stepping onto a box or chair. At the lowest point of the exercise, your body should be parallel to the ground.



Rear perspective

Let's see how the back muscles engagement looks like from the rear. In the idle position, back muscles are relaxed. As the movement starts, the lats, traps, and rhomboids activate. With the chest near the bar at full engagement, these muscles work at their peak.

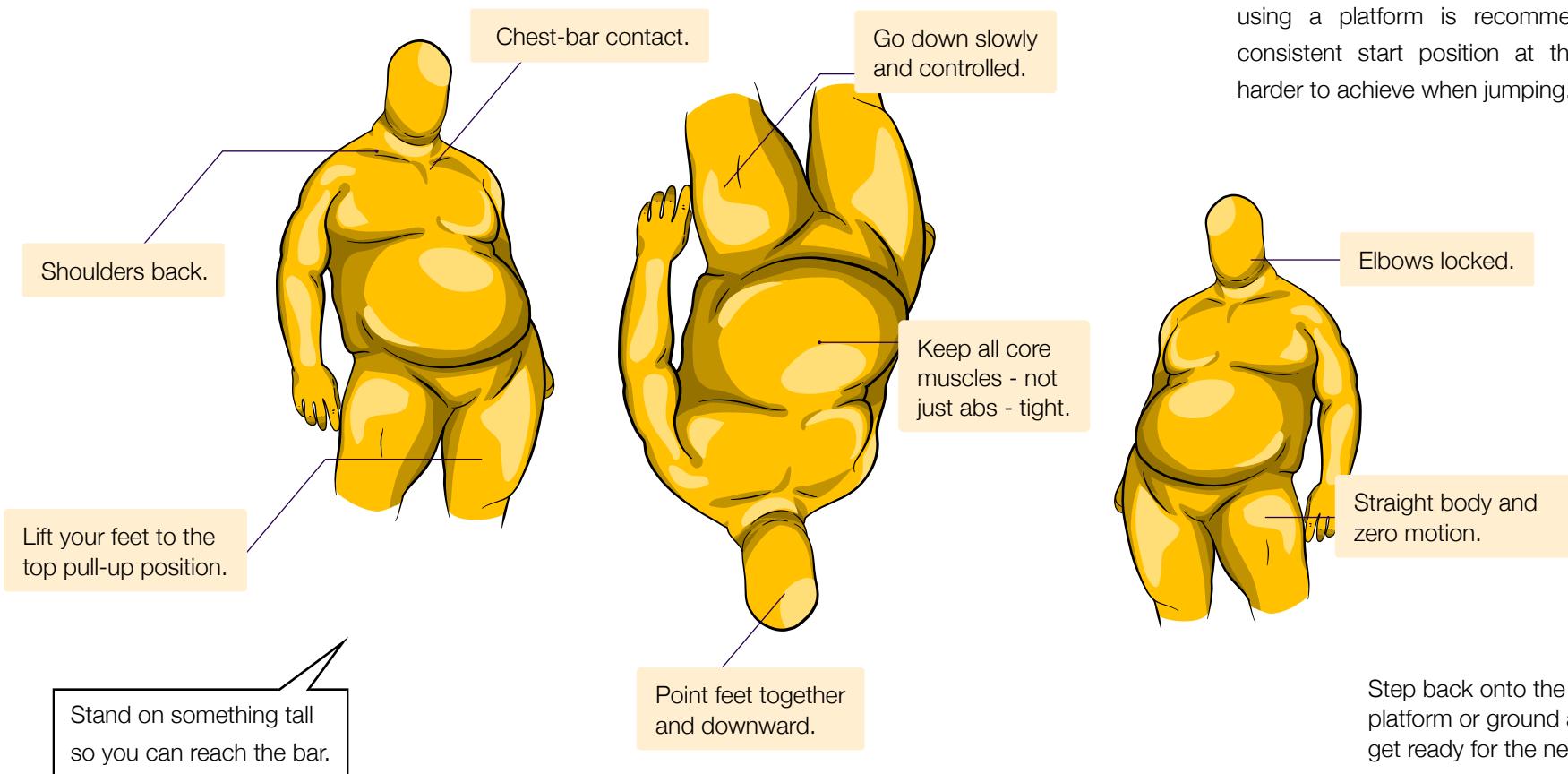


Bar too high & feet too far forward

A common mistake during Australian pull-ups is setting the bar too high and stepping too far forward. This misalignment results in you pulling the bar towards your face instead of your chest, which is the optimal pulling point. It could strain your neck and shoulder muscles and not effectively target the intended muscle groups. Always ensure you set the bar at the correct height, and that your body is positioned correctly to achieve the best results.

NEGATIVE PULL-UPS

Also known as "eccentric pull-ups," negative pull-ups are about the downward or "eccentric" phase of the pull-up movement. In strength training, eccentric movement (where a muscle lengthens under tension) is especially effective for building muscle strength and mass. The key is to resist gravity on the way down, engaging your lats, biceps, and upper back muscles. You might find that you can perform several negative pull-ups even if you can't do a full pull-up yet.

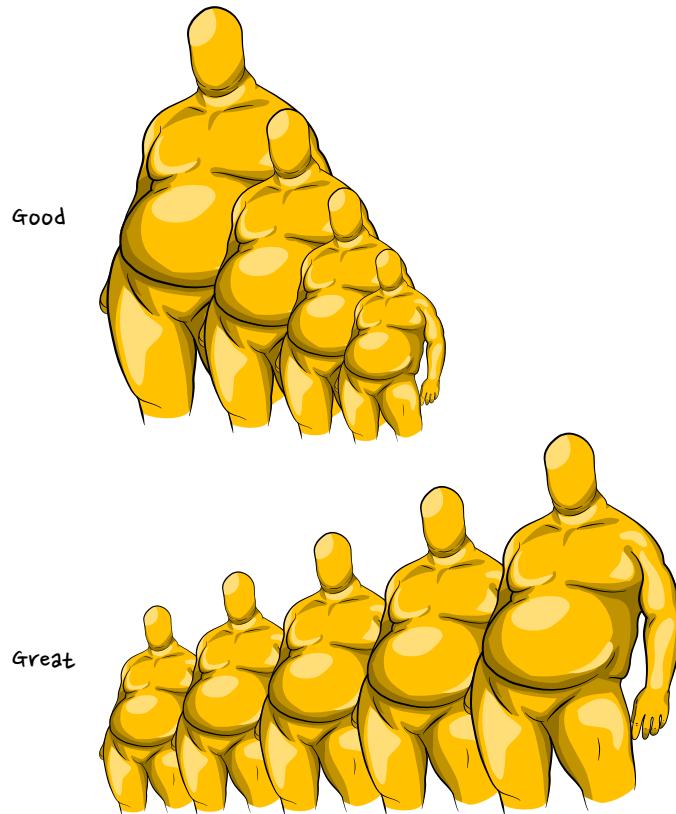


Jump to the bar

Jumping to reach the bar is an option, but using a platform is recommended. A consistent start position at the top is harder to achieve when jumping.

Time your descents

Experiment with timing your descents. Start with a 3-second descent, then gradually work up to 4, 6, and so on. The slower the descent, the harder your muscles will have to work. It can be a great way to challenge yourself as you progress with your negative pull-ups.



Strength gains following different combined concentric and eccentric exercise regimens. Aviat Space Environ Med. 2003 Apr;74(4):342-7. PMID: 12688453.

Greater Strength Gains after Training with Accentuated Eccentric than Traditional Isoinertial Loads in Already Strength-Trained Men DOI=10.3389/fphys.2016.00149v

Eccentric is great

Multiple studies highlight the potential benefits of eccentric exercises for strength gains and muscle growth. Interestingly, muscles can manage up to 1.75 times more weight during eccentric contractions than concentric ones. This is why eccentric workouts can be a powerful tool for mastering more challenging skills. However, it's worth mentioning that eccentric exercises, also known as AEL (Accentuated Eccentric Loading), can lead to more muscle damage and longer recovery times. So, it's crucial to balance your workout and recovery effectively.

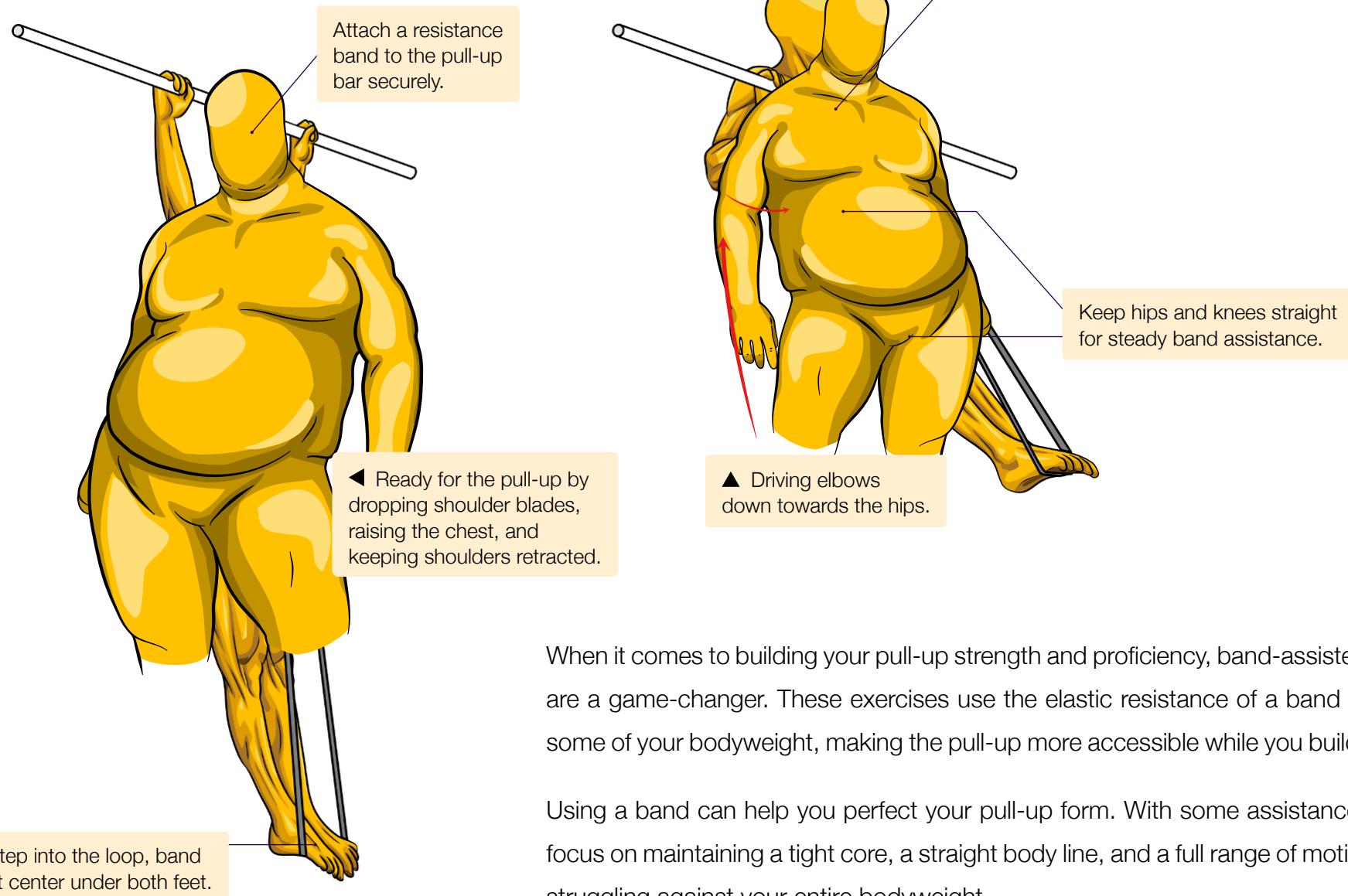
Negative pull-ups focus on the easier lowering phase before the harder lifting phase. With regular practice of this easier phase, you can build the strength needed for the stricter lift.



BAND ASSISTED PULL-UPS

02

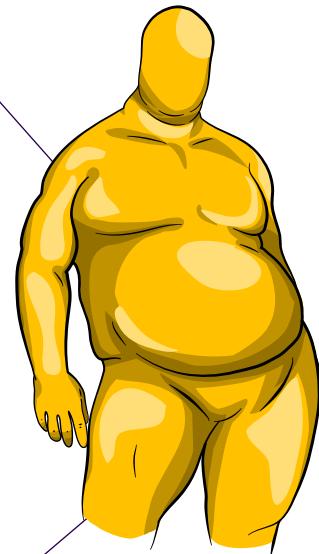
PULL-UPS



When it comes to building your pull-up strength and proficiency, band-assisted pull-ups are a game-changer. These exercises use the elastic resistance of a band to counter some of your bodyweight, making the pull-up more accessible while you build strength.

Using a band can help you perfect your pull-up form. With some assistance, you can focus on maintaining a tight core, a straight body line, and a full range of motion without struggling against your entire bodyweight.

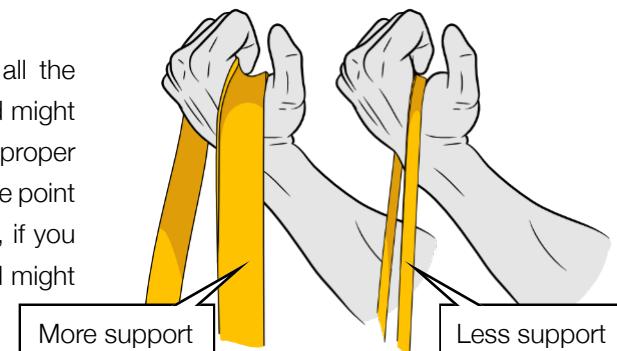
Grasp the bar with a wide grip and let the body hang fully with arms extended



Keep feet together and body straight to maintain form.

▲ Keep the head back to avoid contact with the bar while pulling up.

The band should assist, but it shouldn't do all the work for you. If pull-ups feel too easy, the band might be too thick and provide too much help. A proper resistance band will challenge you, but not to the point of straining or compromising form. Conversely, if you struggle to perform even one pull-up, the band might be too thin and need more support.



◀ Lower slowly back to the starting position, maintaining control throughout the descent.

NOTE Head over bar



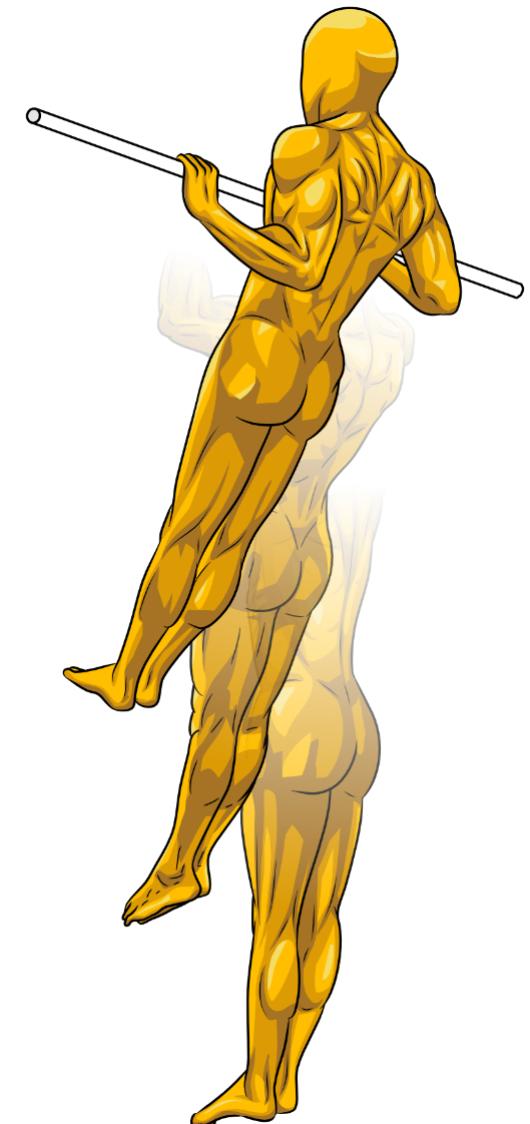
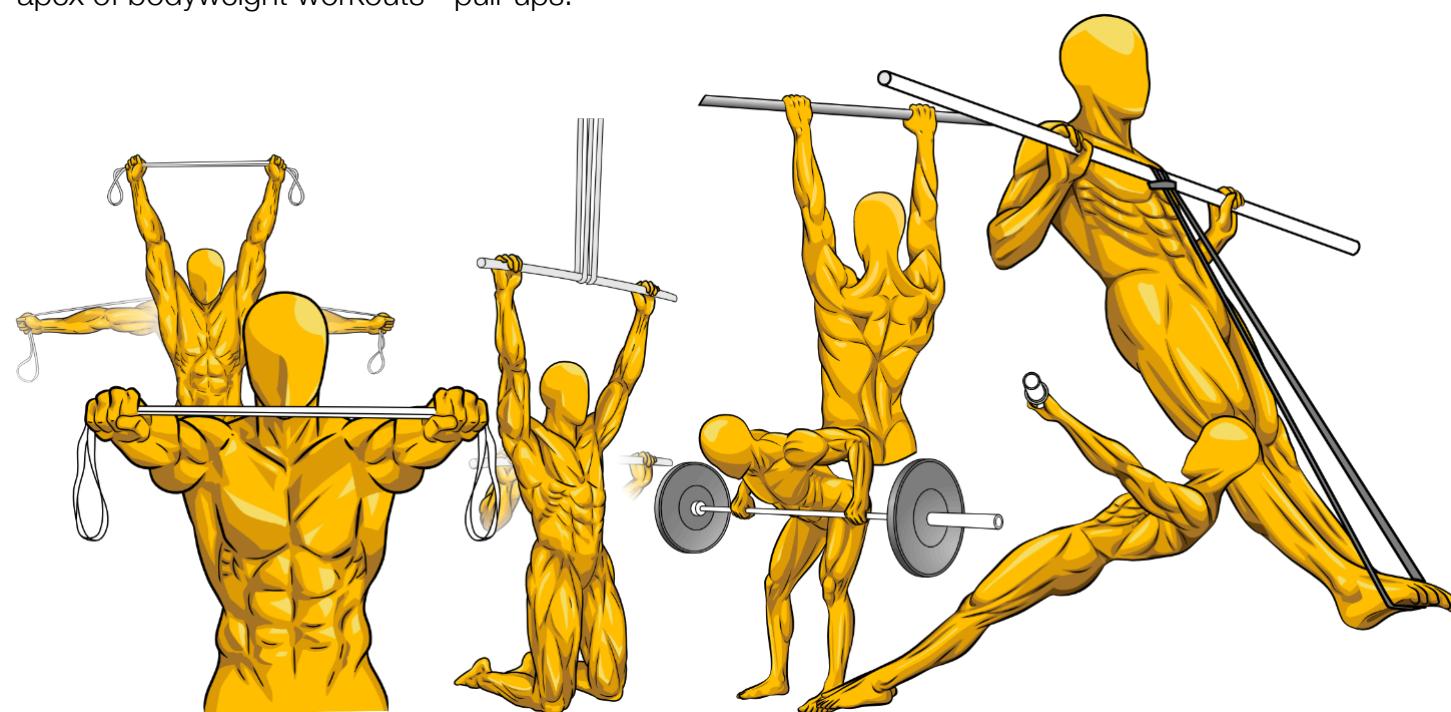
The head may go over the bar, but this shouldn't be the cue. If used as a cue, it may lead to underusing back muscles and over-reliance on arm and shoulder strength, risking imbalances and injuries.

Instead, focus on keeping the head away from the bar to encourage an upright position. You should feel no stress in the neck.

PULL-UPS

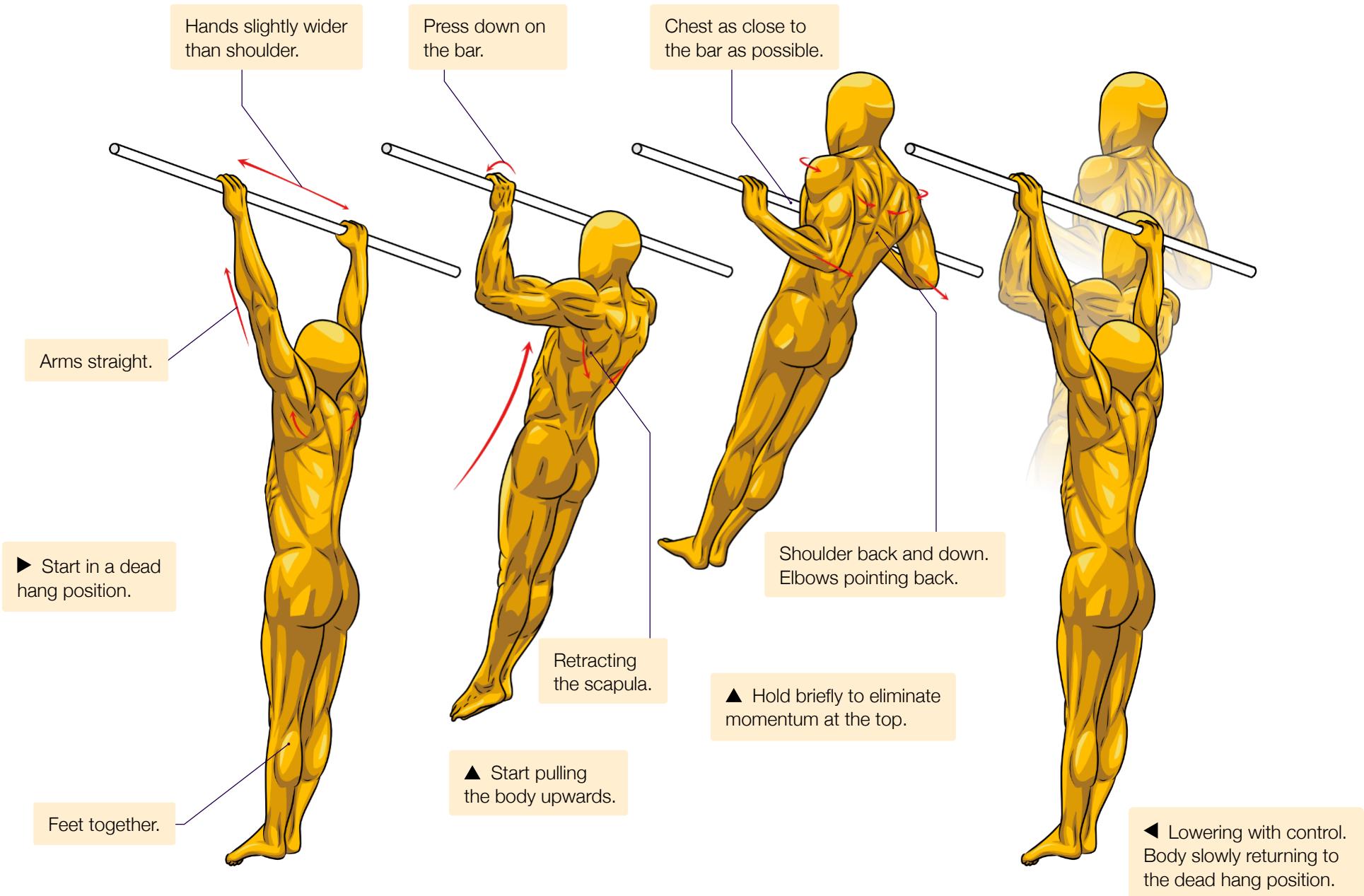
Pull-ups are the definitive upper body workout for strength, control, and precision. They activate several muscles, including the lats, biceps, rhomboids, and core. By lifting your bodyweight against gravity, pull-ups enhance grip, boost upper body power, and increase muscle endurance. They call for not just strength but also muscle coordination. Each rep signifies effort and perseverance. Your first pull-up isn't the finale but the initiation of a new stage in your strength and fitness journey.

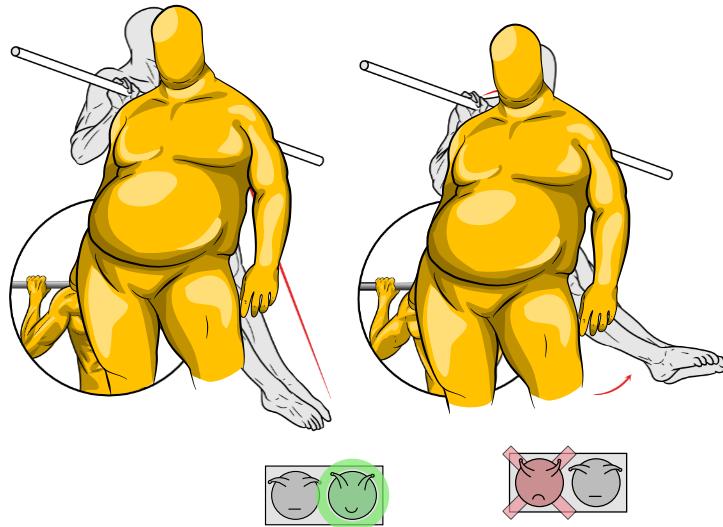
You've built up your power through earlier workouts, and now, you're ready to face the apex of bodyweight workouts - pull-ups.



02

PULL-UPS



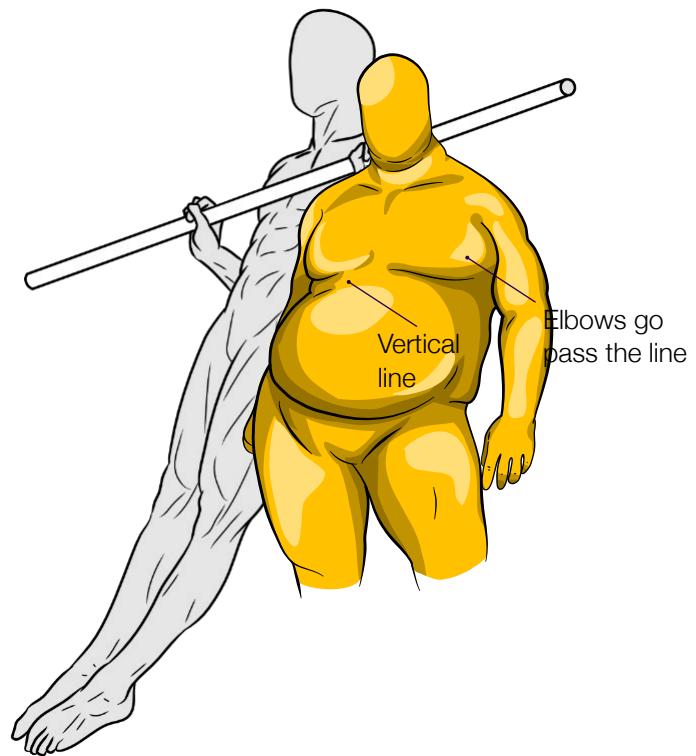
NOTE Head not over the bar

Steer clear of the traditional 'head over the bar' advice during pull-ups. This common cue can cause unnecessary neck stretching, resulting in a compensatory hip drop, disrupting your straight body line, and raising your legs to balance.

Instead, aim to make contact with the bar using your chest. This approach ensures the maintenance of a proper straight-line form throughout the exercise.

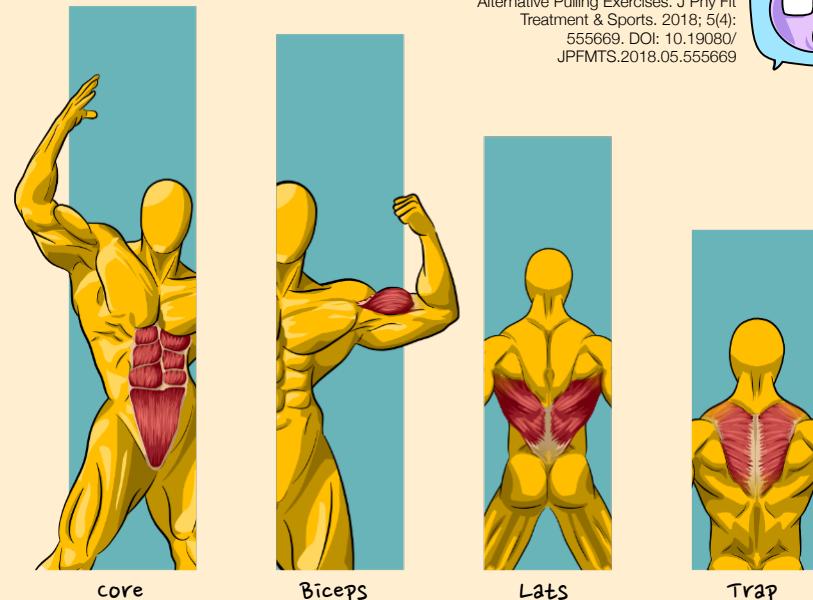
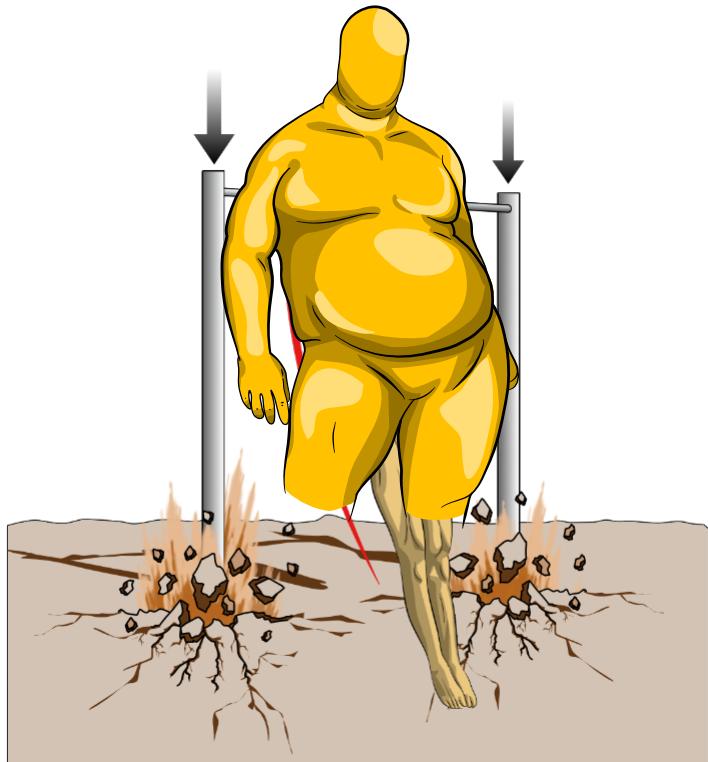
Imagine a vertical line next to your body during pull-ups. This line serves as a guide for your elbow movement. As you pull yourself up, your elbows should pass beyond this line at the peak of the pull-up. This motion ensures a full range of movement and helps engage your back muscles more effectively.

This isn't just about form—it brings fun to your workout. It's like a mini challenge within the exercise, turning each rep into a small victory as your elbow passes the line.



The “pull-down” cue

Try this fresh perspective when doing pull-ups: don't focus on lifting your body to the bar; instead, imagine pulling the bar down to you. Pretend your body is not moving, and the bar is sinking into the floor as you pull. Aim to bring the bar down to your chest, not just lift your body to reach the bar. This simple shift in mindset could help you squeeze in one or more extra pull-ups.



A Comparison of Muscle Activation during the Pull-up and Three Alternative Pulling Exercises. *J Phy Fit Treatment & Sports.* 2018; 5(4): 555669. DOI: 10.19080/JPFMTS.2018.05.555669



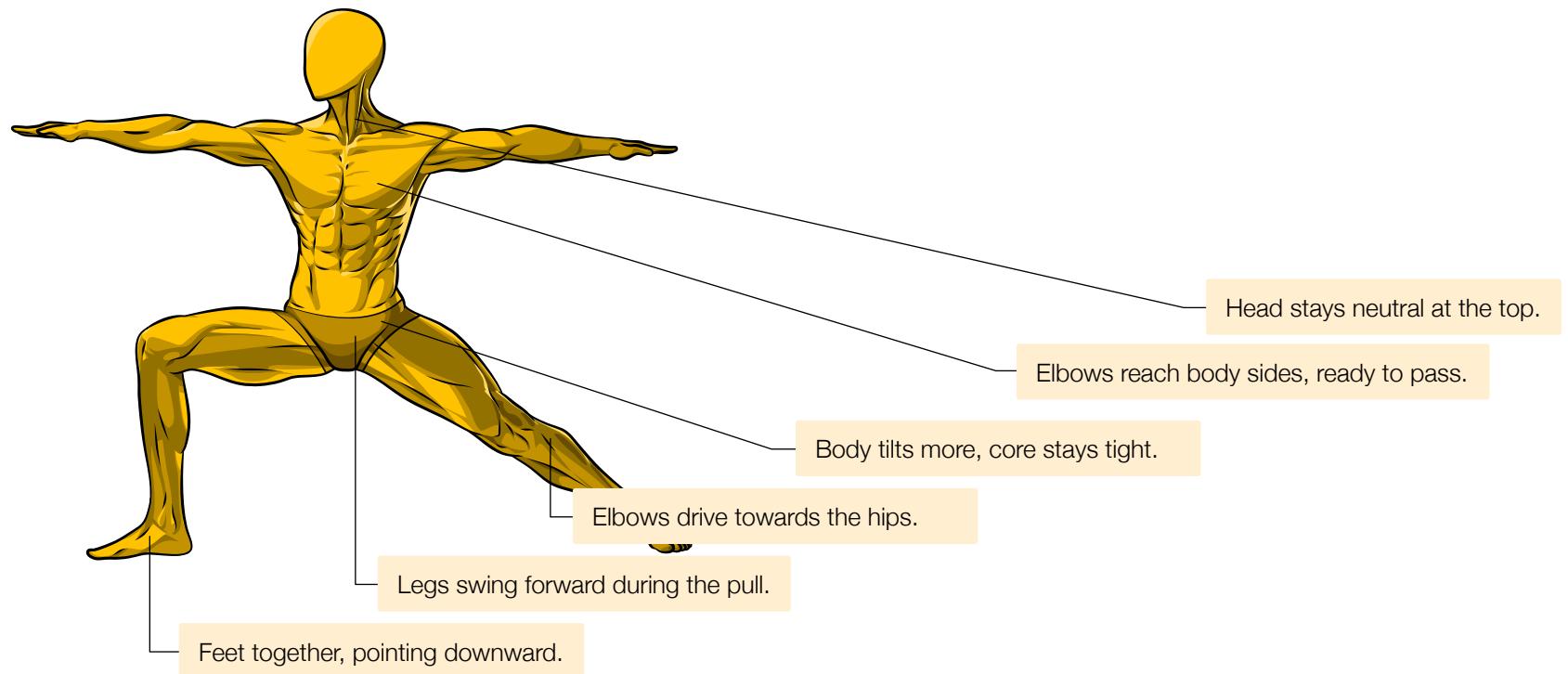
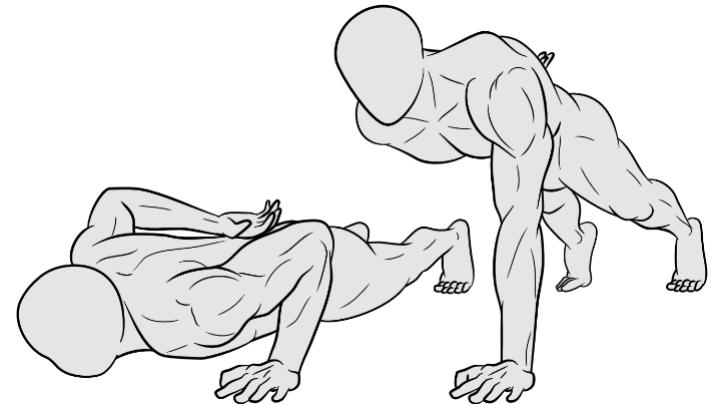
The role of core in clean pull-ups

The body tilt in pull-ups isn't just practical, it's necessary to prevent the head from hitting the static bar. This tilting motion relies heavily on the core to hold the body in a straight line, explaining why abs are significantly engaged during a pull-up. However, does it mean mastering pull-ups is all about solid abs? Not exactly.

The back and biceps remain the main drivers, but a solid core is vital to execute clean, high-repetition pull-ups. This core strength is also a stepping stone to more challenging skills, like the front lever. Interestingly, we may not need to tilt the body as much when performing pull-ups on rings, thanks to their mobility and the different dynamics they offer.

Breaking down the ascent phase

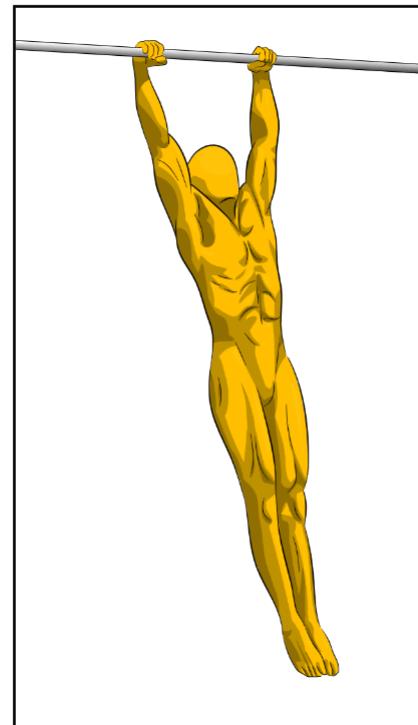
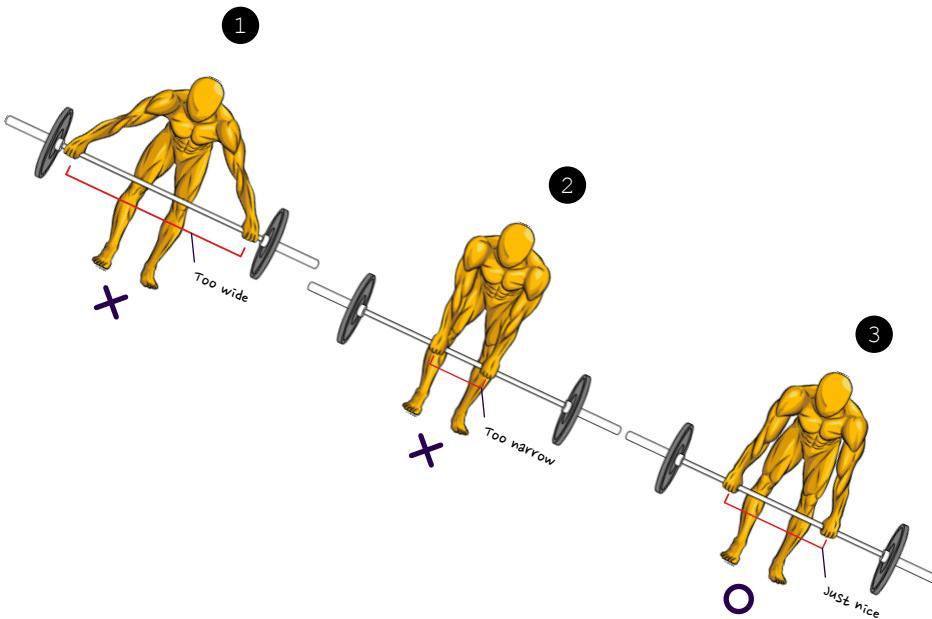
This view reveals several key cues at each stage. However, in actual practice, it may be challenging to differentiate these phases due to the quick nature of the pull-up. Rather than trying to separate each stage rigidly, it's more beneficial to keep these cues in mind and seamlessly integrate them into a fluid pull-up motion.



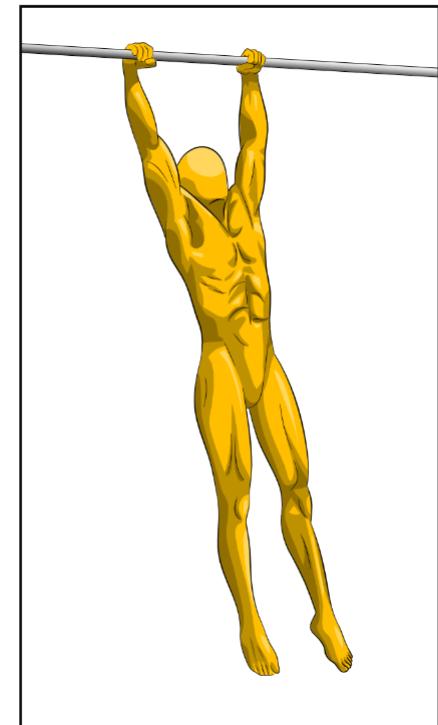
Pull-ups sticking points

Everyone has certain parts of the pull-up that feel harder than the rest. You can do some of these exercises to help you get stronger in those tricky spots. So, if pulling up to the top is challenging, try doing some top pull-up holds.

- ➊ Top Pull-Ups Holds: Aim to keep your chest touching or nearly touching the bar. This helps improve strength at the highest point of the movement.
- ➋ Middle Pull-Ups Holds: Hold the position where your elbows form a 90-degree angle. This strengthens your ability to maintain the mid-point of the pull-up.
- ➌ Active Hangs: Different from passive hang. Engage your scapula and keep tension in your lats. It's different from a passive hang and focuses on strength at the start of the pull-up.



Legs together



Dancing legs

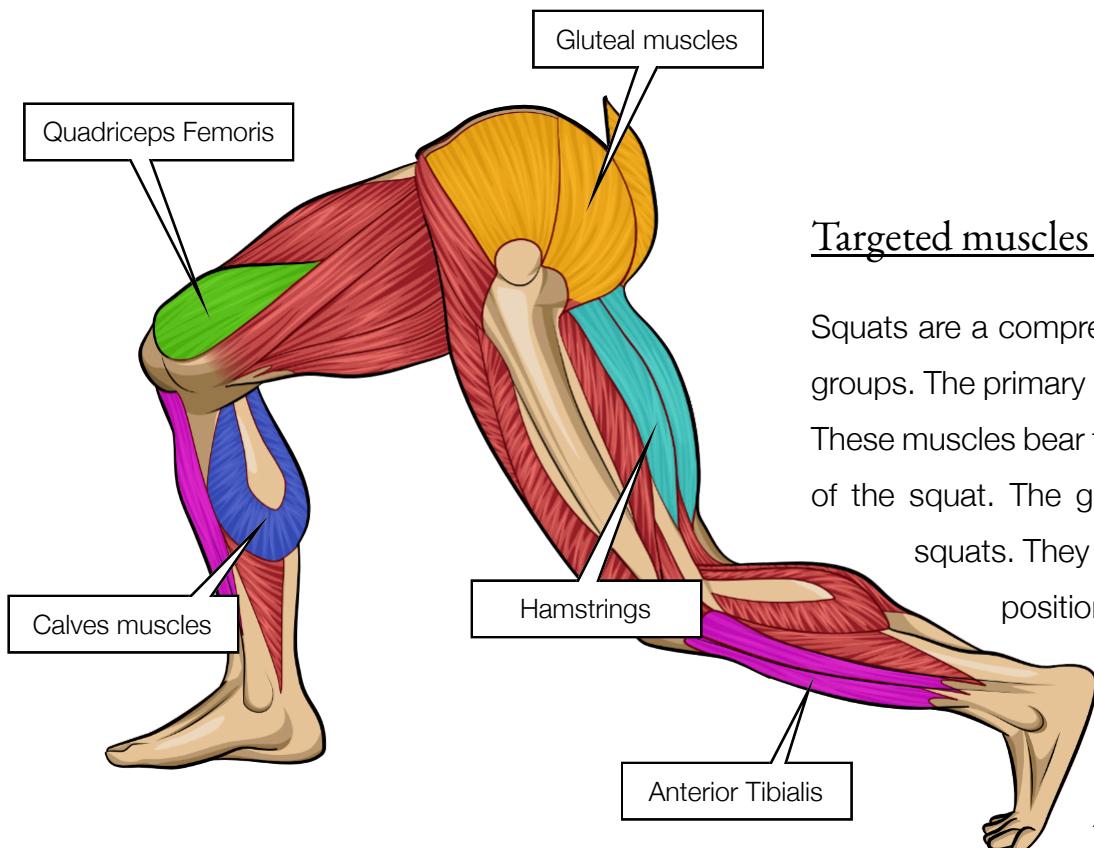
Remember to keep your legs together. It helps you keep your form looking tight, work all the right muscles, and stay steady as a rock. Also, keeping your legs together means you won't swing around. You want to use all your strength to pull yourself up without wasting it on flailing around. Fail to do that; you're going to be all over the place, losing your balance, and not getting the most out of the workout.

PISTOL SQUATS

PISTOL SQUATS PROGRAM INTRODUCTION

03

In calisthenics, we often focus on upper body strength, but real power starts with our legs. This program helps you build that strength, starting with deep squats that use both legs. As you progress, you'll move to exercises like the cossack squat that work one leg at a time. The final goal is the pistol squat, a challenging move that requires and builds significant strength and balance. Stick with this program; you'll see significant leg strength and overall fitness improvements.



Targeted muscles in push-ups

Squats are a comprehensive lower body exercise that targets several key muscle groups. The primary muscles worked are the quadriceps at the front of your thighs. These muscles bear the brunt of the force when you're pushing up from the bottom of the squat. The glutes, or buttock muscles, are also heavily engaged during squats. They work with the quadriceps to help you stand up from the squat position. The hamstrings, located at the back of your thighs, and the calves also play a significant role in the squatting motion, providing stability and power. Although not a leg muscle, the core, including your abs and lower back muscles, is crucial for maintaining balance and stability during the squat.

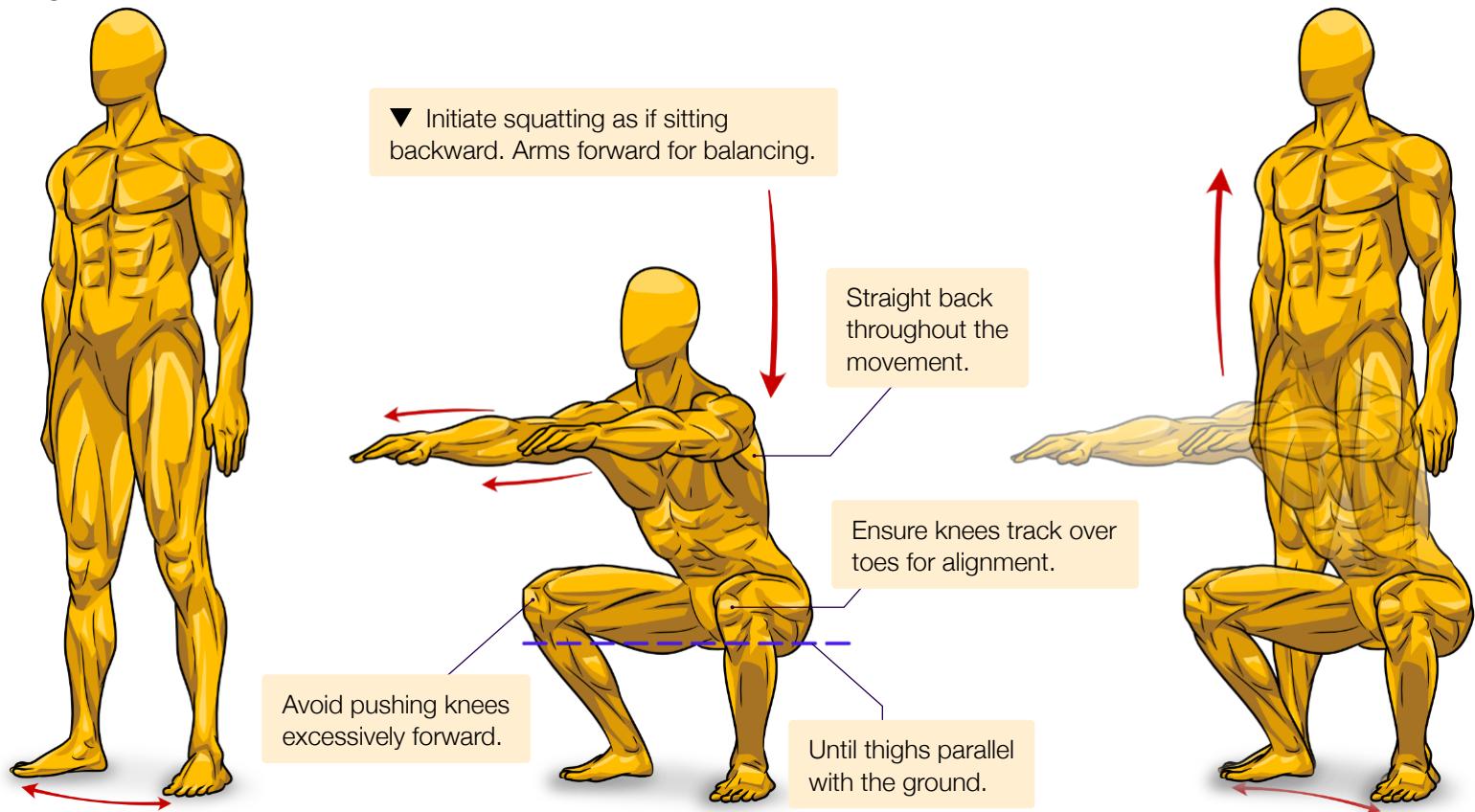
BODYWEIGHT SQUATS

03

Bodyweight squats are foundational movements that mirror everyday actions, like lifting heavy items or standing seated. They are the primary form for all squat variations, promoting leg strength and fostering muscle balance and mobility. Targeting the body's largest muscle groups - the quads, hamstrings, and glutes - these exercises are critical for overall fitness improvement. Bodyweight squats, which should be manageable for any healthy adult, establish a solid foundation for undertaking more challenging versions and are the stepping stone toward mastering the pistol squats.

SQUATS

▼ Power the ascent using hips and knees.



► Set feet at shoulder width, slightly wider is fine.

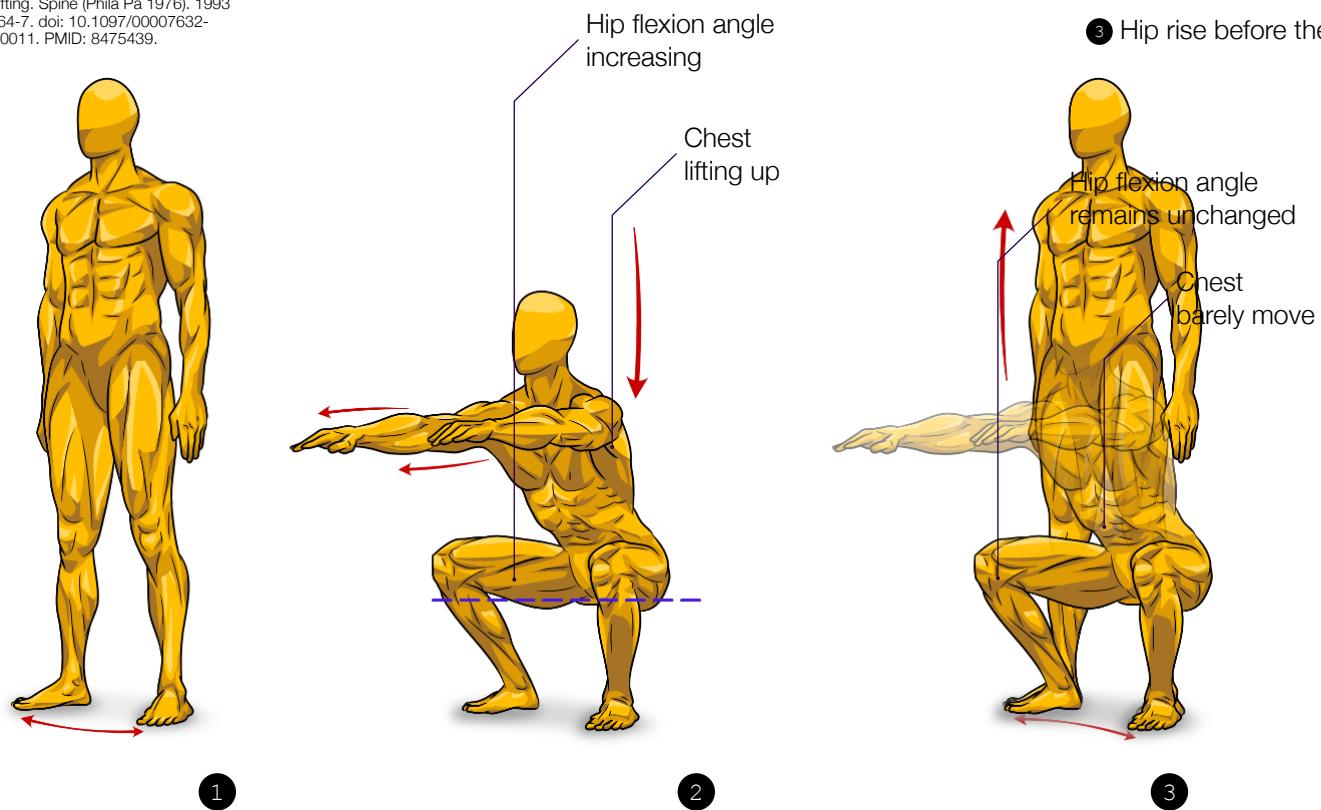
Watch out for quad fatigue

A study reveals that quadriceps fatigue can alter lifting technique, shifting from a leg-focused lift to a back-focused lift. This insight can be applied to bodyweight squats. As the quadriceps tire, squatting technique may change, potentially leading to improper form and injury risk.

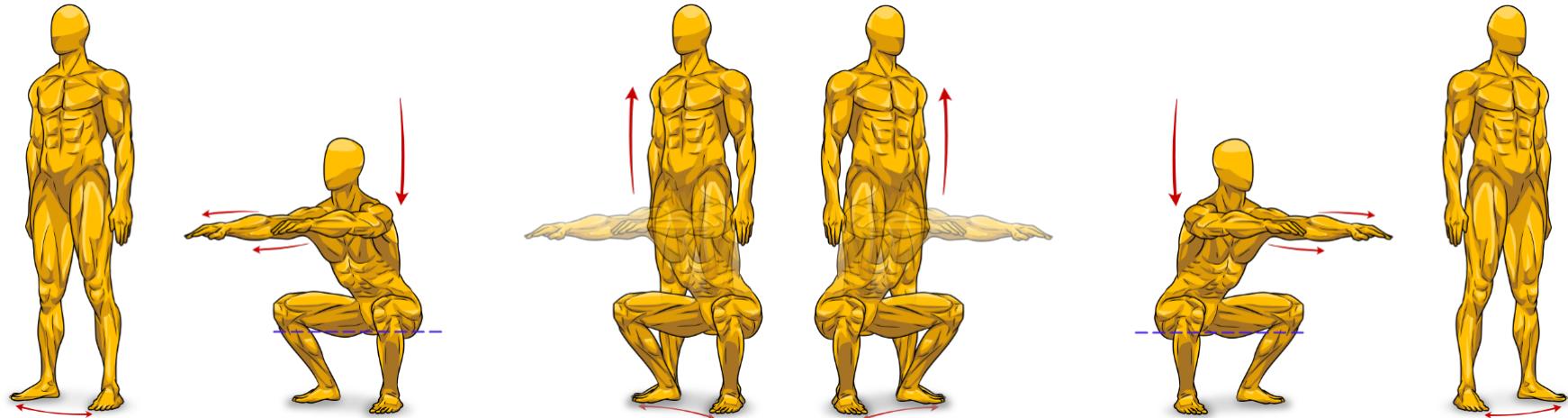
A key technique issue to watch for is lifting the hips faster than the chest when rising from the squat. This could indicate a shift of load from the legs to the lower back, increasing injury risk. Awareness of quadriceps fatigue can help maintain proper squatting technique and reduce injury risk.



The effects of quadriceps fatigue on the technique of lifting. Spine (Phila Pa 1976). 1993 Mar 1;18(3):364-7. doi: 10.1097/00007632-199303000-00011. PMID: 8475439.



- ① At the bottom of squat prepare to rise.
- ② Hip and chest rising at the same time.
- ③ Hip rise before the chest.



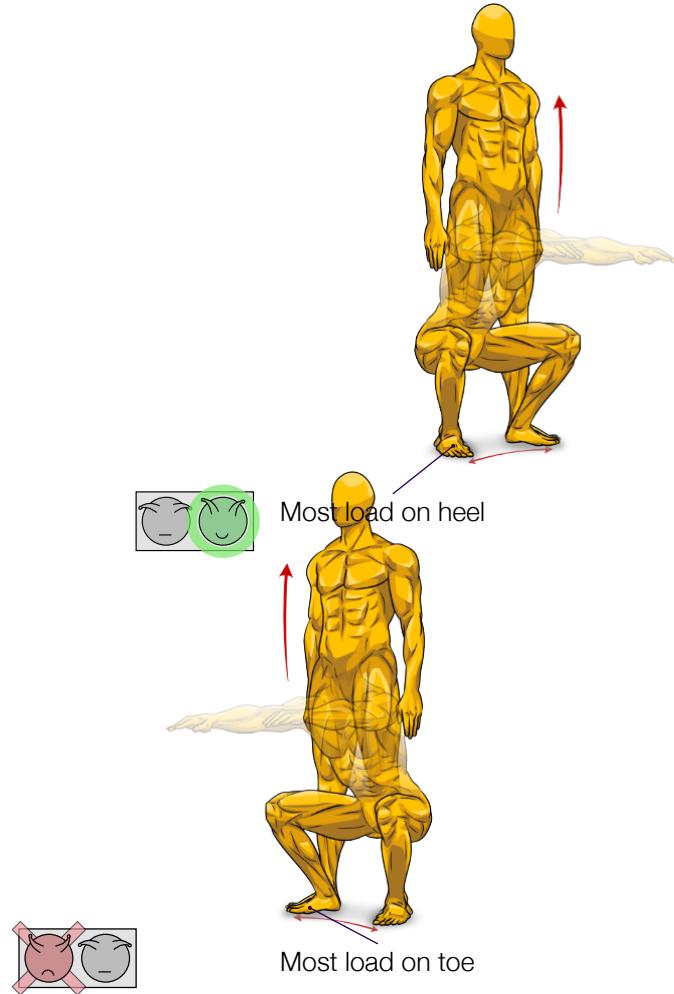
Stance width

Like the feet' direction, the right squat stance comes down to personal preference, comfort, flexibility, and strength, influenced by unique hip structure differences. Shoulder-width stances or wider ones are acceptable as long as there's no discomfort or pain when squatting, particularly in the knees. The ideal stance will allow for a full range of motion while maintaining comfort and safety. Listening to your body and adjusting as needed is essential to ensure an effective, pain-free squat.

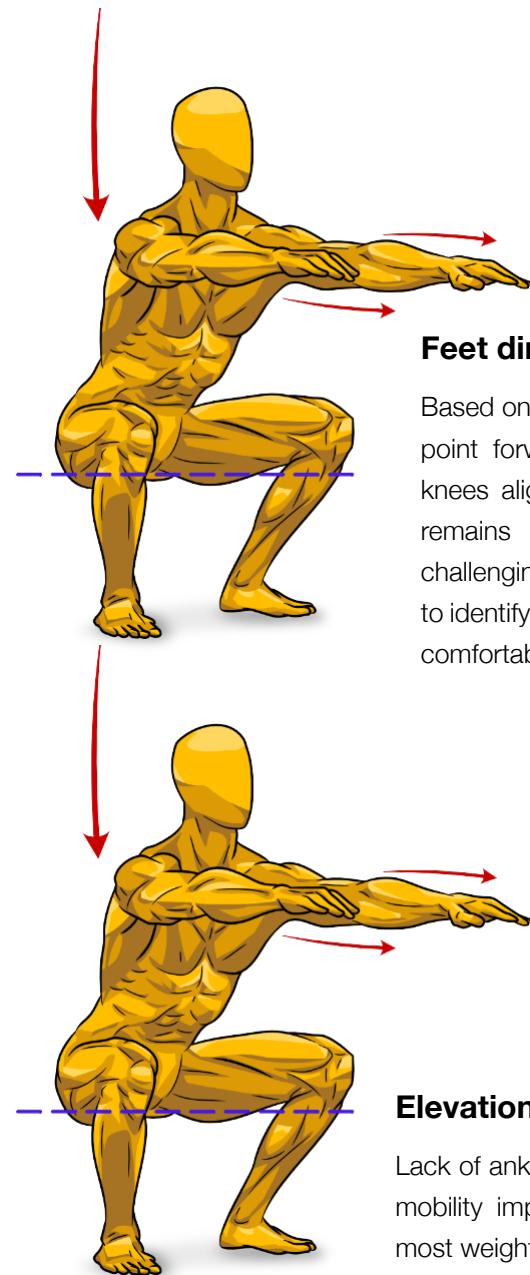
As the feet come closer together, they naturally tend to face forward rather than sideways.

Notice as the feet come closer together, they naturally tend to face forward rather than sideways.





It's crucial to keep your weight centered over the middle of your foot, leaning more towards the heels rather than the toes. This positioning helps focus the workout on the quadriceps, not the shins. Adjust your upper body slightly backward to effectively balance your center of gravity, optimizing your squat form and efficiency.



Feet direction

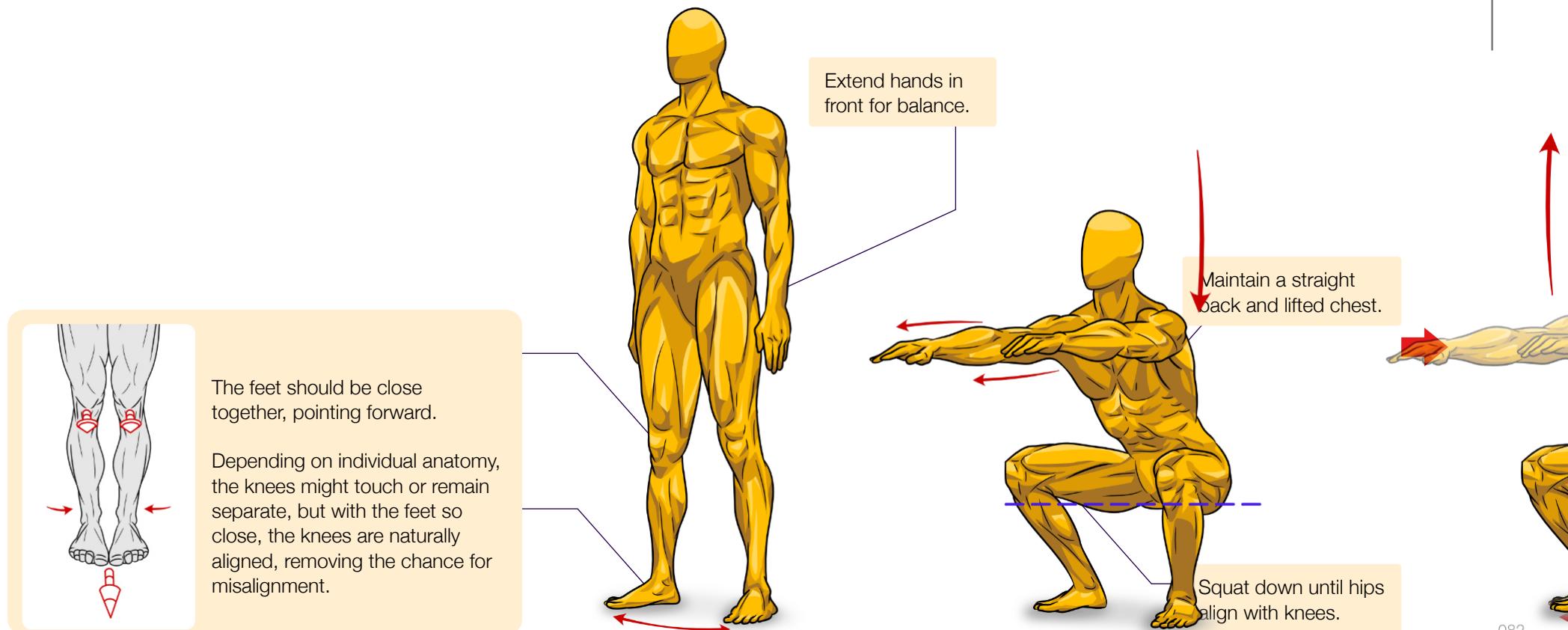
Based on your hip structure and comfort, your feet may point forward or slightly outwards. Ensure that your knees align with your toes at all times. This principle remains consistent, even when performing more challenging squats like pistol or Bulgarian—experiment to identify what provides the best stability and feels most comfortable for you.

Elevation for Ankle Mobility

Lack of ankle flexibility? Use a slight heel lift. As mobility improves, phase it out. Always keep most weight on heels.

NARROW STANCE SQUATS

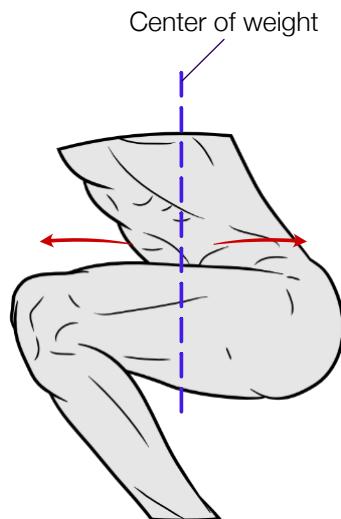
The narrow stance squat is a subtle change from the standard squat. Placing the feet nearer targets the quadriceps more and adds a balance challenge. Since the stance is much narrower, balance plays a bigger role. If the feet-to-feet stance is too harsh, gradually reduce the stance distance. This squat version is ideal for improving balance and preparing for one-legged squats.



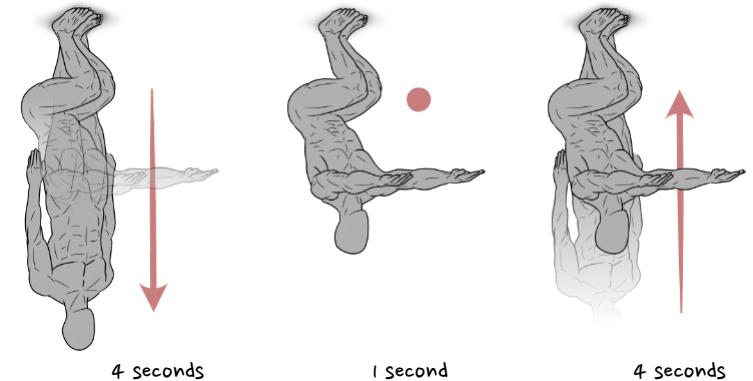
Maintain balance and control movement

Balance can be challenging during a narrow stance squat. If frequently off balance, consider practicing against a wall for added support until comfortable.

As balance is a crucial factor in narrow squats, avoid rapid movements. Aim for a slow, controlled descent of at least 4 seconds, hold at the bottom for a second, then ascend in 4 seconds. This tempo trains the ankles, knees, and hips to counteract instability.



When squatting down, the knees push past the toes while the glutes move back. This balance helps keep the center of gravity steady, making the exercise stable and performed with the correct form.

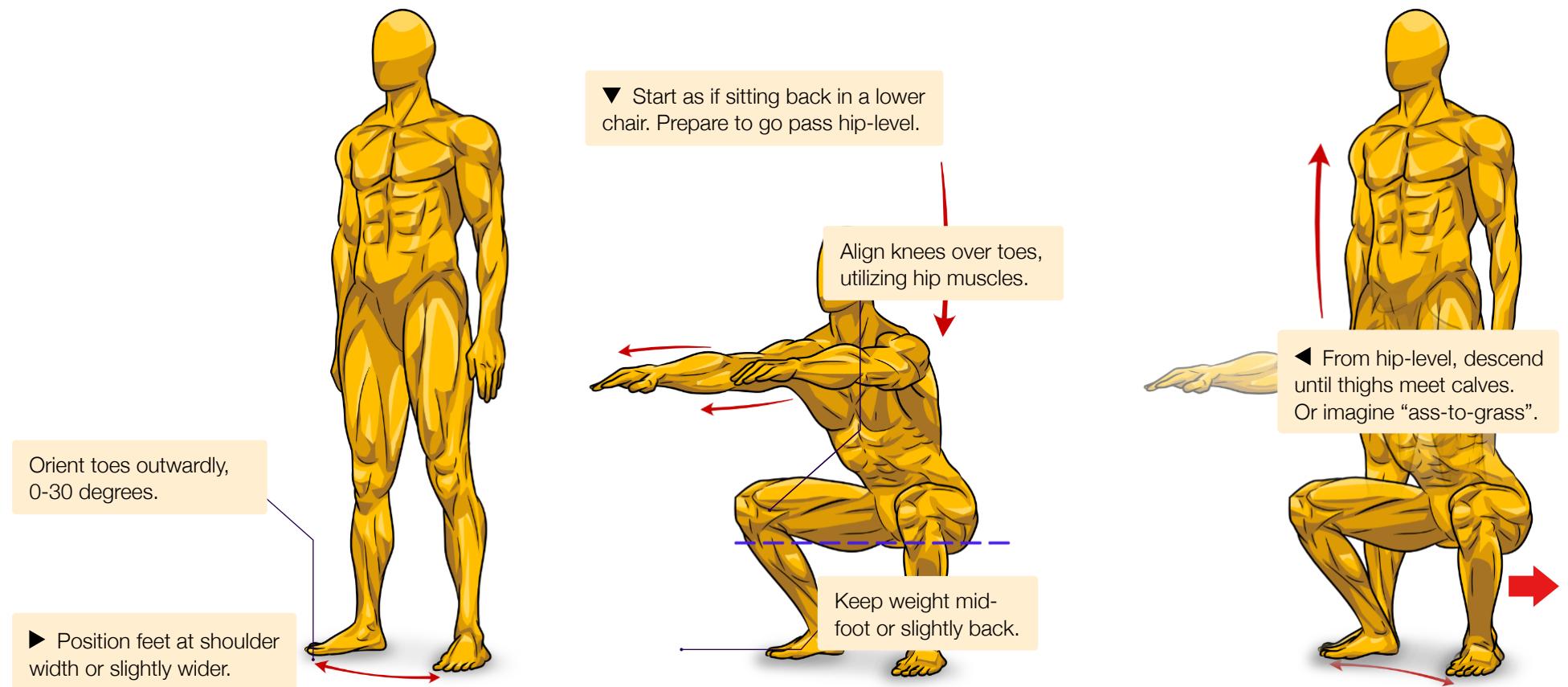


DEEP SQUATS

03

SQUATS

Deep squats elevate the simple squat, needing more flexibility, mobility, and strength. Lowering the hips below the knees works the full range of lower body muscles, especially hamstrings and glutes. This move imitates natural actions like rising from low seats, a movement often lost from too much sitting. Once mastered, deep squats are an effective warmup stretch before advanced lower-body exercises like box jumps, shrimp squats, and pistol squats.



▼ On ascent, maintain straight back, engage hips and knees.

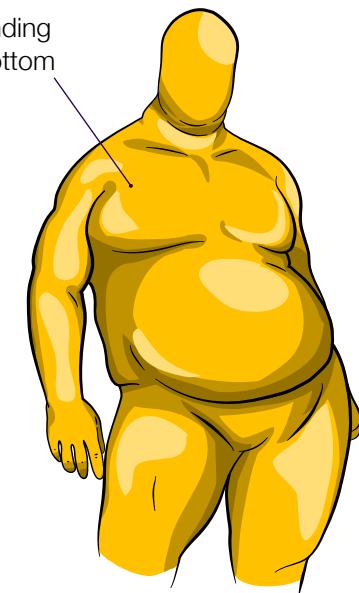
Avoid rounding back at bottom



Use external weights

A squat routine can begin with three sets of 15 reps using bodyweight only. When this is comfortably achieved, adding weight becomes an option for further resistance and progress. Add weights like dumbbells, kettlebells, barbells, loaded bags, or resistance bands. Interestingly, additional weight can often assist in achieving proper form, especially for those having difficulty reaching total depth in their squats.

Avoid rounding back at bottom



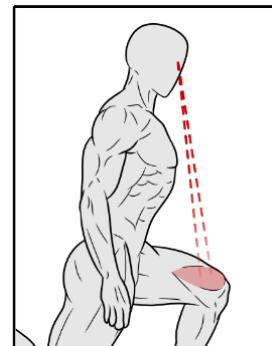
Adding challenge with narrow stance

Once full squats with a wide stance are easy, try a harder version. Squat deeply with feet right next to each other, toe-to-toe. Pause for a bit at the bottom to feel the extra wobble. If falling backward happens, more work on ankle or hip flexibility is needed.

BULGARIAN SPLIT SQUATS

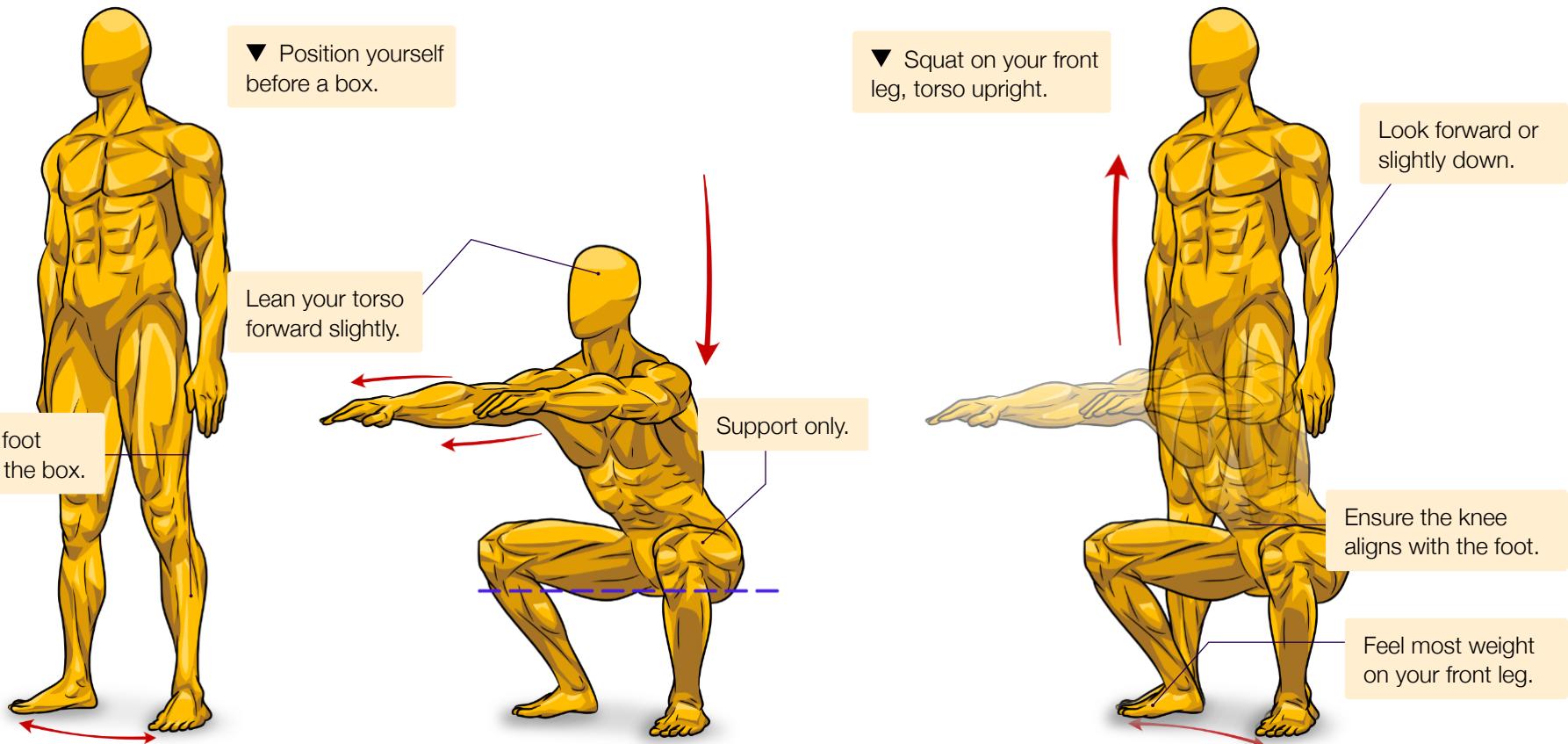
Bulgarian split squats focus on strengthening each leg individually. This exercise enhances balance, promotes better body symmetry, and ensures equal strength in both legs, which mirrors the demands of many daily activities such as walking or running. It's also a crucial preparatory exercise for pistol squats, as it familiarizes your body with single-leg squatting mechanics.

Instead of holding a forward gaze, try letting it naturally drop downward. It allows for monitoring the stretching and contracting of the quads, the key muscles fueling the movement, and keeping an eye on knee alignment.

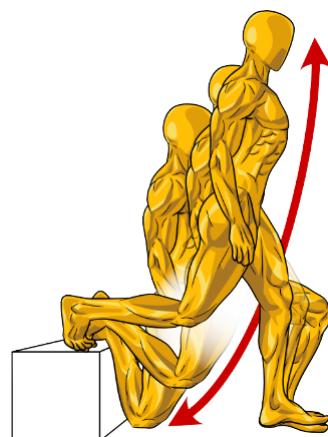


03

SQUATS



NOTE Vertical motion



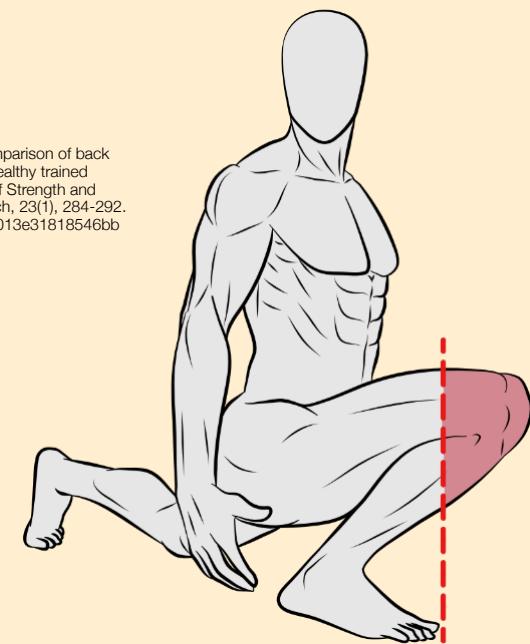
Strive for a vertical motion as you descend into the squat rather than a forward and backward U-shaped motion. It minimizes unnecessary strain on the knee of your front leg and ensures effective engagement of your lower body muscles.

Slight forward lean

You can keep your torso upright or lean forward slightly. A bit of forward lean is recommended as it engages the leg more intensely. This lean can also provide additional space if you're holding a weight, such as a dumbbell.

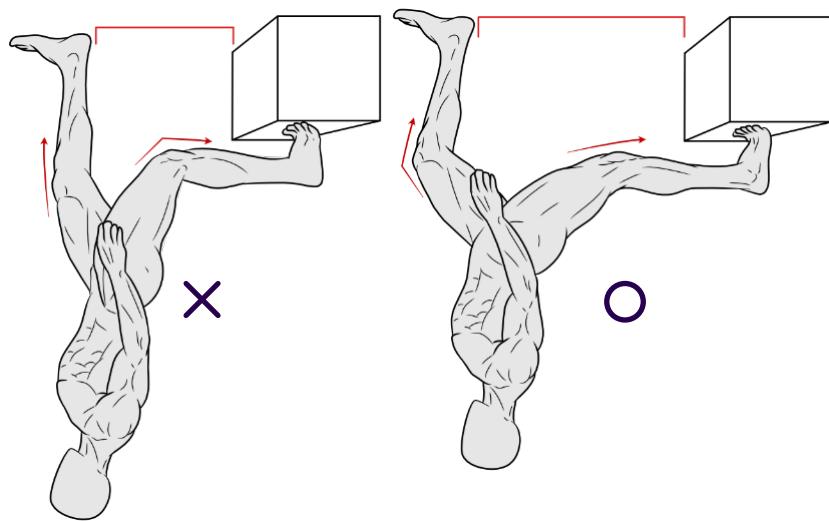


A biomechanical comparison of back and front squats in healthy trained individuals. Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research, 23(1), 284-292.
doi:10.1519/JSC.0b013e31818546bb



Knee over the toe is bad?

It's a myth that allowing your knees to extend beyond your toes while squatting leads to injuries. Our knees often pass our toes in everyday activities, like climbing stairs. Many fitness experts and studies, including 'An Analysis of the Biomechanical Differences Between the Front and Back Squat' by Gullett et al. (2009), have indicated that this movement isn't harmful but can increase mobility and even decrease injury risk.

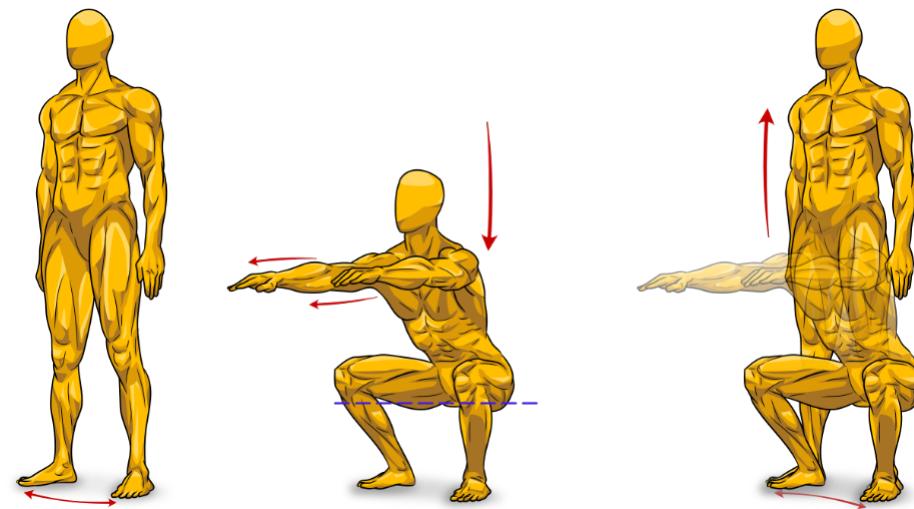


Proper foot placement from box

Too distant from the box hinders full quad contraction and prevents the working leg from fully extending upon standing. The front foot should be placed at an adequate distance to allow full leg extension at the top position, standing taller than with incorrect stances. The resting leg should have a knee flexion angle of about 60 to 90 degrees. This position ensures an optimal range of motion.

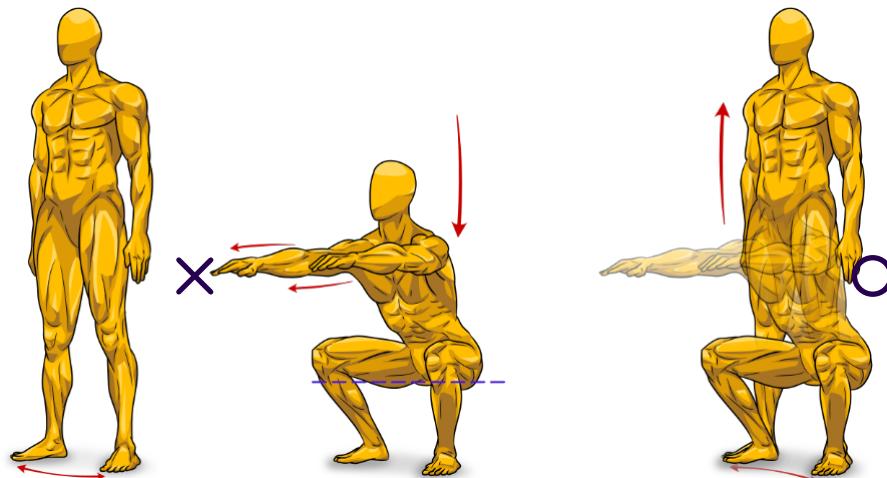
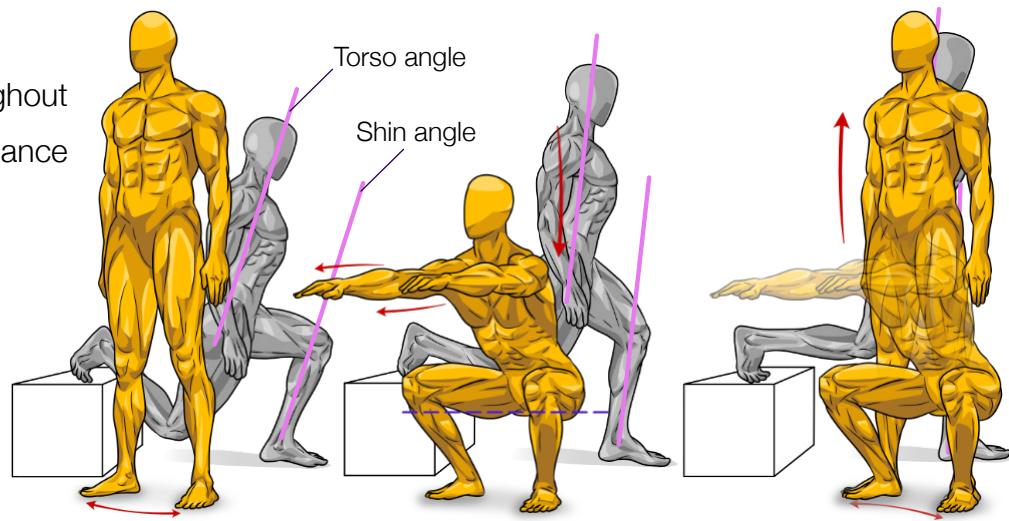
Stance width

Keep the front leg aligned directly under the shoulder, forming a straight line from the shoulder down to the foot. This correct alignment ensures efficient force transfer and maintains structural integrity throughout the movement. Misalignment to the inside or outside can cause undue strain on the ankle and knee.



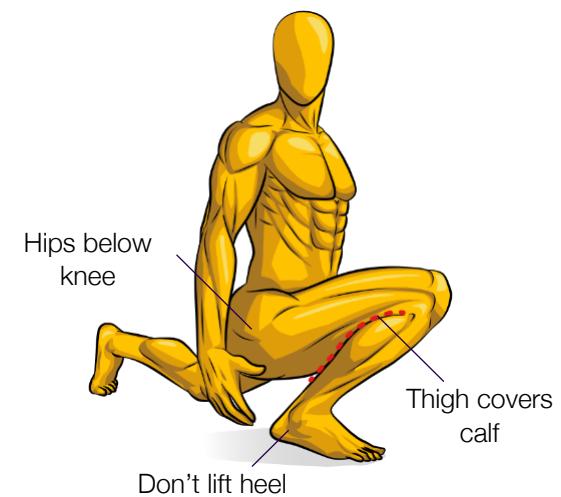
Angle consistency

Maintain similar angles for your torso and shin throughout the movement. This alignment aids in keeping your balance and generating power throughout the exercise.



Weight distribution

Keep the weight distribution approximately 90% on the front leg and 10% on the back. The focus should be on the front leg, with the rear leg acting mainly as support. Positioning too far from the box or bench disrupts this balance, shifting the center of gravity and inadvertently activating the back foot more. It is contrary to the intended focus of the exercise.

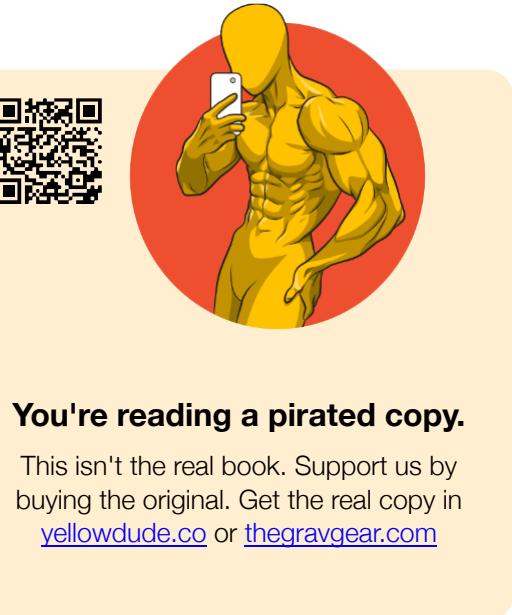


Challenge the ankles

Aim to lower your thigh until it covers as much of your calf as possible while keeping your heel on the ground. This tests your ankle flexibility and significantly enhances your single-leg squat performance.

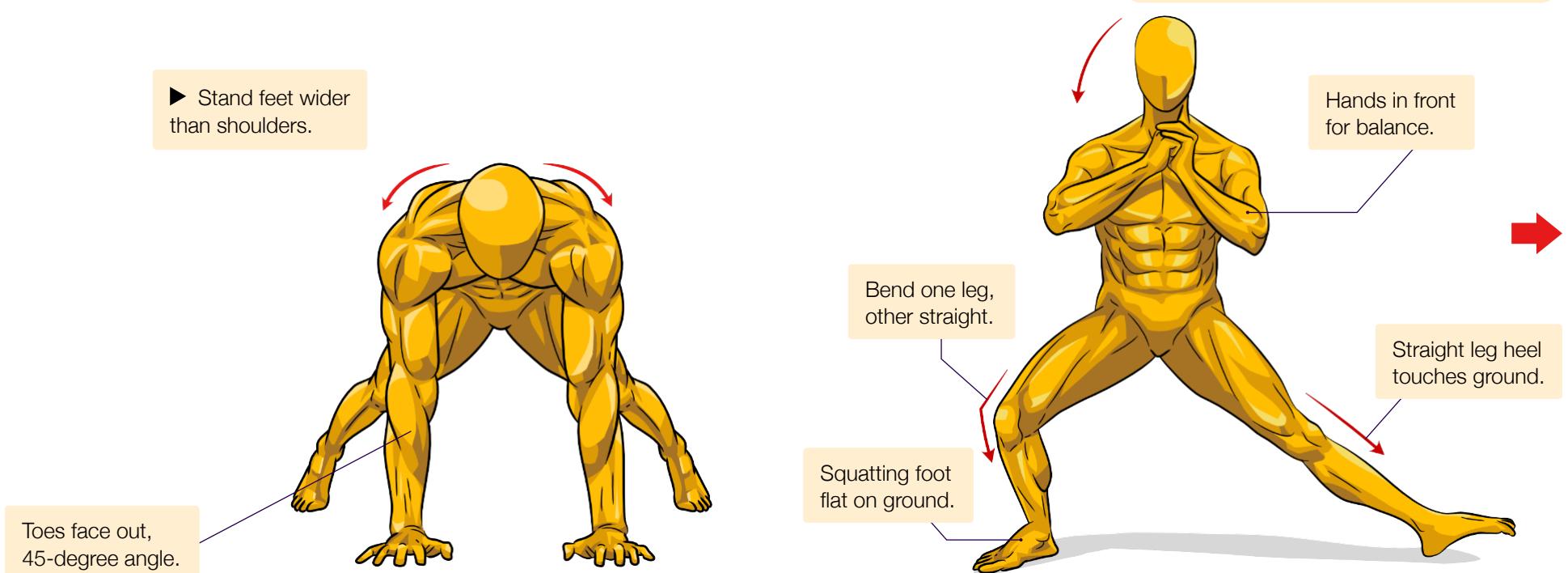
COSACK SQUATS

Also known as the side-to-side squat, it presents a challenging unilateral exercise that goes beyond the difficulty of the Bulgarian split squats. It is because the bent leg in this movement carries a larger load when proper form is maintained. Moreover, the cossack squats demand superior hamstring flexibility, as it involves straightening the non-working leg, shifting most of the bodyweight onto the working leg.



03

SQUATS



Toes face out,
45-degree angle.

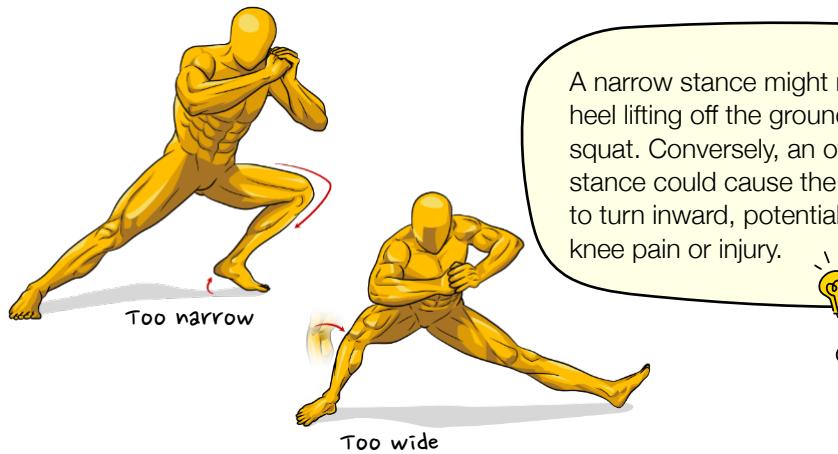
► Stand feet wider
than shoulders.

Bend one leg,
other straight.

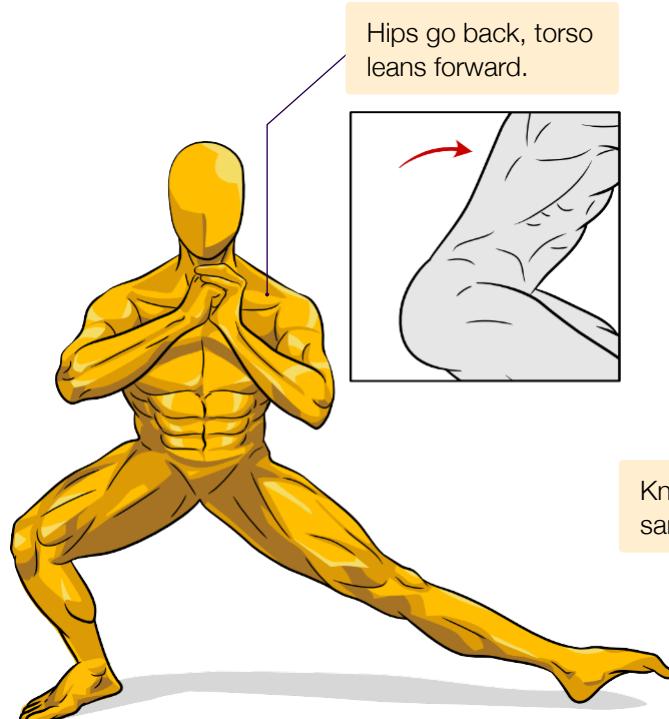
Squatting foot
flat on ground.

Hands in front
for balance.

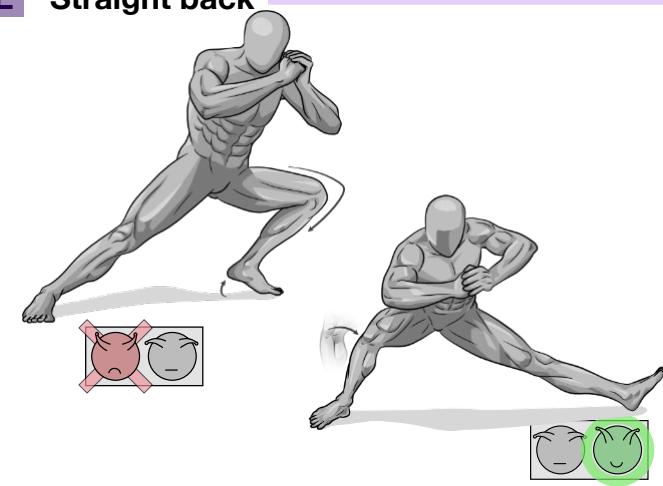
Straight leg heel
touches ground.



A narrow stance might result in the heel lifting off the ground during the squat. Conversely, an overly wide stance could cause the bending leg to turn inward, potentially causing knee pain or injury.



NOTE Straight back

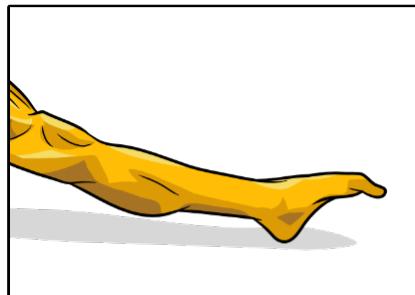
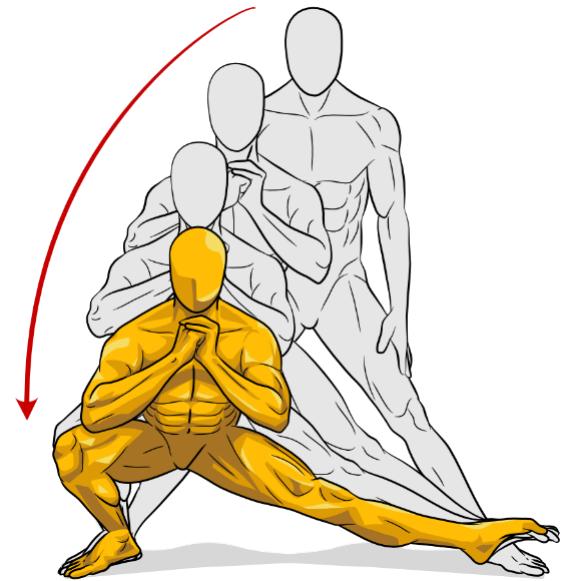


Keep your back from curling. A curved back at the squat's base may mean less ankle flexibility. Only a portion of the belly should touch the bent leg. Keep a tight back to keep it straight.

Full range of motion

The support leg is a steadyng rod, utterly straight, carrying as little weight as possible. The torso's stance stays upright, eschewing any side-to-side wavering for counterbalance. As the body lowers into the squat, the torso leans forward, mirroring the mechanics of a standard bodyweight squat.

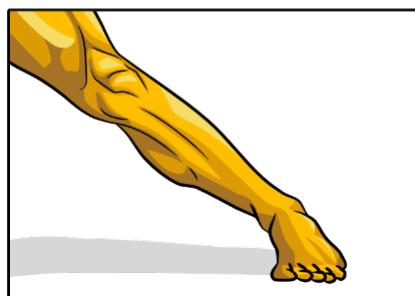
The working foot remains firmly planted, distributing the weight towards the mid-foot or heel. Hold the arms before the chest or extend out to aid balance. From the squat's lowest point, draw force from the foot, quad, and glute muscles to ascend, gradually returning the leaning torso to vertical alignment.



Minimising support leg involvement

Like a Bulgarian split squat, the straight support leg should hold about 10% of the bodyweight. Most weight should be on the bending leg.

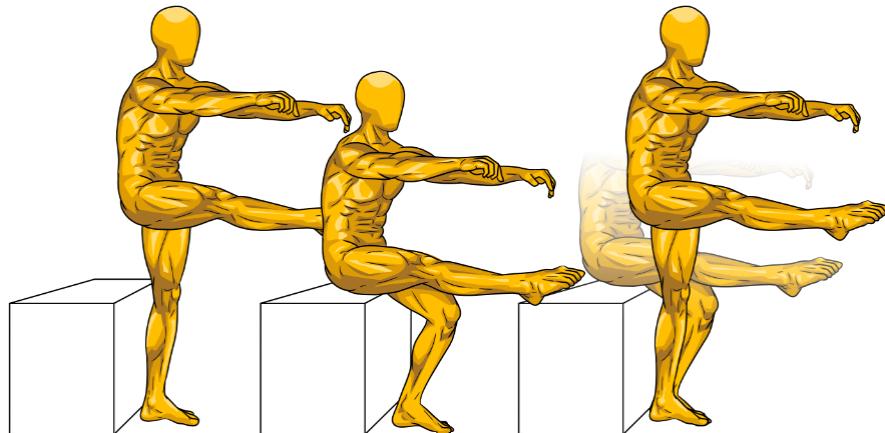
Some people feel the support leg sharing more load, especially at the bottom of the movement. It usually happens when the entire foot of the support leg is on the ground.



If this happens, try this: keep only the heel of the support leg on the ground and point the toe to the sky. This can help keep the leg straight and give less support. This small change can make a big in mastering the movement.

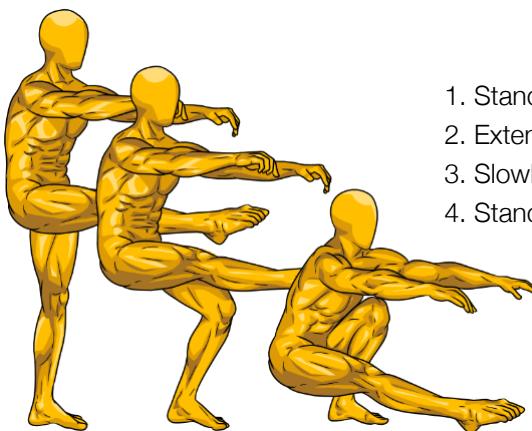
PISTOL SQUATS EASIER VARIANTS

With the strength and conditioning developed from previous practice with unilateral and bilateral squats, you're well-prepared to try easier versions of pistol squats. Even after mastering these variants, you can increase the difficulty by adding weight, transforming these exercises into main workouts.



Eccentric pistol squats

This variant allows you to concentrate on the downward phase of the squat. As with all eccentric exercises, control, and pace are essential. Maintain a consistent speed, especially as you approach the most challenging point at the bottom. Keep your knee in line with your toes throughout the descent. Pause for a few seconds at the bottom before releasing and standing back up using both feet.



Box pistol squats

A box (or chair) allows you to practice the easier top half of the motion before attempting the entire range. You can gradually make this exercise harder by lowering the height of the box. However, perform the movement as if there were no box, maintaining muscle tension throughout the descent. This will prevent you from releasing tension and dropping onto the box like sitting on a chair.

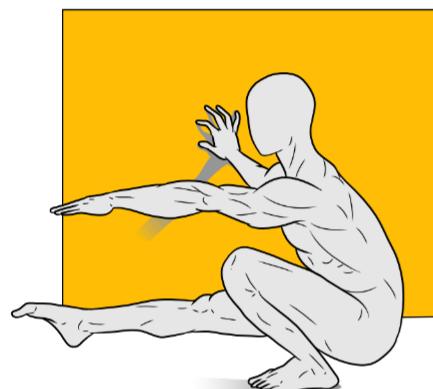
Refer to next chapter
“Pistol Squats” for all
the form guides.



1. Position body in front of a box.
2. Extend one leg forward. Lift arms for balance.
3. Gradually descend until seated on the box.
4. Push through the heel to stand up.

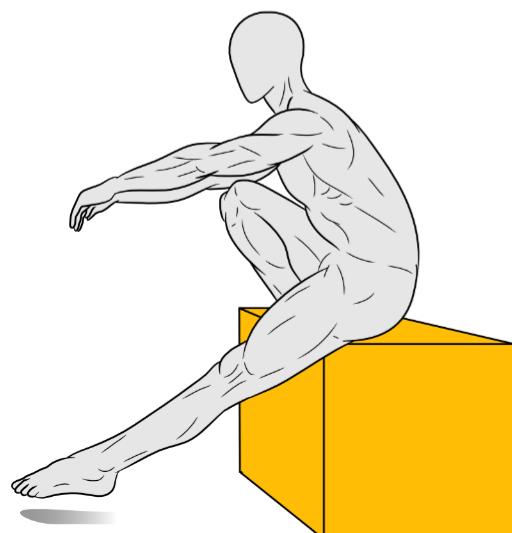
Assisted pistol squats

You'll attempt the full range of motion like regular pistol squats, but with assistance. Several techniques can help overcome specific challenges before you're ready for the unassisted version.



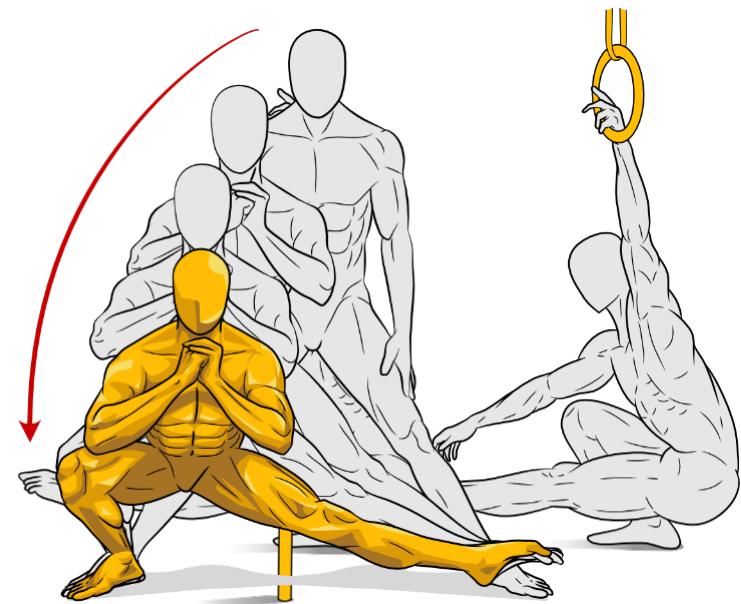
Hand-to-Wall

If balance is your main issue, this method can help. Stand near a wall, and use one hand for support as you perform the one-legged squat. Adjust your hand position on the wall to accommodate your movement as you lower and raise yourself.



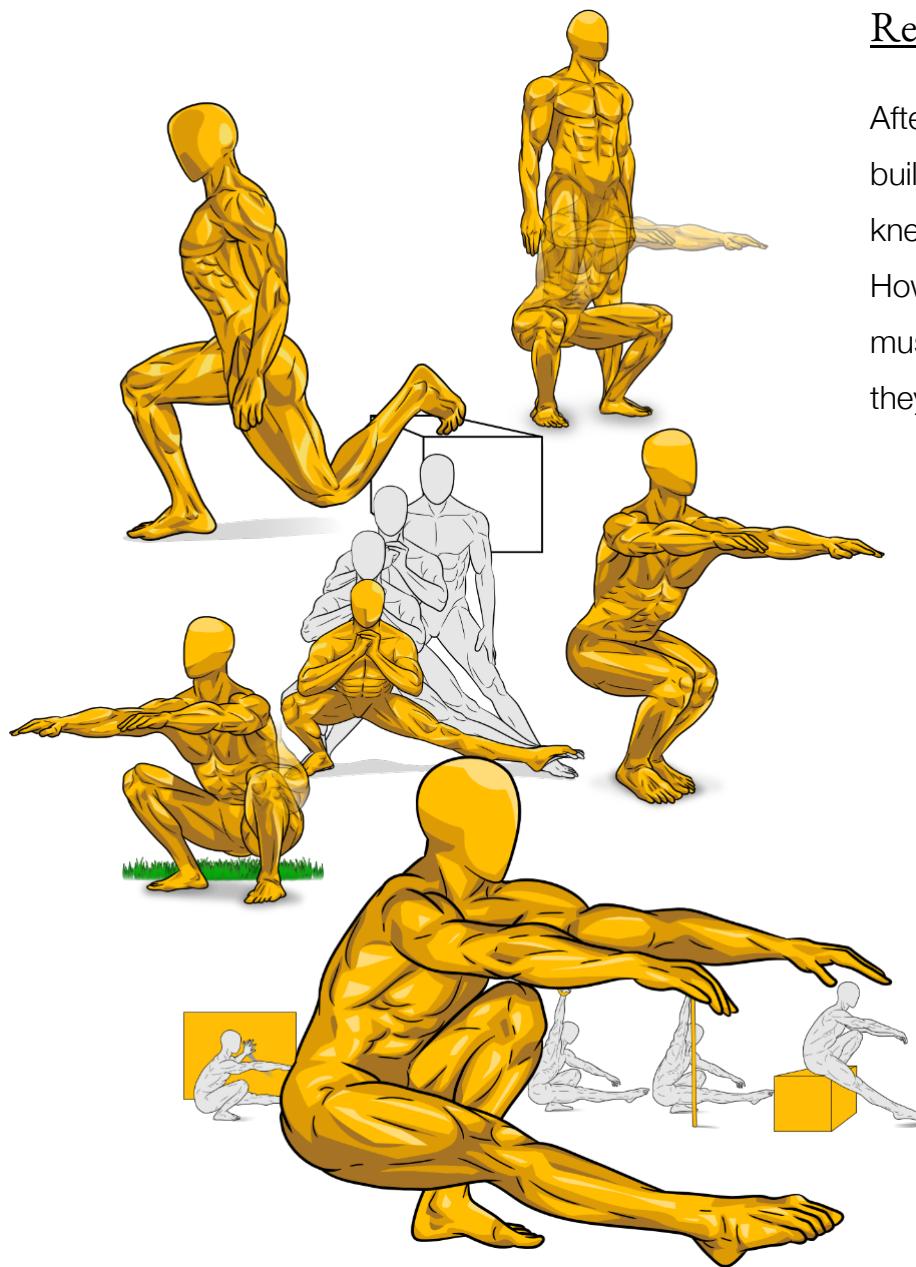
Leg-on-High-Box

One challenge with pistol squats is maintaining the off-ground leg straight in the squat position, which could indicate stiff hamstrings. Practice the full squat on higher, sturdy surfaces like a box or a chair. This elevated position allows the resting leg to remain off the ground during the exercise. Ensure your chosen platform is stable enough to support your whole bodyweight.



Hand-to-Objects

If you're struggling with the strength to push back up, using items like rings or resistance bands can help. Hold on to these as you squat, pulling with enough intensity to assist you. Remember not to over-rely on your hand strength; the main effort should still come from the working leg. Using a stick for support on the ground is also an option.



Recap and preparation for pistol squats

After mastering ten consecutive reps of pistol squats variations, you've likely built the necessary single-leg strength and fundamental flexibility in your hips, knees, and ankles. Now, it's time to tackle your first unassisted pistol squats. However, don't abandon the previous squat variations. They target different muscles and flexors and can still be challenging with various techniques. Plus, they are excellent warmup exercises for more advanced moves.

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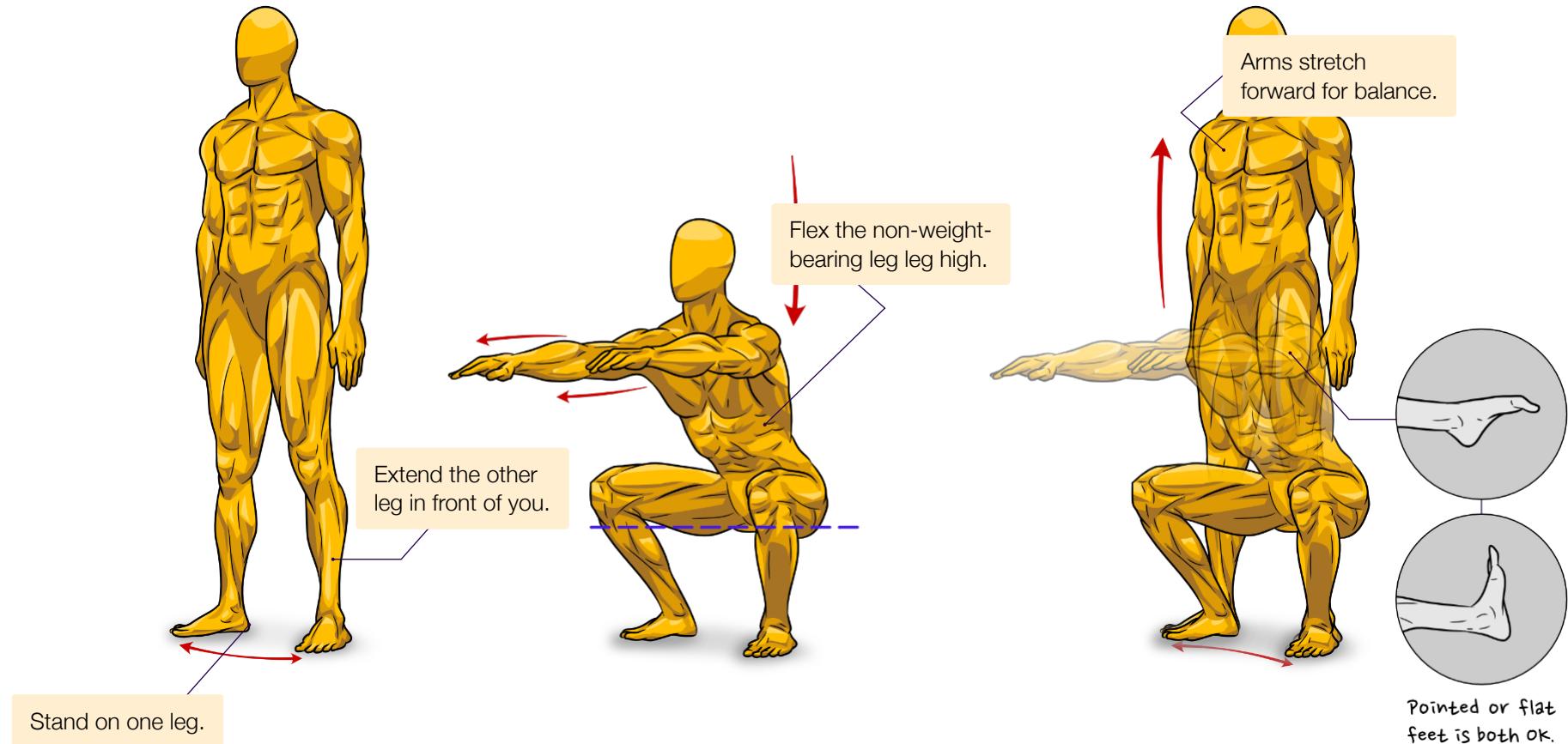


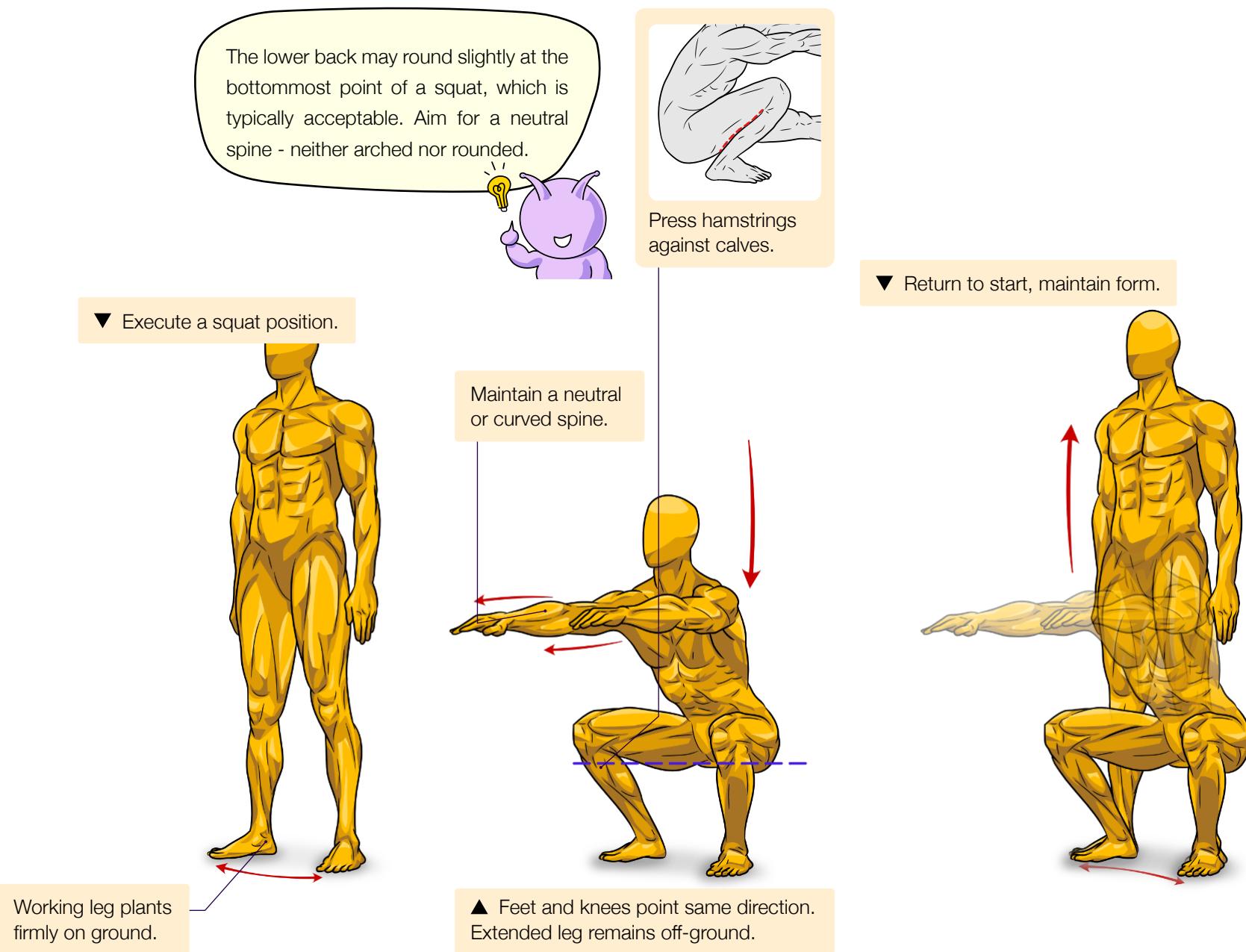
PISTOL SQUATS

03

SQUATS

The end goal of our program is none other than the pistol squats or the single leg squats. This challenging workout requires not just strength but also balance, flexibility, and coordination. It engages one leg at a time as a unilateral exercise, ensuring equal focus and development on both sides. Mastering the pistol squats is a testament to your progress, showcasing your improved leg strength and overall body control.

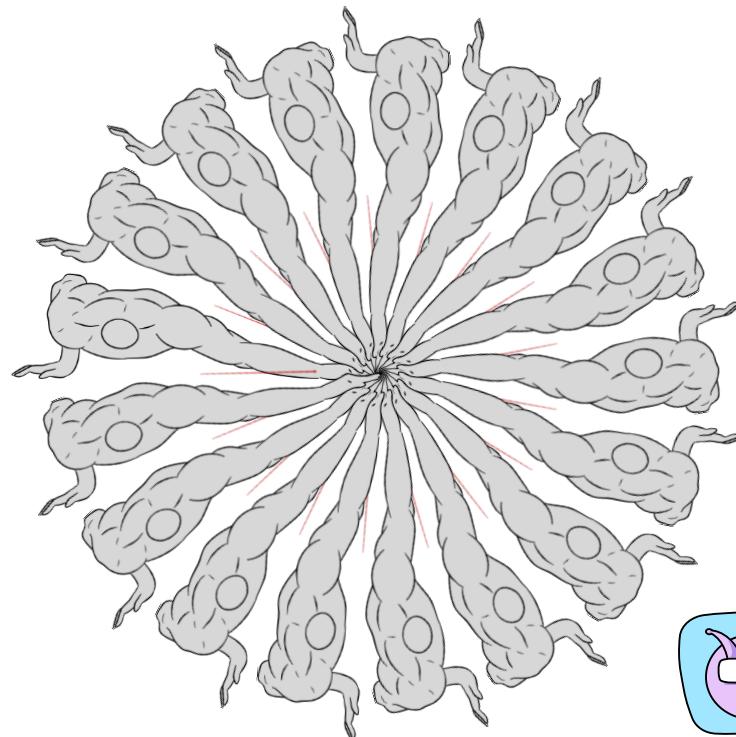




Avoid knee valgus

Knee valgus, or knee cave, is a mechanical deficiency in squats where the knees rotate inward. This inward movement can lead to knee pain or injury over time by causing the kneecap to rub unevenly against the femur or damaging the patellar tendons and surrounding tissues.

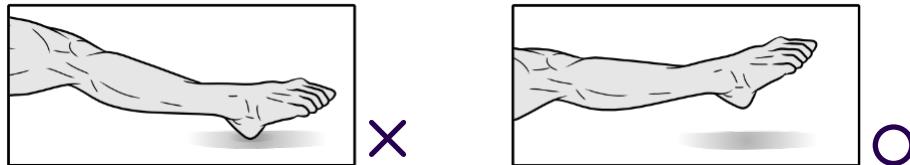
Maintaining a straight vertical line in the knee's trajectory is vital, resisting any inward rotation. Studies show that people with knee valgus often have a lower ratio of gluteal muscle co-activation to hip adductors and reduced ankle and foot mobility. It suggests that reducing the tension or stretching the hip adductors and plantar flexors of the ankle may help decrease knee valgus angles.



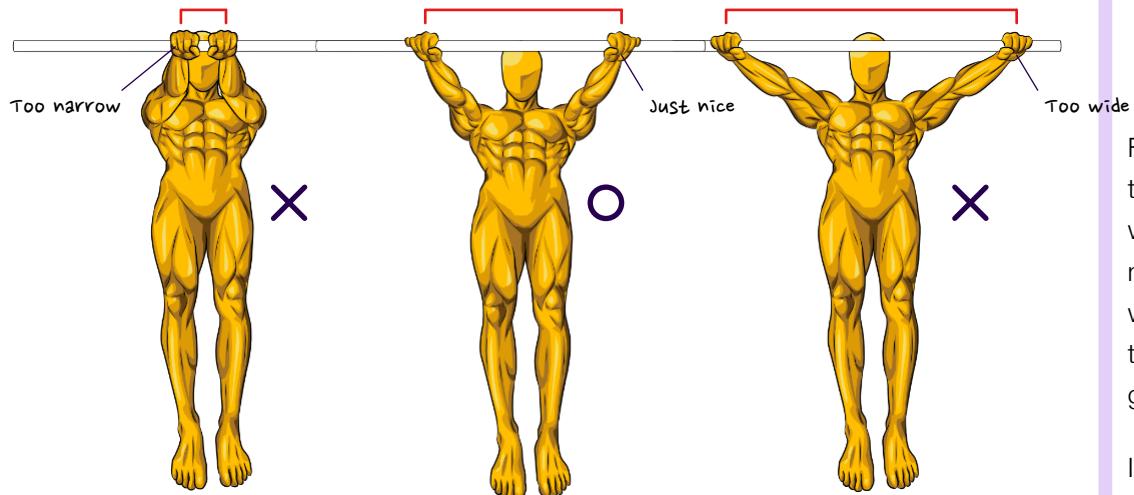
Dynamic Knee Valgus in Single-Leg Movement Tasks. Potentially Modifiable Factors and Exercise Training Options. A Literature Review. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health. 2020; 17(21):8208. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17218208>

Knee valgus angle during single leg squat and landing in patellofemoral pain patients and controls. *Knee*. 2014 Mar;21(2):514-7. doi: 10.1016/j.knee.2013.11.011. Epub 2013 Nov 27. PMID: 24380805.

Role of the extended leg

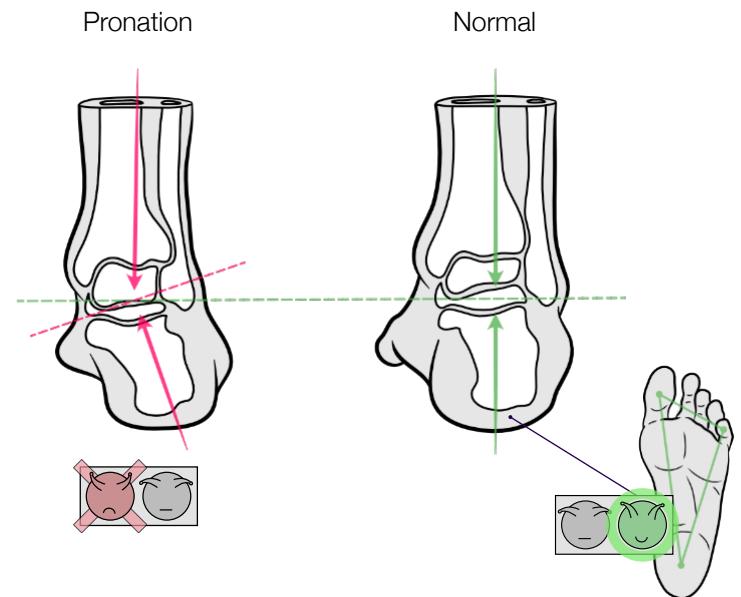


Keeping the extended leg off the ground in a squat requires decent hip flexor and hamstring flexibility. While it doesn't need to be completely straight, it must not touch the ground. This is a rule in some competitions and can nullify a repetition. Although we're not competing, using this as a benchmark can guide us toward a good rep. Working on leg mobility can help straighten it out, improving the squat's aesthetics.



You can hold the extended leg any way you want during the pistol squat as long as it doesn't touch the floor. But holding it straight and level with the ground not only looks really good but that's what we should aim for.

NOTE Eliminate foot pronation



Foot pronation is one of common causes in knee valgus. It happens when the ankle tilts inward, making the big toe and inner heel carry most of the weight, leading to a lighter or even lifted pinky toe. This becomes particularly noticeable at the squat's bottom. In exercises like pistol squats, balanced weight distribution across the feet is crucial. The aim is to form a triangle with the pinky toe, big toe, and heel. A useful tip to achieve this is to grip the ground using your toes.

In contrast to bilateral squats, where the heel bears most pressure, unilateral squats require pressure to be evenly divided between the toes and heel. This is vital since in unilateral squats the knee often extends far over the toes, underlining the importance of balanced foot pressure.

ROUTINE

TRAINING ROUTINE INTRODUCTION

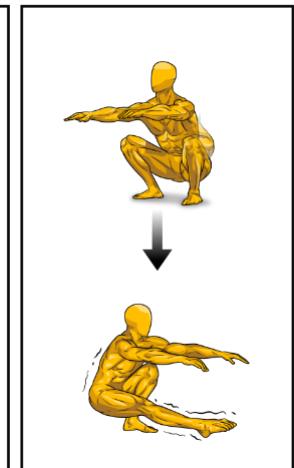
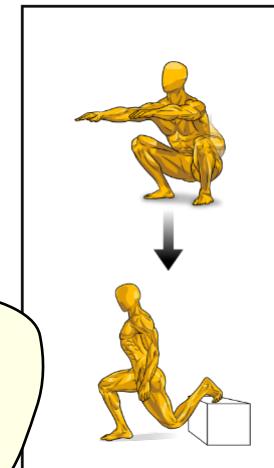
This training routine serves as 'a' method to acquire your first skill, not 'the' definitive one. Everyone's fitness journey is unique. This routine provides a blueprint that you can customize to suit your needs. If you make changes to the routine, whether it's the number of sets, reps, the speed of each movement, or the rest period, write these down. This helps you maintain consistency and accurately track your progress.

For instance, if you need to rest for 180 seconds instead of the suggested 120 seconds, that's okay. Record it so you follow the same rest period next time. Consistency helps measure your improvement accurately.

Pick a level of routine and do it two to three times per week, taking at least 48 hours rest in between each session. Progress to the next level once you meet the stated goals. It's important not to skip levels unless you know what you're doing.

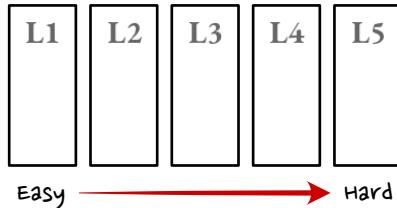
Use this routine as a starting point. Feel free to tweak it to your individual level, but adhere to the fundamental principles of consistency, adaptability, and gradual progression.

Remember to take things one step at a time. Don't skip any levels - gradually increasing your workout intensity is the secret sauce for getting stronger.

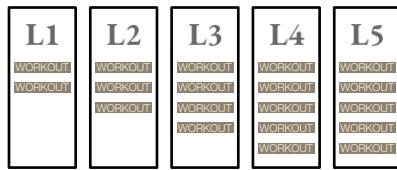


Routine principles

Here's how we design our workout routines:



Every routine has five levels. Level 1 is the easiest, good for beginners. Level 5 is the hardest. You can say you've finished the program when you can do Level 5.



Each level has 2 to 5 workouts. Some levels have what we call a 'superset'. This is when you do 2 or 3 workouts one after the other without a break. We have a guide that tells you when you're ready to move up a level



We always start each level with the hardest workout, and end with the easiest. This means you do the hardest workouts when you have the most energy. Then build up more training volume with the easier progressions that follow. It's a good way to make sure you get better step by step.

Understanding the properties

Reps

Or repetitions, are the number of times you perform a specific exercise without stopping.

Sets

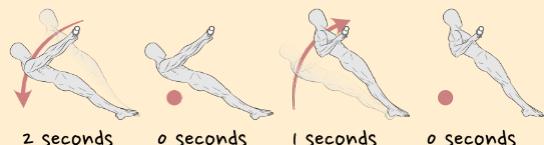
A set is a group of reps done one after another. If you do 10 pull-ups, rest, then do 10 more, you've done two sets.

Superset

It means you do multiple exercises in a row without rest. Rest comes only after completing the superset.

Tempo

In dynamic workouts, '2010' tempo implies a 2-second lowering, 0-second pause, 1-second lifting, and another 0-second pause. In eccentric exercises like negative pull-ups, tempo dictates the eccentric phase duration.



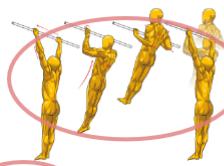
Pull-Ups

Tempo **2010**

Reps **2**

Sets **5**

Rest **180** seconds



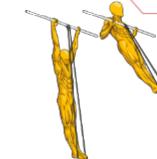
Band Assisted Pull-Ups

Tempo **2010**

Reps **8 - 10**

Sets **3**

Rest **180** seconds



Australian Pull-Ups

Tempo **2010**

Reps **8 - 10**

SUPERSET

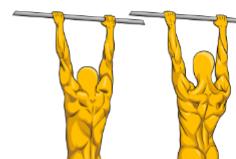


Scapula Pull-Ups

Tempo **2010**

Reps **8 - 10**

SUPERSET



Passive Hang

Time **30 - 45** seconds

Sets **3**

Rest **180** seconds



Illustrations

Basic figures showcasing exercises. See respective guides for full details.

Rest

This is the pause between sets, giving your muscles time to recover.

How to go through routine

Start with the top exercise: pull-ups. Complete 2 reps at a 2010 tempo and rest for 180 seconds. Repeat for 5 sets.

Next, transition to band assisted pull-ups. Perform 8 reps (or push to 10 reps if possible). Rest for 180 seconds. Repeat for 3 sets.

Lastly, execute a superset. Perform 8 Australian pull-ups, 8 scapula pull-ups, and end with a 30-second passive hang. Rest for 180 seconds after the superset. Repeat for 3 sets. This completes your full routine.

Time

It is the length of time you hold the exercise. Only applicable to isometric exercises, like plank holds and passive hangs.

PUSH-UPS ROUTINE

Progression guide between levels

L1 If you can complete 8 reps for the given sets of negative push-ups, it's time to progress to level 2.

L2 If you can perform 12 reps of regular push-ups, upgrade to level 3.

L3 Once you can complete the specified sets and reps, proceed to level 4.

L4 After completing the specified sets and reps, and maintaining a full minute plank (no cheating), it's time to attempt level 5.

L5 Once you can complete the whole routine with the specific sets and reps, aim to increase the number of reps in the OAPU.

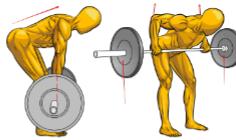
Level 1

SUPERSET

Bent Over Barbell Rows

Tempo **2010**

Reps **12 - 15**



Passive Hang

Time **30 - 60 seconds**



Sets **3**

Rest **180 seconds**

Level 2

SUPERSET

Australian Pull-Ups

Tempo **2010**

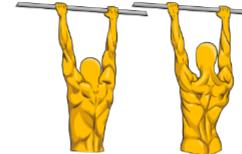
Reps **10 - 12**



Scapula Pull-Ups

Tempo **2010**

Reps **10 - 12**



Sets **3**

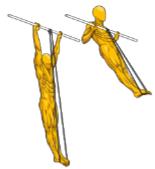
Rest **180 seconds**

Level 3

Band Assisted Pull-Ups

Tempo **2010**
Reps **4 - 6**

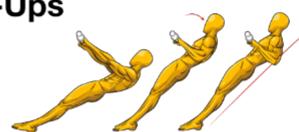
Sets 3	Rest 180 seconds
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SUPerset

Australian Pull-Ups

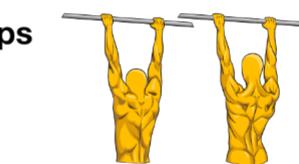
Tempo **2010**
Reps **10 - 12**



Scapula Pull-Ups

Tempo **2010**
Reps **10 - 12**

Sets 4	Rest 180 seconds
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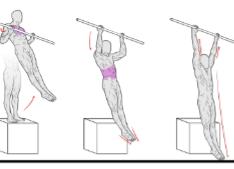


Level 4

Negative Pull-Ups

Tempo **5 - 10** seconds
Reps **1**

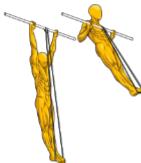
Sets 5	Rest 60 seconds
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Band Assisted Pull-Ups

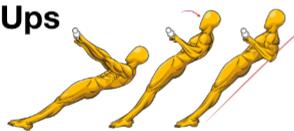
Tempo **2010**
Reps **4 - 6**

Sets 3	Rest 180 seconds
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Australian Pull-Ups

Tempo **2010**
Reps **8 - 10**



Passive Hang

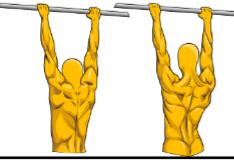
Time **30** seconds



Scapula Pull-Ups

Tempo **2010**
Reps **8 - 10**

Sets 3	Rest 180 seconds
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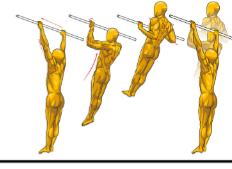


Level 5

Pull-Ups

Tempo **2010**
Reps **2**

Sets 5	Rest 180 seconds
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Band Assisted Pull-Ups

Tempo **2010**
Reps **8 - 10**

Sets 3	Rest 180 seconds
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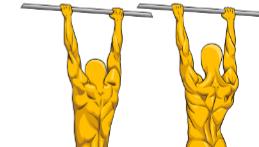
Australian Pull-Ups

Tempo **2010**
Reps **8 - 10**



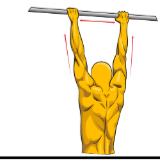
Scapula Pull-Ups

Tempo **2010**
Reps **8 - 10**



Passive Hang

Time **30 - 45** seconds



Sets 3	Rest 180 seconds
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PULL-UPS ROUTINE

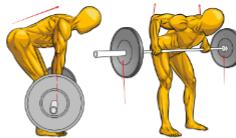
Progression guide between levels

- L1** Successfully rowing 30-40 kg (66-88 lb) for the outlined sets/reps and holding a hang for 60 seconds marks readiness for Level 2.
- L2** Achieving a nearly horizontal position in Australian pull-ups for the specified sets/reps ushers in progression to Level 3.
- L3** Accomplishing the specified sets/reps using a thin resistance band (approximately 10 kg or 22 lb) indicates readiness for Level 4.
- L4** Completing 5 single sets of 10-second negatives indicates the ability to perform a pull-up.
- L5** If 5 sets of 2 pull-ups are doable, it's time to try more. For instance, aim for 5 sets of 3 pull-ups next.

Level 1

SUPerset

Bent Over Barbell Rows

Tempo **2010**Reps **12 - 15**

Passive Hang

Time **30 - 60** secondsSets **3**Rest **180** seconds

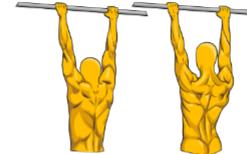
Level 2

SUPerset

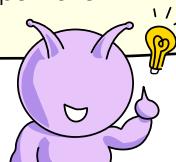
Australian Pull-Ups

Tempo **2010**Reps **10 - 12**

Scapula Pull-Ups

Tempo **2010**Reps **10 - 12**Sets **3**Rest **180** seconds

Progressively increase the challenge of the exercise by adding weight, using a thinner band, or altering the angle. Select a weight or band that allows you to complete the specified sets and repetitions.

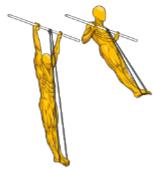


Level 3

Band Assisted Pull-Ups

Tempo **2010**
Reps **4 - 6**

Sets 3	Rest 180 seconds
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SUPerset

Australian Pull-Ups

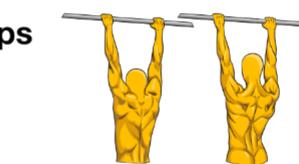
Tempo **2010**
Reps **10 - 12**



Scapula Pull-Ups

Tempo **2010**
Reps **10 - 12**

Sets 4	Rest 180 seconds
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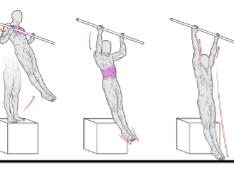


Level 4

Negative Pull-Ups

Tempo **5 - 10** seconds
Reps **1**

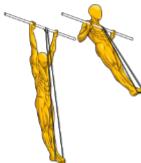
Sets 5	Rest 60 seconds
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Band Assisted Pull-Ups

Tempo **2010**
Reps **4 - 6**

Sets 3	Rest 180 seconds
---------------	-------------------------



Australian Pull-Ups

Tempo **2010**
Reps **8 - 10**



Passive Hang

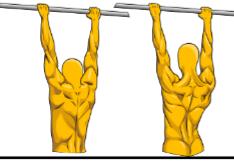
Time **30** seconds



Scapula Pull-Ups

Tempo **2010**
Reps **8 - 10**

Sets 3	Rest 180 seconds
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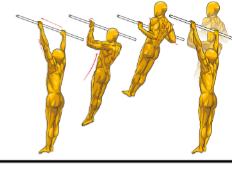


Level 5

Pull-Ups

Tempo **2010**
Reps **2**

Sets 5	Rest 180 seconds
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Band Assisted Pull-Ups

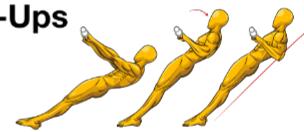
Tempo **2010**
Reps **8 - 10**

Sets 3	Rest 180 seconds
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Australian Pull-Ups

Tempo **2010**
Reps **8 - 10**



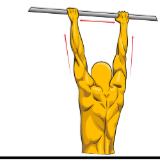
Scapula Pull-Ups

Tempo **2010**
Reps **8 - 10**



Passive Hang

Time **30 - 45** seconds



Sets 3	Rest 180 seconds
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SQUATS ROUTINE

Progression guide between levels

- L1** If deep squats are hard, skip them and work on mobility. Go to level 2 once you can do the entire routine.
- L2** After completing 6 reps of Bulgarian split squats, move to level 3.
- L3** If you can do 6 reps of Cossack squats and the other workouts, start pistol squat variants.
- L4** Pick any pistol squats easier variant. After 10 reps (or 4-second eccentric squats), it's time to try an unassisted pistol squat.
- L5** Once you finish the whole level, aim to gradually reach 8 reps of pistol squats.

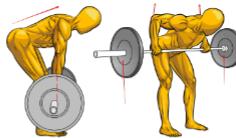
Level 1

SUPERSET

Bent Over Barbell Rows

Tempo **2010**

Reps **12 - 15**



Passive Hang

Time **30 - 60 seconds**



Sets **3**

Rest **180 seconds**

Level 2

SUPERSET

Australian Pull-Ups

Tempo **2010**

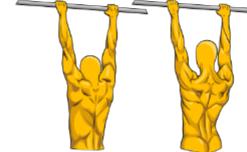
Reps **10 - 12**



Scapula Pull-Ups

Tempo **2010**

Reps **10 - 12**



Sets **3**

Rest **180 seconds**

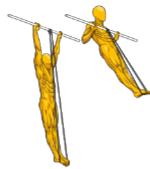
Sometimes, it can be tricky to do an easy workout even when you can handle a tough one. This just means you should go back and get really good at the basic stuff now and then. If you don't, it could slow you down when you're trying to learn harder moves.



Level 3

Band Assisted Pull-Ups

Tempo **2010**
Reps **4 - 6**



Sets 3	Rest 180 seconds
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SUPerset

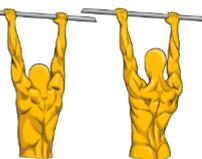
Australian Pull-Ups

Tempo **2010**
Reps **10 - 12**



Scapula Pull-Ups

Tempo **2010**
Reps **10 - 12**

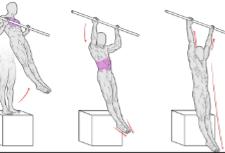


Sets 4	Rest 180 seconds
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Level 4

Negative Pull-Ups

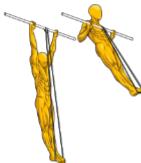
Tempo **5 - 10** seconds
Reps **1**



Sets 5	Rest 60 seconds
---------------	------------------------

Band Assisted Pull-Ups

Tempo **2010**
Reps **4 - 6**



Sets 3	Rest 180 seconds
---------------	-------------------------

SUPerset

Australian Pull-Ups

Tempo **2010**
Reps **8 - 10**



Passive Hang

Time **30** seconds



Scapula Pull-Ups

Tempo **2010**
Reps **8 - 10**

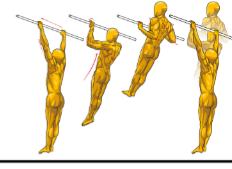


Sets 3	Rest 180 seconds
---------------	-------------------------

Level 5

Pull-Ups

Tempo **2010**
Reps **2**



Sets 5	Rest 180 seconds
---------------	-------------------------

Band Assisted Pull-Ups

Tempo **2010**
Reps **8 - 10**



Sets 3	Rest 180 seconds
---------------	-------------------------

SUPerset

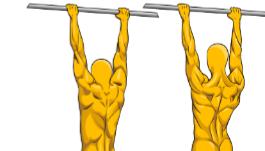
Australian Pull-Ups

Tempo **2010**
Reps **8 - 10**



Scapula Pull-Ups

Tempo **2010**
Reps **8 - 10**



Passive Hang

Time **30 - 45** seconds



Sets 3	Rest 180 seconds
---------------	-------------------------

AFTERWORD

This book might look short with its 100 pages, but it took us a very long time and lots of hard work to make. Each picture you see was drawn with a lot of care. The real book has even more amazing pictures and things to learn.

When people take books without paying, it's like taking away the reward for all our hard work. If you like what you see and want more books like this in the future, getting the real book helps us a lot.

We made this book because we love teaching people about exercise and want to make more. But we need everyone's help to do that. By getting the real book, you're like a friend giving us a high-five and saying, "Keep going!"

So, if you want to be part of our big adventure and learn even more fun stuff, look for the real book. Let's enjoy and learn together!

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