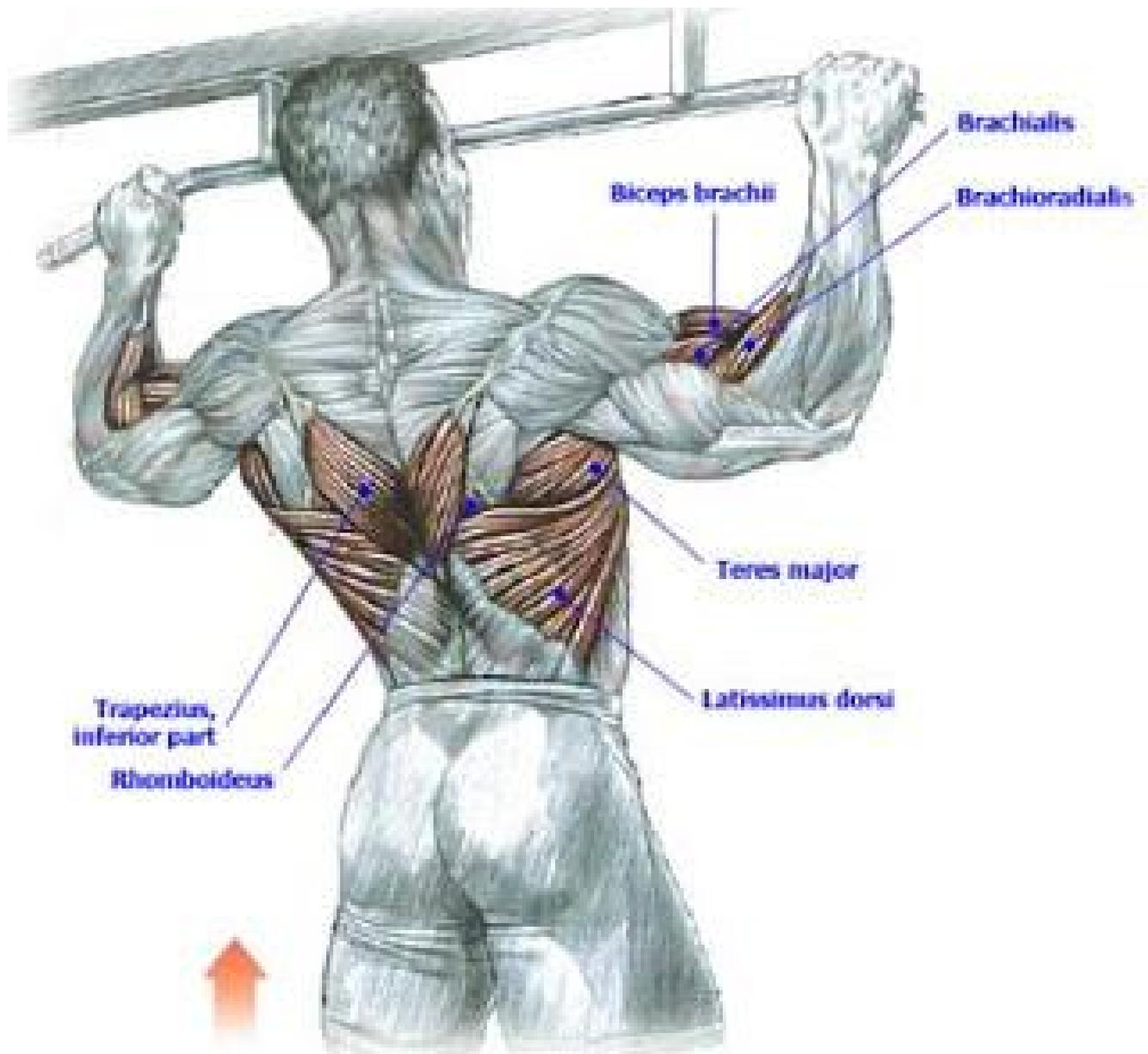


The Pull-Up Blueprint.



One part of Fitlife training is to always find new goals and strive to achieve them. It is a healthier approach to focus on performance. Exercises are tools but are also a skill that must be mastered. This way you won't ever get bored training and you will always be motivated to exercise.

To be Fit, means to be capable of moving a certain way. This comes with practicing the skills that you want to be good at, instead of looking like you are capable, but not having the confidence behind it.

It can be any skill you want, as long as, you strive to perfect it. Such skill is the Pull-up.

Being able to perform a bodyweight pull-up is simply impressive. Not everyone is capable of pulling up his/her bodyweight-only with his/her back. Many people can't even hold their bodies on the bar.

It is a skill and strength-based exercise, therefore it boosts the confidence of the person capable of performing it.

The good news is that it is not rocket science. Anyone can learn it. Anyone can get that strong to perform it and is going to give you motivation for completing your goal.

I am going to share my journey of the pull-up, as well as tips and other exercises, in order to make the experience of learning that skill, exciting and not that long.

Honestly, when I unlocked the pull-up, I pretty much hacked the back workout. I did not need any other fancy machines or a lot of weight, just a bar, and my body was more than enough.

The first and most important skill before master the pull-up is to master the:

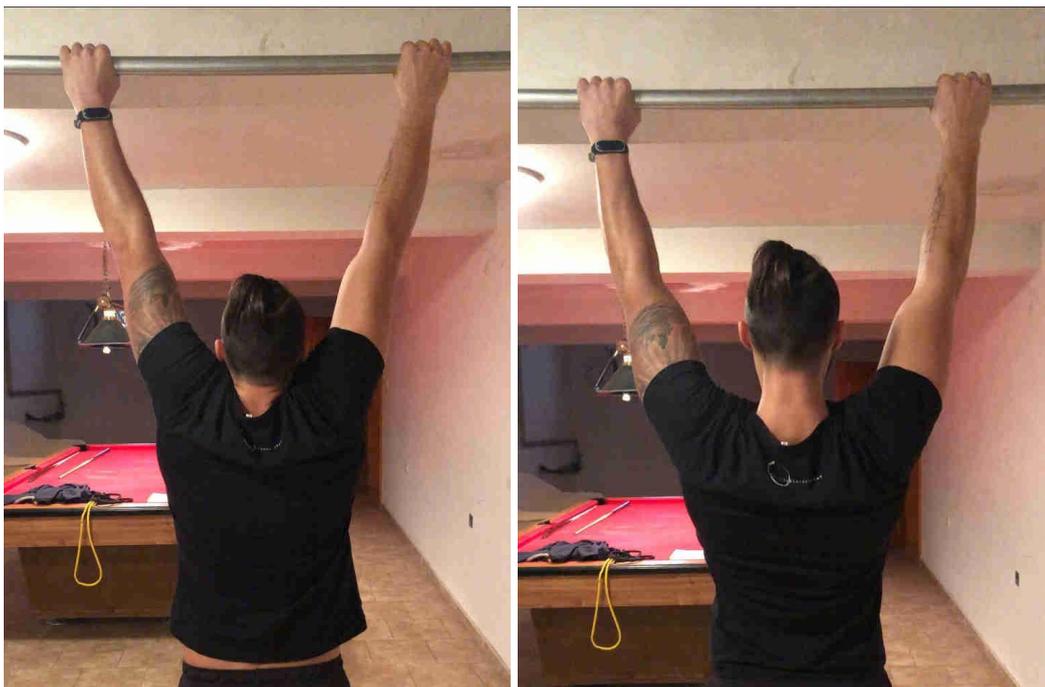
Scapula pulls.

This exercise is important for setting up the scapula for the correct motion and therefore proper activation of one of the biggest and strongest muscles in the human body – latissimus dorsi also known as lats.

This is important, as if you do not activate the scapula, there will be more pressure on the muscles of the shoulders and arms to pull the body. Those muscle groups are smaller and weaker than the lats and are assisting in the pull-up.

This exercise is simple. Grab the pull-up bar. Let your body hang and relax. Notice how there is no space between your ears and arms. You can also feel stretch in your lats as well.

Now pull your body, while keeping the elbows straight. It is a very small move. You should feel your ears free and lats activated.



Using a resistance band is great for regression if you don't have the strength required. The exercise is simple. Wrap one end of the band around the bar and let it hang. Step between the bar and push down with your feet while holding the bar.



Notice how the band is pulling your body towards the bar. Perform scapula pulls this way until you build enough strength to reduce the thickness of the band or completely remove it.

This is the first part of the pull-up. The scapulas should be active throughout the entire pull up, therefore it is important to take your time and practice it. I wish I knew this when I started, as that would have saved me a lot of time effort, and pain.

Do it for reps, such as 10 – 15. When you get stronger, you can hold for 5 sec each rep.

Negative pull-up.

Once you learn the right scapula's position is time to step further and build some row power that is needed to perform a pull-up.

The negative pull-up is hands down, the best exercise for building strength and mastering the pull-up. After practicing it for around 3 weeks, I was able to do 2, not perfect, but still decent pull-ups.

The beauty of it is that the negative part creates more damage to the muscles and therefore the demand for rebuilding and strengthening them, is going to be greater. The brain is not going to have a choice, but to focus its resources on those muscles. And by the time you realize, you will be able to longer and longer.

Another great benefit is that you are going to practice half of the motion. This way the brain is going to remember the muscle activation and recruitment pattern. Then it is going to be easier to replicate and apply it to the positive part of the exercise.

How to start?

Yes, you do need a pull-up bar, but you also going to need a chair or something to step on. Starting on the top position of the pull-up, hold tight and drop down a slow as you can. Think of the position of the scapula, do not let them shrug up.

As you progress you will notice that it will become easier to hold on top, so you can replace the chair with a slight jump.

This more dynamic move is going to replicate the full motion and increase the demand of your muscles to stabilize your body at the top.

Aim for 5 to 8 seconds. Do it for 4 to 5 sets. 6 – 8 reps.



Band pull-up.



If you followed the steps above, you should already be able to perform some sort of pull-ups. But we don't just want to do some sort of pull-up, right? We want to be able to grab the bar and do several perfect-looking pull-ups.

Perfecting the technique is crucial for the right implementation of the row power that you have built by doing the negative pull-ups, as well as is a great way to add more resistance to and keep progressing.

Similar to the band scapula's pulls, Band pull-ups are great for taking some weight off and allowing you to perform the strict pull-up with more ease. Now you should be able to perform the perfect pull-up, for

reps. Start with the appropriate band size, put two if you have to. Progress by removing or using thinner bands.

Programming

The goal here is to build your routine, according to your personal needs, level of strength, and activity. Ideally, you want to take at least 6 weeks of patience and dedication, going through all the progression, for as long as you need, to perfect each exercise.

If you are not doing any type of activity and this pull-up progression is going to be the only exercise that you will work and perfect then you should take it very slow and take at least 2 weeks perfecting each exercise.

You do not want to hammer yourself and your back every day, however, you do want to have some sort of practice, so you speed up the recovery and learning process.

I recommend having at least one rest day between each working day. However it is called rest day, it does not mean you should spend it on the couch though. The best will be to do some sort of back mobility exercises which are going to speed up your progress.

Prone cobra is one of the easiest, yet effective mobility exercises you can do. 3 to 5 sets of 10 resp are going to be more than enough. At least one time, ideally 3 times per day. More on mobility you can learn **here**.

The way you are going to incorporate those exercises is entirely up to you, the only thing that you must be aware of is to:

1. Not overtrain.

Doing way too much every day and not letting your body fully recover.

2. Make sure you perfect each exercise before you progress.

Often we think we are ready for the next step, but in reality, we just want to see fast results. Trust the process and make sure you master the move before you switch to the next one. If you have to spend an extra week practicing then do so, if you have to come back and practice the movement again, then 100 % do so.

3. Do not stop.

Just because you have mastered the exercise, does not mean you should not do it anymore. If you have progressed to band pull-ups, you should still create room for scapula pull-ups, just so you keep that mind-muscle connection active and make it stronger.

Being able to do pull-ups is not only a great confidence booster but is going to strengthen your back and make you capable of a lot more. The greatest benefit is probably the posture one. Strengthening the back is going to better your posture and help fighting or prevent the upper crossed syndrome.

The good thing is that you can continue to progress further. Different Grip pull-ups, muscle-ups, ring pull-ups or muscle-ups, one arm pull up, etc...

There are no limits to what we are capable of. We just need to put the effort and be consistent