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If you're anything like me, physical training is important to you. The fact that you are reading this shows at least an interest in exercise. Like most people, you probably have a busy lifestyle and do not have a lot of time to waste on unnecessary things in your life, and that includes your training. With that being said, I'm going to keep this short and to the point, because you have important things to do.

“Physical training does not have to be a long boring process.”

While I like to mix things up regularly, there is one training tool and modality that I never get bored with. **That is bodyweight training (bwt). It can be done virtually anywhere, by anyone, at anytime.** Every minute that you have an opportunity to mobilize your body is a minute you have to make yourself a better person.

I am not going to even come close to covering all areas of bwt in this short manual, because it is basically an infinite subject. But we can begin to scrape the surface and possibly get a few ideas for you to incorporate immediately in your regular training.

BWT can be used by itself as a standalone program, say if you were stuck in a prison cell for an extended period of time without access to any other pieces of equipment, or if it was simply a prerogative to do so. But in reality, most of us do have access to other training tools, which leads to my favorite way to train, incorporating weightlifting of some sort with bwt.

To keep things concise, this manual is focusing solely on bwt.

The Body

The body is one unit and it should be trained as such. With bwt it is difficult to isolate one primary muscle or group without incorporating other muscle groups as well, as a stabilizer or secondary mover. Therefore, by doing something as basic as a pushup is not only training your arms, shoulders and chest to a tremendous degree, but also your abs and back, and even your neck, glutes, fingers and toes if performed in a manner to do so.

There are several exercises that I use as a foundation to build strength in all quadrants of the body. Each of the movements have progressions and regressions. It is always better to start very easy, and work your way up to more intense exercise over long periods of time. Just because you can begin training immediately, does not mean you will get maximal benefits overnight.



“ A lifetime of dedication and consistent diligence is irreplaceable.”

Working hard will cause muscle growth, which is good. Working too hard, too soon, will cause joint stress and connective tissue damage, this is not good. Having respect for regular progressive training with smart programming is the way to go. If you protect yourself and the structural integrity of your body, you can enjoy a lifetime of pain free bwt, and actually reverse some of the pains that were caused by other stresses in your life.

The Four Basic Sections

Let's break the body down into four basic sections.

- 1.) Front of the Upper Body
- 2.) Back of the Upper Body
- 3.) Middle, Trunk, Core, or whatever other buzzword you want to call it
- 4.) The Lower Body

The function of the **upper front** of your body is to push, the **upper back** to pull. The function of the **core** is to stabilize, twist, flex and extend. The function of the **lower body** is generally to push and pull with your legs. I realize this is overly simplified and there are some exceptions, but for the most part, this is accurate given the complexity of our bodies.

Balancing your training in all of these sections is paramount to the effectiveness in your training. A lot of people live in a way that encourages over utilization of their pushing muscles and slack on their pulling muscles, for example. If this is the case, balanced and effective training could mean to practice pulling to pushing exercises in a 2:1 or 3:1 ratio. This should be individualized, of course, depending on your situation.

Equipment

BWT can be done completely free of any equipment if desired, but I prefer to use just a few simple tools to help you in your progress. A stable pull up bar, and a form of a suspension trainer, like gymnastic rings, are ideal for myriad exercises. A simple ab-wheel is a tremendously cheap and effective tool for developing an insanely strong mid section.

On with the exercises! It is important to realize that we are attempting to improve our strength with these movements, not just our conditioning. While strength endurance is a great thing, it is not necessarily an indication of one's maximal strength. Once you have reached an adequate level of proficiency with an exercise, it is important to move on to the next progression.

Simply doing more of something that has become relatively easy will not necessarily get you better. I look at it like this, if you know $2+2=4$, simply repeating that over and over again doesn't enhance your math skills, you need to work on harder equations if you want to be a big time calculus whiz. The same holds true for bwt. I don't like to give a specific repetition range for progressions.

There is no substitution for common sense. When you feel you have a skill down pretty good, try the next level, but be honest in your evaluation of control and mastery of the exercise. **Some trainees are impatient, that's when injuries occur and progress ceases.** Be diligent and move forward.

Movements

Beginning with the easiest movements and working our way up to the harder movements. This is not a complete list, but should be sufficiently challenging for any level of trainee.

Upper Body Pushing

-Push up against a wall or object at a higher level off the floor, like a desk, sofa, stairs, or a barbell in a power rack at waist to chest height. Slowly progress to lower your base of support until you get to the ground.

-Kneeling pushups. Lie on the ground and push up from your knees keeping your body straight through your torso.

-Full pushups. Flat on the ground, on your toes and hands with a very rigid body, touch your chest and thighs to the ground and push up. Perform a few sets of 15 reps and move on.

-Have some fun and play with multiple hand positions. Bring them in close together, take them out wide, stagger them, etc. Putting your hands on a soft cloth on a smooth hard surface will allow easy movement and transition of angles.

-Hindu push ups. Hands on floor with butt in air like a tent, head looking back toward heels, scoop body towards floor in an arc, almost slide face and chest against floor, then finish with arms extended and chest up. Push butt back up and repeat.

If possible, get some sort of suspension trainer, like gymnastic rings, blast straps, or any other versatile strap system, even homemade, and perform pushups with them.

-Dips. Begin with stable parallel bar dips, then work your way up to suspended dips.

-Change the position of your hands so that they face out, even try holding the rings further out away from the body.

-Decline push ups. Elevate your feet on a wall, chair, table or anything else that allows a greater angle on the body.

-Planche push up variations. Using straps, you will change the position of your hands from just outside the ribs, to lowering them closer to the waist, and eventually further out away from the body. Picture this by standing straight up, hands by your side, rotate thumbs out, palms forward, and raise arms out to the side a foot or so. This is extremely advanced, full planche push ups and maltese push ups can take years to tackle. In the meantime, we will work other exercises.

-Fingertip pushups. Perform any variation of a push up on your fingertips.

-Explosive pushups. Push up as fast as possible and basically jump your hands off the ground. You can play with clapping or other variations if you like, but the benefit comes from pushing up as fast and explosive as possible.

-One arm push ups. These work best by again starting at an elevated angle, then working your way to the floor. You could also use a basketball under one palm, keeping that arm straight lower your body down with the hand on the floor, push back up using the straight arm as a lever for assistance.

-Handstands against wall. Simply hold for time and build isometric strength. Put hands on floor with feet against wall, walk feet up wall while facing floor, then eventually touch nose to wall.

- Frog stands. Balance on hands on floor, supporting elbows on your knees. Spread your fingers and shift weight forward til only your hands are on floor and feet are off the ground.

-Handstand push ups. Same as handstands against wall, only lower head to floor and push back up, face wall as well as face away. You could perform these from a pike, or jackknife, position with your hips bent as a regression.

-Elevated handstand push ups. Use blocks or parallel bars to get a greater range of motion.

-Handstand push up using rings. At first you will kick up into position and wrap your legs around the straps for support. You will eventually lose contact with the straps and use only your body for control.

-Chest roll to handstand push up. Begin in a push up position, shift your weight forward so your hands are near your wrists, roll on your belly to your chest, lifting your feet push into the ground. You will eventually be upside down. Slowly lower yourself under control, roll from chest to belly, then back up into a handstand.

-One arm handstand push up. This works best by putting your body in a corner and leaning feet into corner, shifting all weight onto one hand. Eventually work your body through a full range push up.

Assistance exercises.

--Triceps pushups, keeping your shoulders fixed, bend only at the elbow lower yourself down then press back up. Use strap to intensify the movement.

--Hand walking. You could do this on your hands and feet, with a partner holding your feet, your feet on a dolly, or while walking in a handstand position. There are many animal type movements as well, just picture yourself walking around mimicking a bear, a tiger, a crab, etc. Your only limitation is your imagination.



Upper Body Pulling

-Inverted rows. Start as vertical as necessary to get a full range of motion as possible.

Hold on to a stable object, lean back and pull hands into chest. You could use a barbell in a power rack at waist height, or a suspension trainer attached to a fixed object. Eventually you can perform one arm inverted rows, these work best with suspension trainers.

-Lie face up as flat as possible and eventually elevate feet on a box to enhance difficulty of movement.

-Jumping pull ups with negative. Jump up to top of pull up and hold, slowly lower yourself to bottom position.

-Jackknife pullups. Adjust a bar in a power rack or rings so they are about chest height, sit down and grab object and dig heels into floor. Pull up while assisting movement with straight legs. Lift chin above bar and lower under total control.

-Full chin ups and pull ups. Regularly change the position of your palms from facing front, back and neutral. Using rings will allow you to move your hand position throughout the exercise.

-L-pull ups. Hold your feet straight out in front of you, point your toes, and pull up. Again, use a variety of hand positions. Also, bending your knees or straddling your feet will make this exercise easier.

-Kipping pull ups. This will help build flexibility in your shoulder girdle as well as help get lots of volume in your pulling. Hang from a bar or rings and push your hips forward while pulling your feet back. Then aggressively push your palms forward against the bar, pull your hips back and swing your feet forward. This forceful action will generate momentum to propel you upward as your body swings back and up and you pull aggressively on the bar, engaging your lats. Once you get to the top, push away from the bar and reverse the movement. When your hands and feet are forward, your hips are back, when your hips are forward, your hands and feet are back.

-Weighted pull ups. Add resistance by wearing a weight vest, draping chains over you, or holding a dumbbell between your legs.

-Assisted one arm pull ups. Grab a bar and drape a towel or some other object over one side. Grab the towel with your other hand and pull up with your strongest grip. The hand on the towel will assist minimally.

-One arm chins and pull. Grab a bar with one hand, pull your chin over the bar, and amaze everyone.

Combining pulling and pushing

- **The muscle up** is the most basic and one of the most effective combined pulling and pushing exercises.

-**Jumping negative muscle ups.** Start by using a false grip on the rings. This is easily achieved by jumping into the top of a dip position, and slowly perform a negative descent all the way down until you get under the rings, holding the rings closely to you at all times and not letting your hands slide from their original position. The rings will be firm against your wrist on the way down. Picture curling your wrists in and flexing your forearms as hard as possible.

-**Kipping muscle ups.** Kip from the bottom of the pull up to generate upward momentum. Once at the top of the pull up, pull the rings into your chest, then aggressively shoot your hips back and your chin forward, keeping rings close your body and midline. Pull rings under armpits and stabilize at the bottom of the dip position. Push up to support at the top of the dip. Return to bottom and repeat. Rushing through the transition will not help you in the long run.

-**Seated muscle ups.** Lower rings so that you can hold them from seated on floor, legs out in front of you. Take a false grip and pull upward, gradually increasing the height of the rings over time.

-**Muscle ups.** From standing position, pull with a narrow grip, then eventually work your way into pulling with a wider grip. Then work up to pulling muscle ups from a straight bar instead of the rings. Then add weight to all the variations.

Core Movements and Static Holds

-**Planks.** This hold should not be overlooked. Assume a push up position and hold for time. You could be on your elbows or hands, facing down or sideways. Play with your

hand and body positions by picking up hands and feet from ground, moving them in and out, etc. Eventually add weight with chains, plates, etc.

-Supermans. Lie prone, face down, on the ground and raise your chest and/or legs off the ground. Only your low abs will be in contact with the ground, hold the top position. Play with moving your arms and legs in new positions and eventually add resistance by holding weight in your hands or ankles.

-Ab wheel or suspension trainer rollouts. These are profoundly effective. Begin kneeling on a pad, holding an ab wheel or suspension trainer, roll your hands away from you, keeping a flat back the entire time, lower your torso to the floor then return to starting position. Eventually add weight and then perform movement from your feet instead of your knees.

-Hollow rocks. Almost the opposite position as a superman, lie flat on your back and reach your arms and legs up in the air so that nothing is touching the floor except your low back, slowly lower your straightened legs and straightened arms until they are both about a foot off the floor in a straight line and your body resembles the bottom of a rocking chair. You will now hold that position and rock back and forth for time without changing the angle of your arms, legs or hips.

-Lying leg raises. Lie on the floor with hands by your side and smoothly raise legs in air. The straighter the legs the better. You can begin by bending knees on the way up, then straightening them at the top and lower at full extension. Bend knees, lift and repeat.

-V ups. Begin by straddling your legs, raise your legs and torso with chest high to about 45 degrees. Eventually straighten legs.

-Hanging leg raise. Same as a lying leg raise, but hang from a bar or rings. Begin with knees bent and progress to straight legs, eventually touching toes to bar, beginners can touch knees to elbows, or raise one leg at a time. Eventually you could use weights around your ankles for increased intensity.

-L-sit. With hands on blocks, books, paralettes, or between 2 chairs, lift your feet out in front of you and hold for time. The straighter and higher your legs, the better. The more flat your back, the better. Eventually use the rings.

-Torso twist. Stand erect and twist from side to side under control, be light on your feet to not twist your knees.

-Russian twist. Same as a torso twist except lie supine face up, on a table with feet supported by a partner, or use a glute ham bench. Add resistance over time by holding weight in your hands.

-Bridges. Begin by lying on your back, pull your heels to your butt, engage your glutes and raise your hips, supporting yourself on your shoulders. Advance to bridging on your head and then your hands, trying to straighten your arms and legs.

-Hyperextensions. If you do not have a machine for this to hold you in place, lie face down on a raised object like a table, let your body hang over the edge while a partner holds your feet in place. Raise and lower your upper body under control. Use padding as necessary and keep hands behind your head, eventually adding weight behind head. You will want to perform these with both a fully extended and arched spine as well as curling and flexing your spine.

-Reverse hyperextensions. This time you hang your feet off the edge and raise and lower legs under control.

-Handstand leg lift. Begin by performing a headstand and slowly lower your feet to the ground with straight legs, then raise your legs back up to full headstand. You will eventually perform these in a handstand with your back supported against a wall and your hands out in front of your head to counter balance the weight.

-Wall walking. Stand with your back against a bare wall. Reach your hands over your head and place on the wall. Walk your hands down wall towards the floor. Eventually place hands on the floor and walk back up.

-Freestanding bridges. Perform same as wall walking, but don't use a wall. From standing position, do a backbend and place hands on floor and rise back to standing under total control.

-Back levers. These are an advanced hold from gymnastics rings or a bar. There are several ways to enter the hold, but let's just say you grab the rings as if you are about to do a pull up. You pull your feet up over your head and invert yourself, hold that stable position and slowly lower your legs toward the ground while facing the ground. You will try to hold your straight body position parallel to the floor. Beginners will bend their legs or straddle them. Advanced trainees will maintain a straight body throughout. You can lift back up, or simply bring feet all the way towards the ground and release rings, landing on your feet.

-Front levers. Same as the back lever, except you will lower your legs so that you are facing the ceiling. This one is much harder in my opinion.

Leg exercises

-Squatting is the basis of building lower body strength with bwt. Stand with feet about shoulder width apart, toes pointed out slightly. Push your butt back and break at the hips, then lower your hips by bending the knees. Keep your knees out and tracking over the toes and keep your eyes focused forward. Lower as much as possible while keeping your feet flat on the ground, your knees out and your back flat, do not allow your back to round during a squat.

-Assisted squats. Hold on to something in front of you and assist yourself through the movement. A doorknob, couch, suspension trainer or pole all work great.

-Full squats. Perform these with full range of motion and proper alignment of the body. Feet flat, toes slightly out, knees out, hips back and down, back flat, chest up, neck neutral. Drop hips below knees under control, then ascend back up with a fierce hip drive, raising your hips and shoulders in concert. You will eventually add resistance by holding a weight in your hands, on your back, in front of you, etc.

-Lunges. Any form of a split squat. Step one foot forward and lower back knee to floor, keeping weight balanced, and chest up. Push back up and return to starting position. You could walk, step backwards, sideways or any direction you like.

-Assisted single leg squats. Begin these by having a stable box behind you to sit on, and something to hold onto for balance as well. Lift and hold one leg in the air out in front of you, then squat. Eventually lose the balance aides and lower or lose the box altogether.

-Deck squats. Squat down, both legs under control all the way to the floor. When your butt makes contact with the floor simultaneously roll backward onto your upper back. Then reverse direction and use the momentum to stand. This exercise will greatly enhance an athlete's range of motion in the squat. Your back will round in the bottom, but you are not under any load, so you will be safe.

-Jumping deck squats. Perform the deck squats as stated, but jump as high and or as far as possible at the top in one smooth movement out of the bottom of the squat.

-Weighted deck squats. Eventually add resistance with a vest or some form of weight.

-Single leg squats, or pistols. Begin with two legs, and then eventually work up to using only one leg variations. You could do a one leg negative, squatting down with one leg, then raising with both legs, then eventually one leg only, following the same progression as with both legs. At first use a box, an assistance strap for your hands to hold on to, then roll on ground. Eventually squat to the bottom then rise without rolling on floor. Also, eventually jump for height and distance out of the squat and add resistance.

-Natural glute hamstring raise (GHR). Begin kneeling on the floor with your feet secured by a partner or placed under something fixed and stable. Keeping your body in a straight line from your shoulders to your knees, slowly lower your torso to the floor, using as little assistance from your fingertips as necessary. Touch your torso to the floor and rise up while keeping your hips open and not allowing any jackknifing to occur. Of course, bending at the hips is inevitable for beginners, but try to eliminate it with diligent training.

-Sprinting and jumping. Without thinking too hard about it, simply run hard and fast up hills and stairs and jump in various directions with one or both legs to unleash the full potential of your legs. Carrying a heavy sandbag up a hill will make anyone stronger and fitter.

Training Protocols

While there are many different protocols you could use to program the exercises, the most effective system seems to be a minimalist approach. Simplicity in your training is a sure fire way to see massive results. Don't overcomplicate things in your training; it does not have to be so confusing. An effective full body bwt session could look like this:

1A.) Upper body pushing exercise to build power, such as explosive push ups, or just basic kneeling push ups, depending on level of trainee 6x4

1B.) Lower body exercises to build power, such as jumping deck squats or single leg jumping squats, depending on level of trainee 6x4

2A.) Lower body exercise for strength, such as a weighted pistol or a reverse lunge, depending on level of trainee 3x10

2B.) Lower body exercise for strength, such as a natural glute ham raise 3x8-10

3A.) Upper body pulling/pushing exercise for strength, such as weighted muscle up or jumping negative muscle up, depending on level of trainee 5x5

3B.) Core exercise for strength and stability, such as a bridge or wall walking 5x5

4A.) Core exercise for strength and stability, such as ab wheel rollouts or planks, depending on level of trainee 3x12

4B.) Core exercise for mobility, such as a torso twist or Russian twist 3x20

There you have it, following these exercises and bwt progressions will make you stronger, faster and more explosive, while keeping you well balanced and flexible if done properly with diligence. Once you have the basics mastered, you can combine any of the exercises in conjunction with each other or various other training programs that you like.

For example, an explosive push combined with a jumping squat is called a burpee. It is an extremely effective exercise for building full body conditioning for any athlete.

But if you cannot perform the individual movements correctly, by combining the two just results in two ugly and sloppily performed movements. Sure, you will sweat, pant, and burn calories, but the risk of injury will be enhanced as well.

So master the individual basic movements first, and then feel free to combine any of the exercises into a flowing program or circuit of your choice. The more movements you can safely and effectively perform, the better and more athletic you will become.

You will always benefit most by gaining strength first and performing the movements slowly and under control before trying to do the movements faster. Never add velocity to a movement that you cannot perform slowly, safely, and under control.

There are so many ways you can begin or integrate this style of training into your lifestyle. Like I said from the start, bwt can be done anywhere. If you like, you can incorporate other training as well for a hybrid workout, which in my opinion delivers the best results.

I recommend you spend the majority of your time on the basic exercises that give you the most trouble. For example, if you can do push ups very easily, but struggle with pull ups, you may have an imbalance in your shoulder girdle and need to incorporate more pull up variations in to your training.

Likewise, if you can easily perform natural glute ham raises, but struggle with deck squats, then you might have an imbalance in your hips that needs corrected. Spend twice

as much time squatting until the problem is resolved. Never neglect any areas, especially weaknesses.

Embrace your weaknesses and imbalances to eventually eliminate them. You will feel better and move easier, with less pain and more confidence once you become a master of bwt

What you have just read is a sample of the body weight progression we use at TSS. If you are interested in more gymnastic exercises, Olympic lifting, kettlebell training, strongman training, or anything else strength related to get better at your chosen sport, you need to check out our **private strength & conditioning membership area** on the web site.

Private Members receive a 4 month detailed strength and conditioning program as well as regular tutorials and updates with question & answer sessions. I answer your personal questions daily, in some cases with video responses. No where else can you get an online coach for this price. It's only \$50. for a 4 month program and a personal online coach, GET ON IT, NOW!

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