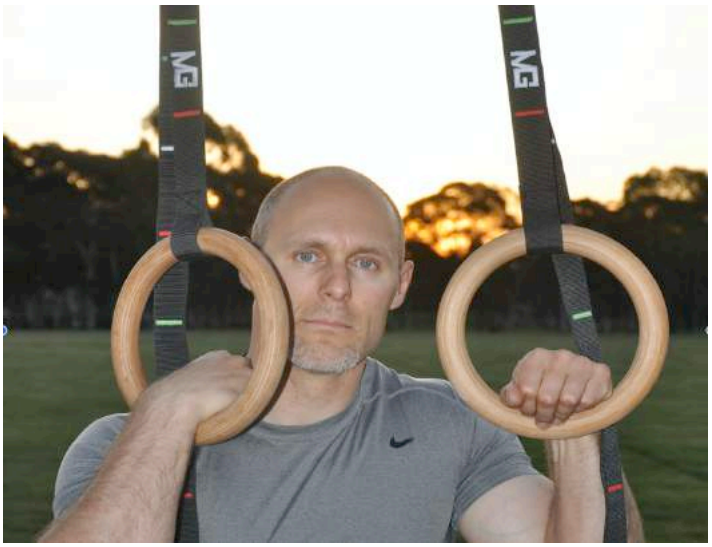
Gym rings training

METAL GEAR



MG Gym Rings

Training manual for strength, fitness and muscular development

Gym rings safety

- Make sure that the bar or support you use to hang the rings from is sturdy and strong enough to support your full body weight;
- The straps should be passed and hanged only over smooth surfaces like smooth steel bars or smooth wood. If the surface you hang the straps over is rough (tree branch, concrete beam, etc) it may cut or damage the straps or the stitching; use an old piece of cloth to wrap around the hanging surface in order to protect the straps;
- Make sure that the carabineer is set up properly;
- Attempt only exercises you can perform, or at least can try in a safe manner.

How to take care of your rings?

The MG Gym Rings are extremely strong supporting in excess of 300 kg per side.

However, common sense should be applied when using the rings.

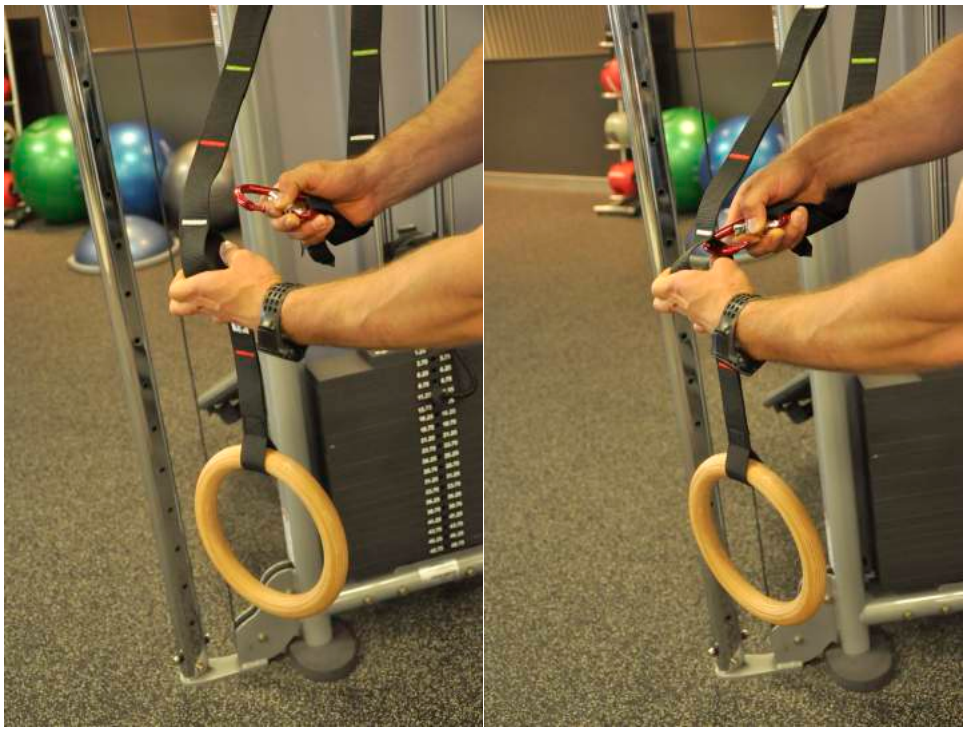
- Do not leave the MG Gym Rings under the sun; prolonged exposure to direct sunlight will lead to the destruction of the system (Wooden rings, nylon straps and polyester stitches).
- Do not store the MG Gym Rings in a place with excessive humidity where mold could create; store them at room temperature inside your home or in a shaded and aerated garage or store room.
- If the MG Gym rings get wet, allow them to dry hanging them in a place that allows for air draft, before storing them.
- When you hang the MG Gym Rings avoid hanging them directly over concrete beams, metal bars with sharp corners or tree branches with rough bark.
- If the hanging surface is not smooth, use an old piece of cloth to protect the straps from being sliced or brazed.
- Do not strike the wooden rings against hard objects.

How to adjust the rings?

The MG Gym Rings straps are 3 m long, so straps could be hanged from bars between 2 – 4 meters high, while the wooden rings would hang anywhere between 10 cm and 2.6 meters above the ground.

The MG Gym Rings have different colors stitching spaced at 10 cm intervals with a regular pattern.

- First adjust the height for one ring by passing the straps over he supporting bar and hooking the carabineer on both sides of the strap to close a loop around the bar
- Adjust the second ring making it about the same height with the first ring by the eye; observe the color of the stitching where the carabineer hooks on both sides of the loop and replicate the same exact hooking for the second ring.



Hook the carabineer on both sides of the strap to form a loop around the supporting bar


You can hook the carabineer through any eylet of the strap.

To have the rings at the exact same height make sure you match the colors

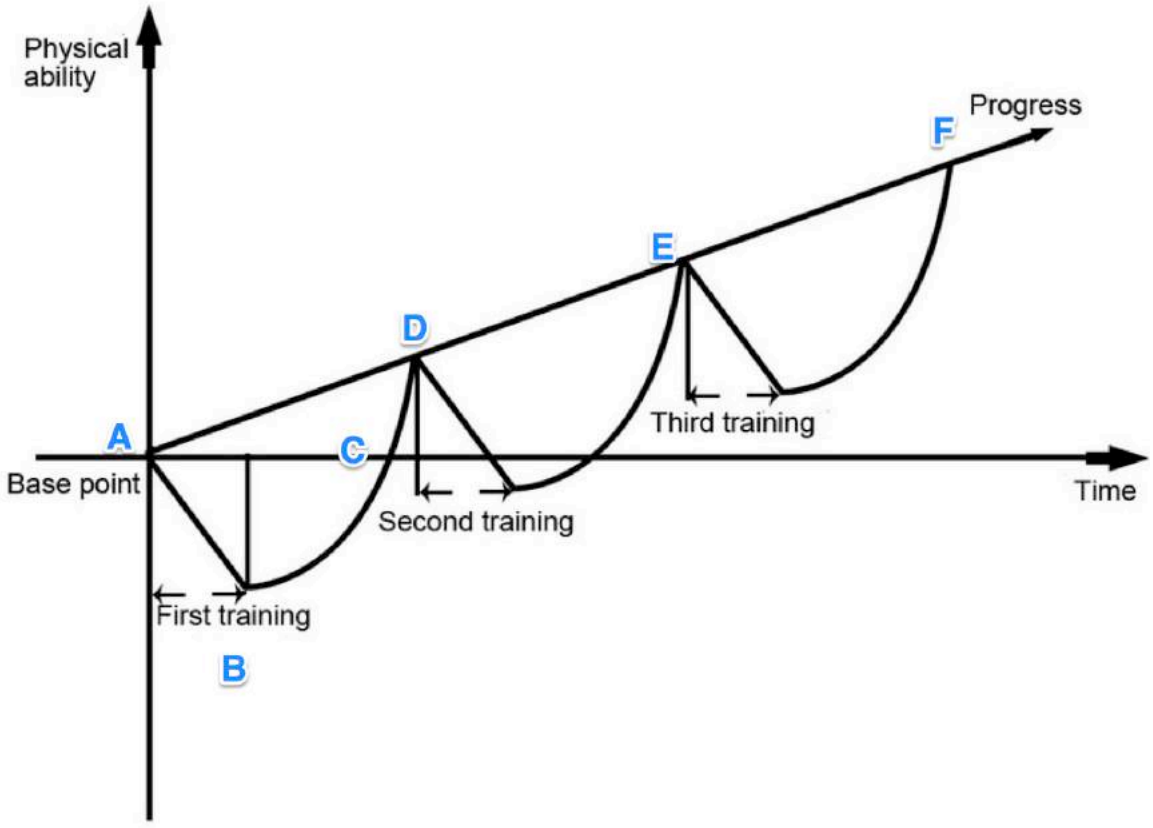
Ex (Under red on the back strap, under white on the front strap)

Adjusted correctly the rings will be at the exact same height

How to train to improve continuously?

As a complete beginner, any kind of physical training will offer results up to a certain level.

I will show how should you train for optimal results at any level form completely untrained people to world-class athletes.



The graph above shows how athletes improve as a result of training

Before first training session you are at your baseline fitness level (point A on the graph). As an example for horizontal bench press A = 80 kg; you can perform

one maximal repetition using an 80 kg barbell.

As you exercise during your session your fitness decreases, you get more and more exhausted. If you train 4 sets of barbell bench press your temporary strength capability decreases, because your chest, shoulders and arms muscles and your nervous system become exhausted. The B point on the graph marks the end of training session one. As an example B = 77 kg; at this time you can bench press only 77 kg.

After you finish training session one, your body (I am referring at the chest, shoulders and arms muscles and central nervous system) begins to recover.

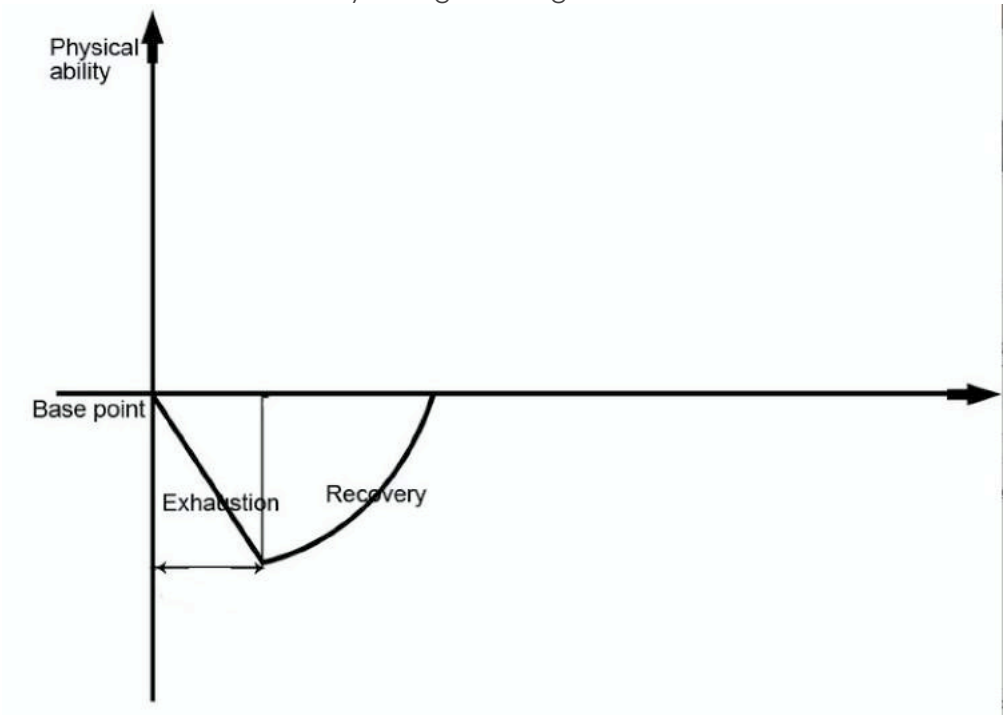
Point C on the graph marks the moment when you recover to A baseline level; at this point you are again able to bench press 80 kg.

If your training session number one had enough **intensity** or **overload** your chest muscles and their afferent nervous control will obtain what is called **super compensation**, or **super recovery** – in plain words, improvement. The point D on the graph shows the over compensation peak; at this time you will be able to bench press 81 kg, which is 1 kg more than your previous personal best.

If your training lacked intensity or overload, you will not obtain over compensation.

The key point is that your training provides overload AND the **training frequency** is optimal so the subsequent session takes place near the peak of previous session's over compensation.

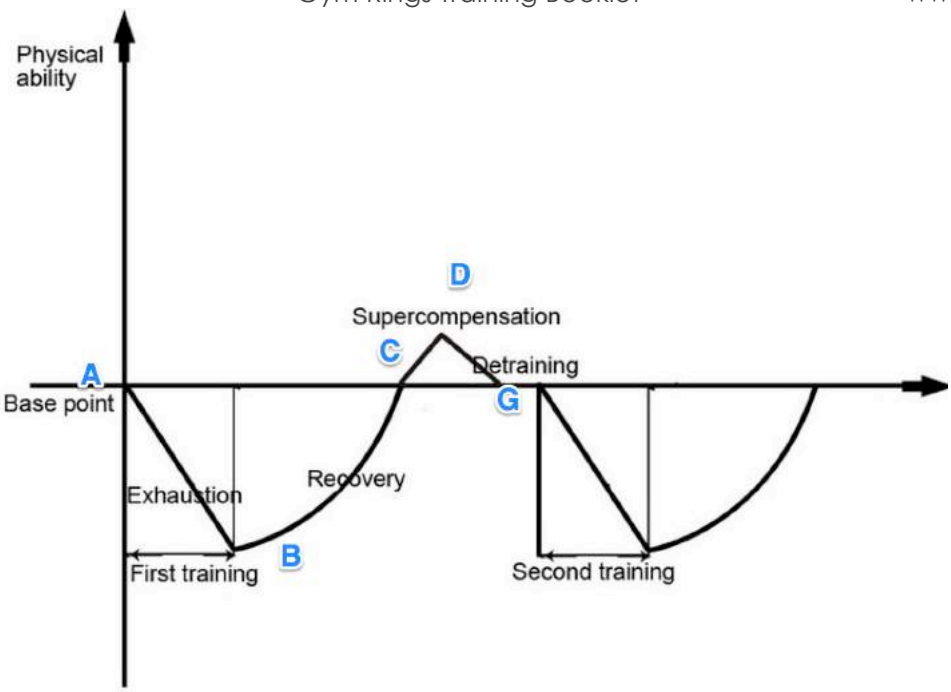
The second training session should start at point D, and than again has enough overload to take you super recovery to point E, then F and so on.



No Over Load = No Improvements

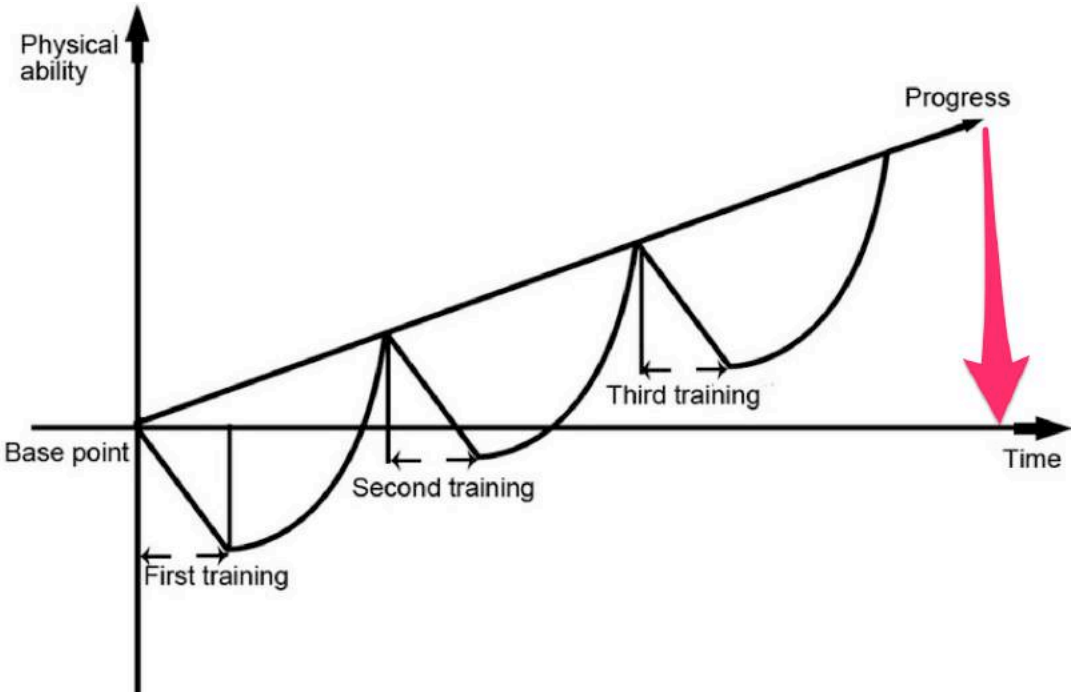
The overload necessary to induce super recovery at point F it is higher than at point E, which is higher that at the point D, which is higher that at the initial point A.

If you rest too long after training session one, even if your training had good overload and good over compensation, you will **detrain;** point G on the graph marks detraining. G is at the same level as A, so this means that you will not gain any improvements after first training session.



Too long rest between training sessions = detraining

If you train well a certain period of time (3 months for example) and than you take a long break (one month) your level will return to baseline level.



Detraining occurs as a result of a prolonged break

It is important to understand that this graph shows only the adaptation specific to what you've trained.

If you train full body strength, this kind of graph it is valid for the full body, if you train only your Abs and Chest on Monday, and Back and Arms on Tuesday, then you will have a graph like this for Abs and Chest and another one for Back and Arms.

Now the important question is how long does it take for the body to be at the over compensation peak; how long time passes from A to D?

Factors which directly influence your recovery time:

- the more intense the training, the higher the training volume, the longer the recovery time;
- basic movements training (squat, deadlift, bench press) need more recovery time compered to small movements (knee extension, shoulder flies); big muscle groups (legs, chest, back) also need more recovery time compared to small muscle groups (biceps, triceps, shoulders);
- a new kind of training (novel for you) needs longer recovery time;
- the more experience you have in training, the faster you will recover;
- the younger adult you are, the faster you will recover.

For strength training, the usual recovery times is 48 to 72 hours; that is why most training plans have training cycles of 2 – 3 days.

If the training intensity AND volume are both very high, 4 to 6 days might be needed for complete recovery. High volume for strength training is more than 20 sets per muscle group.

Training load for strength training

	Reps range	1 RM %	Multiple RM	Speed of the movement
Bodybuilding	7 – 15	60 – 85%	7 – 17 RM	Controlled – time under tension
Strength	1 – 6	80 – 100 %	1 – 8 RM	As fast as you can up, controlled down
Power	1 – 8	50 – 70 %	12 – 25 RM	Explosive

1 RM – a load that you can use to perform only one repetition is any given exercise for any given day; 1 RM is your Personal Best.

Example – Barbell Horizontal Press – 1 RM = 120 kg (you can perform one rep with 120 kg; you can not press 121 kg).

1 RM is different for different days.

10 RM – a load that you can use to perform 10 repetitions for any given exercise with good form; you can not perform the 11th repetition without sacrificing form.

How to progress your training overload?

- Increase the number of repetitions
- Increase the number of sets
- Increase the load

Example of progression for continuous overload.

Training – week 1 to week 12.
Reps – per set per exercise
Sets - per exercise.
Load – just an example.

Training	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Reps #	8	9	10	8	10	8	10	8	10	10	8	10
Sets #	2	2	2	3	3	2	3	2	3	3	2	2
Load(Kg)	60	60	60	60	60	65	65	70	70	70	75	75

* when using Gym Rings adjust the body inclination and leverage to increase the loading

Summary of training principles:

1. Your training should be intense and challenging.
2. Your training should be progressive. Train harder as you get better.
3. Your training program should be created and directed according to your goals. Every variable of your training should have a meaning and a specific purpose.
4. You should allow your body to recover enough time in order to achieve a peak adaptation level, and then train again.
5. You should maintain you progress and not allow detraining to occur.
6. You should plan your fitness program on periods, each period with a specific goal in mind.
7. You should choose the fitness program which is right for you according with your factors, conditions, and goals.
8. You should see the complete picture. Proper nutrition, sleep, life style, alcohol and cigarettes avoidance are a must in order to accomplish your health and fitness goals.

Upper body training

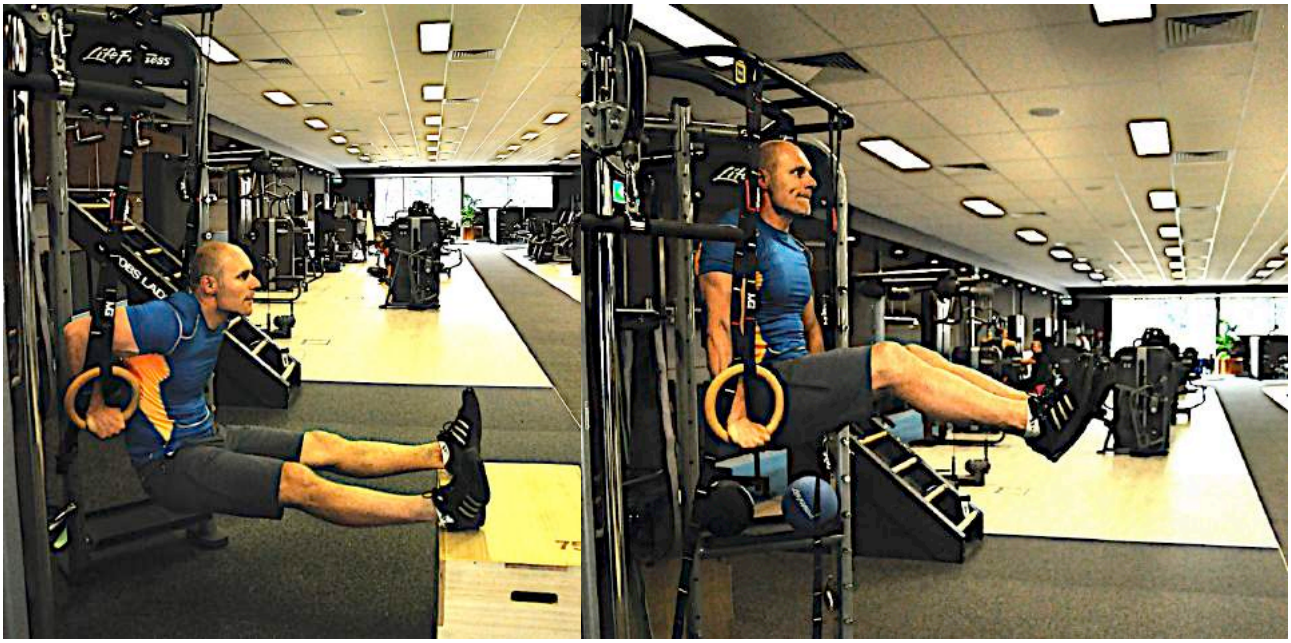
The Gym Rings are a phenomenal tool for developing upper body strength and promote muscle growth. If you look at any competitive male gymnast's body you would immediately notice their awesome upper body development and strength. They train multiple events, but by far the most challenging for the upper body strength is the rings event.

The way to adjust the resistance is very quick and easy, by changing the leverage.

As an example for push ups, as the body comes closer to being parallel to the ground, the greater the load.

Changing the degree of body inclination will change the load and the difficulty

Changing the leverage will change the difficulty of the exercise (for the same inclination of the body). Ex. Chest Flies are much more challenging than Chest Push-ups



Having the feet in the air and extended makes the drill much more challenging compared to having the feet on a box or on the ground

Push-ups

Push-ups are the best exercise one could do for upper body pushing strength and chest development. Beside chest, the push-ups are good for the triceps, anterior delts and abs.

Key points:

- Contract your abs as you would brace for taking a punch to the stomach
- Maintain your whole body from shoulders to heels stiff like a wood board
- You can choose to keep the elbows anywhere between shoulders level to close to the sides of the torso
- Descend as low as you comfortably can, then extend your elbows completely and bring the rings closer together

If push-ups become easy and you can easily complete 15 or more repetitions, add weight using a weighted vest, a kettlebell with a wide strap that you hang behind your neck, or a child that can hold well on your back (hands around your neck and legs around your waist).

One-hand ring push-ups is a very challenging drill you can use for your training.

Gym rings push pus – if the body is inclined the load is lower

Gym rings push pus – if the body is parallel to the ground the load is higher

Adding extra weight for push-ups

Dips

A dip is a challenging drill that trains the chest, triceps and anterior delts. Dips are quite similar to push-ups, but are more difficult because usually the whole body needs to be moved.

Key points

- Grip the rings, keep your wrists straight, lock your elbows and twist the thumbs outward
- Slowly bend your elbows until about 70 - 90 degrees
- In order to involve the pectoralis major (chest muscles) more keep your elbows outward, your chest slightly oriented downward and your knees bent; to involve more the triceps brachialis, keep your elbows close to your sides, push your chest forward and keep your knees straight or slightly bent
- At the top of the drill lock your elbows actively. Do not lock your elbows passively.
- If you can perform more than 15 reps, you can load yourself using a plate hanging from your belt or keeping a dumbbell between your feet (or a child on your foot).

Diving push-up

The diving push-ups drill is a combination of a push-up with a pike. This combination makes this drill very efficient as a core training drill and shoulders stability.

After you perform the push-up bring your hands to your shins (you can open the 4 fingers to touch your shins)

Chest flies

- Chose the level of inclination that suits your strength and range of repetitions. Slowly open your arms until hands are in line with your shoulders.
- Keep elbows slightly bent at about 150 – 170 degrees.
- Descend slowly and pause at the bottom of the movement for 2-3 seconds, then bring your hands close together.
- You can combine chest flies with push-ups or with the abs pike.

Pull-ups

For training your upper back muscles you need only two movements (with different variations): pull-ups, when your arms are moving in the frontal plane from up to down and rows, when your arms move in a transversal plane, from front to the back.

The rings are exceptional for practicing pull-ups. You can have the rings wider or narrower, and you can position your hands pronated, supined or parallel (this means palms facing out, in or facing each other).

- Descend slowly extending the elbows completely or slightly bent to 160-170 degrees
- Pull-up as high as possible bringing your chest to the level of your hands
- Keep your chest open and head up

If pull ups become too easy and you can perform 15 or more repetitions easily, add load – weighted vest, hang a kettlebell or a plate using a belt and a strap, hook a dumbbell or a kettlebell with your feet, or a child sitting on your foot with arms and legs around your calf.

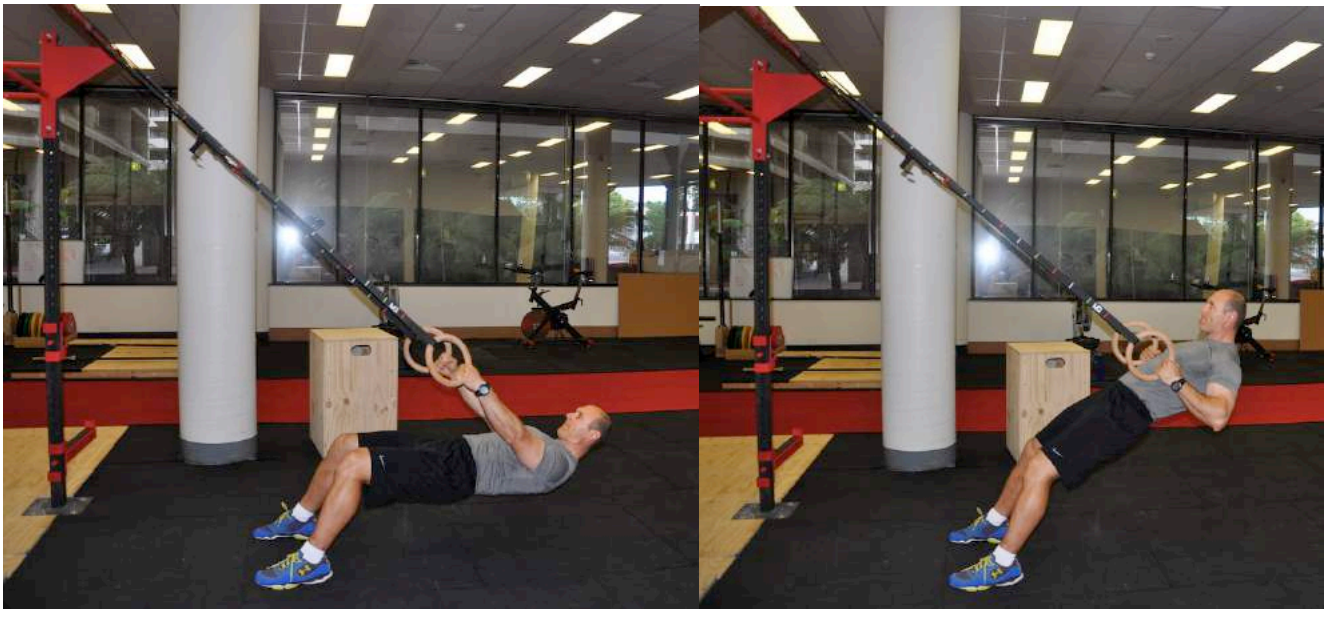
Rows

You can choose to have the rings wider apart or narrower. You can row with the elbows close to the sides of the body or wider up to elbows in line with the shoulders.

Choose the degree of body inclination to adjust the resistance according to your strength level and range of repetitions you wish to use.

- Keep your body rigid and straight like a wooden board; head should be aligned with the trunk and hips should be extended.
- Extend your elbows completely and allow your shoulder blades to come apart.
- Row as high as you can, ideally bringing the hands in line with the trunk, bringing the shoulder blades close together.

When the rows become easy, progress to one arm normal row and one arm rear fly, or single arm rows.



Gym rings rows – when the body is inclined the load is lower


Gym rings rows – when the body is parallel to the ground the load is higher

Row – Fly (One arm row and one arm rear delt fly)

A difficult way to row is by being completely suspended by the handles, with your feet in the air. Make sure that your grip is strong enough, so you do not fall and injure yourself.


Y Shoulder extensions

This is a very good drill for the upper back muscles around your scapula and your rear delts.

Make sure that the straps are under continuous tension.

Maintain the top position with arms extended for 1-2 seconds, then move back slowly under control.

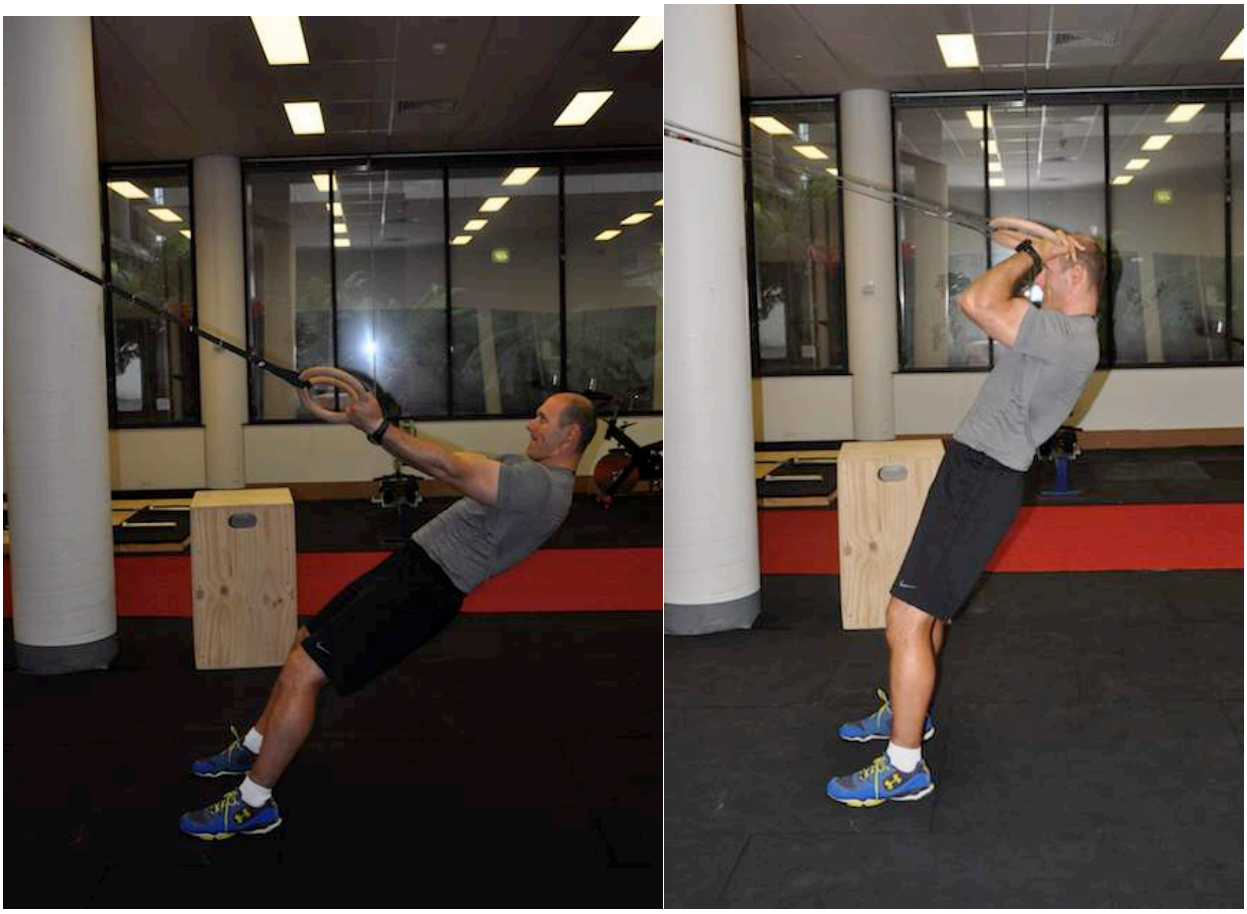
Biceps curls

Biceps curls

As the name says clearly, this drill will assist you to improve biceps strength and muscle mass

Curls in front of your body

- Make sure that the straps are under continuous tension.
- Maintain the top position with arms extended for 1-2 seconds, then move back slowly under control.
- Keep your elbows up with arms straight in front of the shoulders
- Flex your elbows until your fingers come close or touch your head



Curls behind your body

- Incline your body forward with elbows extended and hands and elbows slightly behind your body
- Keep your elbows behind your torso at all time
- Start with your elbows fully extended or slightly flexed (170 degrees)
- Bend your elbows until 60 – 80 degrees without bringing elbows in front of your torso

Triceps extensions

Triceps extensions

Face down triceps extensions

- Keep your arms close to your face with elbows pointing forward throughout the drill
- Grip the rings deep, so they are close to your wrists
- Maintain your whole body from shoulders to heels stiff like a wood board, by bracing your abs
- Bend your elbows until hand come close to your forehead or behind the ears
- Contract your triceps forcefully while extending the elbows completely at the top of the movement – maintain the contraction for 1-2 seconds.

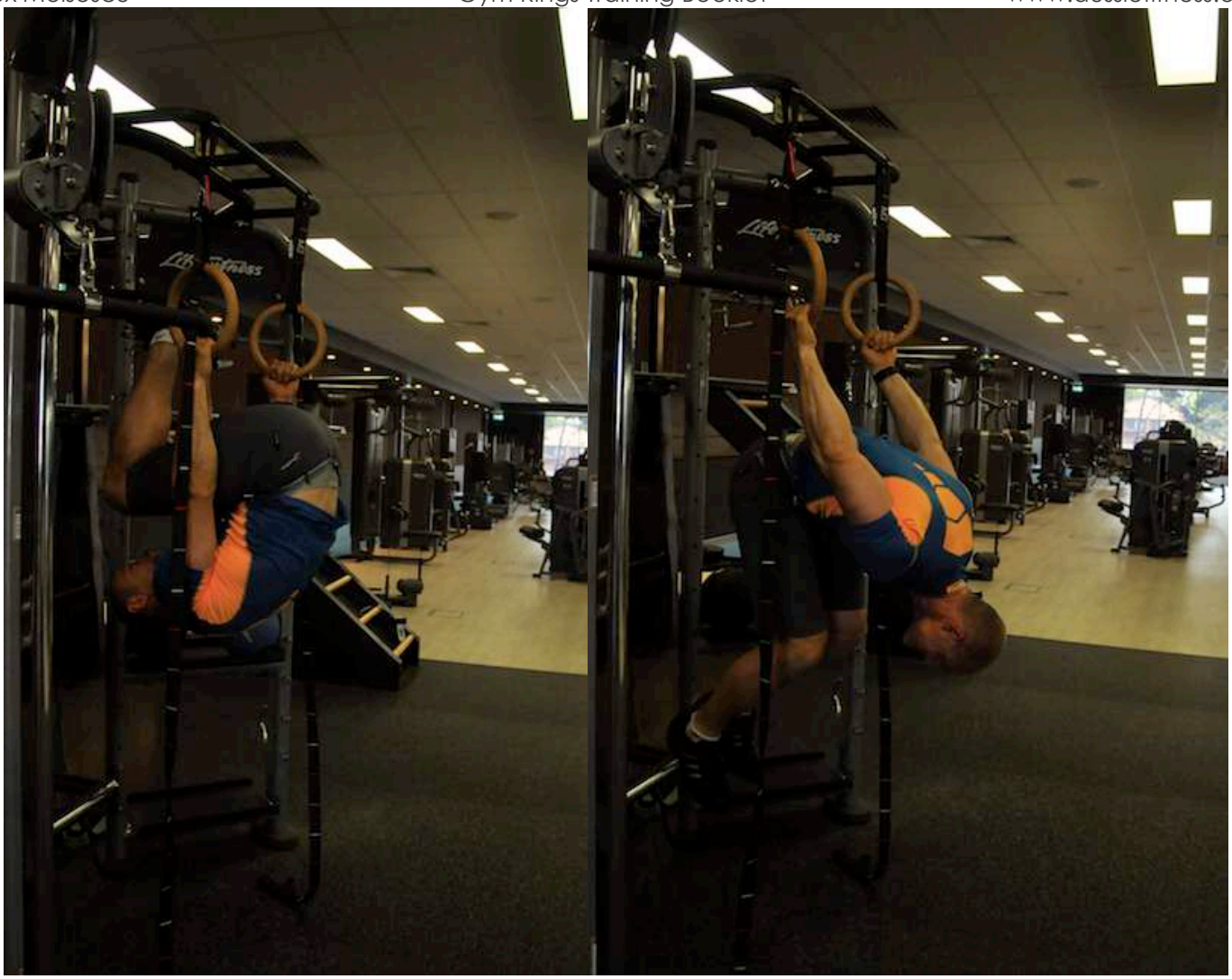
Backward triceps extensions

- Make sure that the straps are under continuous tension.
- Maintain the top position with arms extended for 1-2 seconds, then move back slowly under control.
- Grip the rings deep, so they are close to your wrists
- Keep your elbows at the sides of your trunk throughout the drill
- Keep your body rigid like a wooden board
- The movement should occur only in the elbows, not in the shoulders

Skin the cat

Skin the cat

Skin the cat drill is awesome for abdominal strength and it will help you build shoulder joints made of steel. This movement takes your shoulders through a full range of motion under considerable load. Do not attempt this movement if your shoulder joints are not fit and pain free and if you not have a strong grip.



Perform it slowly under complete control and go through the widest range of motion that you can comfortably accomplish.

- Hang on the rings with arms and elbows extended
- Bring your feet up above the rings; knees can be bent or straight
- Rotate your body around the shoulders and go with your feet towards the ground
- Reverse the movement to reach the initial position

Do not perform this drill if you feel pain in the shoulders.

Gorilla crunch

Gorilla crunch

This is an elite abdominal exercise, but is also challenging for arms and back muscles.

- Hang from the rings and bring your feet to rings level.
- Perform the movement slowly under control.
- Knees can be bent or straight.

If you can not lift your feet to the rings level, lift your knees as high as you can and lower them back slowly.

Suspended abs

Suspended abs

Hook your feet in the rings (at shoelace level) and start with arms extended and body tensed and parallel to the ground.

Bring your knees close to your elbows, (as a variation bring both knees sideways), then go back to extended position.




Suspended pike

Starting in the same position as the previous drill, keep your knees straight, lift your hips high and bring your feet as close to your hands as you can.

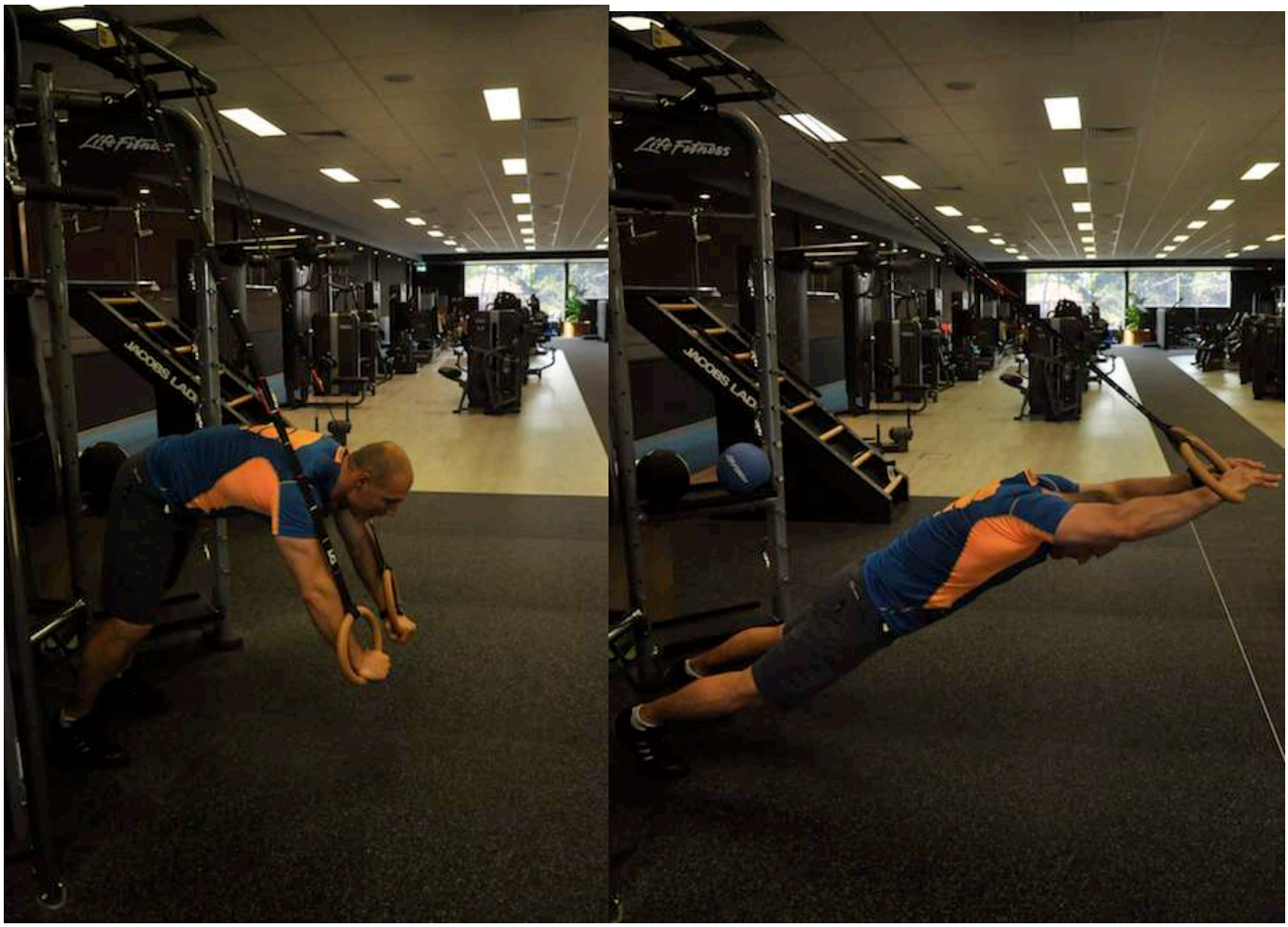
Perform the drill under control.

You can perform the same drill with hands in the rings and feet on the ground or on a bench.

Superman

The goal of this drill is to achieve an extended body position (see pic below) and maintain it for 3-5 seconds. Whole body, especially the mid-section should be hard and tensed like a wooden board.

The difficulty is increased when the body is closer to being parallel to the floor.



Squats

Squat

The rings are awesome for training the upper body and core and they can also offer high quality training for the lower body.

Rings are very helpful for a trainee that can not perform body weight free squats because of insufficient strength and/or balance, because the trainee can maintain balance easier and can pull on the rings for assistance when standing up.

Some of the following drills can be performed without the rings, but rings can help with the balance so the trainee can focus on strength and power development (pistol squat), or make it more difficult to balance (split squat) so some muscles are activated at a higher degree.

Split squat

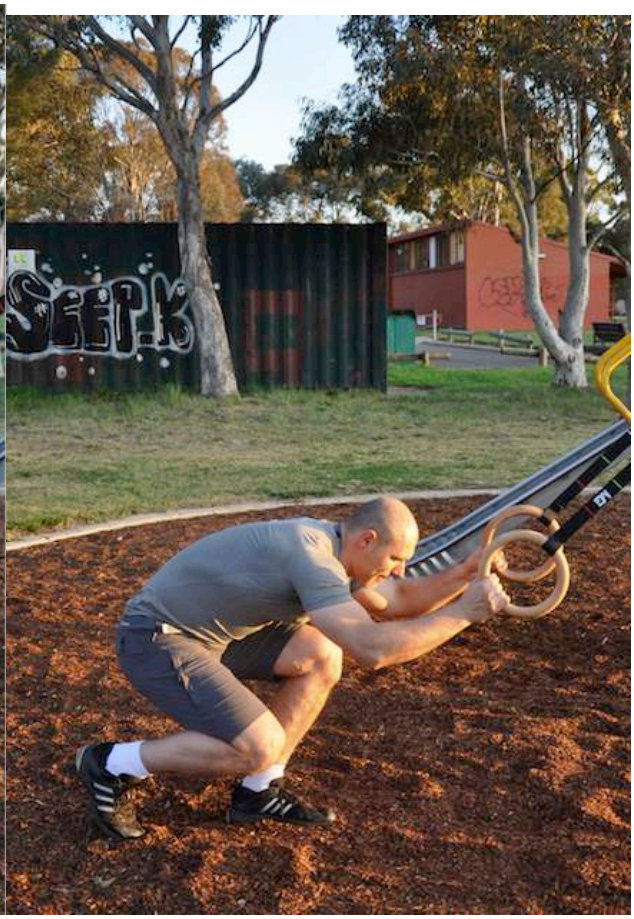
- Place one foot in one ring, 30 – 50 cm above the ground.
- Descend low, bringing the hip crease at or below knee level
- Stand up extending the knee and the hips
- Keep the weight centered over the working leg

This drill can be performed with a load (kettlebell, plate, dumbbell, power bag, weighted vest) so it is more difficult.

One leg squat

- Use one ring for extra balance
- Keep the weight centered over the working leg

Load with a kettlebell if needed.



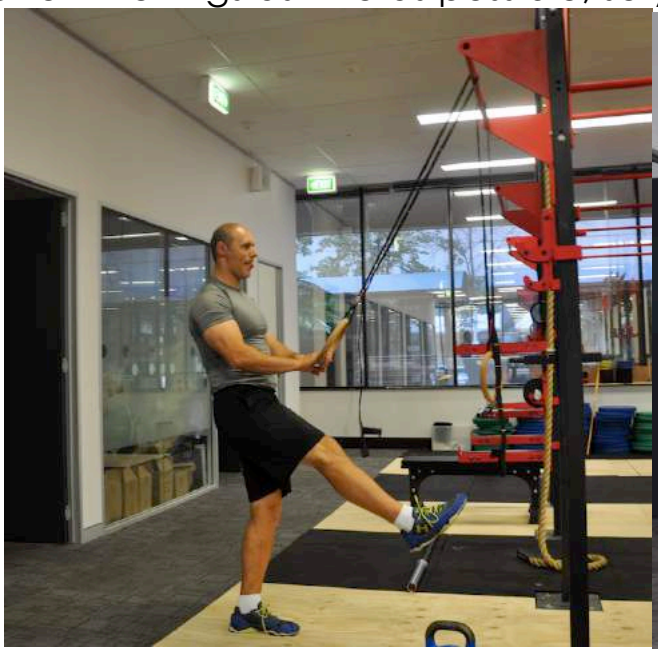
Pistol squat

This is an awesome drill to improve legs strength, power and muscular development. The loading is very high even if one only used own body weight.

An 80 kg individual squatting a 80 kg barbell, has a 60 kg load on every leg (0.5 x 40 kg – upper body weight + 0.5 x 80 kg – barbell weight).

The same 80 kg individual performing a pistol squat with own body weight will also have a 60 kg loading for the working leg (40 kg - whole upper body weight + 20 kg – the leg that is in the air). Adding only a relatively light weight of 20 kg could provide the same loading (for the legs) as a 120 kg barbell.

- Hold one or two rings for balance
- Keep one leg straight ahead (pistol) throughout the drill
- Bend the working leg's knee and descend as low as possible
- Lean forward with the head and the chest and keep the weight centered over the working leg
- Do not lift the heel off the ground
- Do not allow your hips or knee to shift sideways; keep knee and hips well aligned to the supporting foot
- Pull on the rings as little as possible, so you load your leg more.

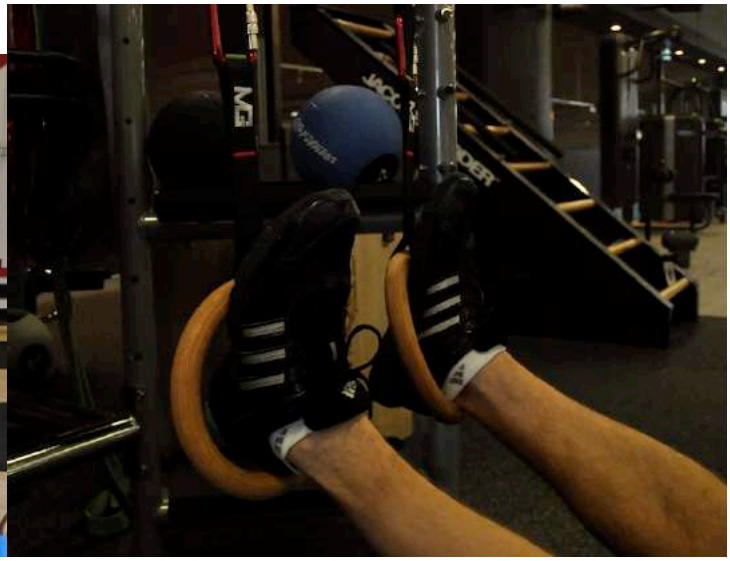


Hamstrings curls

Hamstrings curls

Performing this drill you will experience an intense contraction of your hamstrings muscles (back of the thigh) and also target glutes and spinal erectors.

- Adjust the straps, so rings are 40 – 60 cm above the ground;
- Lie on your back and hook the heels in the rings with feet and toes in front of the rings (not through the rings);
- Keep your hips extended and flex your knees, so hips will move upwards.



Muscle-ups

Muscle-ups

The muscle up movement is an elite achievement for amateur trainees, but only a very basic movement for gymnasts.

To perform a muscle-up start in a hanging position with arms and elbows extended. Pull yourself up with both rings close and reach the rings with your chest. Transition to a dips bottom position and extend the arms to complete a dip to finish the muscle-up.

Before attempting a muscle up, you should be able to do at least 15 pull-up

and 15 dips with the rings.

- Grip the rings with a false grip – almost like gripping with your wrists;
- Pull yourself up, as high as possible, with elbows close to your sides and rings about 20 cm from each other
- To make the transition from a pull-up to a dip, bring your elbows above the rings and rings under your armpits. The transition is the most difficult part of a muscle-up. Going high with the pull-up and the false grip will be the key to make this transition
- Complete the movement by extending your elbows to complete the dip

Drills to perform to complete a clean (no kipping) muscle-up:

- Pull-ups – pull up as high as possible, touch your wrists to your chest and ribs;
- Dips – descend as low as your shoulders allow you to and go up extending the elbows completely;
- False grip hangs – to practice your false grip and improve the needed specific strength start with false grip hangs for 10 – 30 seconds;
- False grip pull-ups or rows – complete pull-ups and rows using a false grip;
- Mini muscle-ups – lower the rings (1.7 – 1.4 m above the ground) so your heels are on he ground and practice the muscle-up using the same techniques as explained above.

DAFF – Dynamic Assisted Functional Flexibility

A wide variety of athletes would benefit from enhanced hip and shoulder flexibility, neuromuscular control and stability. The first few drills (Exercise 1) target the hamstrings and the abductor muscles, while the latter drills (Exercise 2) target the shoulder girdle area.

Exercise 1 – Hips - Hamstrings and abductors flexibility training

Front split and side split (hamstrings and abductors)

Starting position – take a one-foot standing position with the other foot supported by the Gym Ring at hip height. Adjust the Gym Ring height above the ground according to the athlete's flexibility and muscle control.

Start with few knee extensions and flexions, than increase the ROM (Range of Motion) under good control and balance.

In order to increase the ROM (Range of Motion):

- allow the Gym Ring to swing further in front;
- pull the ring rope band with the hands toward the chest so the ring elevates;
- move the support foot further backwards.

Recover to default position by contracting the hamstrings. By contracting the hamstrings, more training purposes will be achieved: improved hamstrings

strength toward the end of the ROM (Range of Motion), improved split movement control and inhibition of the stretch reflex that allows for a more efficient muscle fibres elongation.

To use the PNF (Proprioceptive Neuromuscular Facilitation) method, contract the hamstrings (60 – 90%) for 7-10 seconds than relax into stretch

Start with light extension-flexion movements of the knee

Increase the amplitude (pull the band towards you to add a few degrees to the ROM – Range of Motion)

Place the support foot backwards and use gravity to increase your ROM (Range of Motion) towards the maximum

Repeat the routine for the side split (pull the band towards you to increase hips extension ROM)

Place support foot to the side and use gravity to increase ROM towards your limits.

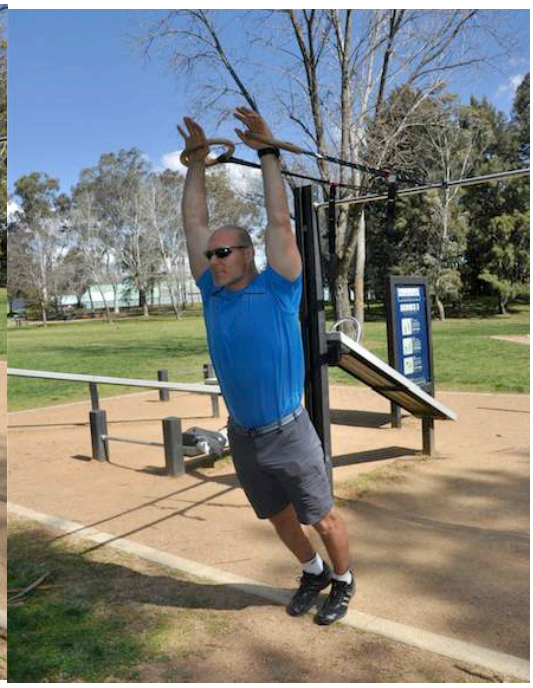
After this type of training DOMS (Delayed Onset Muscle Soreness) was noticed in the upper part of the gluteus muscles, due to isometric contraction while stabilising the support leg.

Exercise 2 – Shoulder flexibility

Shoulder extension – extend the shoulders while keeping the elbows extended; adjust the angle between the humerus and the torso

- use your body weight to increase the pressure on the shoulder
- Contract the chest and the back muscles for 7-10" to use the PNF (Proprioceptive Neuromuscular Facilitation) method

Position the arms above the shoulder



Use your body weight to increase pressure on the shoulder

Open the arms in a V position Use your body weight to increase pressure

Extend the shoulders with arms at shoulder height Use the gravity to increase pressure

Gym Rings Training Programs

Training 1 is the most accessible; each subsequent training is more and more difficult.

Training 1

Full body training

1. Push ups 3 sets x 8 reps
2. Rows 3 sets x 8 reps
3. One leg squat 3 sets x 8 reps (each side)
4. Triceps extensions 3 sets x 8 reps (face down)
5. Biceps flexions 3 sets x 8 reps (backward)
6. Superman 3 sets x 4 reps

Training 2

Full body training

1. Dips 3 sets x 5 – 10 reps (depending on how many dips you can perform)
2. Diving push-ups 3 sets x 8 reps
3. Rows 3 sets x 8 reps
4. Split squat 3 sets x 8 reps (each side)
5. Triceps extensions 3 sets x 8 reps (face down)
6. Biceps flexions 3 sets x 8 reps (backward)
7. Suspended abs 3 sets x 1 reps

Training 3

Full body training

1. Dips 3 sets x 10 reps
2. One arm push ups 3 x 5 reps (each side)
3. Row – fly 3 x 5 (each side)
4. Pistol squat 3 x 8 (each side)
5. Triceps extensions 3 x 8 (face down)
6. Biceps flexions 3 x 8 (forward)
7. Pike suspended abs

Training 4

Full body

1. Muscle-ups 3 x n (as many as you can)
2. Dips (legs stretching forward) 3 x 10
3. Pull ups 3 x 10
4. Chest flies 3 x 8
5. Skin the cat 3 x 5
6. Pistol squat with weight 3 x 8 (each side)
7. Hamstring curls (suspended) 3 x 8
8. Triceps extensions 3 x 8 (body parallel with the ground)
9. Biceps flexions 3 x 8 (face down, body steeply inclined)

Training 5

Upper Body

1. Dips 3 x 10
2. Diving push-ups 3 x 10
3. Chest flies 3 x 8
4. Pull ups 3 x 8
5. Row-fly 3 x 5 (each side)
6. Triceps extension (face down) 3 x 8
7. Triceps extension (backward) 3 x 8
8. Biceps flexions (face down) 3 x 8
9. Biceps flexions (face up) 3 x 8
10. Y extensions 3 x 8

Training 6

Lower Body and Core

1. Pistol squat 3 x 10
2. Split squat with weight 3 x 6 (each side)
3. Suspended hamstrings 3 x 8
4. Skin the cat 3 x 5
5. Suspended pike 3 x 10
6. Gorilla crunch 3 x 8