



**BODY**  
**BY**  
**RINGS**

**18**  
**WEEK**  
**BODYWEIGHT**  
**TRAINING**  
**PROGRAM**

**BY**  
**DANIEL**  
**VADNAL**

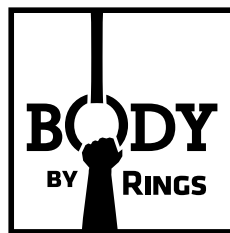
# DISCLAIMER

The information in this book is presented with good intentions, but no warranty is given, nor results guaranteed. We have no control over physical conditions surrounding the application of information in this book and the author disclaims any liability for untoward results including any injuries or damages arising out from a person's attempt to rely upon any information contained herein. The exercises and training program described in this book are for information purposes and may be too strenuous or even dangerous for some people.

Use this information at your own risk.

When purchasing Body By Rings, the purchaser understands the risks associated with using this type of product and agrees not to hold its representatives responsible for injuries or damages resulting from use without proper supervision. Perform a safety check prior to each session, which includes analysing the gymnastic rings and straps for defects and ensuring the supporting structure is sturdy. The author is not responsible for problems related to the equipment that is used to perform the exercises described.

Be sure to thoroughly comprehend the instructions provided for all exercises and warmups. If you experience acute or chronic pain, consult a licensed health practitioner



**Copyright © 2015 bodybyrings.com**

*All rights reserved worldwide.*

*All trademarks and service marks are the property of their respective owners.*

# INTRODUCTION

A sincere thanks for purchasing the Body By Rings (BBR) training program. I'd like to acknowledge you for investing time, effort and money into this unique method. BBR is the culmination of over 6 years of experimentation, research and countless hours of training. The program has been designed to address all aspects of hypertrophy development through the use of bodyweight exercises, no bullshit and no superfluous exercises or false promises. BBR is the only comprehensive bodyweight bodybuilding program utilising gymnastic rings as of 2015. Read this guide thoroughly and study the videos provided. Don't stick to the program for a few weeks or months and give up. See it through from start to finish and the results achieved will be proportional to the effort and dedication implemented.

## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT BBR

### **What the program is designed for**

The BBR system has been constructed with the intent of increasing muscle mass via bodyweight exercises using gymnastic rings. Compound exercises which target multiple muscle groups simultaneously serve as the main constituent. Compound exercises have a greater potential for building muscle as it's possible to make progression with sets, reps or intensity on a consistent basis. This allows a steady improvement in strength and physique development. Unique to the BBR system is the inclusion of isolation exercises with gymnastic rings. Isolating is a must for bodybuilding as certain muscle groups require an additional stimulus to refine the appearance of a physique. Examples include the chest and arms.

### **What level of strength is needed for BBR?**

You need a solid foundation level of bodyweight strength. Beginners who have minimal experience with physical training need to spend time developing their strength through basic movement patterns. One should

be proficient with pushups, pullups and dips. I'd recommend picking up a copy of [Bodyweight Evolution](#) (BWE) and following the 12 week program prior to commencing BBR. Concepts are discussed in BWE which will serve you well for BBR and into the future. It's logical to be able to perform bodyweight movements competently on a stable environment prior to undertaking the added challenge of instability associated with gymnastic rings. Most people will adjust to the instability experienced when using rings in a few weeks, so don't fear. The exercise intensity in BBR can be easily increased or decreased to suit varying strength levels. This is made possible by simply changing posture or the height of the rings. The video series provided demonstrates how to do so. This aspect of the gymnastic rings is extremely powerful and provides a seemingly infinite capacity for progression. Therefore, the sets and reps structure outlined can be completed by varying ability levels whilst employing a full range of motion and progressing at a rate appropriate to the individual.

## **What the program isn't optimal for, and the SAID principle**

BBR is constructed with the goal of maximising hypertrophy through the use of high volume and high time under tension protocols. A user of the BBR series should expect to progressively become stronger with basic upper body ring exercises and subsequently develop muscle. Those looking to achieve specific, higher level strength skills such as front levers and planches and are less interested in gaining muscle, should follow a specific training protocol designed for this purpose. Strength skills require dedicated attention to be achieved. Progressing towards skills requires a calculated approach. Simply obey the SAID principle (Specific Adaptations to Imposed Demands) if seeking to get stronger at strength skills. Essentially, strength comes with movements which are practised often (easier said than done, huh?). Focusing on too many aspects of training at once, if the intention is skills, will lead to frustration and a lack of progression because it's not feasible for the body.

## **Warming up**

In order to prepare the body safely for the upcoming training demands it is critical to perform a thorough warm up which addresses all the major joints to be utilised. By choosing movements which address multiple aspects at once, you can reduce the total number of mobility drills required to get the body going, saving precious time. Included in the video series is a handful of preparatory exercises which are worthwhile doing prior to each training session. When done conscientiously, the process should take no more than 10 - 15 minutes. This should be enough to yield a moderate increase in range of motion and blood flow to the upper body. Additionally, use this time to mentally prepare for the upcoming training session. Visualise progression and make a promise to give 100% effort. Performing the stretches dynamically, as opposed to holding sustained stretches, is recommended prior to training. Prolonged static stretches have been consistently shown to decrease power production in the working muscle. In practical terms, this translates to a reduction in the number of reps which can be performed per set. As the exercises in BBR only require a moderate amount of range of motion, the disadvantages of static stretching outweigh the potential temporary benefits for our purposes. Stick to dynamic movements prior to training and sustained static stretches protocols post training.

## **Essential pre-training and ongoing measurements**

Prior to starting a new training program one should take several objective measurements to serve as a baseline. These measurements can be re-taken at certain intervals along the journey. When tracking progress, it's easy to fall into the pitfall of subjective assessment which is laden by emotions and influenced by many external and internal factors. Worse yet is making comparisons to others in regard to strength/physique development. Everyone is on a journey which is unique to the individual. The biggest factor leading to consistency and fulfillment with one's training is focusing on individual progress. When taking objective

measures (reliable, repeatable numbers which don't lie), assessments can be honestly made over time which allows pinpoint scrutiny to be made where needed. A wise man once said, what gets measured gets managed; this principle should be applied to more than your training program. The following measurements are highly recommended and will give valuable feedback in regard to the efficacy of training, recovery, etc.

- ***Weight (first thing in the morning after going to the toilet in your underpants - ensuring testing conditions remain the same)***
- ***Upper body girth measurements (flexed, relaxed, without a pump)***
- ***Photos (same lighting conditions/camera settings, flexed, relaxed)***
- ***Body fat testing - Dexa scan***

Don't become obsessed with taking objective measurements either. Daily weight tracking is great when used appropriately. Comparisons should be made between weekly weight averages to account for daily fluctuations in weight and to avoid becoming consumed by the daily values.

Attached is an example from my own weight tracking after increasing caloric intake following a body-recomposition phase.

The other measurements listed above are not required as frequently. Re-measuring girth and taking new photos every 4 weeks is an appropriate time period to track progress. Don't expect to see drastic results from month to month. These objective measures will keep you on track during the training process. Results should be noticeable when comparing pre-training to post 18 week BBR measurements and photos.

## Weight Tracking 2015

Date	Day	Weight	Average	Notes	Goal
2/6/2015	Friday	82.8	82.675		
2/7/2015	Saturday	82.1			
2/8/2015	Sunday	82.8			
2/9/2015	Monday	82.7			
2/10/2015	Tuesday	83.3			
2/11/2015	Wednesday	83.6			
2/12/2015	Thursday	83.6			
2/13/2015	Friday		82.98571429		
2/14/2015	Saturday	82.5			
2/15/2015	Sunday	82.8			
2/16/2015	Monday	83.4			
2/17/2015	Tuesday	83.4			
2/18/2015	Wednesday	84		chinese food	
2/19/2015	Thursday	84.2			
2/20/2015	Friday	82.7	83.28571429		
2/21/2015	Saturday	83.5			
2/22/2015	Sunday	83			
2/23/2015	Monday	83.5			
2/24/2015	Tuesday	83.5			
2/25/2015	Wednesday	84.2			
2/26/2015	Thursday	84.2			
2/27/2015	Friday	83.6	83.525		
2/28/2015	Saturday	83.4			
3/1/2015	Sunday	83.4			
3/2/2015	Monday	84			
3/3/2015	Tuesday	84.4			
3/4/2015	Wednesday	85		pizza	
3/5/2015	Thursday	83.9			
3/6/2015	Friday	84.5	84.025		83.5





# EQUIPMENT

## Equipment highly recommended

A pair of quality [wooden gymnastic rings](#) is the only essential equipment to follow the program. The best place to buy gymnastic rings will depend on where you live. Some quick research online will provide the best location to buy them. The 28mm wooden gymnastic rings are the Olympic standard size and are easiest to grip. A quality pair will last a lifetime if looked after; a worthy investment! Grab a pair from Amazon as they are a trusted distributor. Select a high quality pair as you won't need to replace them. If looking elsewhere for gymnastic rings, make sure the straps are numbered which will allow training progress to be tracked objectively over time.

Purchasing [chalk](#) is highly recommended so the hands remain dry and can sustain a firm grip on the rings. The difference between training with/without chalk is night and day. There is no doubt you will achieve more reps per set and be able to create more tension in the working muscle groups through enhanced grip with dry, chalked hands. If training in a recreational gym which does not allow chalk due to the mess it creates, an awesome alternative is [liquid chalk](#).

## Products which will augment the training experience

These products will be mentioned throughout this informational PDF. Here's the list from Amazon which includes the highest quality products at the most affordable prices:

- [Wooden Gymnastics Rings \(Numbered straps\)](#)
- [Gymboss Interval Timer](#)
- [Chalk Block / Liquid Chalk](#)
- [Dip Belt](#)
- [Light resistance band for warm up routine](#)

# TRAINING STRUCTURE

## How to appropriately follow the BBR system

Follow the protocol provided and do not introduce any additional exercises for the upper body to the sessions outlined. Common questions include:

- *Can I add x compound exercise to the workout?*
- *Can I perform sprints/HIIT after each workout?*
- *Can I train the lower body 3x a week?*

The sessions have been created to provide the appropriate amount of stimulus with the goal being hypertrophy. Doing too much at once or too much too soon will detract from your ability to progress with the exercises outlined in the training series. Making progress in the various training variables such as increased sets, reps or intensity, to name a few, are fundamental to building muscle. Jumping back and forth between different exercises or attempting too many exercises at once is a waste of time and effort. Once all three phases in BBR are completed, by all means go ahead and manipulate your training program to coincide with future ambitions, including and excluding elements from BBR that you like/dislike. Don't make training more complicated than it needs to be. Commit to the program and it will pay off.

## Tempo explained

For those familiar with the BWE training program or have received online coaching from FitnessFAQs, you're probably cursing me right now at the very sight of a tempo prescription on a spreadsheet. Tempo refers to the speed in which an exercise is performed. Using a fast tempo with an absence of control is a common mistake made by both beginners and advanced trainees. Unfortunately, the average person emphasises doing more at the expense of quality. A balance must be kept between maintaining consistent exercise form at a given tempo whilst simultaneously aiming to progressively overload.

*Below is an example of the tempo format and how to interpret it.*

## **30X0**

- *The first number represents the eccentric phase of the exercise*
- *The second number represents the isometric pause after the eccentric, when the muscle has been stretched*
- *The third number represents the concentric phase*
- *The fourth number represents the isometric pause after the concentric, when the muscle is in a shortened state*

## **Interpreting the tempo numbers and application**

- *Each digit represents a # of seconds*
- *X means as fast as possible*
- *0 means no pause*

Practically speaking a similar tempo is applied consistently throughout the BBR program, 30X1 being the most common. This tempo is a controlled eccentric followed by an explosive concentric and a one second squeeze of the muscle to complete the movement. This tempo provides ample time under tension without compromising the ability to achieve several reps. Become familiar with the specific tempo for each exercise in the program; it can be humbling to train in a strict manner if previously unaccustomed. Refer to the exercise video on tempo for further clarification.

## **BBR and lower body training**

The gymnastic rings are the ultimate tool for building upper body strength and muscle due to the endless array of exercises which can be progressed for years to come. Using bodyweight exercises for lower body development is inadequate, unless the individual is a complete beginner. Constructing a training program for the lower body with unloaded

exercises and making false promises in regard to their efficacy is immoral. This is the reason why the BBR training series prescribes only upper body training. The time and energy devoted to lower body training is better utilised with conventional weight training which provides the necessary stimulus the lower body thrives, no dogma, just preaching what works. Whilst following the BBR program it's recommended to include one session (maximum of two) lower body workouts per week using weighted compound movements such as squats and romanian deadlifts, etc. A higher frequency above two days is not recommended because it will impact recovery and decrease the capacity to progress using the BBR protocol. The design of the training week should always be structured in accordance with the main goals. It's assumed for those following BBR that the priority is developing the upper body.

## **Training structure (Push, pull)**

The BBR system is centred on a push, pull upper body training split. Through ongoing research and practical application, this format has been shown time and time again to be effective in regard to hypertrophy. Three upper body sessions per week is on the lower end of the frequency spectrum; results will be good but not optimised. Five upper body sessions appears to compromise recovery ability, inevitably leading to the fifth upper body session being sub-par in terms of intensity. This is a trend which can affect performance in the following week. Therefore, a 4x per week upper body frequency seems to be the sweet spot in terms of allowing adequate recovery to continually apply progressive overload. Instead of training the whole upper body each session, conventionally done with bodyweight training, splitting the day into pushing or pulling will be a refreshing, enjoyable change which equals adherence!

# How to structure the training week if not training legs at all (I don't recommend)

What I'd recommend if not training legs  
(Why are you not training legs?)

**MON:** Pull 1  
**TUES:** REST  
**WED:** Push 1  
**THURS:** REST  
**FRI:** Pull 2  
**SAT:** Push 2  
**SUN:** REST

Those wanting to rest on the weekends

**MON:** Pull 1  
**TUES:** Push 1  
**WED:** Rest  
**THURS:** Pull 2  
**FRI:** Push 2  
**SAT:** Rest  
**SUN:** Rest

# How to structure training week if training legs

(Well done! You won't be a flamingo)  
If training legs 1x a week (recommended)

**MON:** Pull 1  
**TUES:** Legs  
**WED:** Push 1  
**THURS:** REST  
**FRI:** Pull 2  
**SAT:** Push 2  
**SUN:** REST

If training legs 2x a week

**MON:** Pull 1

**TUES:** Legs

**WED:** Push 1

**THURS:** REST

**FRI:** Pull 2

**SAT:** Push 2

**SUN:** Legs

## **Why are there no supersets in the BBR training program?**

The design of the training program follows a push/pull split. Supersets are conventionally employed with alternating muscle groups (i.e. back/chest) or when a difficult exercise is 'supersettted' with an easier exercise which employs similar muscle groups (i.e. back/back). With gymnastic rings it can be tedious to constantly re-adjust the strap length to alternate between different exercises. When training with straight sets on a given exercise, aiming to progress will be just as effective for muscle gains anyway. Employing a simple, measurable and repeatable style of training was decided upon for BBR.

## **REP PROTOCOL EXPLAINED (ACCUMULATION & ! DOWN SERIES)**

### **What is the Accumulation protocol?**

Accumulation training is an enjoyable way to progressively increase training intensity in a given time constraint. The concept is to achieve as many full range of motion, tempo specific reps of an exercise within a given period of time. It is essential to try and beat the previous total repetition number in the last session to continue growing stronger and building muscle. Pace yourself, burning out within the first few sets is not a smart idea. Generally

stopping ~2-3 reps short of failure (or several seconds in regard to timed holds) will allow enough energy to complete subsequent sets. Remember, overall volume is more important than one or two high rep sets.

The first week of an accumulation protocol serves to establish a baseline for which the goal is to exceed the following week.

### ***Example of progression:***

***Week 1*** → Handstand Pushup: **25** total reps

***Week 2*** → Handstand Pushup: **28** total reps

***Week 3*** → Handstand Pushup: **28** total reps

***Week 4*** → Handstand Pushup: **33** total reps

***Week 1*** → Two Arm Hang: **4** sets of **30s** = **2** mins total

***Week 2*** → Two Arm Hang: **4** sets of **35s** = **2.3** mins total

***Week 3*** → Two Arm Hang: **5** sets of **30s** = **2.5** mins total

***Week 4*** → Two Arm Hang: **6** sets of **30s** = **3** mins total

## **How to approach the accumulation protocol**

Structure in a way which feels best on the given day. An example is straight sets, i.e. 5 sets of 5 reps or 12 sets of 2 reps.

Alternatively, the number of reps performed per set can be lowered to accommodate for increasing fatigue: 2 sets of 5 reps followed by 2 sets of 4 reps and finishing with 2 sets of 3 reps in the final few minutes. The manner in which the total reps are achieved can be manipulated infinitely. Strive to improve on the total number each week through autoregulation.

## **How to apply accumulation to timed hanging sets**

A total timed hold range has been set in the program. Most people should start at the lowest time prescription which is 2:00 mins and progress gradually. The goal is to reach the time objective with as few sets as possible. Each week the goal should be to either:

- *Reach the time goal with less sets*
- *Increase the total time accumulated*

### **Example for TWO arm hang:**

**Week 1** → **6 sets of 20s = 2:00 mins**

**Week 2** → **4 sets of 30s = 2:00 mins**

**Week 3** → **5 sets of 30s = 2:30 mins**

**Week 4** → **4 sets of 38s = 2:32 mins**

**Week 5** → **6 sets of 30s = 3:00 mins**

### **Example for ONE arm hang:**

**Week 1** → **4 sets of 30s L / 4 sets of 30s R = 2 mins for each side**

**Week 2** → **4 sets of 35s L / 4 sets of 35s R = 2 mins 20s for each side**

**Week 3** → **6 sets of 30s L / 6 sets of 30s R = 3 mins for each side**

**Week 4** → **7 sets of 30s L / 7 sets of 30s R = 3 mins 30s for each side**

When accumulating time for the one arm hang, the total time specified is for both the left AND right side. Understandably, it won't always be possible to do straight sets as described in the above example. If this happens, reduce the hold time in the following sets. Just ensure the total hold time objective for both sides is completed.

## **! Down series**

The ! Down series is a method of rest pause aimed at accumulating a large volume of work in a short period of time. Rest minimally between each 'set' within the series when working down to 1 rep.

**6!** = 6+5+4+3+2+1 = **21** reps

**7!** = 7+6+5+4+3+2+1 = **28** reps

**8!** = 8+7+6+5+4+3+2+1 = **36** reps

**9!** = 9+8+7+6+5+4+3+2+1 = **45** reps

**10!** = 10+9+8+7+6+5+4+3+2+1 = **55** reps



View the video on the (! Down series) in the exercises folder for further clarification.

## **RECOVERY**

### **Choosing the appropriate intensity to start a phase**

Be honest and drop the ego, as doing so will allow continual, measurable improvements. Choose a progression/intensity which allows the minimum sets/reps/tempo prescribed in the program to be achieved whilst being challenged. If the movement is too easy or difficult, make the necessary changes to posture and ring setup as described in the videos. Choosing the appropriate intensity is essential for full range of motion form and being able to follow the program as intended. Choosing a level which is extremely difficult to begin with leaves no room for progression over the weeks. Don't make this rookie mistake. Look at the big picture of consistent gains over time being superior to a good session here or there. Physique and strength development is a marathon not a sprint.

### **How to approach unilateral (single arm movements)**

Nearly everyone will have a side of their body which is stronger than the other. As a consequence, it's common for a mismatch to be present in terms of muscular development. The weaker side is generally smaller. Unilateral movements are a great opportunity to decrease the imbalance which exists side to side. Always start unilateral exercises with the weaker side first, followed by the dominant side. To maximise output the following rest approach is recommended: Once a set has been completed on the non-dominant side, rest 30-60s before switching sides. Once the set on both sides has been completed, take a longer rest period as outlined in the program. Due to two sets being required to complete one set for unilateral work (left and right) it helps to take a short rest break between the two.

# **BBR training phases and recovery**

The BBR system is split into three phases. Follow each phase for a minimum of 5 weeks followed by a 1 week deload before moving onward to the next phase. The following paragraph will explain how to deload. It's fine to do a given phase for one cycle (5 weeks training +1 week deload) then repeat another cycle of the same phase (5 weeks training +1 week deload) before moving to the next phase. Allow adequate time to progress to maximise results. There is no point moving onto the next phase if the current phase is yielding progress or remains excessively challenging. BBR has been advertised as an 18 week training program, but in reality it can be extended depending on the response to training. Choose the appropriate format to suit personal circumstances.

## **What is a deload, why deload and how to deload**

A deload is a planned recovery period which generally lasts one week. If training at a progressively higher intensity over a 5 week training cycle it's expected that fatigue will accumulate.

### **Why deload:**

- *Allow the CNS (Central Nervous System) to recover which will facilitate future training progress.*
- *Ongoing progression and strength gains = increased lean muscle mass.*
- *Mental break from constantly pushing the limits which avoids burnout and reinforces adherence.*

### **Signs that a deload is appropriate:**

- *Not feeling as powerful with movements*
- *Ongoing plateau in terms of making progress*
- *Getting weaker - consistently achieving numbers less than previously capable (sets, reps, intensity)*

- ***Constantly feeling fatigued despite ample sleep.***
- ***Lethargy and fatigue despite ingesting caffeine***
- ***Sore joints***
- ***Mood changes***
- ***Genuine lack of desire to train despite usually being passionate***

It's impossible to operate at 100% every session for 365 days a year. Individuals that tell you otherwise are lying in an attempt to be pseudo-motivational or are taking performance enhancing drugs. This 'beastmode' mindset generally leads to burnout, overuse injuries or losing passion and being forced to take a recovery period anyway. Alternatively, it's common to see people 'going through the motions' in training due to the inability to sustain a high work output for long periods of time. Even if at the end of 5 weeks of training one feels fresh, take a deload regardless. Accumulation of fatigue will catch up eventually. Don't be surprised when a deload is skipped and a lack of progress ensues. A common mistake when failing to progress is the notion that one is not training intensely enough. It's difficult in the present moment to realise a lack of progress can potentially be due to under-recovering from the accumulation of previous training stress. This point can't be highlighted enough; applying a deload is essential. A simple deload week may be all that's required to facilitate recovery, super-compensation and the ability to continue making gains. Erase the foolish 0 or 100 mindset. Submaximal training is not a waste of time and is a necessary component of adaptation. There are multiple ways to deload, yet the following approach is recommended for simplicity, consistency and maintaining strength through continuing to practise the motor pattern of each exercise.

- ***Keep the intensity of the exercise the same***
- ***Increase intensity by ~5%. Decrease the volume by 50%***

What this means is the training reps will be similar to the previous week, multiple reps short of failure allowing strength to be maintained during the planned recovery week. However, less sets will be performed in

comparison to regular training. If 4 sets were previously completed of an exercise, do 2 sets. Using 3 sets of an exercise, do a maximum of 1-2 sets.

Mentioned above is the option of increasing intensity by ~5% during a deload. Adjust the height of the rings or posture slightly to accomplish this. As the number of sets has been decreased, it allows those who feel it appropriate the opportunity to increase the intensity by a manageable increment. There is an inverse relationship between intensity and volume. This means with an increase in one variable, the other must decrease to accommodate this. Making this adjustment allows the body to acclimatise to a higher intensity before the number of sets are once again increased in the week following a deload. Avoid failure, especially on compound movements during this period; allow the body to recover.

During a deload week it's a good opportunity to review the BBR exercise videos and make alterations to technique. The best way to do so is by setting up a camera and taking a video for self-evaluation.

To ensure a highly effective deload, limit or abstain from ingesting caffeine. Taking in too much caffeine places an unnecessary stress on the central nervous system which will directly impact recovery capacity. Most people are dependent on caffeine to get through their day; exercise some self-discipline during this period and it will serve you well in countless ways. Consume caffeine strictly pre-training to get the biggest performance enhancing effect; none on rest days. This rule applies to normal training periods (non-deloads) if one is looking to optimise potential recovery.

## **Reality of progression (non-linear)**

Start slow in each training cycle. Use a full range of motion on every exercise with the tempo provided. Be mentally present during training, focus on the working muscle with correct execution of the movement pattern. Each 6 week cycle allows an ample opportunity to build up training intensity by tolerable amounts and apply progressive overload. It's easy to be motivated during the first week of a training program. What separates those who progress and those who don't is ongoing consistency and

perseverance once the novelty of a new program wears off. Don't expect to be able to make progress on every exercise, every session. The human body is incredibly complex and unpredictable. Many factors contribute to the extent of progress - nutrition, sleep, hormonal factors, training / non-training stress and the list goes on. Shift the mindset from thinking about individual sessions and look at the bigger picture. Adaptation is the result of accumulating many training sessions. Progress is never linear, particularly so in individuals who have a long training history; the body transforms in an undulating manner. Trust the process, adhere to the program, continuously work hard and improvements will occur.

## **Sleep**

These days, with information, overload people tend to sweat the small stuff and forget about the fundamentals. It's easy to become consumed in deciding what are the best supplement(s) to take or other nonsense such as what workout apparel should be worn to have optimal training sessions. Take care of the variables which are going to have the biggest return on investment. Getting enough sleep each and every night is a major factor which will drive strength and physique gains. This guide isn't about determining the optimal number of hours each person should sleep. Analyse individual sleeping patterns and be realistic with how an increase or decrease affects training and progress. Being consistent with sleeping patterns will yield the biggest benefits. Below are a few essential strategies to help.

- Be in a dark environment one hour prior to sleeping.
- No TV, mobile phone or other electronic devices one hour prior to sleeping
- Avoid caffeine 6-8 hours prior to bedtime.
- Make the bedroom environment as dark as possible.
- Minimise noise and wear earplugs if necessary.
- A cooler climate makes it easier to sleep.

- Don't lie on the bed unnecessarily throughout the day, associate lying on the bed with sleep.

Everyone knows getting enough sleep is important. The benefits are so widespread and solidified in research. Sleep isn't sexy or profitable to discuss in a training context, hence it's not stressed more. Don't just read this section and forget about it. Make the necessary lifestyle changes to get enough sleep every night. If training and making physique improvements are important, then being mature about recovery protocols is justified.

## Hydration

To maximise training performance and recovery it is vital to drink plenty of water throughout the day. At a minimum, one should drink enough to satisfy thirst. This is good advice for the average couch potato but those reading BBR are not average. Above average physical output calls for above average daily water intake. Once again, specific recommendations will not be provided regarding daily water consumption. Making a blanket recommendation would be inappropriate. Age, gender, genetics, daily physical activity and environmental factors will all influence the volume of daily water required. Experiment with consuming more water than average and analyse the changes associated with this simple adjustment to daily life. Below are some strategies which will help.

- *Drink 0.5-1L of water after going to the toilet and weighing yourself first thing in the morning.*
- *Have a water bottle accessible wherever you go and drink sporadically throughout the day.*
- *Monitor urine colour - optimal hydration is when the urine appears light yellow / clear.*
- *Chilled water tastes nicer and is easier to consume in vast amounts compared to room temperature water.*

# **METHODS FOR AVOIDING PLATEAUS AND FORCING PROGRESSIVE OVERLOAD**

## **What to do if an exercise is too hard?**

Decrease the intensity of the exercise by altering posture / adjusting the height of the rings as demonstrated in the videos provided. The intensity (or exercise progression/posture) recommended is just a guideline as to what should be expected in the phase outlined. Don't stress if unable to do so. Make the adjustments needed to have a quality training session. If adjusting intensity in the above manner is not enough, employ an easier tempo. For example, if 30X2 on chinups is too difficult, simply utilise a faster tempo through the full range of motion and don't implement a pause at the top (i.e. 20X0). As strength improves, re-introduce the more difficult tempo prescription as a form of progressive overload.

## **It's still difficult to execute multiple reps of a certain exercises; what should I do?**

Change the format. Do more sets, less reps. Ensure the minimum total volume is being achieved and a similar training response will occur.

Using the following example of 3 sets of 6 reps using ring dips: The minimum is being able to do 3x6 but this may not be feasible.

Choose a number of reps per set which allows good form to be maintained. Instead of doing 3 sets of 6 reps, do 6 sets of 3 reps = 18 total reps.

The total volume is still being completed. The only downside to this approach is the training session will take longer due to twice the number of sets needed for the same amount of work. Maintaining the same number of reps per set for all sets is not always possible either. In the latter sets the number of reps per set can decrease. Make sure to reach the total number of reps desired for the particular exercise.

***For the dip example above:***

*Set 1: 3*

*Set 2: 3*

*Set 3: 3*

*Set 4: 3*

*Set 5: 2*

*Set 6: 2*

*Set 7: 2*

Total = **18** reps

## **Finding it difficult to perform multiple straight sets with higher reps? How to progress**

Imagine the goal is to progress from 3 sets of 15 reps to 4 sets of 15 reps on the Bulgarian pushups: The previous session of 3x15 was difficult but manageable. It's acceptable to perform less reps per set in the final set or two as long as the overall volume is being reached. As mentioned earlier it's not always feasible to add in an extra set and hit the target number with acceptable form.

***For the Bulgarian pushup example above, this is an example of forcing progress:***

*Set 1: 15*

*Set 2: 15*

*Set 3: 15 (barely got 15)*

*Set 4: 8*

*Set 5: 7*

Total = **60** reps

The above example is attempting to make too big of a jump (45 reps to 60 reps at the same intensity from session to session is a big ask). That's a 25% increase in reps, particularly if the 3x15 was a near maximal effort.



Instead, take a more patient path to progression. A more realistic way of progressing beyond 3 sets of 15 would be to add an additional set but reduce the reps initially to compensate. This allows more total reps to be achieved incrementally whilst progressively overloading. 4 sets of 12 would be the smart option.

## **Sensible way to progress when able to do high reps of an exercise**

When able to hit the upper end of a rep range provided, adding an additional set is the next logical step. When doing so, temporarily decrease the number of reps per set. From this point aim to increase the number of reps with the additional set. When done correctly the number of reps will increase over time in a manageable way.

### ***Sample progression given a 3-5 set range for 10 - 15 reps:***

***Week 1*** → 3 sets x 15 reps = 45 reps

***Week 2*** → 4 sets x 10 reps = 40 reps

***Week 3*** → 4 sets x 12 reps = 48 reps

***Week 4*** → 4 sets x 15 reps = 60 reps

***Week 5*** → 5 sets x 12 reps = 60 reps

## **'X exercise' has been manageable but when moving up a phase the progression is too hard to meet the minimum sets / reps prescribed**

A few different options are possible in this situation:

- ***Do another full 5 week cycle of a given phase, deload and try again.***
- ***The old phase can be continued for a few more weeks prior to moving up a phase.***

If, however, there are only one or two exercises that are difficult in a new phase, do the following:

- ***Regress the exercise temporarily until capable and continue with the new phase.***

If many exercises in the next phase are too difficult, the most sensible decision is to be patient and continue working on the current phase for as long as needed.

## **How to make progress when plateauing (Rest-pause)**

Aiming to make incremental progress is the key to long-term gains. Some weeks it will not be feasible to simply add an extra set per exercise or additional reps for every exercise. If this sounds relatable, try implementing the rest-pause method. Rest-pause is effective for increasing the overall amount of work done, especially during a fatigued state. Using the example of 3 sets of 6 reps ring dips:

The last time 3x6 was undertaken the final set was challenging; today, the objective is to perform 3x8. Sets one and two were challenging and it's doubtful 8 reps will be achieved in the final set. When reaching 1-2 reps short of failure, have a momentary rest prior to completing the remaining reps. This allows the total volume to be achieved without compromising form.

*Set 1: **8** reps*

*Set 2: **8** reps*

*Set 3: **5** reps*

*Rest **10-15** seconds*

***2** reps*

*Rest **10-15** seconds*

***1** rep*

Applying the rest-pause method is going to be useful in the final week or two on a given phase. Force progress!

# **GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT EXERCISES USED IN BBR**

## **Compound exercises & Isolation exercises**

Examples of compound exercises in the program include pullups, dips and pushups. Examples of isolation exercises in the program include bicep curls and tricep extensions.

Compound exercises are multi-joint movements which utilise multiple muscle groups when performed. More muscle being recruited means a greater capacity for work and resulting muscular adaptation. This is why compound exercises are stressed as the main muscle building exercises and each training session begins with them. Compound exercises are the fundamental movements in any effective training program for building muscle.

Isolation exercises are a single joint movement utilising one muscle group to execute the rep. Due to the smaller muscle involved in the movement, the potential for progressive overload is more gradual by comparison. Keep this in mind when using isolation exercises and focus on quality time under tension with a mindful execution.

## **The importance of isolation exercises for bodybuilding purposes**

Intense compound movements are great for building strength and developing overall muscle mass, no sane person will argue this. The downfall of relying entirely on compound movements is that certain body parts will inevitably lag behind. Common areas include the chest and arms which tend to be underdeveloped by those using strictly compound bodyweight strength exercises. Variance in individual strengths and genetics will dictate which areas of the body grow slower. The human body is very efficient when training, utilising stronger muscle groups preferentially to do the work. Over time this can lead to physique deficiencies. The easiest way to remedy this situation is to include isolation

exercises which provide the desired muscle groups the extra stimulation required to grow.

Always refer to the specific adaptations to the imposed demands principle. This is the reason why people training predominantly with bodyweight exercises have a huge back and shoulders but often lack size in their chest and arms. These areas are being neglected and it shows. The reality of physique development is certain areas require isolation, compound movements alone are not enough to develop an aesthetically proportionate look.

## **The compound movements are getting too easy for me and I'm a freak; how do I progress?**

If the necessary changes to posture/technique have been made to increase intensity and the exercises remain easy, the following changes are available.

- *Increase time under tension (50X1 instead of 30X1, as an example)*
- *Superset exercises*
- *Decrease rest period*
- *Add weight*

The final most reliable, repeatable way of overloading is to add weight. Using a [dip belt](#) is going to be most comfortable. Otherwise use a backpack and add weight, if there's a will there is a way, so be resourceful and make it happen. Remember, do not compromise form at the expense of adding additional weight each week. The instability associated with the rings will be amplified when adding weight, maintain good form and be patient with progress.

## **Should sets be taken to failure?**

This is a concept which causes heated debate amongst many professionals in the fitness industry.

## **Training to muscular failure is NOT ESSENTIAL for building muscle, progressive overload is.**

Muscular failure is when, despite maximal effort, a repetition can't be completed through a full range of motion. Reaching failure consistently on intense compound exercises can be taxing to the central nervous system which is what governs training output. Training into failure frequently is detrimental in the grand scheme of things. Doing so will impact the ability to consistently make progress over the weeks, which should always be the number one objective in any training program. Reaching failure sparingly is ideal. Muscular failure is likely to occur during the final set or two of the last exercise performed for the day due to fatigue. This is a good sign that the training intensity/volume selected for the day was ample to induce muscular breakdown and resulting hypertrophic response. Don't aim to reach failure on every set of every exercise for the day. Long-term progress will be non-existent following this style of training, both physically and psychologically.

Reaching failure on isolation movements is not going to cause major issues to the central nervous system's ability to recover. Therefore, it's appropriate and expected to reach muscular failure more often on isolation movements, otherwise gains will be extremely slow. Don't be afraid to work hard on isolation movements and remember to aim for progressive overload over the weeks in a given phase.

### **Arms program, when to use, why included**

The arm isolation series of workouts have been provided as a bonus for informative purposes and provides some additional value for those following BBR. The arm routines have been created for use in the future if one specifically wants to have an effective arm workout using only bodyweight exercises. Once the BBR training program has been completed (all 3 phases), it's a good time to re-evaluate goals and devise a new training program. From here feel free to experiment with the provided arm routines. Do so if further developing the arms is one of your objectives.

The arm isolation routines increase in difficulty from level 1-3. Choose the level most appropriate for current strength levels and feel free to experiment with the others when ready. Include the arm routine after an upper body training session 1-2 times a week for best results. Once again there is no need to use the arm isolation routine whilst working through BBR as the movements are already integrated.

## **Exercise variations - which can be substituted, why, how?**

For exercises such as rows and vertical pulling movements, the position of the hands will alter the muscle groups recruited to a certain extent. Select a hand position and use the same version for the entire 5 week training cycle. Afterwards, if desired, change the hand position for the next 5 week cycle. Common hand variations include a pronated (overhand grip), supinated (underhand grip), or neutral (palms facing each other grip). The significance of this paragraph is to highlight the importance of allowing enough time on a given variation to make progress. Planned variety will stimulate the body to grow through emphasising different muscle groups.

## **Why hanging is included in BBR**

The BBR program is comprised of bodyweight exercises to develop muscle mass with no additional equipment needed except gymnastic rings. The most efficient way to stimulate the forearms with bodyweight training is through hanging. Do you want to have those popeye forearms which appear to be skin bursting? Hang. By being able to hang for longer periods of time grip strength will increase. The average trainee has dismal grip strength - don't be average.

## **Why are some exercises low reps/high sets? Why are some low sets/high reps?**

Due to the nature of certain exercises being more difficult, less reps will

be possible when completed with quality form. To accommodate for the increased intensity, more sets are performed to achieve a similar overall volume and bias a greater hypertrophic response.

In phase 3 certain exercises are now being done with a lower rep count per set, such as the chest fly/tricep extension (push session 1). The lower rep range will bias greater strength gains during this period. This will allow a higher intensity progression to be undertaken with more reps per set in the future. This style of training is a must for long-term gains, otherwise it becomes difficult to progress exercise intensity in a higher rep range by doing high rep work alone. Planned changes to intensity and sets/reps structure will continue to stimulate muscular development and provide variety.

6 sets of 5 is the same overall volume as 3 sets of 10. The advantage for 6 sets of 5 is a more difficult exercise progression can be used. This trend in training design is evident in phase 3 of BBR. The only downside being a longer duration is necessary to complete 6 sets as the rest period will be inherently longer.

## **REST PERIODS**

### **Short vs long rest.**

### **Why the difference in Phase 3?**

The rest periods recommended change depending on which phase of BBR is being worked on. The reasoning will be explained below. In the initial phases of BBR the rep range tends to be higher meaning exercise intensity will be moderate. Therefore an extensive rest period is not required. Working with a 1:30 minute rest period allows ample recovery and the training session can be completed in a timely manner.

Here's how the duration of training can be influenced by rest times:

**20 total sets @ 1:30 mins rest: 30 minutes of resting**  
**20 total sets @ 2:00 mins rest: 40 minutes of resting**  
**20 total sets @ 3:00 mins rest: 60 minutes of resting**

As one becomes stronger and works at a higher intensity and or with more total sets it is going to be necessary to take longer rest periods. This will ensure the objectives for the day can be reached. As previously mentioned the only trade-off is the session itself will take longer to complete.

## **Best way to monitor rest times**

I'm sure those reading this guide have issues when it comes to taking appropriate rest periods. It's common to rest too long, lose focus and have a sub-par session. Conversely, inadequate rest will result in being unable to reach full potential as far as training output is concerned. To avoid human error through basing training off emotions, the solution is to invest in an [interval timer](#). Simply set the first timer to match how long it will take to complete a set (30-45s generally), and the second timer to the designated rest period. Clip the timer to a hip, set it to beep/vibrate and get to work. Another method is to begin the rest period manually after completing each set. The aforementioned interval timer has been used by FitnessFAQs for over five years now. If not interested in buying an interval timer, there are free interval timers apps available for use on mobile phones. Remember training is a time to be present and focused on the task at hand. Don't be a fool and spend this valuable time seeking another social media induced dopamine rush.

## **FAQ'S ABOUT GYMNASTIC RINGS**

### **How far apart should the rings be set up?**

For most exercises a slightly wider than shoulder width distance will be ideal. Choose a setup which is comfortable and doesn't cause any discomfort.



## **Arm irritation**

Some contact with the ring straps is inevitable especially during pushing movements. With continued use, the skin will become conditioned and desensitised to contact with the straps. If the irritation is excessive, it's likely form is incorrect.

Make sure the hands are turned out at the top of each pushing movement and this will clear the forearms from the straps, reducing irritation. Wearing long sleeves as strength develops may also be a viable option.

### **My arms are shaking uncontrollably when using the rings; what am I doing wrong?**

It's perfectly normal to appear like a fish out of water when beginning rings training. Essentially, the nervous system is recruiting the upper body musculature to act as stabilisers in a dynamic, unaccustomed manner. Unless unstable surface training has been done in the past, shaking is a humbling and expected presentation that needs to be adapted to. Don't stress as the human body is an incredible system and most people develop increased control within several weeks.

### **How to monitor training intensity if the gymnastic rings are not numbered**

Ideally, the gymnastics rings purchased have numbers on them. When entering intensity in the training log, the number which the buckle is set to is entered in the intensity section. Take note of posture in relation to the anchor point (feet in front or behind the anchor point) to monitor progressive overload from a strap and posture perspective. If the available rings don't have numbers, standing beside a ring and using a landmark on the body is the next most objective method. When strength increases over the weeks, the rings will be set lower. Simply track the height of the rings in accordance with a known landmark on the body.

**Sample of four weeks of intensity progression**  
**using the landmark method:**

<b>Week 1</b>	<b>Letter</b>	<b>Exercise</b>	<b>Intensity</b>
1	A1	Ring Dips	-
1	B1	Archer Pushups	bottom of ring @ mid shin
1	C1	Chest Flies	bottom of ring @ navel
1	D1	Tricep Dips	-
1	E1	Tricep Extensions	bottom of ring @ navel

<b>Week 2</b>	<b>Letter</b>	<b>Exercise</b>	<b>Intensity</b>
1	A1	Ring Dips	-
1	B1	Archer Pushups	bottom of ring @ mid shin
1	C1	Chest Flies	bottom of ring @ top of hips
1	D1	Tricep Dips	-
1	E1	Tricep Extensions	bottom of ring @ navel

<b>Week 3</b>	<b>Letter</b>	<b>Exercise</b>	<b>Intensity</b>
1	A1	Ring Dips	-
1	B1	Archer Pushups	bottom of ring at top of ankle
1	C1	Chest Flies	bottom of ring at mid thigh
1	D1	Tricep Dips	-
1	E1	Tricep Extensions	bottom of ring @ top of hips

<b>Week 4</b>	<b>Letter</b>	<b>Exercise</b>	<b>Intensity</b>
1	A1	Ring Dips	-
1	B1	Archer Pushups	bottom of ring at top of ankle
1	C1	Chest Flies	bottom of ring at top of knee
1	D1	Tricep Dips	-
1	E1	Tricep Extensions	bottom of ring @ bottom of hips

## **Increasing the lifespan of gymnastic rings**

When treated with respect, the gymnastic rings and straps will last for many years without requiring replacement. Adhere to the following guidelines:

- *Never leave the rings in the sun or rain for extended periods of time.*
- *Take the rings down after training when used outside - store in a dry location.*
- *Don't anchor the straps over surfaces which will cause fraying.*
- *Avoid throwing the rings on the floor in frustration when failing to progressively overload.*

## **NUTRITION, BODY COMPOSITION & RATE OF MUSCLE GAINS**

### **Nutrition and developing muscle mass with BBR**

Nutrition for body composition and building muscle is going to be simplified in this section in order to avoid causing paralysis by analysis. Discussing nutritional protocols is beyond the scope of this eBook. There are copious amounts of information online regarding nutrition. Regardless of what style of nutrition is followed, the principles below are imperative for a natural individual looking to alter body composition whilst bodyweight training.

***Caloric surplus = Build muscle.***

***Caloric deficit = Lose fat whilst sustaining  
as much muscle as possible.***

There is much debate regarding the concept that one can maintain the same bodyweight whilst losing fat and gaining muscle simultaneously. If it is possible, the process will be significantly slower than inducing a slight caloric surplus.

The body requires an environment with a presence of additional nutrients to synthesise muscle tissue. With bodyweight training, a compromise must be made. If one puts on too much weight in a short period of time, it will be counterproductive to the strength training progress. Remember, we are manipulating our bodies in space - every additional kg of unnecessary tissue makes this more challenging. The best approach is a gradual increase in weight gain as the body can only build muscle at a given rate. Patience is the important factor once again, a good rate of weight gain would be to aim for ~0.5-1kg per month at the most (this equates to 6-12kg gained in a year.) Slow down the rate of weight gain or go into a maintenance phase when body fat percentage is getting too high. By taking the process slowly, strength gains will be progressive through adapting to training at an increased bodyweight. Additionally, a gradual increase in bodyweight will result in a larger proportion of muscle in relation to fat gained during this period. For more information on this concept, check out the FitnessFAQs YouTube video [Maximum Natural Rate of Muscle Growth](#).

### **Final words:**

Now that you have read this guide on how to follow and manage training with BBR, watch the exercise videos and become familiar with correct exercise form. The training logs provided should be used to input training numbers and to monitor intensity as the weeks progress. The results achieved will be the cultivation of an ongoing progress, consistency and a commitment to achieving the goals you desire. I hope the BBR training system serves you well,

**Daniel Vadnal** (FitnessFAQs)

**For all queries and feedback regarding BBR:**

[contact@bodybyrings.com](mailto:contact@bodybyrings.com)

**For more information about  
bodyweight training, visit:**

<http://www.youtube.com/FitnessFAQs>  
<http://www.instagram.com/FitnessFAQs>  
<http://www.bodyweightevolution.com>

**Personalised online coaching services:**

[fitnessfaqspt@gmail.com](mailto:fitnessfaqspt@gmail.com)

**Spread the word and connect  
with others using BBR**

Share your training videos or progress photos  
by using the #bodybyrings on all social media platforms.

