

BRIDGE**ATHLETIC**

BUILDING BLOCKS

A PROGRESSIVE APPROACH
TO BUILDING BETTER ATHLETES

"EXCELLENCE IS THE
GRADUAL RESULT OF
ALWAYS STRIVING TO
DO **BETTER.**"

-PAT RILEY



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A swimmer is shown in a pool, performing a freestyle stroke. The swimmer's head is above water, wearing goggles and a black swim cap. Their right arm is extended forward, cutting through the water, with a large splash of water behind it. The background is a dark, overcast sky. A yellow graphic overlay consists of a square in the top left containing the number '01', and a horizontal rectangle in the center containing the word 'INTRODUCTION'. Two yellow lines connect the corners of the '01' square to the corners of the 'INTRODUCTION' rectangle.

01

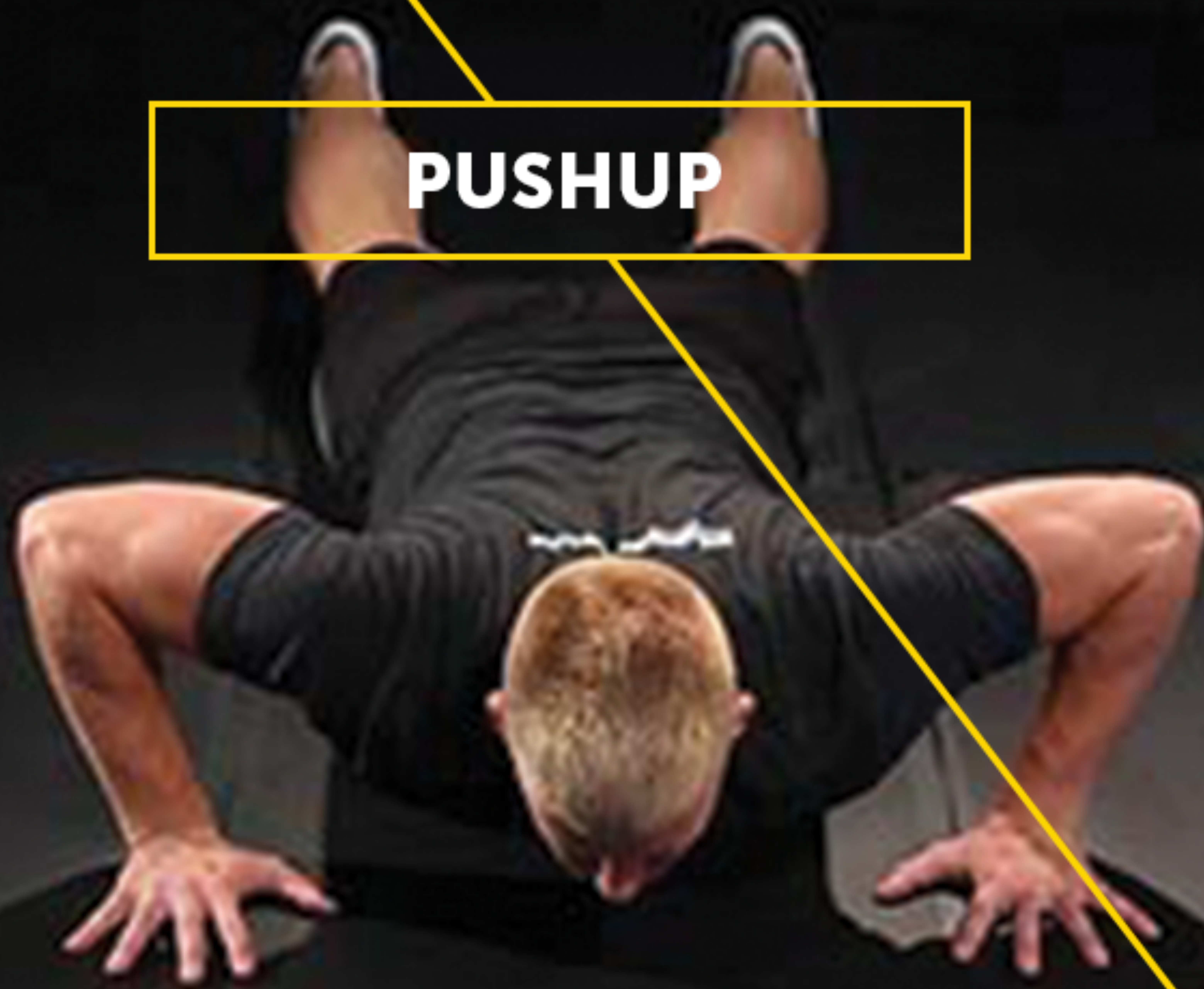
INTRODUCTION

To build better athletes, start with the basics. The exercises here may seem familiar, but they represent the foundation on which you will build strength, mobility, speed, and power. And that can make all the difference.

Each exercise begins with a basic building block then progressively adds variations and levels of difficulty to work different muscle groups safely and productively.

02

PUSHUP



INTRO:

To build base upper body strength, start with the pushup. Accessible and effective, the pushup can be done anywhere, without any equipment. The pushup does far more than just strengthen the chest. The exercise targets an athlete's chest, shoulders, triceps, scapula and midsection. This is often referred to as "the fingertip to toe connection." While the pushup seems basic, there is a level of complexity that demands good form. Performed incorrectly, poorly executed pushups can lead to muscle imbalances and future injury.

Incline Pushup



The incline pushup is used to teach movement and the mechanics of the pushup by reducing pressure on the shoulder and engaging the athlete's core.

TIPS:

Start in pushup position with hands on the box. Place hands slightly narrower than shoulder width apart and rest feet on the floor. Hinge at elbows moving chest toward the box. Keep back flat, head neutral and elbows tight to body. Descend until elbows are bent at a 90 degree angle. Maintain a flat back. Then, push torso to starting position. Remember, keep back flat and head neutral. Repeat for prescribed reps.

Kneeling Pushup



The kneeling pushup adds gravity to the movement. This movement increases focus on shoulders, scapula mobility, and midsection.

TIPS:

Start on all fours with feet elevated. Make sure hands are under shoulders, back is flat, head is neutral, and arms are extended. Hinge at elbows to move chest toward the ground. Touch chest to ground. Then, push torso to starting position. Remember, keep back flat and head neutral. Repeat for prescribed reps.

Pushup

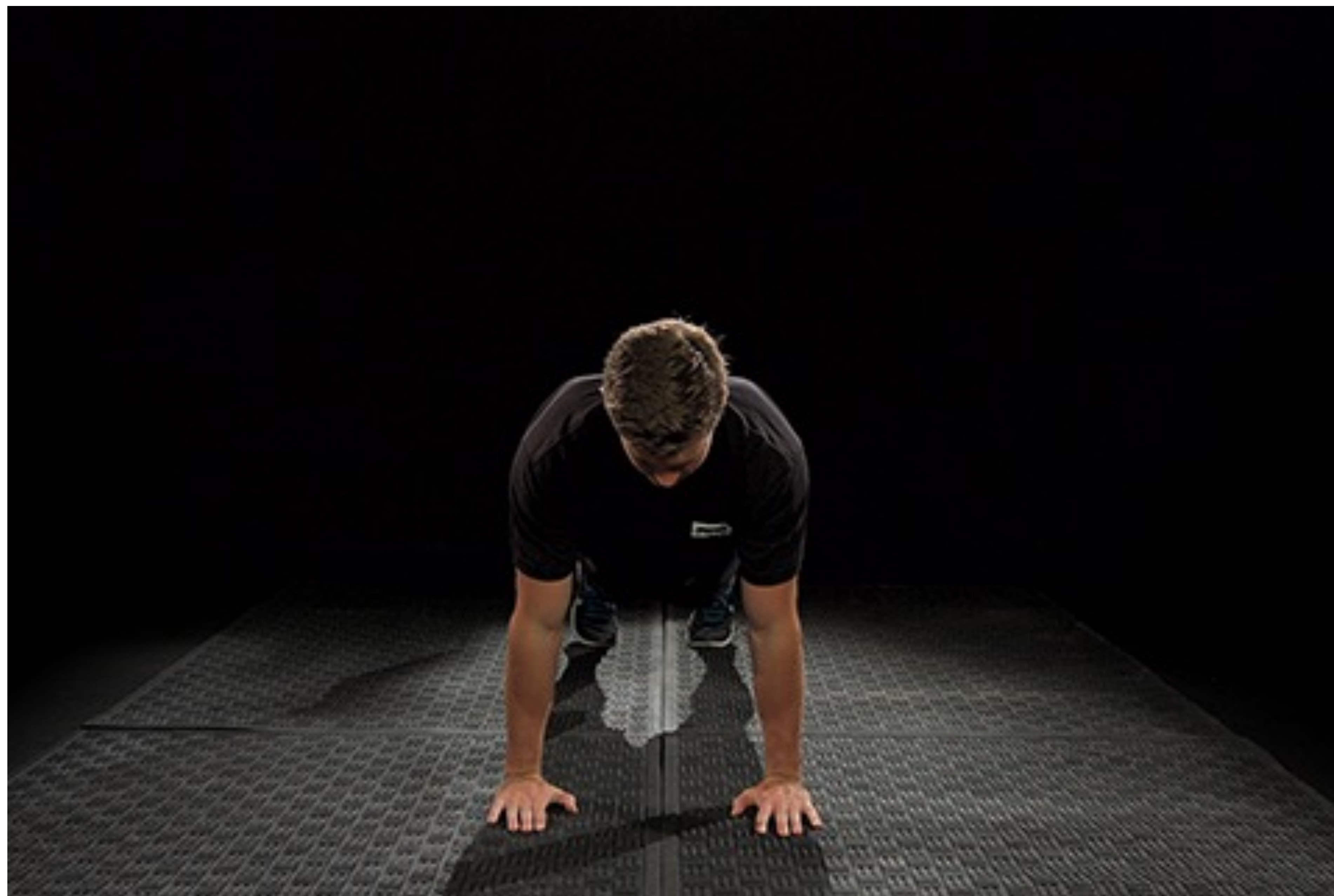


The pushup adds stability and mobility work for shoulders. A longer lever promotes enhanced fingertip to toe connection and stability.

TIPS:

Start with hands on the floor below shoulders with arms extended; legs are straight and toes are on the floor. Bend at elbows and move chest toward the ground. Keep back flat and head neutral. When arms are bent at 90 degree angle, maintain flat back and touch chest to ground. Then, push torso to starting position. Remember, keep back flat and head neutral. Repeat for prescribed reps.

Tempo Pushup



The tempo pushup adds time as a variable to increase difficulty through an increased focus on shoulder stability, triceps, and core.

TIPS:

Start in pushup position with hands under shoulders and legs extended. Maintain a tight core. Under control, take 3 seconds to hinge at elbows and lower body toward the floor. Remember, core tight. While maintaining control, explode to starting position. Ascent takes 1 second. Repeat for prescribed reps.

Kneeling Spiderman Pushup



The kneeling spiderman pushup is a full-body exercise that will test your proprioception and coordination.

TIPS:

Start in table-top position with knees under hips and feet elevated. Place hands under shoulders and maintain neutral head position. Hinge at elbows and move chest toward the floor. Bring one knee to elbow. Push torso to starting position. Again, hinge at elbows moving chest toward the floor. Bring opposite knee to elbow. Maintaining a neutral head position, push torso to starting position. Repeat alternating legs for prescribed reps.

03

SQUAT



INTRO:

The squat provides the foundation for lower-body stability, mobility, and strength. This makes it an integral component of any athlete's development. In this series we begin with bodyweight exercises that focus on stability and mobility, then progress to advanced barbell squats designed to build strength.

Wall Sit



The wall sit acts as a foundation for developing the squat with a focus on form and stability. The wall support aids in form development, while time can be used as a variable for increased difficulty.

TIPS:

Start by sitting comfortably against the wall, thighs parallel to the ground, feet shoulder-width apart, and toes slightly rotated out. Focus on contracting the belly-button to keep lower-back firmly against the wall. Perform for the prescribed amount of time.

BW Squat



The BW squat is an excellent introduction to squat mobility and form. Work on developing strength by increasing repetitions.

TIPS:

Start standing with feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart, toes slightly outward, and a slight bend in the knees. Keeping chest up and arms extended out in front, squat down in a controlled movement until thighs are parallel to the ground. Pause. Return to start position without locking knees out. Repeat for prescribed number of reps or time.

Split Squat



The split squat focuses on lower-extremity stability and strength development. The split squat will test stability and coordination, while targeting the stabilizers, as well as the major lower-extremity muscle groups.

TIPS:

Start standing in a lunge position, toes pointed forward. Keeping chest up, squat down until front thigh is parallel to the ground and the back-knee is six inches from the ground. Avoid taking front knee too far over toes of front foot. Pause. Return slowly to start position. Repeat for prescribed reps or time. Be sure to pause after each rep to avoid momentum created instability as set is performed.

Medball Squat



The MB squat is a safe loading progression given the multitude of MB weight ranges available. As with any new external load or movement, focus on keeping the movement controlled and not rushing through it as the body adjusts to the new stimulus.

TIPS:

Start standing with feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart and toes slightly rotated out. Hold the medball at chest height with both hands. Keeping chest up, squat down in a controlled movement until thighs are parallel to the ground. Work initially on a tempo of 2 to 3 seconds down with a slight pause at the bottom. Return to the start position without locking knees out. Repeat for prescribed number of reps.

Barbell Back Squat



The barbell back squat is a cornerstone in any strength program. With the added load of the bar, focus on balance, especially on the downward movement of the squat.

TIPS:

Start standing with feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart and toes slightly rotated out. With the bar resting on shoulders at the base of the neck, place hands a comfortable distance apart on either side of the bar. Keeping chest up, squat down in a controlled movement until thighs are parallel to the ground. Work initially on a tempo of 2 to 3 seconds down with a slight pause at the bottom. Return to the start position without locking knees out. Repeat for prescribed number of reps.

04

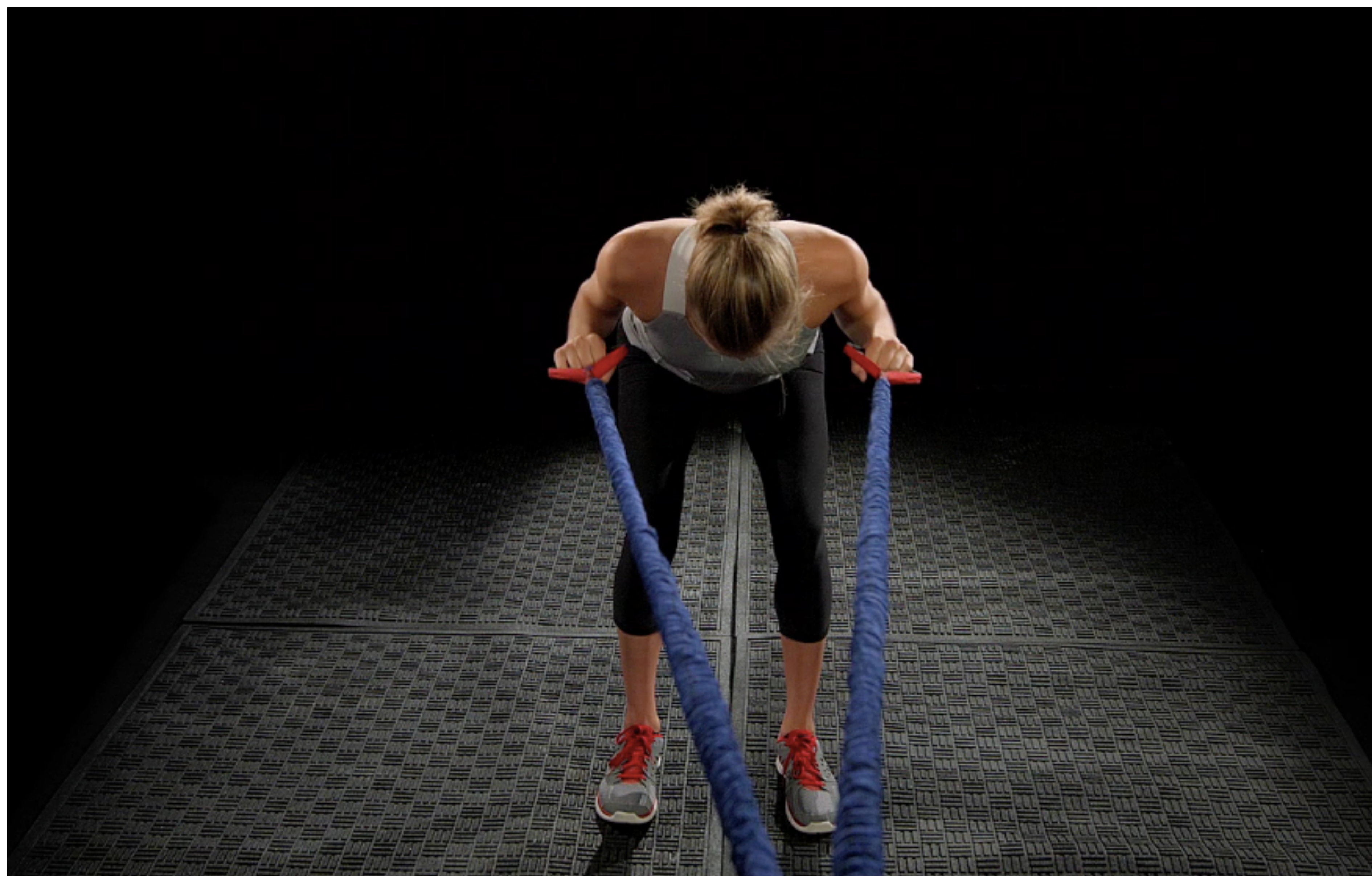
BW PULLUP



INTRO:

The pullup is the cornerstone of any strength program. While the pullup is difficult, it is important that an athlete can pull their own body weight. The pullup progression will help athletes conquer the challenge of the pullup, while mastering the elements of proper form.

Band Over Neck Pull



The band-over neck pull is a good starting point in the body weight pullup progression as it negates the effect of gravity while empathizing scapula depression, which is tough to achieve in a regular pullup when just starting out. The movement focuses on scapula mobility and stability, as well as thoracic extension.

TIPS:

Stand, chest up, back flat. Overhand Grip on bands. To begin, hinge at hips, torso parallel to floor. Extend arms in front of body, then pull bands to chestline extended, leading with elbows. Repeat for prescribed reps.

Work on a slight pause and squeeze at the bottom of the movement, bringing elbows close into sides. Then, return slowly to the start position overhead, pause and repeat. While looking down at the floor be sure to keep a slight bend in the knees, hinge at the hips, natural back curvature and elongated neck.

Supine Row Hold



The supine row hold is an isometric exercise that can lead to strength gains without adding muscle. This ultimately improves an athlete's strength-to-weight ratio.

TIPS:

Set hands about 3 fists wider than shoulder-width apart. Start in a supine position, pushing through heels. Pull body up and as close to the bar as possible without arching the back. Squeeze elbows into sides and hold this position for the required amount of time. To end the exercise, lower body slowly to the ground. Stretch lats and shoulders in-between sets for best performance.

For athletes that are not proficient in upper-body pulling exercises, or who need to improve their strength-to-weight ratio, set the bar at chest height to start. As an athlete improves in strength, move the bar height closer to the floor for increased difficulty.

Supine Row



The supine row, or inverted row as it is often referred to, adds a body weight pulling movement to the progression.

TIPS:

The start position and hand positions on the bar are the same as for the supine row hold. From the start position, pull your body toward the bar trying to get chest as close to the bar as possible. Throughout the movement keep a straight line from the heels through the back of the neck. Pause at the top of the movement without arching the back. Squeeze elbows into sides. Return slowly to the start position. Pause. Repeat for the prescribed number of reps.

Remember, stretch lats and shoulders in-between sets for best performance.

Assisted Chinup



The assisted chinup progresses the body weight pull from a horizontal pull to a vertical pull. This naturally increases the difficulty of the movement. The resistance band is added to assist the athlete with the vertical pull. Using a chinup grip decreases the difficulty of the movement, aiding in the progression and allowing the athlete to perform more reps and hence improve vertical pull strength.

TIPS:

When starting, a box or bench below the pullup bar can help the athlete prepare for the movement. Set up the band in the middle of the bar. Then hook the band over the knees or feet, depending on comfort level. Hold onto the bar, hands shoulder-width apart with a supine grip - palms up.

Pull body in a smooth movement toward the bar. Squeeze elbows into sides and pull to get chin above the bar. Pause. Slowly return to the start position. Pause. Repeat the movement for the prescribed reps, without jerking.

Remember, stretch lats and shoulders in-between sets for best performance.

Pullup



The pullup is often viewed as the cornerstone of many back and lat strengthening programs. Being able to pull body weight is a necessity in the progression of all developing athletes.

TIPS:

When starting, a box or bench below the pullup bar can help the athlete prepare for the movement.

Place hands, knuckles up, just wider than shoulder-width on the pullup bar.

In a controlled movement, pull body toward the bar. Squeeze elbows into sides while completing pull movement to get chin above the bar. Pause. Slowly return to the start position. Pause. Repeat the movement for the prescribed reps, without jerking.

Stretch lats and shoulders in between sets for best performance.

A woman with blonde hair in a ponytail, wearing a black tank top and shorts, is performing a pullup exercise on a gym machine. She is viewed from behind, with her arms extended upwards, gripping the machine's handles. The background is dark, and the machine is a dark grey color. A yellow square with the number '05' is in the top left, and a yellow-bordered box with the text 'COMBO PULLUP' is in the center. A yellow diagonal line runs from the top left to the bottom right.

05

COMBO PULLUP

INTRO:

This pullup progression utilizes a combination of body weight, machine, bilateral and unilateral exercises to help athletes achieve their goal of performing a pullup.

Supine Row

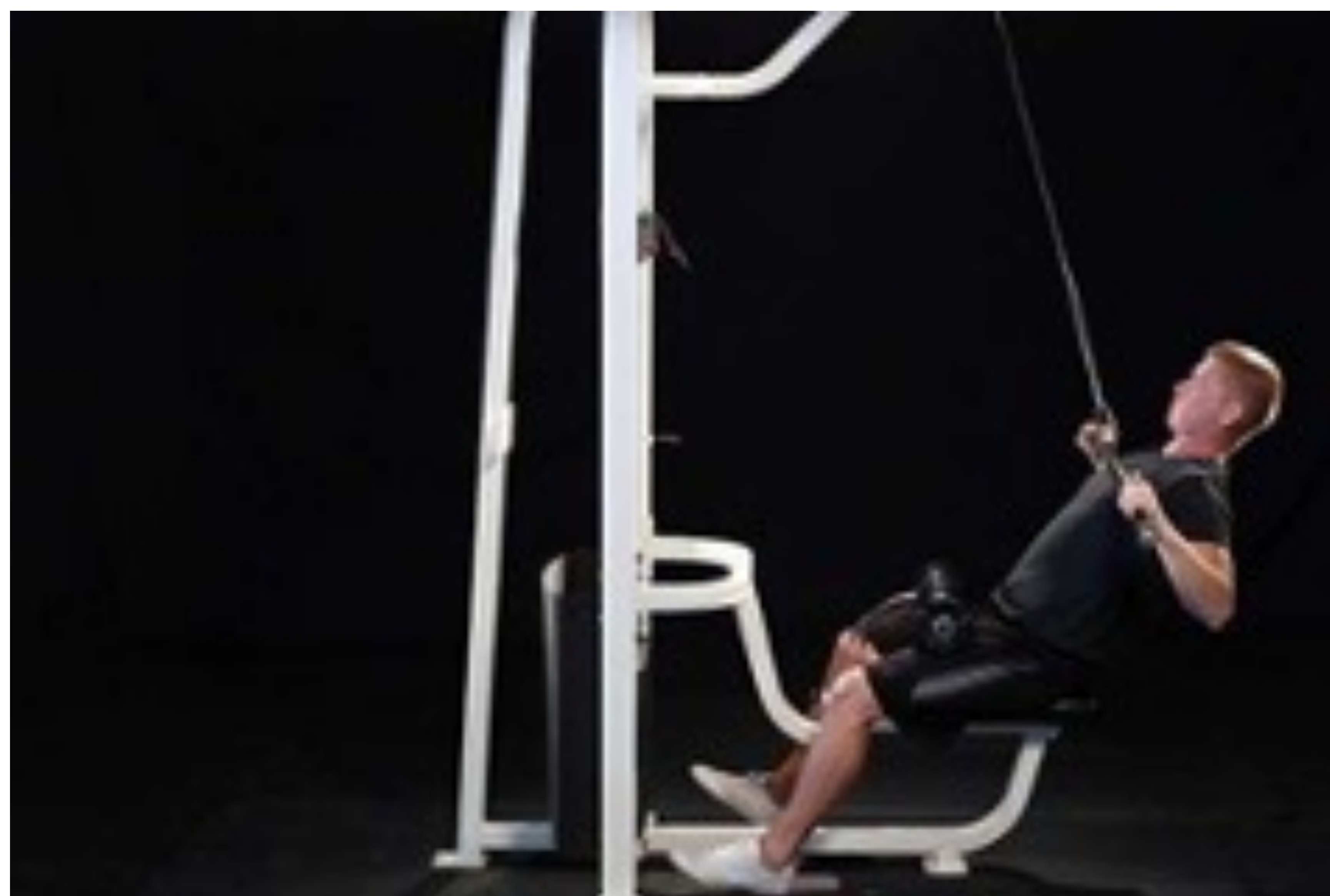


This seated cable row allows athletes that struggle to pull their own weight to progress safely towards the pullup.

TIPS:

Sit on the bench, knees bent, holding the cable handle just above knees. Feet are hip-width apart, knees bent, chest out, back flat. Without using a backward sway, pull the handle to midsection, squeezing shoulder blades down and together. Pause. Return slowly to start position.

Decline Lat Pulldown

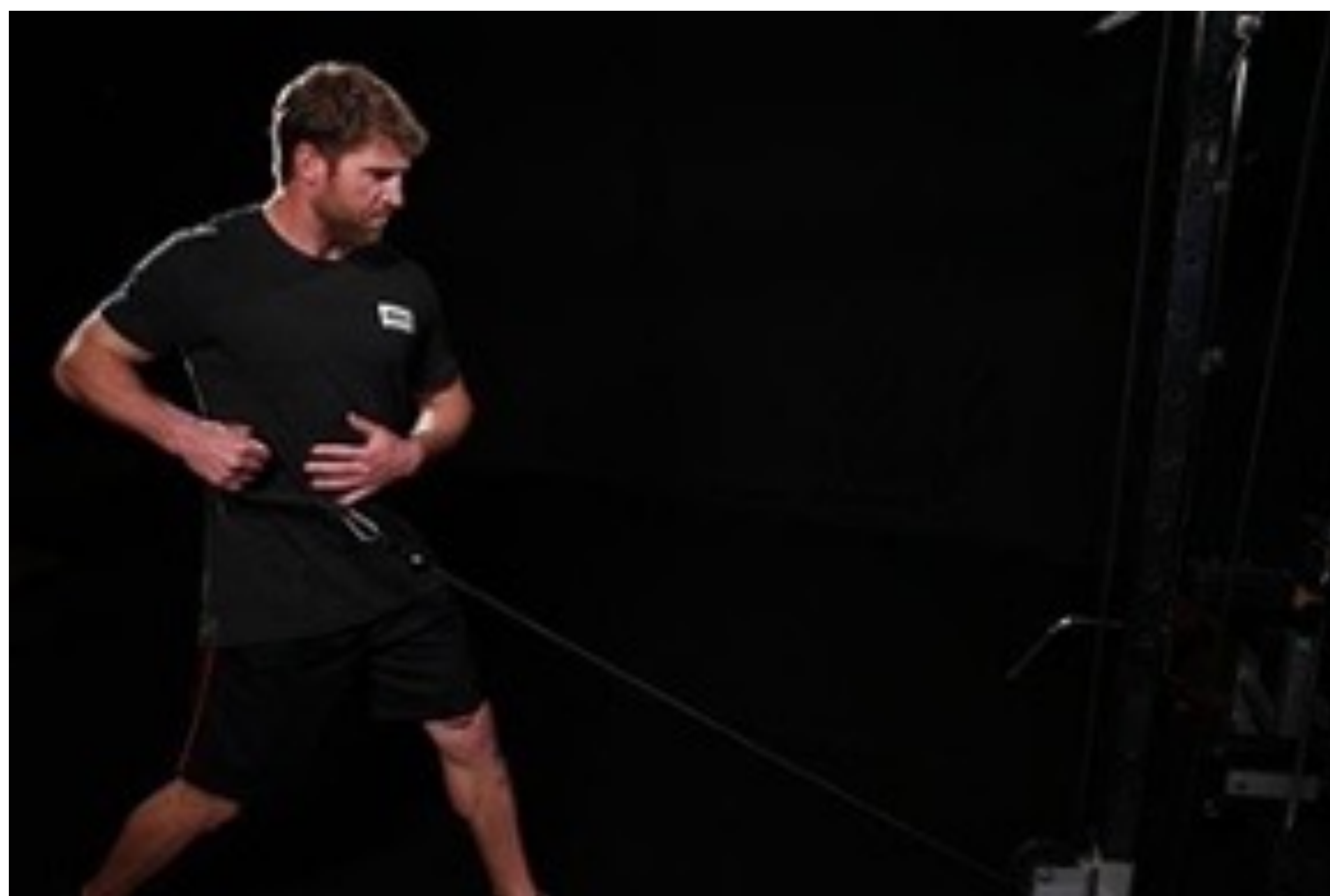


Note the difference between this exercise and a regular lat pulldown. This version requires the athlete to lean back at a 45-degree angle instead of sitting upright. This puts more focus on the lats, especially lower lats, and midsection while easing the pressure that the regular Lat Pulldown places on the shoulder capsule.

TIPS:

Sit on the lat pulldown seat, but further back than what is considered customary for the lat pulldown. Press knees up against the rollers and hook your feet under the machine for leverage. Reach up and grab hold of the bar. Set hands at the curvature of the bar. Sink traps and shoulder blades down. Lean back to 45 degrees. Keeping back flat, pull the bar to sternum, squeezing shoulder blades together. Pause. Return the bar slowly to the start position. Pause. Repeat.

Lawn Mower Pull



The lawn mower pull is the first unilateral movement in the pullup progression. Unilateral exercises use one side of the body, such as one arm or one leg. They help to eliminate strength imbalances between extremities in the same movement pattern.

TIPS:

Stand facing the machine in a split-stance posture. Hold the cable handle with the opposite hand (to front leg). Start in a split-stance squat position, holding the cable at a 45 degree angle.

During ascension (standing up), rotate slightly, pulling the handle to the bottom of rib cage, squeezing the same-side down and back. Pause.

Return slowly to the start position. Repeat for the prescribed number of reps, then switch sides and repeat on that side.

Remember, stretch lats and shoulders in-between sets for best performance.

Assisted Hammer-Grip Pullup



Using a hammer grip or neutral grip focuses on different musculature in the pull movement, which helps athletes develop toward the pullup.

TIPS:

When starting, a box or bench below the pullup bar can help the athlete prepare for the movement. Set up the band in the middle of the bar. Then hook the band over the knees or feet, depending on comfort level. Hold onto the bar, hands shoulder-width apart with a supine grip - palms up.

Pull body in a smooth movement toward the bar. Squeeze elbows into sides and pull to get chin above the bar. Pause. Slowly return to the start position. Pause. Repeat the movement for the prescribed reps, without jerking.

Pullup



The pullup is often viewed as the cornerstone of many back and lat strengthening programs. Being able to pull body weight is a necessity in the progression of all developing athletes.

TIPS:

When starting, a box or bench below the pullup bar can help the athlete prepare for the movement.

Place hands, knuckles up, just wider than shoulder-width on the pullup bar.

In a controlled movement, pull body toward the bar. Squeeze elbows into sides while completing pull movement to get chin above the bar. Pause. Slowly return to the start position. Pause. Repeat the movement for the prescribed reps, without jerking.

Stretch lats and shoulders in between sets for best performance.

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