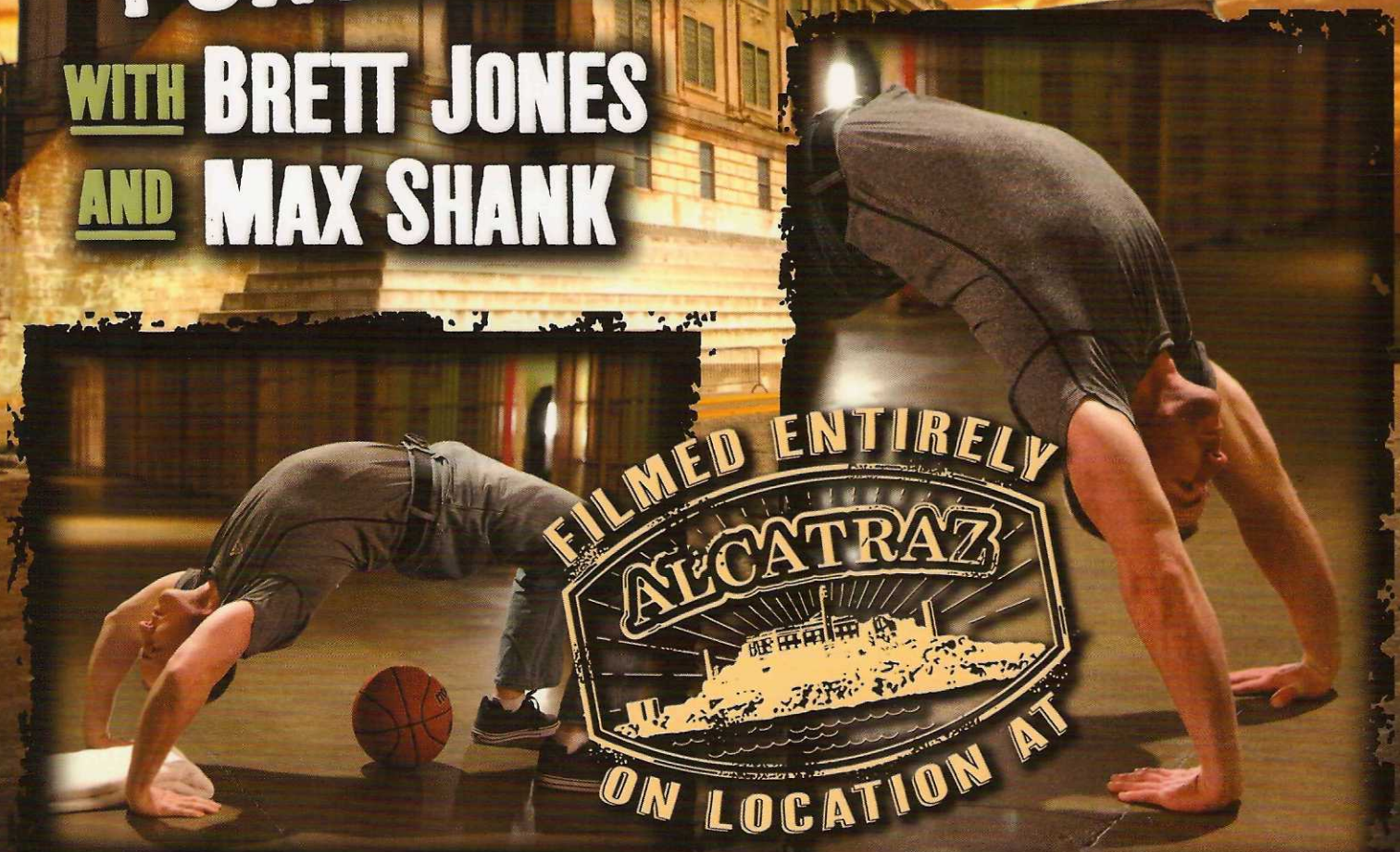
PAUL "COACH" WADE'S

CONVICT CONDITIONING

VOLUME IV:

ADVANCED BRIDGING: FORGING AN IRON SPINE

WITH BRETT JONES AND MAX SHANK



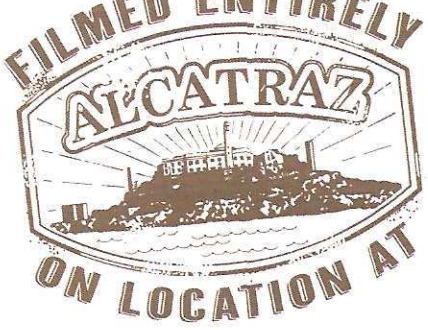
PAUL "COACH" WADE'S

CONVICT CONDITIONING

VOLUME IV:

ADVANCED BRIDGING: FORGING AN IRON SPINE

WITH BRETT JONES AND MAX SHANK



DISCLAIMER!

Fitness and strength are meaningless qualities without ***health***. With correct training, these three benefits should naturally proceed hand-in-hand. In this book, every effort has been made to convey the importance of safe training technique, but despite this all individual trainees are different and needs will vary. Proceed with caution, and at your own risk. Your body is your own responsibility-look after it. All medical experts agree that you should consult your physician before initiating a training program. Be safe!

Despite this, the author maintains that all the exercise principles within this volume-techniques, methods and ideology-are valid. Use them, and become the best.

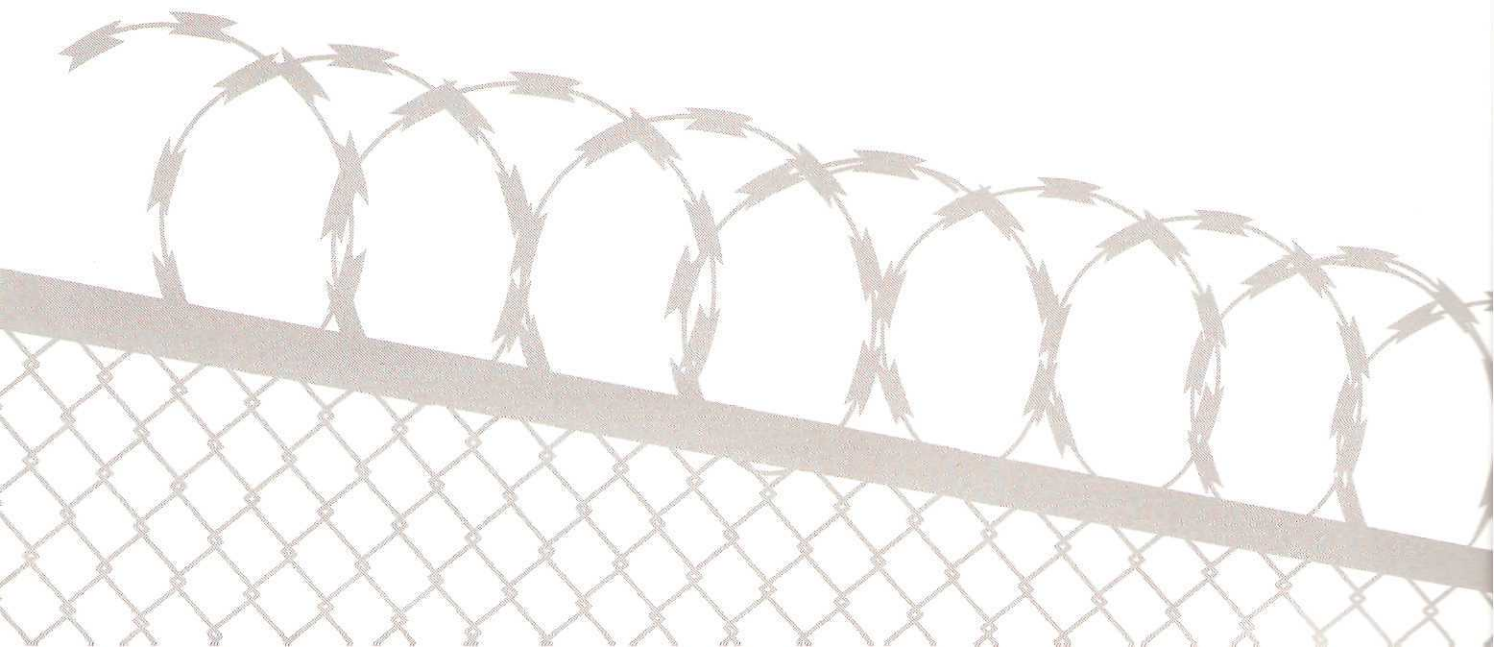


TABLE OF CONTENTS

CELL 1: BRIDGING THEORY 1

THE TEN BRIDGING COMMANDMENTS 3

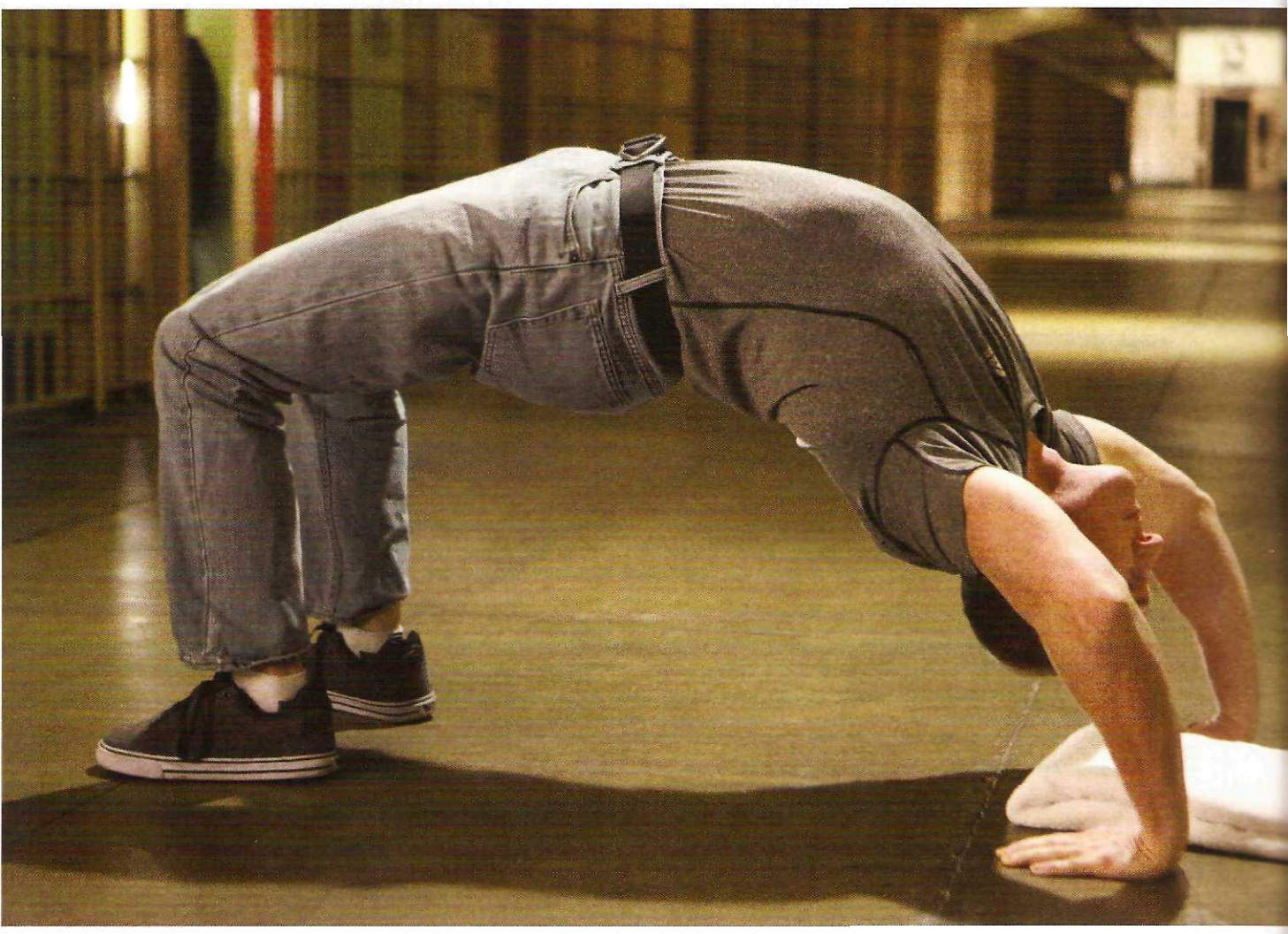
CELL 2: THE BRIDGE SERIES 15

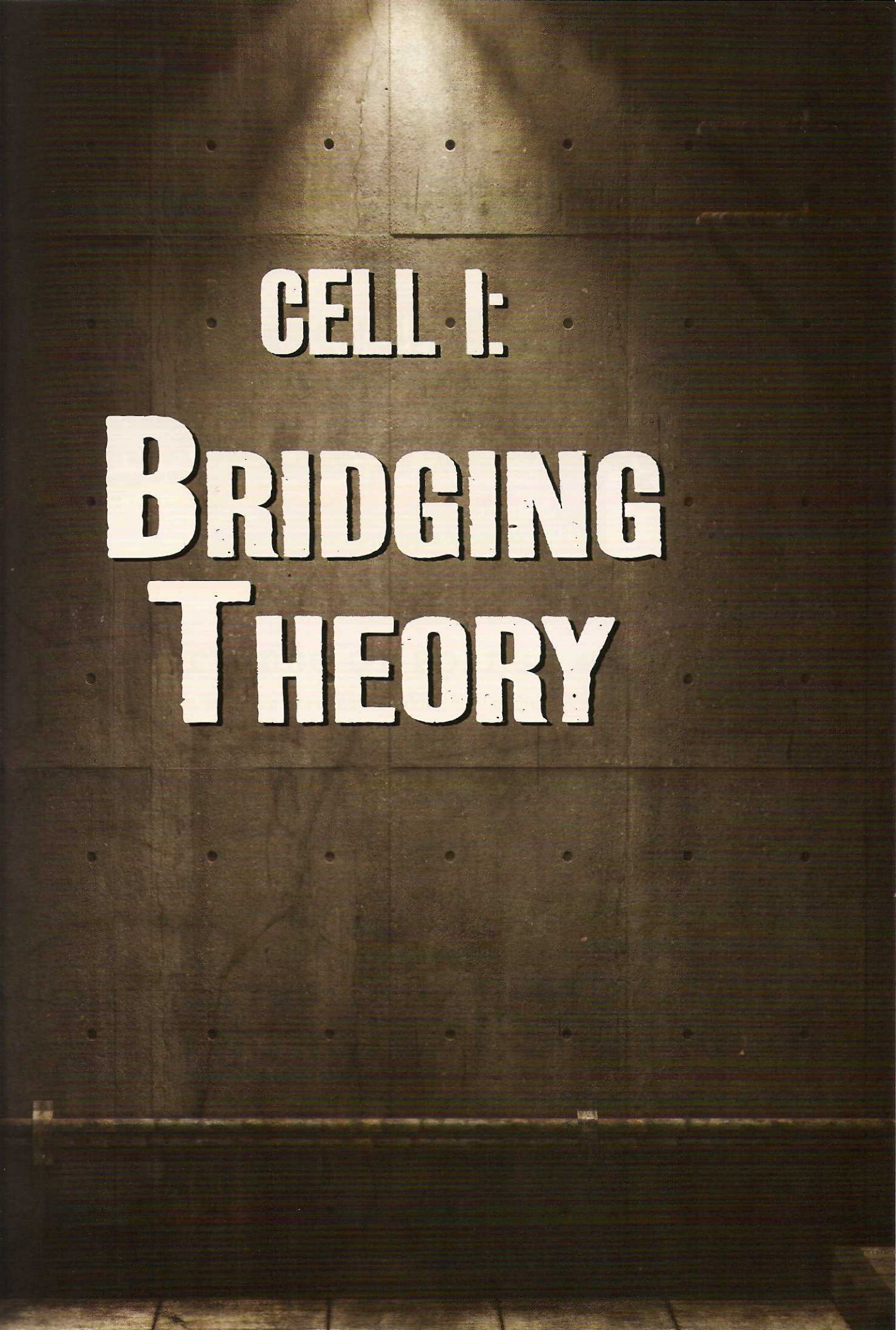
Step 1: SHORT BRIDGES 17
Step 2: STRAIGHT BRIDGES 21
Step 3: ANGLED BRIDGES 25
Step 4: HEAD BRIDGES 29
Step 5: HALF BRIDGES 33
Step 6: FULL BRIDGES 37
Step 7: WALL WALKING BRIDGES (DOWN) 41
Step 8: WALL WALKING BRIDGES (UP) 47
Step 9: CLOSING BRIDGES 51
Step 10: *MASTER STEP*
STAND-TO-STAND BRIDGES 55
BRIDGE SERIES SUMMARY 59

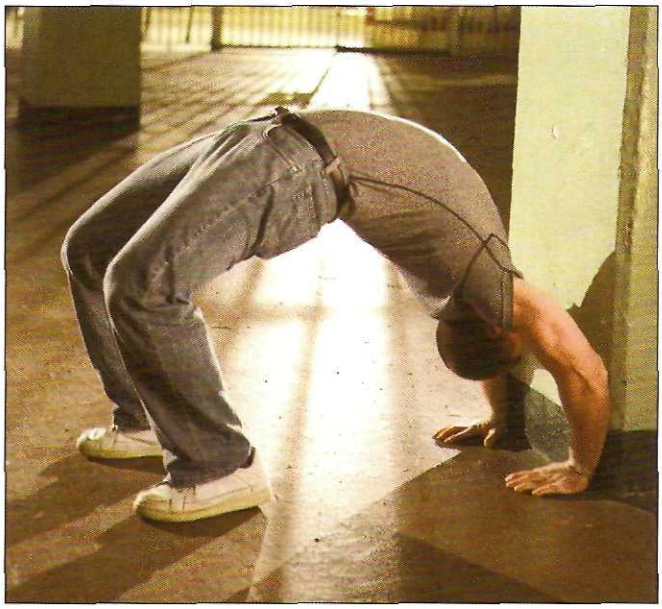
CELL 3: THE VARIANTS 61

TRIPOD BRIDGE 64
BOW HOLD 66
CAMEL HOLD 68
INVERSE HYPEREXTENSIONS 70

OUTRO 73




CELL I:
BRIDGING
THEORY



The importance of spinal work.

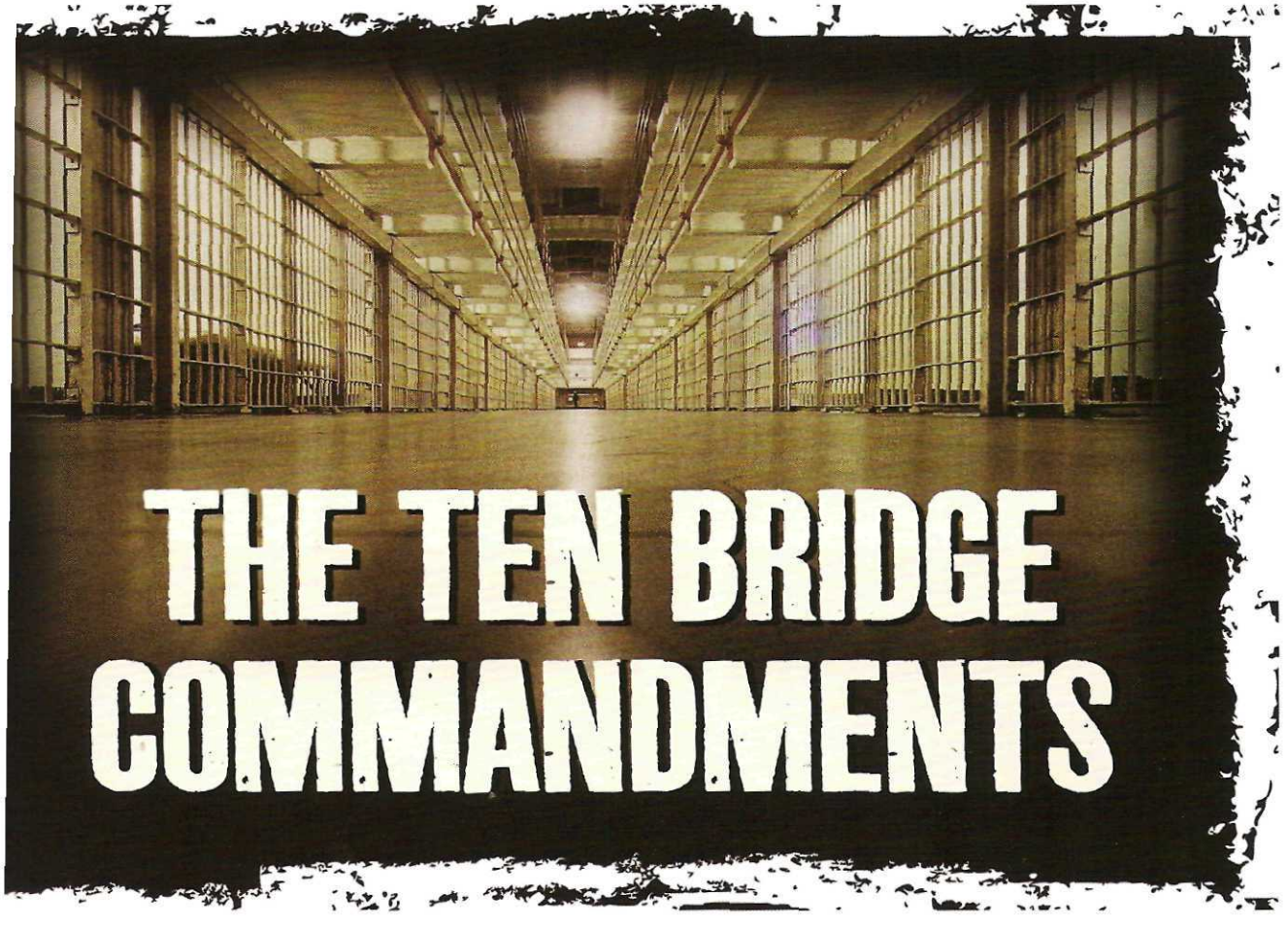
If you go into any gym, you'll see lots of guys working hard to train their biceps, their pecs, their lats and so on. But perhaps the most neglected muscles in modern strength training are the muscles of the back—in particular the deep layer of muscles that run up and along the spine. These are the *spinal erectors*. The spinal column and hips are an essential feature of any body that needs to be strong or athletic. This area is like the universal joint on a motor car. All the pressure of running, punching, lifting and tackling goes straight through the spine—so if you want a body that's explosive, powerful and as injury-proofed as possible, the best way to get it isn't through working your "beach muscles" like your biceps or pecs, the way so many guys on the outside do. The best way to toughen up your entire body is by toughening up your spinal column.

The convict approach.

Previous generations of prison athletes understood the role that the back and spine muscles play in overall toughness. In a way, prison athletes, certainly before the seventies, were *lucky* when it came to spinal training; they didn't have access to the kind of distractions that athletes on the outside had. We're talking about Nautilus back training machines, Cybex machines, hyperextension units or cable machines. Back in the day, convicts didn't even have weights to train their backs with—no deadlifts, good mornings or cleans. If prisoners wanted to build powerful back muscles, they had to access the more ancient, traditional methods, using bodyweight alone. Luckily for them, the very finest back training techniques are bodyweight exercises—variations of the bridge family of techniques.

About the bridge.

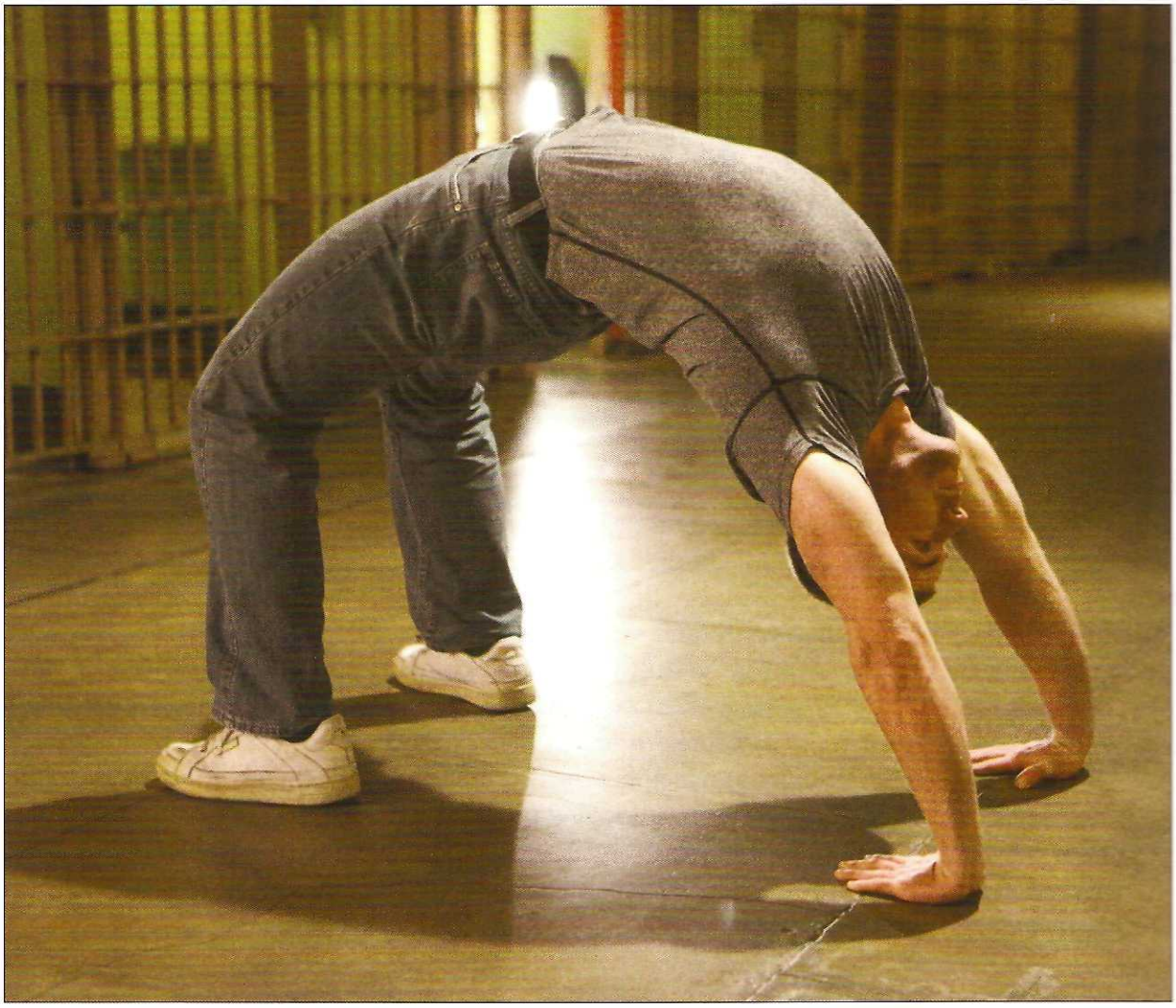
Bridges are so-called because you press your back up into a bridge. You might have seen similar exercises in yoga, gymnastics, or perhaps wrestling and martial arts. Bridging is an excellent, ancient approach to building a strong, supple spine—and if you do it properly it's very safe. A lot of weightlifting for the back involves bending *forwards* with a heavy weight, and this can cause the discs to pop out, or make muscles rupture or split when the spine is stretched forwards under great pressure. Bridging is different; it involves *arching* the back. This "locks" the vertebrae into place, prevents slipped discs and actually heals old back injuries rather than generating new ones. Prison bridges are different from most approaches because instead of just holding the bridge position, or moving to different positions, the athlete repeats the technique over and over, going up and down and back again—just like you would if you were doing pushups, for example. This approach not only increases flexibility, stamina and tendon strength all at the same time, it also goes a long way towards building *muscle*. It's pretty cool to have twin pythons of solid beef running up your spine. And prison-style bridges are also a fantastic workout for the shoulders, arms and legs.



Before we launch into the specific exercises of the bridging series, we're going to follow the approach we used for all the DVDs in this collection, and plant ten ideas in your mind. These ten ideas really are the "x-factor" of spinal training—the kind of stuff you just won't find in training magazines and videos, and probably won't be taught unless you've spent some time behind bars. This is the stuff you need to know if you want to take your bridging from "okay" to "world class". Each of these "Ten Commandments" of bridging relate to any bridging exercise you do. We're not going to repeat each of these ten for every exercise we show you later, so it's your responsibility to remember them. Take a look at them now, and return to this section later when you actually begin your bridging program. Okay, let's look at the ten bridging commandments.

COMMANDMENT I: MOVE YOURSELF!

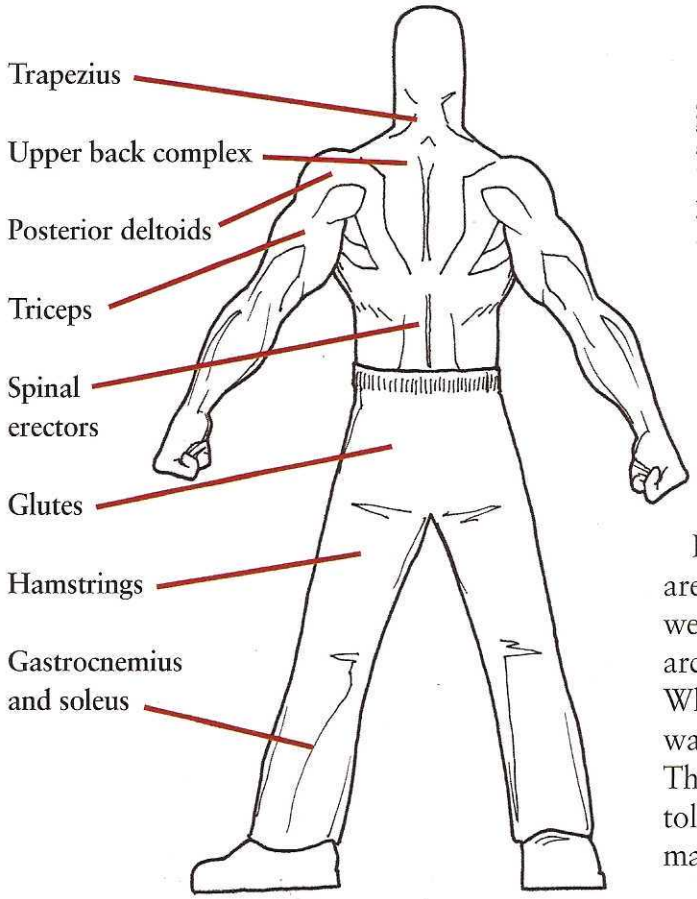
Many people know bridging movements from eastern disciplines like yoga. As a result many people think of the bridge as a "hold". You get into, say, a full bridge, and you hold it. Like this.



In traditional western-type strength training where bridging movements are still used to strengthen the spine—wrestling and gymnastics are good examples—the bridge is a *dynamic* movement. It involves motion; it's not just a static hold. You move up and down.

The way bridges are done in American prisons are more akin to the western way. When you do pullups, you do, say, two sets of ten repetitions. The same is true for pushups, or leg raises. It's also true for bridges. Don't just push up into a single bridge, hold it, then relax. When you bridge, perform sets and reps, the exact same way you would for any other exercise. Yoga is great for suppleness and gentle toning, but if you want a powerful spine with dense tendons and thicker muscles, you should be using the bridge to *repeatedly* move your bodyweight up and down. Muscles gain size and strength fastest when you fatigue their cellular energy, and the most efficient way to do this is through movement under resistance. Using bridges as a moving, up-and-down, up-and-down exercise will also work more muscle groups than just holding the top position of a bridge. Your back has evolved to move, and as you press up and down into your bridges, emphasis shifts from one set of muscles to others. There certainly are benefits to holding the bridge at the top, not least the fact that it stimulates the deepest layer of spinal tissue. Combine both techniques. Move during bridging practice, and pause at the top. This leads us automatically to the next commandment.

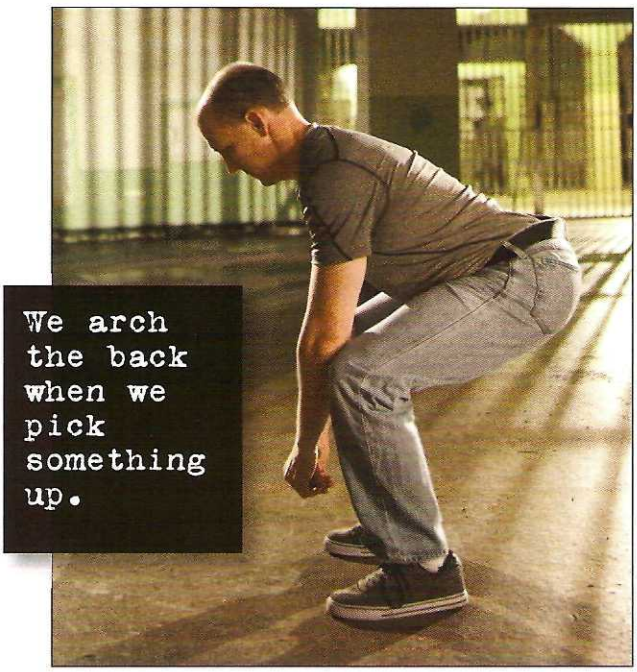
There are lots of exercises which work the posterior chain; you can do hamstring curls for the back of the thighs, hyperextensions or deadlifts for the spine, shrugs for the trapezius muscles, and so on. But no exercise in existence works the spine as well as the bridge. Many other exercises, particularly weighted exercises, move the back up and down, but bridging works the spinal arch to its maximum degree. This in turn works the deepest muscles of the spine, the ones running along and in-between the vertebrae, which are often only superficially worked by barbell training. The bridge, essentially, is an exercise in arching the spine under the body's own resistance. The arch is most pronounced at the top of the bridge, when you're pushing as high as you can. For this reason, to strengthen the deep muscles of the back as much as possible, you should "milk" your bridges by always pausing at the top, when your are at your most arched—for at least a count of "one". A two count would be better, if you really want to reap the rewards of a powerful spinal arch.

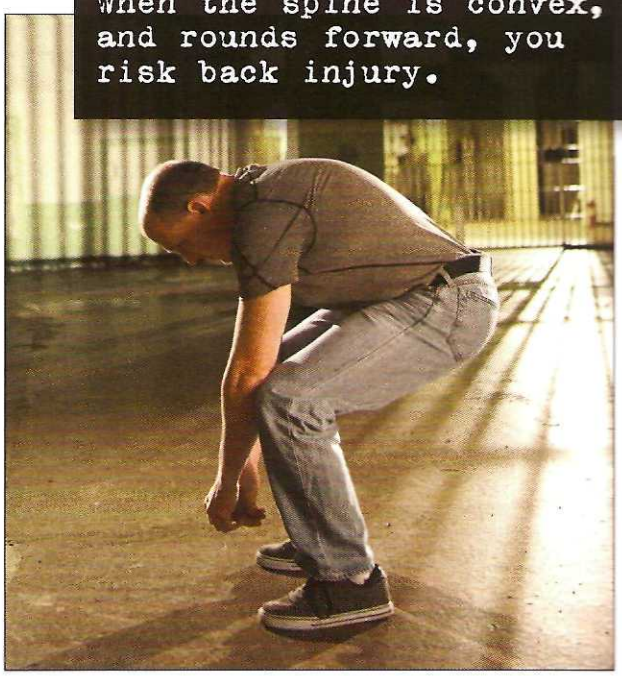


POSTERIOR CHAIN

Powerful, healthy spinal erectors which are trained to arch well are worth their weight in gold to any strength athlete. Any architect will tell you how strong an arch is. When the spine is convex, and rounds forward, you risk all types of nasty back injury. That's why, when we lift heavy objects, we're told to arch the back slightly if we can—it makes us stronger and much safer.

We arch the back when we pick something up, curl something; powerlifters even arch their spines during "upper body" movements like the bench press. Make the most of your bridging exercises and always make the effort to hold it when the arch is at its highest point. It will be incredibly worthwhile if you do this.


We arch the back when we pick something up.

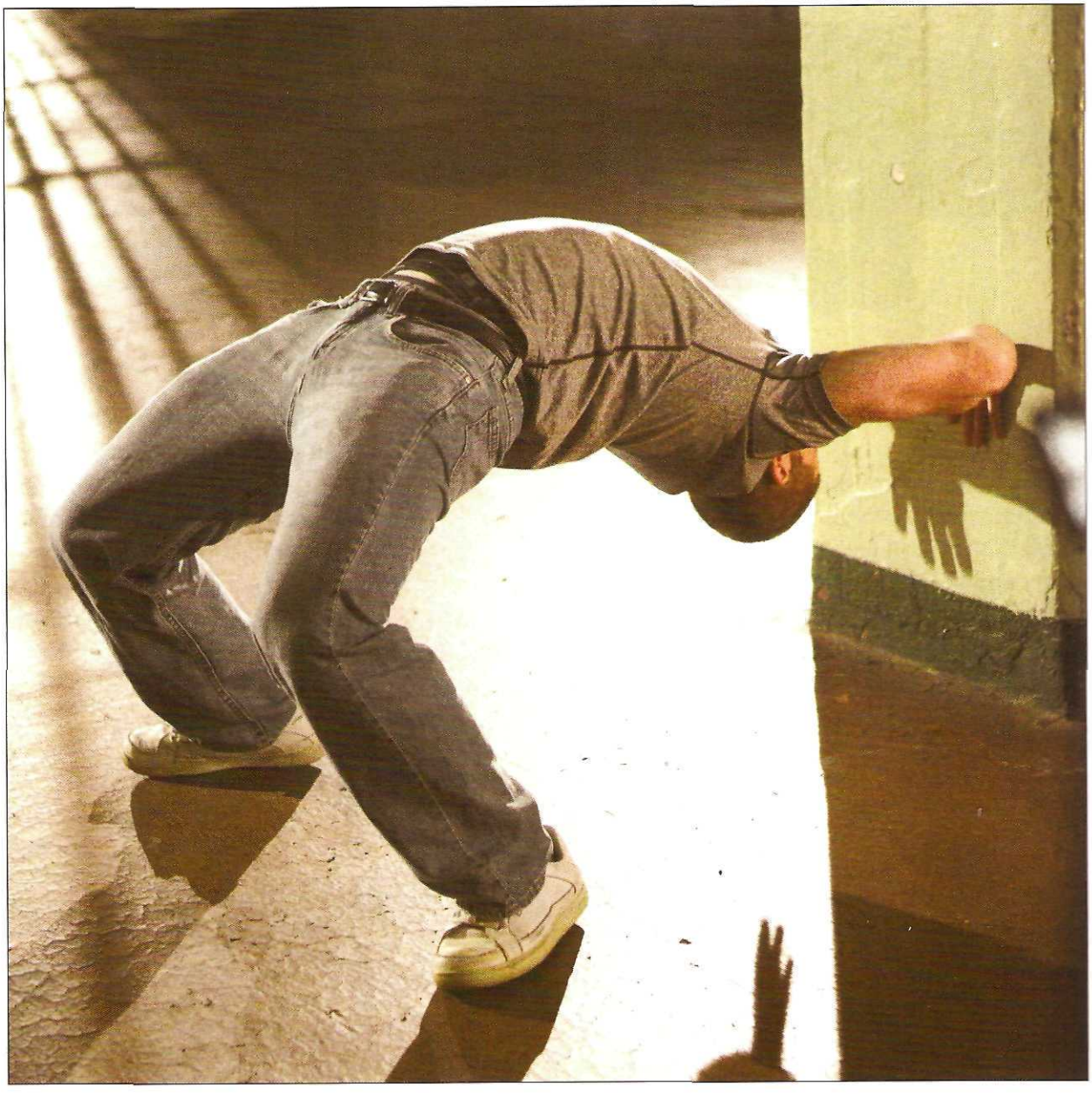

When the spine is convex, and rounds forward, you risk back injury.

COMMANDMENT 3: BREATHE SMOOTHLY!

With a lot of exercises—such as squats, pushups and leg raises—athletes are often advised to breathe a certain way; for example during a pushup it's helpful to inhale on the way down and breathe out on the way up. This use of alternating breathing relative to your direction exploits the natural expansion and contraction of the ribcage. When you begin performing more difficult bridges, your chest will be consistently open, and your diaphragm stretched. At first, you'll find it difficult to take in enough air. For this reason, the best approach to breathing during bridging *isn't* to try and link breathing to your movement. Instead, just try to breathe as normally and smoothly as possible. Avoid heaving, panting, choppy breaths, and focus on drawing in the good lungfuls of air you need during healthy exercise. This will be tough at first, because your ribs may be stiff. But do your best. Over time, your ribcage will gain strength and flexibility, and you'll be able to breathe deeply and smoothly when you bridge. Never hold your breath when you bridge.

COMMANDMENT 4: FEET SHOULDER WIDTH!

A lot of bridgers tend to spread their legs pretty wide. Sometimes, for wall walking bridges or closing bridges, advanced forms of bridging we will look at later, spreading the feet extra wide makes the exercise easier because it places you lower to the ground to begin with. If you're going to bend over backwards into a bridge, you're at an instant advantage if you're closer to the ground.



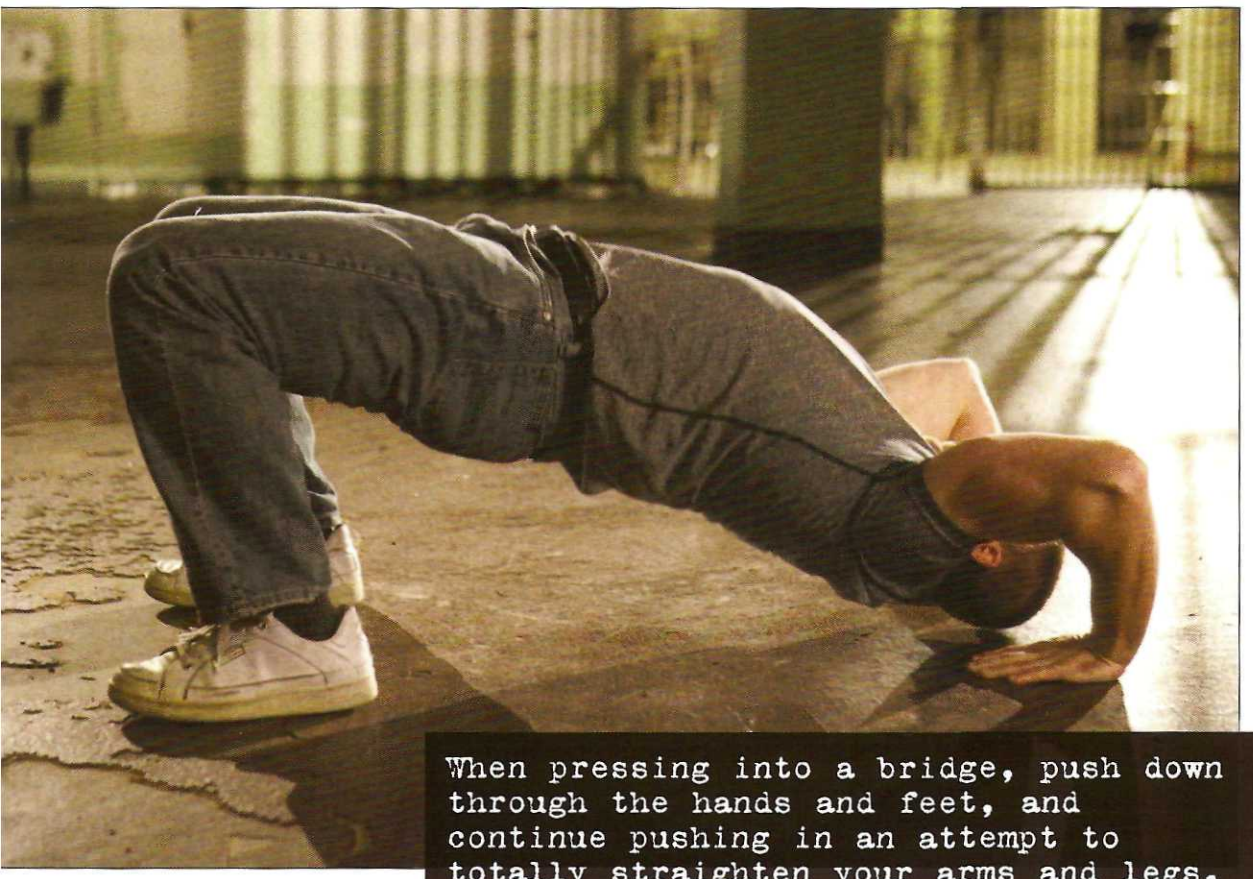
The reality is though, that very wide stances are a type of cheating; plus, they put the hips in a vulnerable position when you're bending back, and this can irritate them. Whenever you bridge—right from step one—avoid wide stances. Keep your feet shoulder width or a little narrower.

Get into this movement pattern and you'll gain greater strength and flexibility in bridging. When you get to later, more advanced stages, you won't need "tricks" because you'll have a grounding in good technique from the start.

COMMANDMENT 5: PUSH THROUGH ALL THE LIMBS!

It's no wonder that in some circles the full bridge, performed for reps, is actually called "the reverse pushup". This approach is the wrong one. The muscles of the posterior chain and even the spine are complex, and are activated by both the upper *and* lower limbs. You need to push into a full bridge with your arms *and* your legs.

This is why prison bodyweight systems often focus on basic bridging exercises which teach athletes how to bridge with the *legs* before the arms, so the lower body doesn't get forgotten down the road. When pressing into a bridge, push down through the hands and feet, and continue pushing in an attempt to totally straighten your arms and legs. Unless you are a contortionist and the perfect bridger, you won't actually be able to achieve this; but it's a good visualization technique to remember if you find yourself only pushing up with your arms.



When pressing into a bridge, push down through the hands and feet, and continue pushing in an attempt to totally straighten your arms and legs.

COMMANDMENT 6: USE YOUR ENTIRE HANDS!

When a lot of guys do bridges, they neglect to think what their hands are doing; and this is a mistake, because the forearms, elbows and upper arms follow the hands. That just means that the biomechanics of the lower and upper arms is directly linked to what the hands are doing. A lot of guys push through the palms, particularly the palm heel.

This is wrong. Whenever you press off your hands—whether in a pushup, a handstand pushup, or during a bridge—you should spread the tension evenly through your entire hand. Not just the palms, but also all the fingers, and the thumbs too.

Pressing this way not only strengthens the hands, it also transmits the moving forces of the exercise more evenly up the forearm. This in turn leads to fewer strain injuries to the forearm and elbows. These kinds of injuries—like golfer's elbow, tennis elbow or carpal tunnel—are common in weightlifting because during pressing motions the hands are wrapped around a bar, and the digits aren't free to extend as they evolved to. So when you bridge, use those digits and learn to push through the entire hand.

COMMANDMENT 7: PRESS YOUR CHIN UP!

Many athletes, when they bridge, are at a loss as to what to do with their head. They either struggle to hold their head up, or they just let it flop backwards under gravity. Both of these options are bad ideas. The noggin is pretty heavy—it can weight upwards of ten pounds. Straining to hold your head up while you bridge will quickly tire out the muscles of the throat, and letting your head just drop down does nothing for your bridging and may even injure the vertebrae of the neck. So how should you move your head during bridges? When you are bridging, certainly if you are doing anything beyond angled bridges, you should forget your head and instead *focus on pressing your chin up towards the ceiling.*

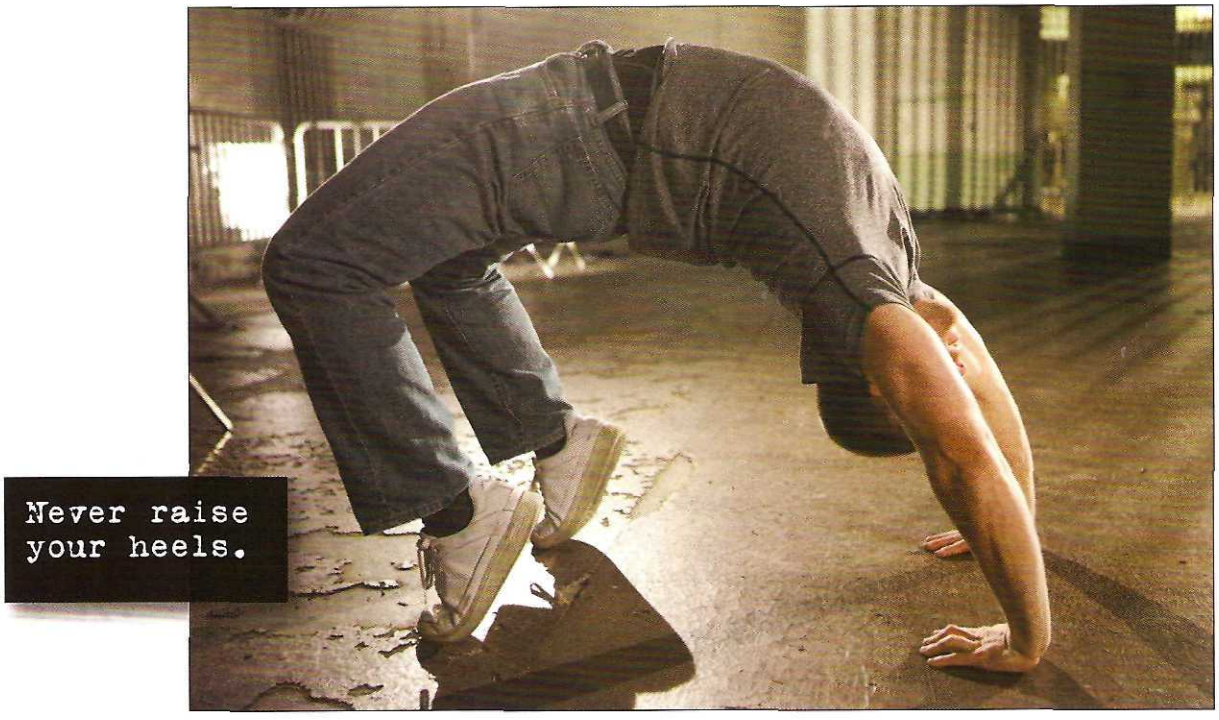
This action will automatically control the backwards rotation of your head. Keep pushing until you can see the wall behind you, and then stop. This technique activates the hard-to-reach muscles of the upper spine, the *cervical* spine, and makes this area more flexible and healthy. All forms of bridging strongly activate the lumbar spine and t-spine, but activating the c-spine as well will go a long way to improving your total suppleness and spinal strength. It will also improve your posture and, if performed correctly, eliminate a lot of neck pain.

A lot of strength coaches—the good ones, anyway—talk about squeezing the glutes, the butt muscles, during any back movement. This is because the glutes act as stabilizers to the vertebrae of the lower back, cushioning the lumbar area and giving an internal layer of protection. When you are bridging however, you don't need to worry about consciously squeezing your glutes. Instead, when you reach the top of any bridge movement, focus on pushing your hips up as high as they will go. You may only manage an inch or two of extra height—that's fine. But when you think you're at the top, make that extra effort to press the hips up into the air.

The glutes are the muscles at the back that extend the hips, so by pushing your hips high you are not only performing a better bridge, you are *automatically* contracting your glutes during the action. This motion will also release any tension in the tight hip flexors at the front, rendering them more flexible. So when you bridge, don't concentrate on tensing any individual muscle group. You don't need to. Concentrate on the *action* of pushing your hips up, and you'll increase your strength and flexibility while simultaneously protecting your lower back.

COMMANDMENT 9: HEELS FLAT!

When you see a lot of athletes bridge, particularly when using advanced variations like wall walking, you'll often see them lift their heels and go on tip-toes, like this.

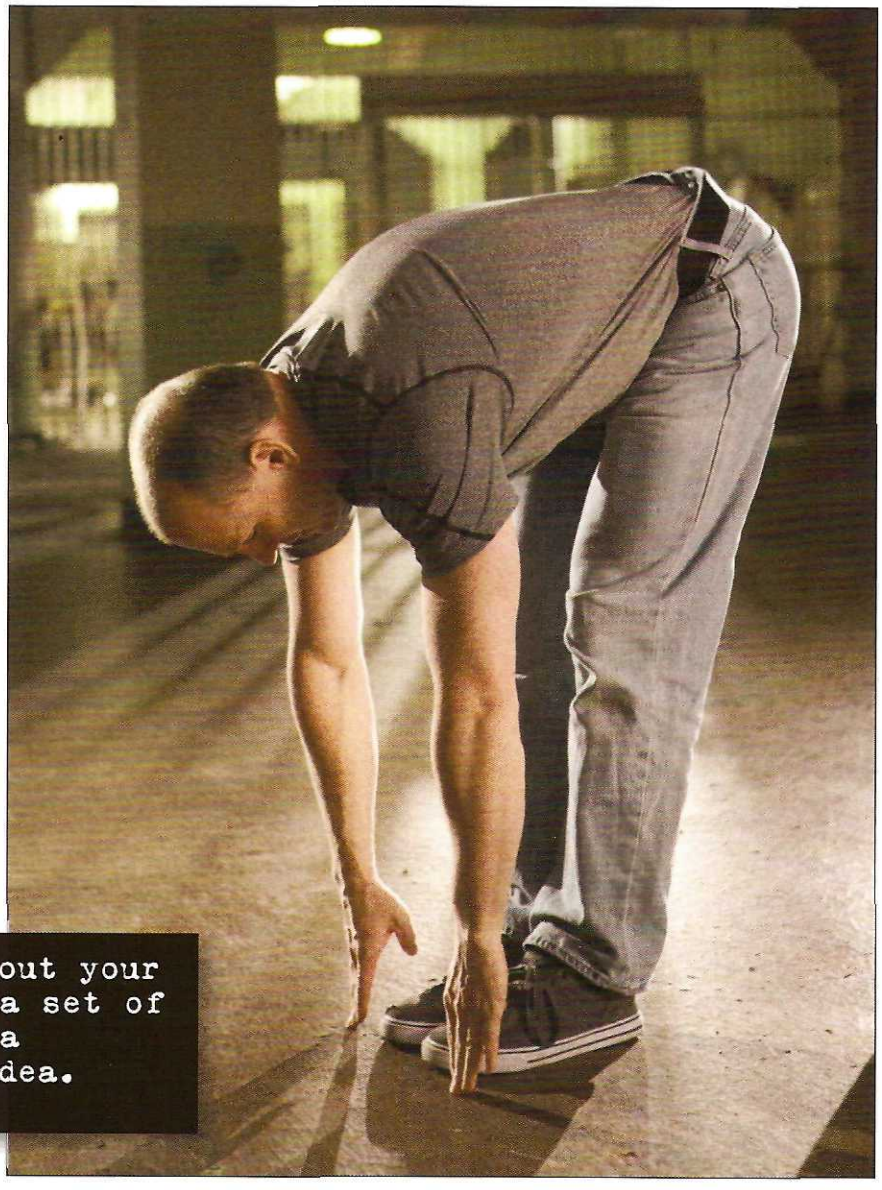


The justification is that this action takes pressure off the lower back. It is true that pressing down through the heels during bridging—or during any exercise where your feet are on the floor—activates the posterior chain of muscles. For this reason, lifting your heels can make you feel less tension in your back during bridging. But this is the opposite of what you want—the whole point of bridging is to train the deep muscles of the spine and posterior chain. If bridging causes your lower back to become sore because you lack flexibility, the solution isn't to lift your heels. The solution is to improve your flexibility. You do this by working through the bridging series methodically, increasing your hip and spine flexibility at the same pace as your strength. Keep your heels flat on the floor to get the most out of your bridging.

Never raise your heels.

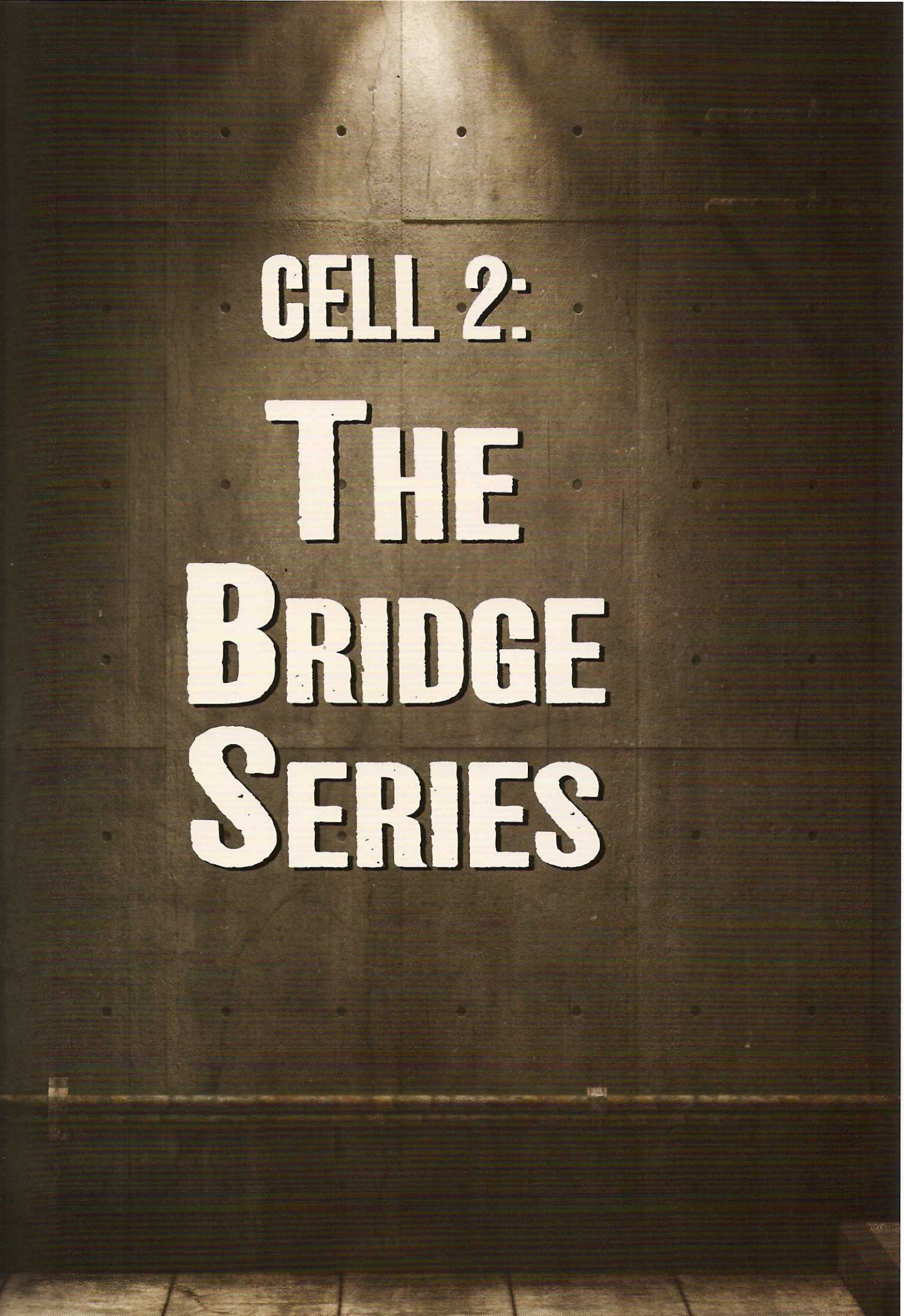
COMMANDMENT 10: RELEASE THE SPINE!

Bridging is a peak contraction exercise. This means that the muscles of the hips and spine, which are not used to being contracted much at all in modern life, are made to flex as hard as possible, to arch the spine. After you finish, your back will feel pumped up and tight, where the tension has been generated. If you flex your biceps hard, all the waste accumulated in the biceps drain away quite quickly, because the biceps is simple, and usually hangs quite relaxed. But the muscles of the spine and hips are complex, and tighten a little as soon as you stand or sit up. For this reason, your back can hold a lot of tension for a while after bridging. So briefly stretching out your back after a set of bridges is a wonderful idea. You can perform some stranding forward bends, or just round your spine forwards for ten seconds while lying on the floor.



Stretching out your back after a set of bridges is a wonderful idea.

Another option would be to follow a set of bridges with one of the leg raise movements, which stretch out the spine as you strengthen your core. Alternating these two is a particularly efficient way to train. Not only will this post-set stretching feel great because you're releasing the waste and tension built up in your back, but you'll also find you're more flexible after bridging because your nervous system is fired up and easier to control. You don't have to stretch *hard,* but if you're into serious stretching—maybe you're a martial artist—performing forwards stretches immediately after bridging is a wonderful idea. Because your back is hot and full of blood, the chances of a stretching injury will be greatly reduced.


CELL 2:
THE
BRIDGE
SERIES

Bridging has many benefits. It doesn't only make your whole body stronger, more supple, and less likely to get injured—bridging will even improve your posture, your digestion, and increase your lung capacity. But most people rarely even train, let alone bend over backwards. So when you begin to tackle bridging, it's important that you do it *gradually.*

In this section, we're going to show you ten bridging techniques. We'll begin with exercises that stimulate the spine and the protective muscles around the hips and back. After some more training to increase shoulder flexibility, we'll move on to exercises like the classic full bridge. From there, we'll move to even bigger movements like wall walking and closing bridges. These exercises are constructed in a ten step series that are designed to increase your flexibility, stamina, joint health and total body strength. By the time you reach the tenth step in the series—the Master Step—you'll be an expert bridger with incredible posterior chain strength and a spine like a steel whip. And your days of bad backs and tight hips will be a thing of the past.

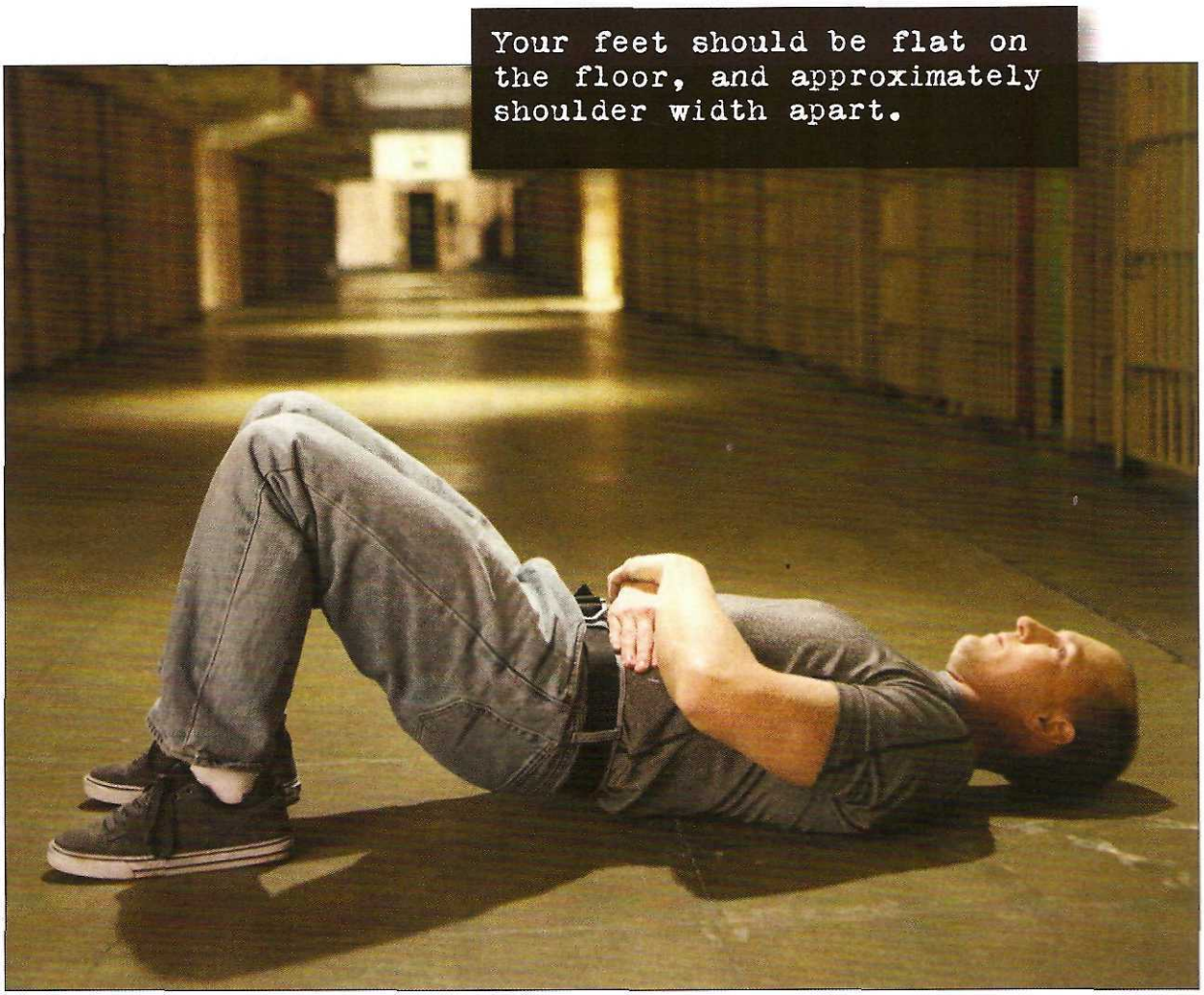
STEP I: SHORT BRIDGES

OVERVIEW

We've just discussed the importance of the posterior chain group of muscles; the spine, the hip flexors, glutes, hamstrings and so on. Most coaches understand how important this chain is, to basic actions such as sprinting, throwing, and so on. As a result, many people appreciate the importance of posterior chain training for strength, performance, and safety. Most people do this using weighted exercises like deadlifts or good mornings; but the best way to train your posterior chain is using bridges. Before we get to more advanced bridges, which require lots of waist and spine flexibility, it's best to start with short bridges which will strengthen your back and hips gradually and without strain.

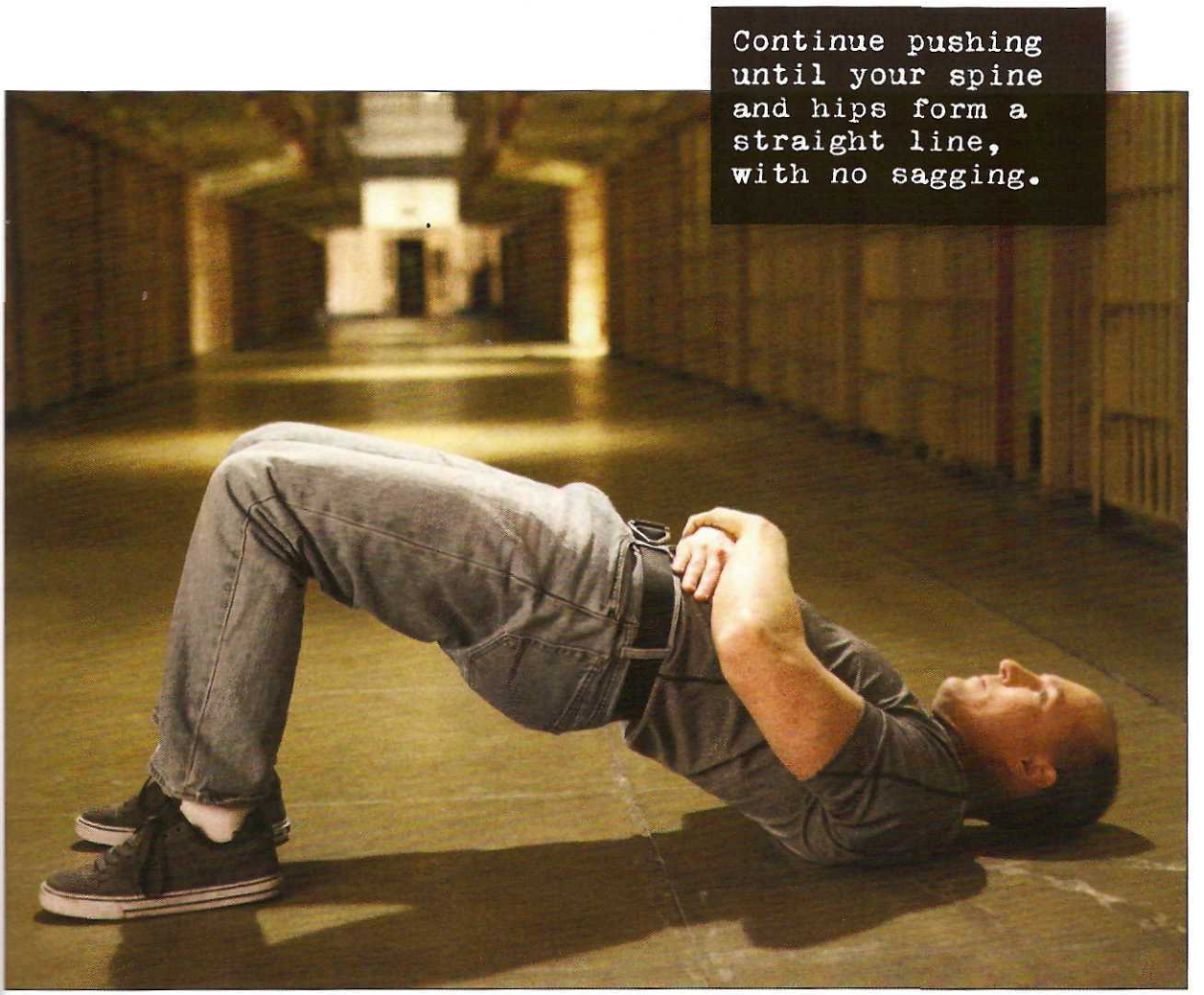
BASIC POSTURE

- Lie on your back with your hands crossed on your stomach.
- Your feet should be drawn in, approximately six to eight inches from your butt.
- Your feet should be flat on the floor, and approximately shoulder width apart.



POSITIVE

- Push through your feet and lift your butt off the floor.
- Keep your knees hands relaxed and neutral.
- Continue pushing until your spine and hips form a straight line, with no sagging.
- Breathe normally throughout the exercise.
- Pause in this position for at least a one count.



NEGATIVE

- Reverse the movement and slowly lower your hips back down.
- Lower yourself under muscular control—don't just collapse onto the floor.
- Continue until you have reached the starting position again, and repeat.

"HIDDEN STEPS" SHORT BRIDGES

- If the full range of motion is too strenuous to begin with, place some cushions or a rolled up blanket beneath your lower back or hips and push off those rather than the floor
- When you become more comfortable in the movement, remove the support

PROGRESSION LEVELS SHORT BRIDGES

• BEGINNER STANDARD:	1 set of 10 reps
• INTERMEDIATE STANDARD:	2 sets of 25 reps
• PROGRESSION STANDARD:	3 sets of 50 reps

Begin this exercise with one set of 10 reps, and gradually add reps from workout to workout. When you can perform a strict set of 25, add a second set of 10. Build up to two sets of 25, then add a third set of 10. From there, work up to three sets of 50 before moving to Step 2.

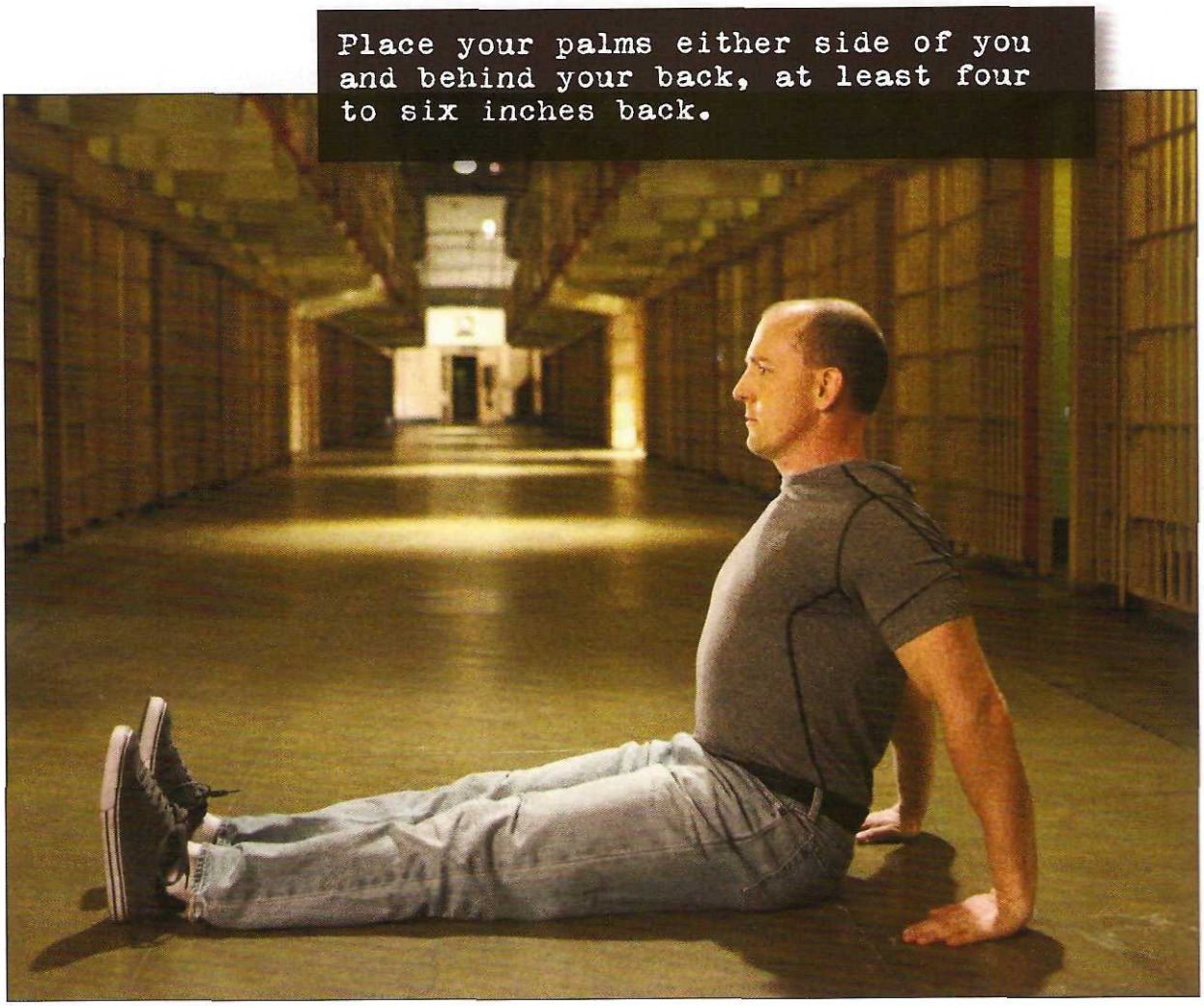
STEP 2: STRAIGHT BRIDGES

OVERVIEW

All kinds of bridges work the spinal muscles and hip extensors, the posterior chain muscles. In short bridges, you activated these posterior chain muscles through the lower limbs—you pushed down through the feet. This is how most people activate their spine and hips in everyday life. We run, we bend, we jump. Bridging is a *total* posterior chain exercise because it activates the spinal muscles from both ends—not just through the feet and hip girdle, but also through the hands and shoulder girdle. In Step 2, we're going to begin using the upper limbs as well. We're going to show you the most fundamental way to begin working with this aspect of bridging, and that's through straight bridges.

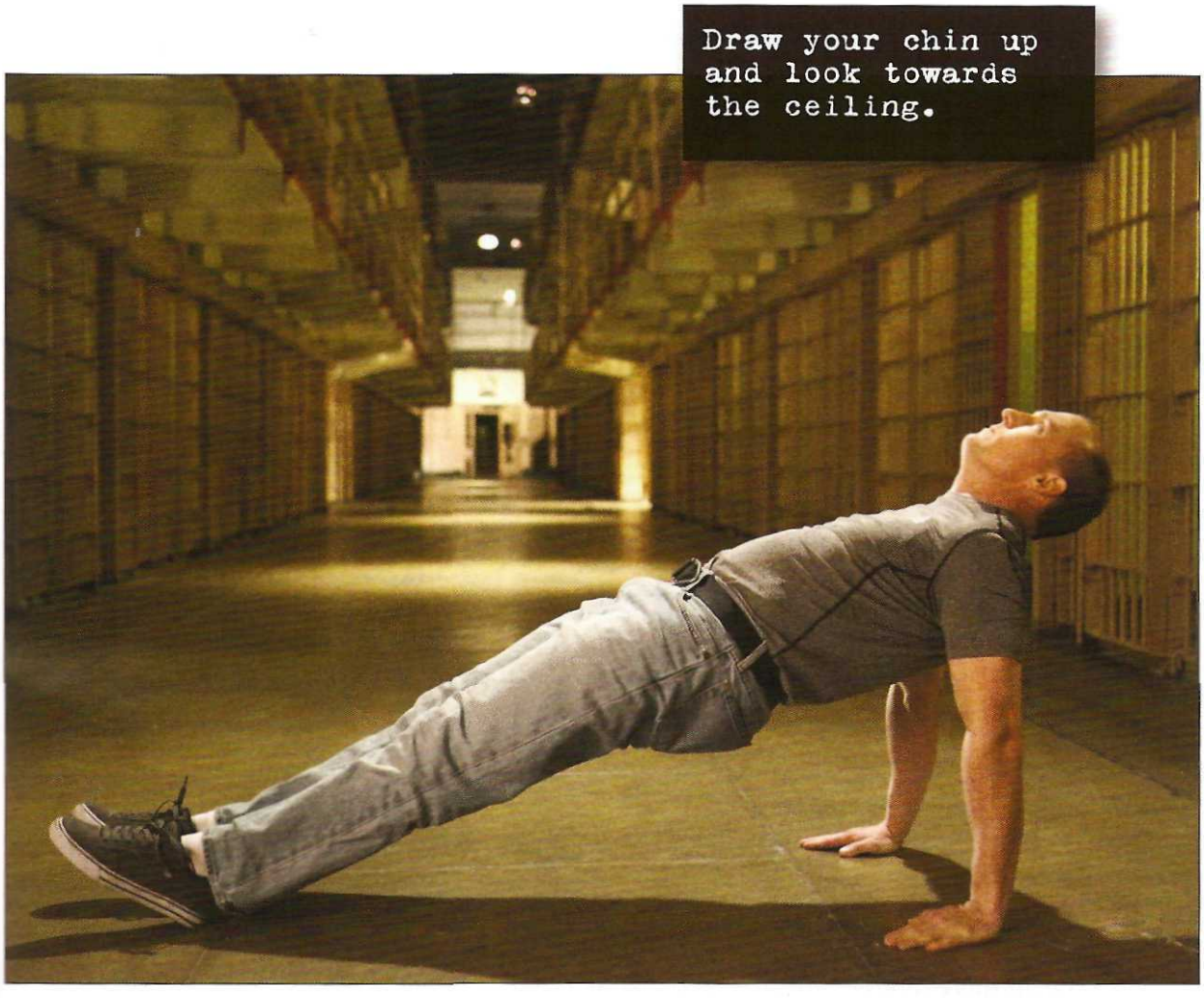
BASIC POSTURE

- Sit on the ground with your legs stretched out in front of you.
- Your legs should be straight, with your feet approximately shoulder width apart.
- Place your palms either side of you and behind your back, at least four to six inches back.
- Sit up straight, so that your body is in the jackknife position.



POSITIVE

- Push through your palms and heels and lift your butt off the floor.
- Keep your arms and legs locked straight.
- Draw your chin up and look towards the ceiling.
- Continue pushing until your spine, hips and legs all form a straight line, with no sagging.
- Breathe normally throughout the exercise.
- Pause in this position for at least a one count.



NEGATIVE

- Reverse the movement and slowly lower your hips back down.
- Lower yourself under muscular control—don't just collapse onto the floor.
- Continue until you have reached the starting position again, and repeat.

"HIDDEN STEPS" STRAIGHT BRIDGES

- To make the exercise easier, begin with bent legs, as for short bridges
- As you get stronger, inch your feet further from your hips from workout to workout, until your legs are finally fully straight

This exercise can be made easier by improving your leverage. This is done by bending the legs while keeping the arms straight. Over time, straighten your legs into the straight bridge.

PROGRESSION LEVELS STRAIGHT BRIDGES

- BEGINNER STANDARD: 1 set of 10 reps
- INTERMEDIATE STANDARD: 2 sets of 20 reps
- PROGRESSION STANDARD: 3 sets of 40 reps

Begin this exercise with one set of 10 reps, and gradually add reps from workout to workout. When you can perform a strict set of 20, add a second set of 10. Build up to two sets of 20, then add a third set of 10. From there, work up to three sets of 40 before moving to Step 3.

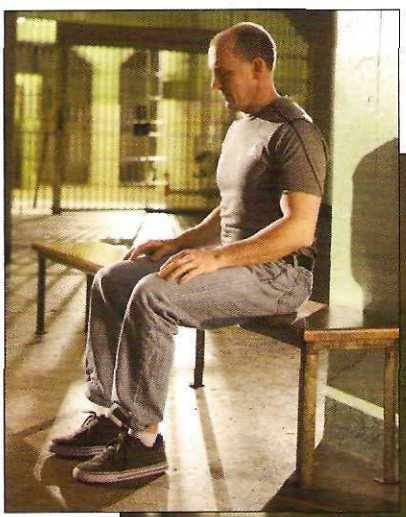
STEP 3: ANGLED BRIDGES

OVERVIEW

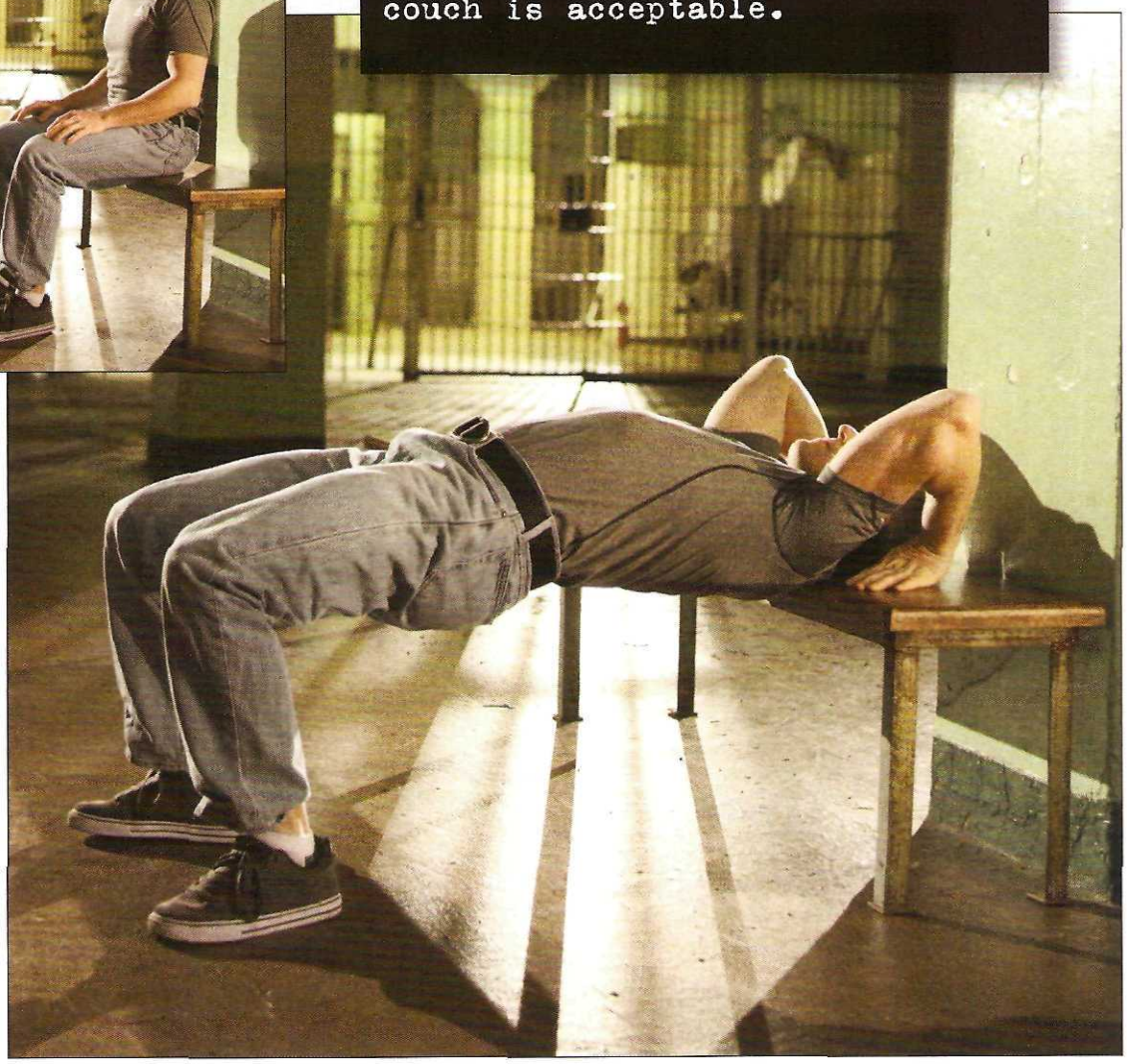
Short bridges and straight bridges will have strengthened and conditioned the muscles of your posterior chain, particularly the hamstrings, your glutes and the lower back, easing out stiffness or disuse issues and replacing them with healthy muscle. But if you want to master full bridges, you'll also need a shoulder girdle with the tension-flexibility required to properly perform the "palms alongside head" hand hold. Angled bridges are the first exercise where you utilize this classic position, but due to the angle, the range of motion and pressure through the arms and shoulders is reduced, making this a perfect transitional exercise to allow students to progress towards harder bridging.

BASIC POSTURE

- Sit on a sturdy object which reaches around knee-height or a little taller. Prisoners use bunks, but a bench, bed or couch is acceptable.
- Lay back, and shuffle forward so that your hips and lower back are clear of the surface.
- Your legs should be bent, with your feet approximately shoulder width apart.
- Place your hands either side of your head, with your fingers pointing down towards your feet.

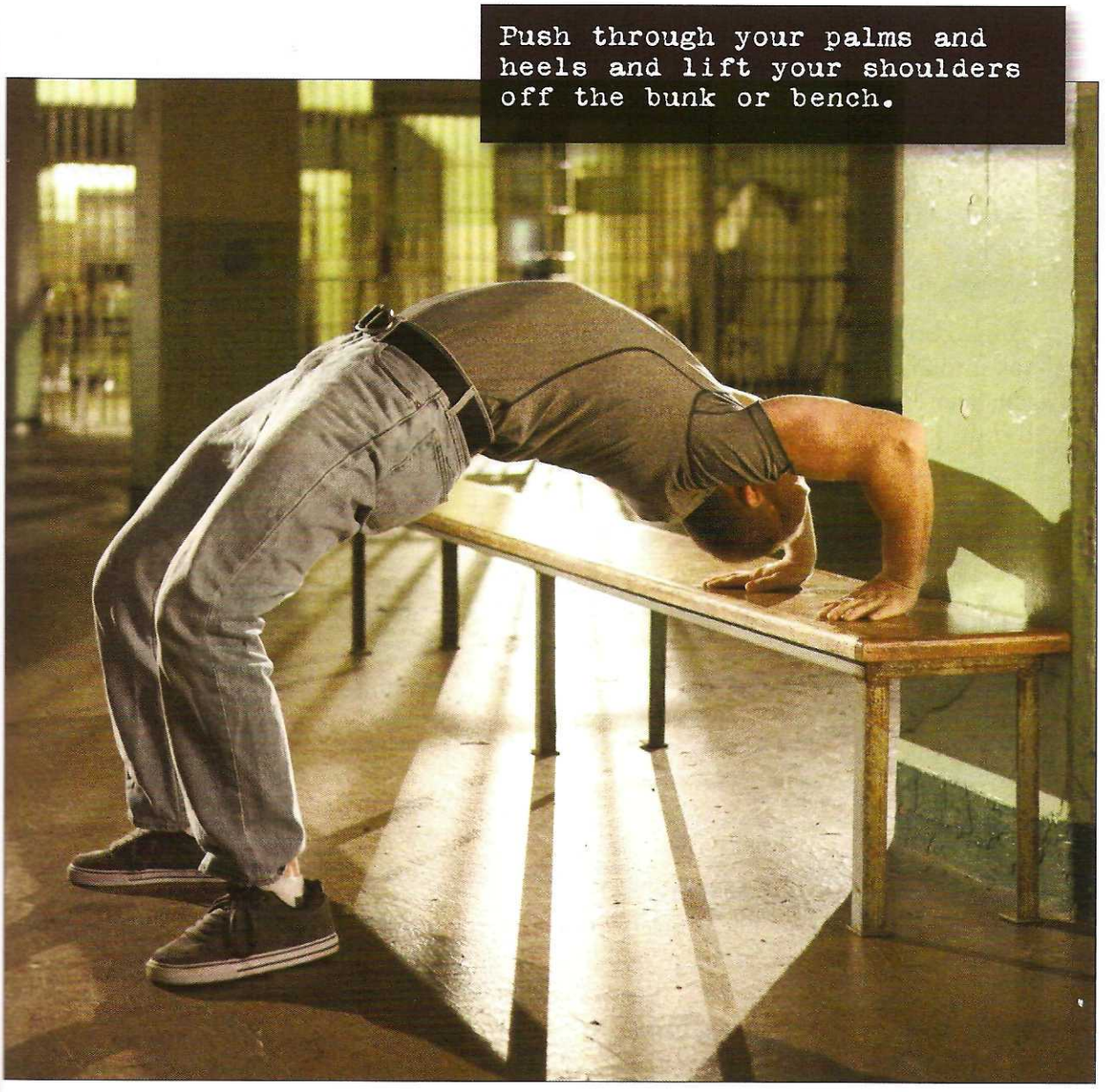


Sit on a sturdy object which reaches around knee-height or a little taller. Prisoners use bunks, but a bench, bed or couch is acceptable.



POSITIVE

- Push through your palms and heels and lift your shoulders off the bunk or bench.
- Draw your chin up and look towards the ceiling.
- Continue pushing until your shoulders have reached as high as possible.
- You will now be supporting your bodyweight using only your hands and feet.
- Pause in this position for at least a one count.


Push through your palms and heels and lift your shoulders off the bunk or bench.

NEGATIVE

- Reverse the movement and slowly lower your upper back and head down onto the bunk or bench.
- Breathe normally throughout the exercise.
- Continue until you have reached the starting position again, and repeat.

"HIDDEN STEPS" ANGLED BRIDGES

- To make your angled bridges easier, push off something higher, such as the edge of a sturdy desk or table
- When the exercise feels easy on the table return to the lower, knee-height base and attempt the bridges again from this angle

Angled bridging is easier the higher your hands are. If bridging off a bed or bunk is too hard at first, try using the edge of a desk or table and try the bunk again later.

PROGRESSION LEVELS ANGLED BRIDGES

• BEGINNER STANDARD:	1 set of 8 reps
• INTERMEDIATE STANDARD:	2 sets of 15 reps
• PROGRESSION STANDARD:	3 sets of 30 reps

Start angled bridges with a single set of 8 reps. Continue adding reps until you can do 15. At this point, add a second set of 8. Keep on adding strict reps until you can perform two sets of 15, then add a third set of 8. Gradually work up to three sets of 30 before moving to Step 4.

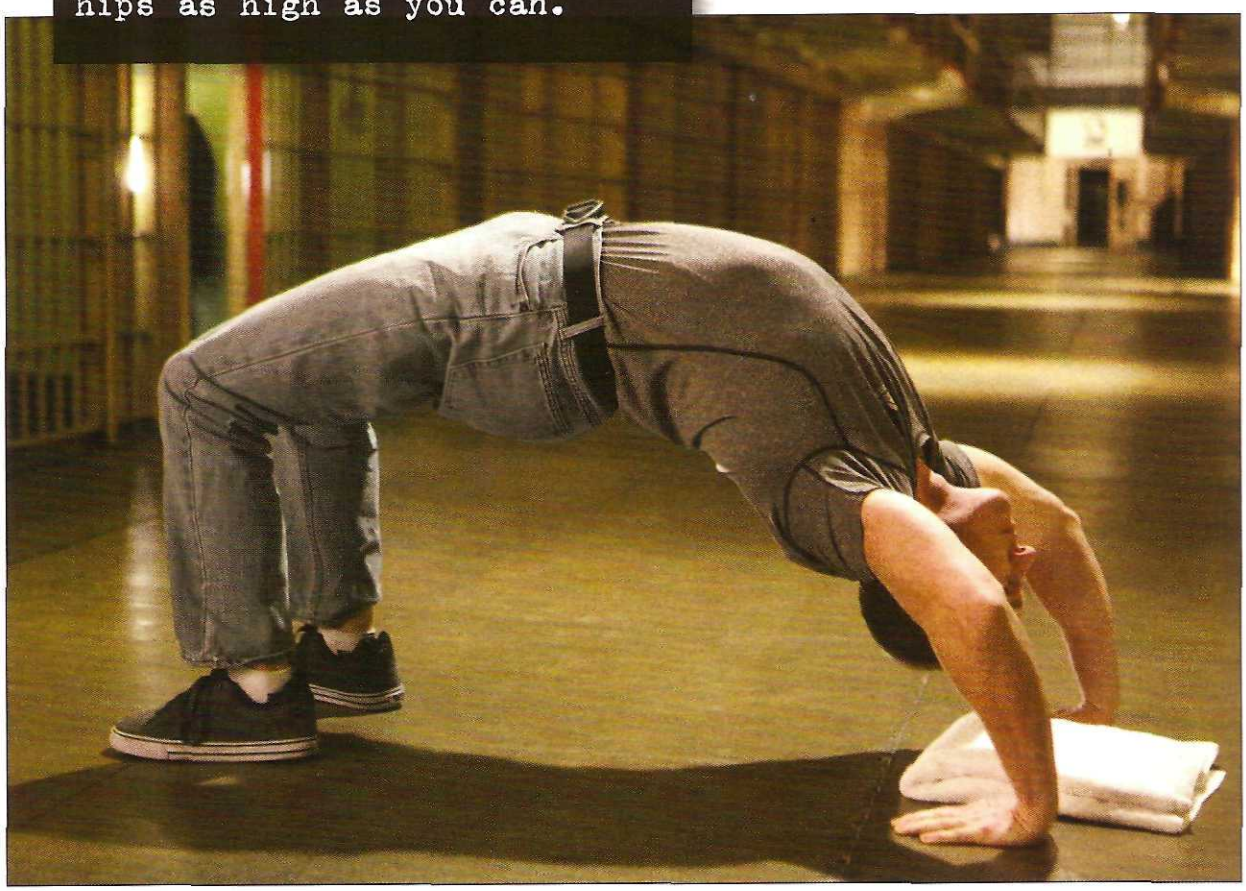
OVERVIEW

Once you've completed a course of angled bridges, your hands, wrists and arms will have the strength to support your bodyweight, and your shoulders will have the rotational tension-flexibility required to maintain the "palms alongside head" position under tension. This means most people will be able to hold a bridge in the top position. Pushing yourself into a bridge all the way from a flat floor will be somewhat harder on the shoulders however, so before you launch into full bridges, it makes sense to continue your training gradually, by working only on the top half of the full bridge. That's the purpose behind this stage.

BASIC POSTURE

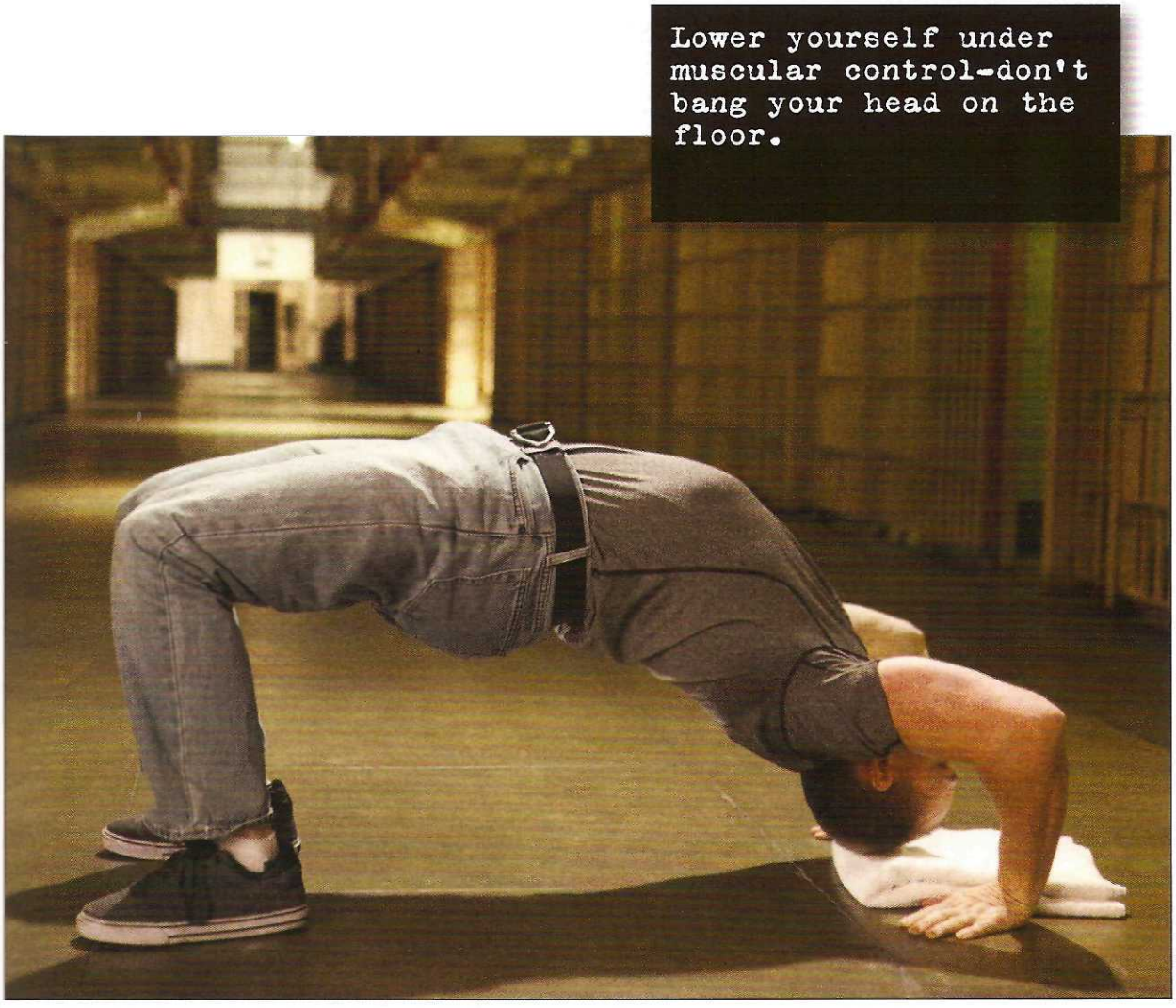
- Lie flat on your back.
- Your feet should be drawn in, approximately six to eight inches from your butt.
- Your feet should be flat on the floor, and approximately shoulder width apart.
- Place your hands either side of your head, with your fingers pointing down towards your feet.
- Press down through your arms and legs and lift your back off the floor.
- Arch your back and push your hips as high as you can.
- Draw your chin up and look towards the wall behind you.

Arch your back and push your hips as high as you can.



NEGATIVE

- Keeping the arch in your spine, smoothly bend your arms and legs.
- Lower yourself under muscular control—don't bang your head on the floor.
- Continue descending until your head gently makes contact with the floor.



POSITIVE

- Push through your palms and heels again, lifting the head from the floor.
- Keep your chin pointing to the ceiling.
- Continue pushing until you are back in the top position, with your hips as high as you can get them.
- Breathe normally throughout the exercise.
- Pause in the bridge hold for at least a one count before repeating the technique.

"HIDDEN STEPS" HEAD BRIDGES

- To enable you to get into the initial bridge hold, support your lower back with a base, such as a basketball (See: Half Bridges)
- If touching the head to the floor is too difficult, place one or two books under your head before you begin, and touch your head to them. As you gain strength, remove the books

If you can't get into a full bridge hold yet, pushing off with a basketball under your hips will help you. If touching the head to the floor is a problem, increase your range over time.

PROGRESSION LEVELS HEAD BRIDGES

• BEGINNER STANDARD:	1 set of 8 rep
• INTERMEDIATE STANDARD:	2 sets of 15 reps
• PROGRESSION STANDARD:	2 sets of 25 reps

Begin this exercise with one set of 8. When you have built to 15 reps, add a second set and continue adding strict reps whenever you can. Since we are moving towards harder bridges now, stick with two work sets and build to 25 reps on each set before moving to Step 5.

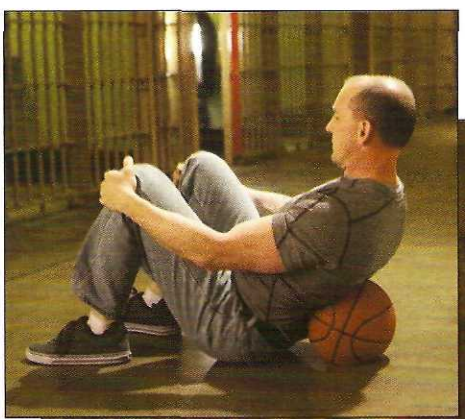
STEP 5: HALF BRIDGES

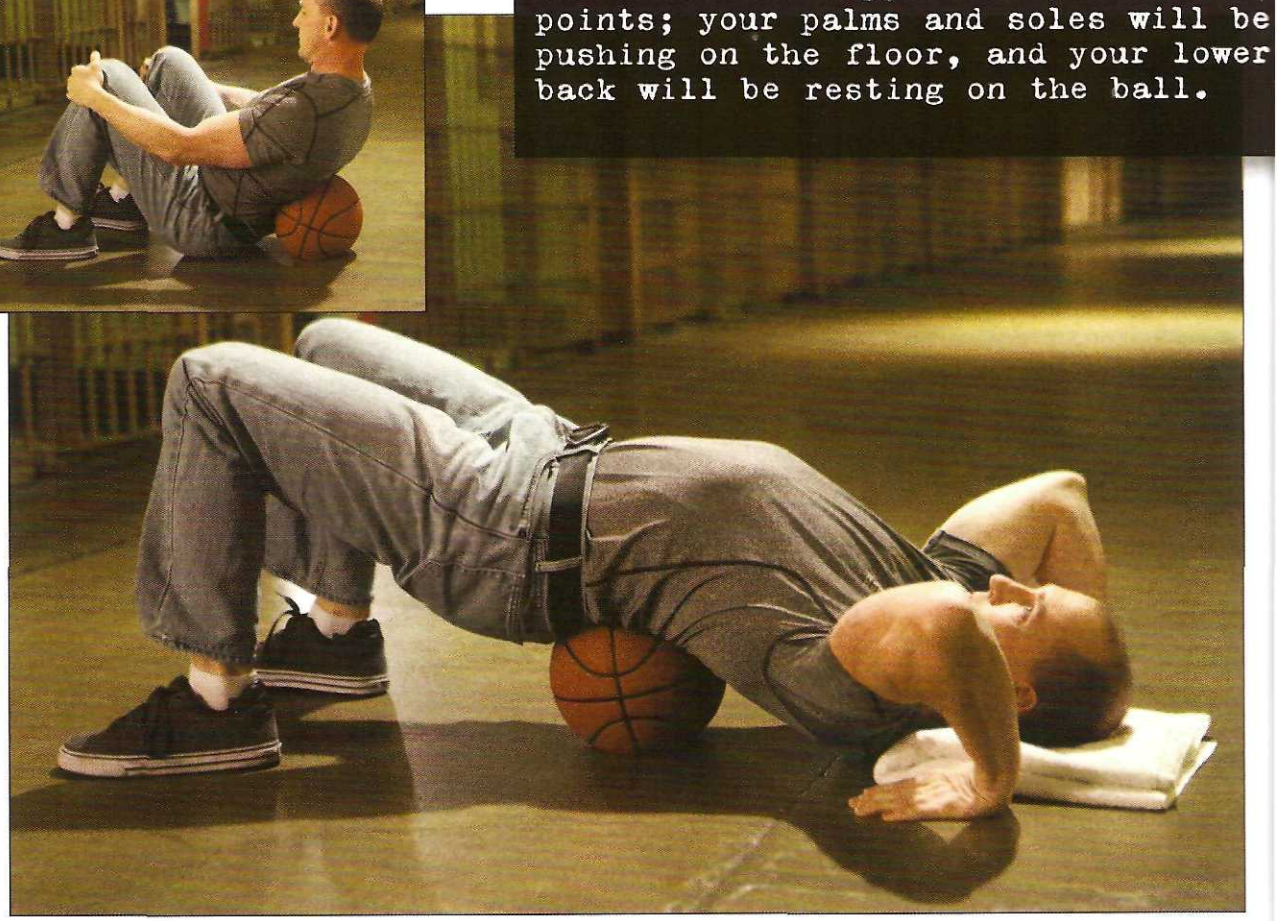
OVERVIEW

A program of angled bridges will have given you the wrist and shoulder flexibility and rotational strength to perform the correct hand position required for harder bridging. With head bridges, the athlete applied this hand position on the floor, and the horizontal surface will have increased the weight going through the shoulders and arms. Now that the shoulders, elbows and hands are conditioned for bridging, the next step is to begin increasing the depth of the horizontal bridging movement. That's what half bridges do, and as a result they condition the deeper spinal muscles.

BASIC POSTURE

- Sit on the floor with a basketball behind your lower back.
- Your feet should be flat on the floor, and approximately shoulder width apart.
- Lean back so that you are lying over the ball, until your shoulders and upper back are on the floor.
- Place your hands either side of your head, with your fingers pointing down towards your feet.
- Press down through your arms and lift your shoulders and head off the ground.
- At this point, you should be supported by five points; your palms and soles will be pushing on the floor, and your lower back will be resting on the ball.
- If this is uncomfortable you can lay a towel or blanket over the ball before you begin.

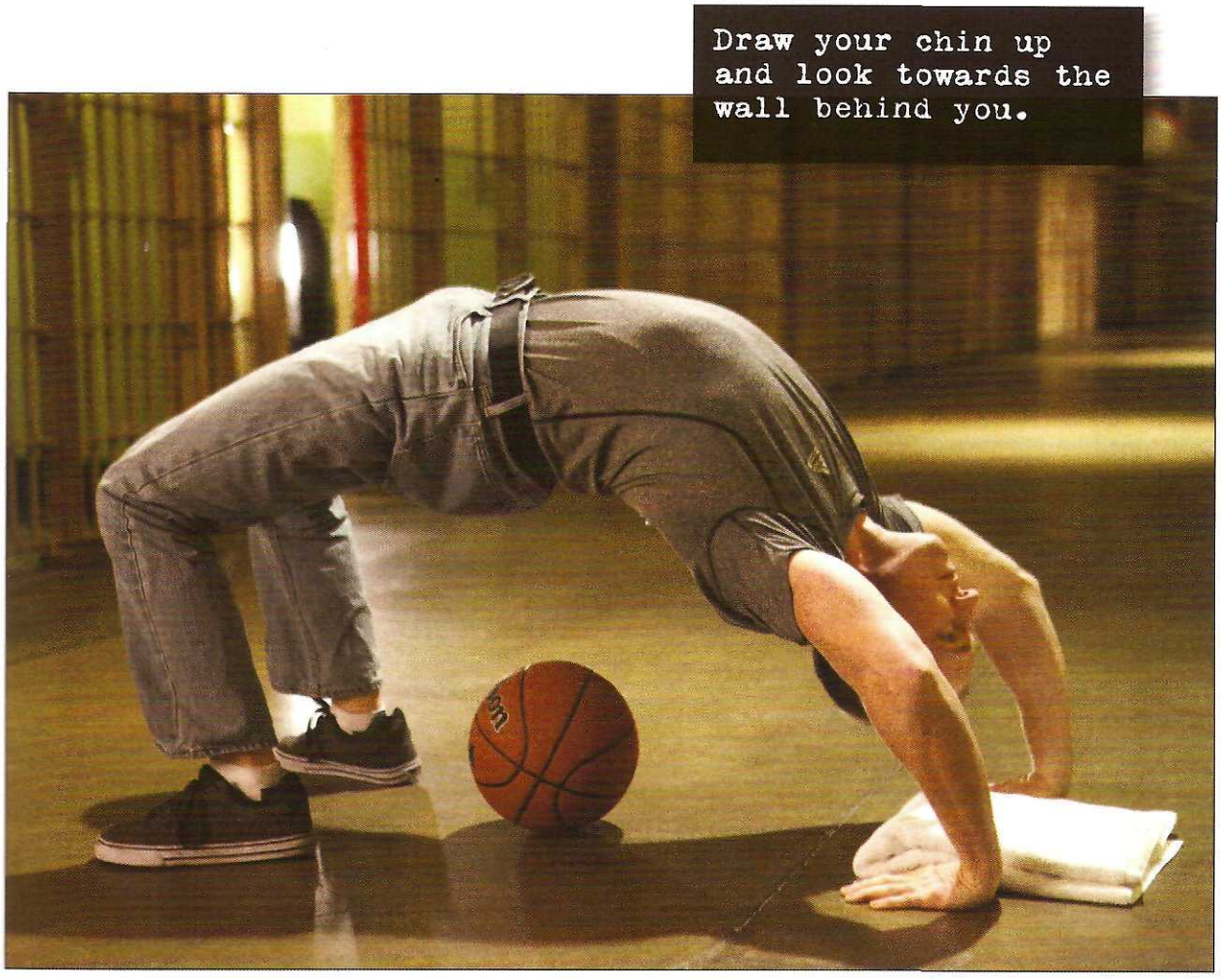




You should be supported by five points; your palms and soles will be pushing on the floor, and your lower back will be resting on the ball.

POSITIVE

- Press down through your arms and legs and lift your lower back clear of the ball.
- Draw your chin up and look towards the wall behind you.
- Straighten your arms and legs as much as possible.
- Arch your back and push your hips as high as you can.
- Pause in the bridge hold for at least a one count.



NEGATIVE

- Reverse the movement, smoothly bending your arms and legs.
- Breathe normally throughout the exercise.
- Continue descending until your lower back gently makes contact with the ball again.

"HIDDEN STEPS" HALF BRIDGES

- To make this exercise easier, increase the height of your base. (Lay a pillow or folded up blanket over the basketball)
- As you get stronger, remove the covering from the basketball and perform the technique as shown

To make the half bridge easier at first, just make your base higher. You can do this by putting a pillow or folder blanket on top of the basketball until you get stronger.

PROGRESSION LEVELS HALF BRIDGES

- BEGINNER STANDARD: 1 set of 5 reps
- INTERMEDIATE STANDARD: 2 sets of 15 reps
- PROGRESSION STANDARD: 2 sets of 20 reps

Begin your half bridges with one set of 8 perfect reps. Gradually add reps from workout to workout until you can perform a strict set of 15 repetitions. When you achieve this goal, add a second set of 8 and build up to two sets of 20 before moving to Step 6, full bridges.

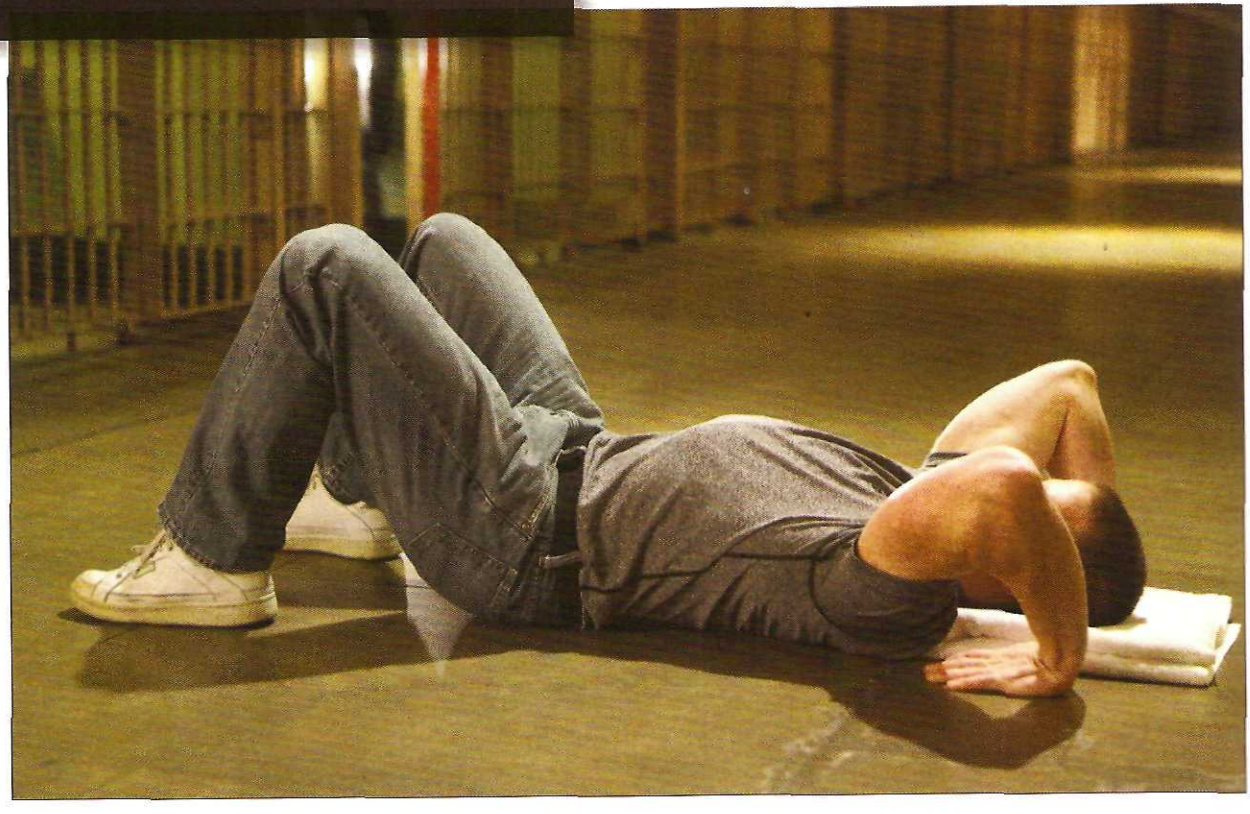
OVERVIEW

Once you've mastered the easier top half of the bridge, it's time to push all the way off the floor. You should be able to do this at least once already—to be able to get into a full bridge hold to start your head bridges and half bridges. Now you're going to be pushing off the floor for every rep. The full bridge is one of the cornerstones of all calisthenics training—right up there with the pushup, the squat and the pullup. There's a good reason for this. Bridging strengthens the spine and posterior chain; it loosens up the hip flexors and abdominal wall, which are mercilessly tight in most strength athletes; it opens the ribcage, improves breathing and tones the arms and legs. Plus, if you build up to it, it's not only safe, bridging can actually heal low back pain, spinal problems and shoulder problems. Learn to love the bridge.

BASIC POSTURE

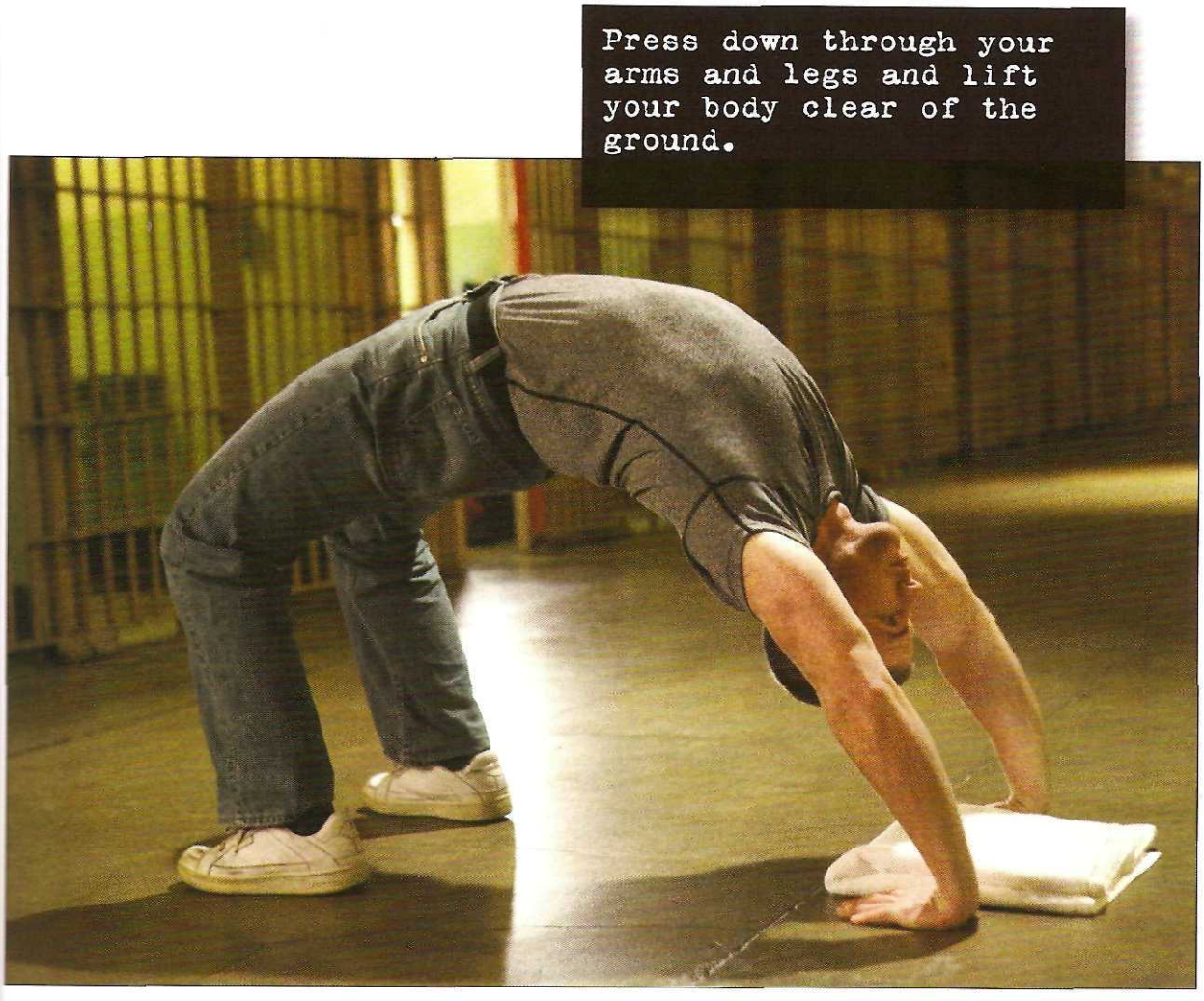
- Lie flat on your back.
- Your feet should be drawn in, approximately six to eight inches from your butt.
- Your feet should be flat on the floor, and approximately shoulder width apart.
- Place your hands either side of your head, with your fingers pointing down towards your feet.

Place your hands either side of your head, with your fingers pointing down towards your feet.



POSITIVE

- Press down through your arms and legs and lift your body clear of the ground.
- Draw your chin up and look towards the wall behind you.
- Straighten your arms and legs as much as possible.
- Arch your back and push your hips as high as you can.
- Pause in the bridge hold for at least a one count.



NEGATIVE

- Reverse the movement, smoothly bending your arms and legs.
- Breathe normally throughout the exercise.
- Continue descending until your head, back and hips are resting on the floor again, and immediately repeat the exercise.

"HIDDEN STEPS" FULL BRIDGES

- To make the exercise easier, push off a base somewhere halfway between the basketball you used for half bridges, and the floor. (A football is a good option)
- Use progressively smaller bases (e.g., mini soccer ball, softball) until you can easily bridge from the floor

If you can perform half bridges but you can't yet bridge all the way from the floor, begin by using a distance marker somewhere between the height of the floor and the height of the basketball. A good tacky football laid on its side is an ideal halfway option.

PROGRESSION LEVELS FULL BRIDGES

• BEGINNER STANDARD:	1 set of 6 reps
• INTERMEDIATE STANDARD:	2 sets of 10 reps
• PROGRESSION STANDARD:	2 sets of 15 reps

Begin this exercise with one set of 6 reps, and add reps until you can perform a strict set of 10. Then add a second set of 6. Build up to two sets of 15 before moving to the next step. Remember, when it comes to full bridges, quality is more important than quality.

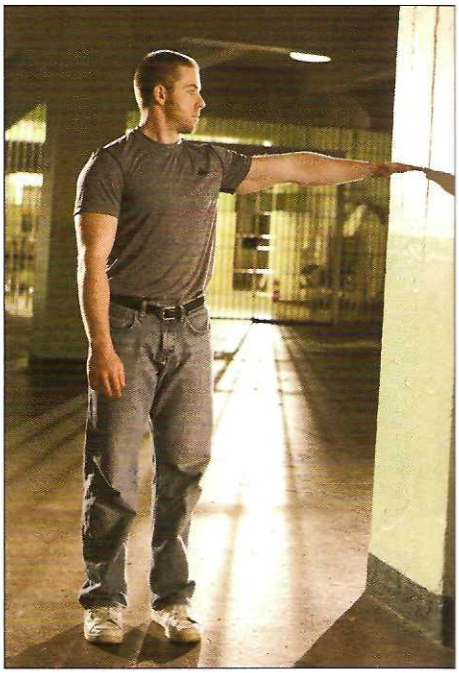
STEP 7: WALL WALKING BRIDGES (DOWN)

OVERVIEW

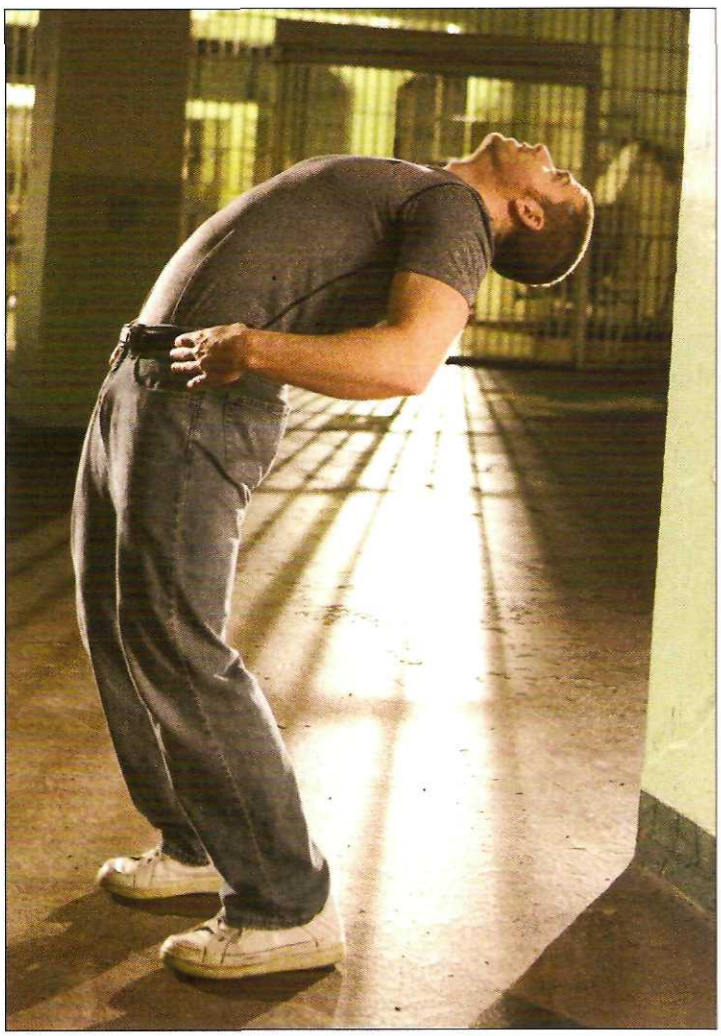
Most bodyweight athletes only go so far as to master the full bridge. The full bridge is an awesome exercise conveying many benefits, but if you want to get the best strength and flexibility you can out of bridging, the time will come where you'll have to move on to more advanced bridges. For this next step you'll begin exploring stronger, bigger bridging movements. The next two exercises will induct you into the art of *wall walking*; that is, bridging from standing using the wall. The first stage of wall walking that bridgers must learn is how to walk *down* the wall safely. Obviously, walking up the wall will be harder due to gravity, so we start like this to learn the basic technique, range of motion, and to get your confidence, balance and vestibular system used to wall bridging.

Before you start this exercise, make some safety preparations. Check that your hands are dry. If they are sweaty, wipe them down. You want to have dry hands if you are walking down the wall so that you don't slip and smack into the floor. Also make certain there's nothing between you and the wall that you could slip on, or fall onto. If you're new to wall walking, you might want to dump some pillows or cushioning next to the wall, so that if you do fall you'll be safe. Once you've started, if you get in trouble or feel you can't go any further, just push yourself away from the wall or go back up. Once you've looked into safety you're ready to roll.

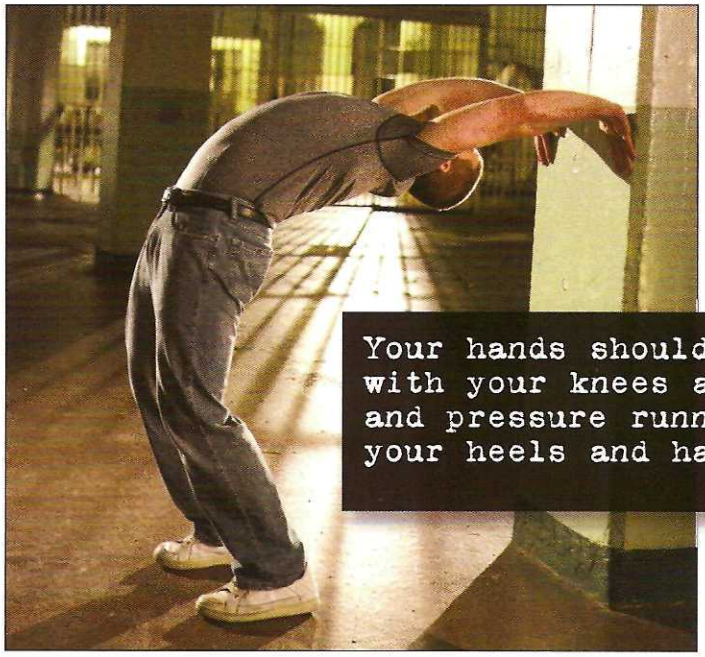
BASIC POSTURE



- Start by standing approximately one arm's length from a solid wall.
- If you're not sure how far away you need to be, start closer to the wall for safety's sake. You can always adjust and step away if you need to.
- Your posture should be natural, with the feet about shoulder width apart.
- Push your hips forwards until they are as far as they can go.
- Bend at the knees a little to keep upright.
- As you do this, draw your chin up and look towards the wall behind you.

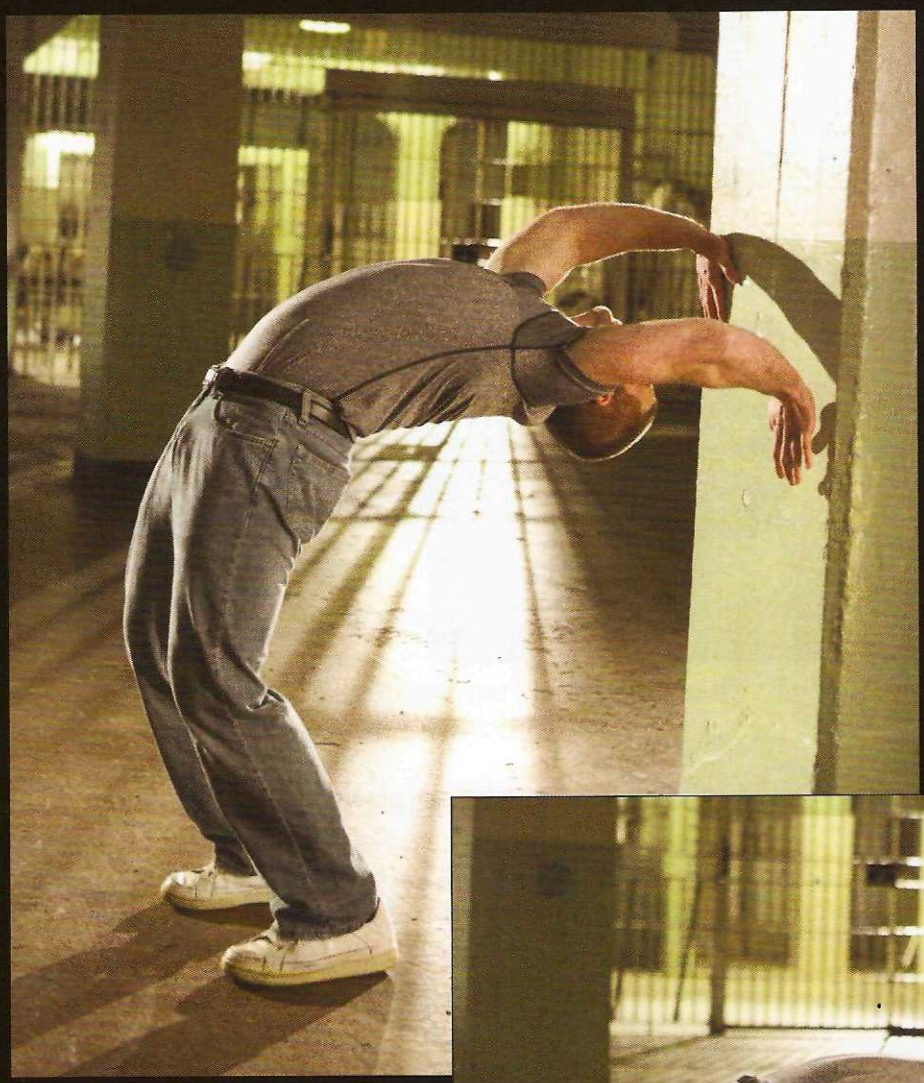


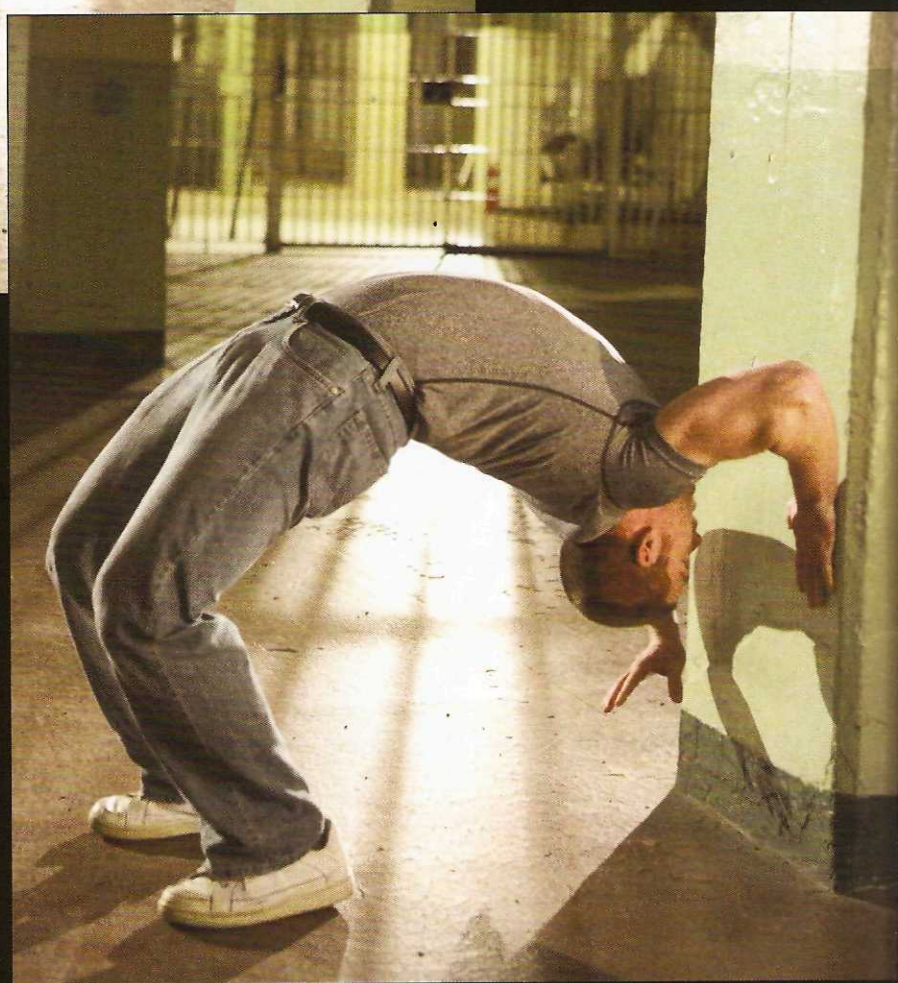
- Once you can see the wall, bring your hands up over your shoulders and place them on a point you can see.
- It's important to place your hands on the wall under control—don't just fall back onto it.
- Once your hands are secure, lean back and put some of your bodyweight through your hands and fingers.
- Your hands should be level, with your knees a little bent and pressure running through your heels and hands.
- This is the basic starting position for all wall walking.

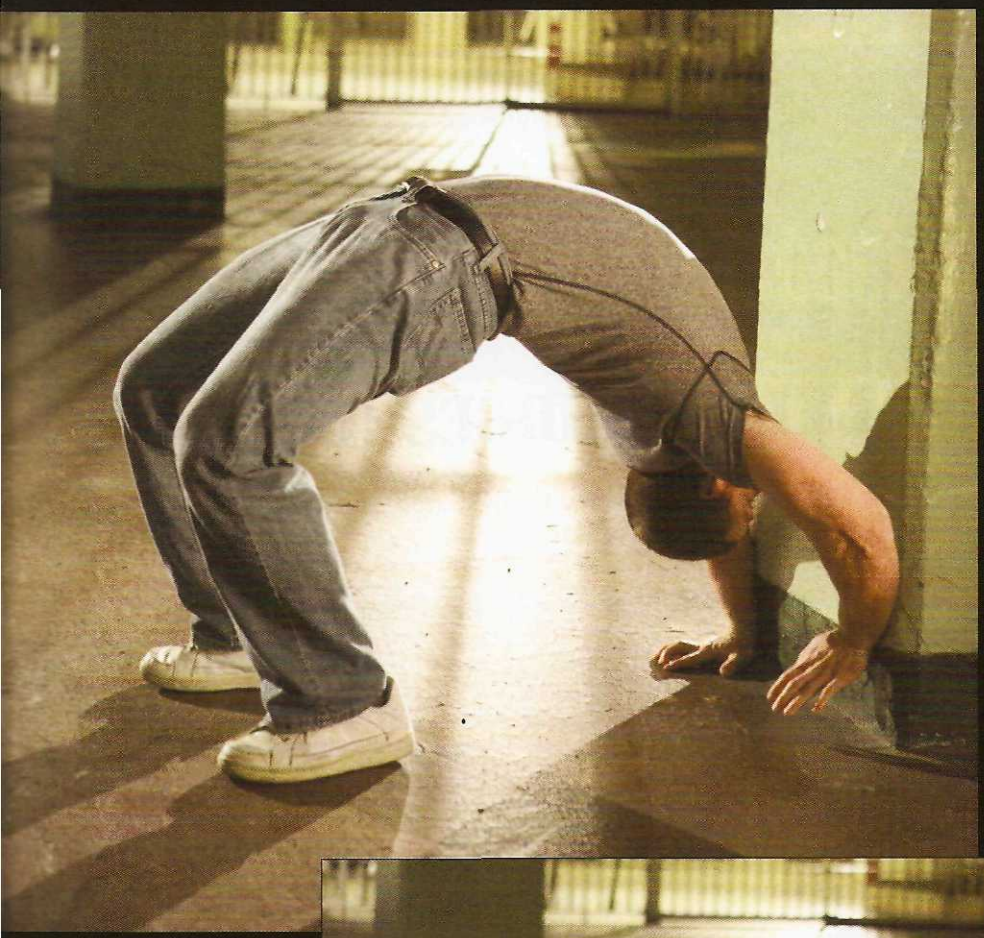


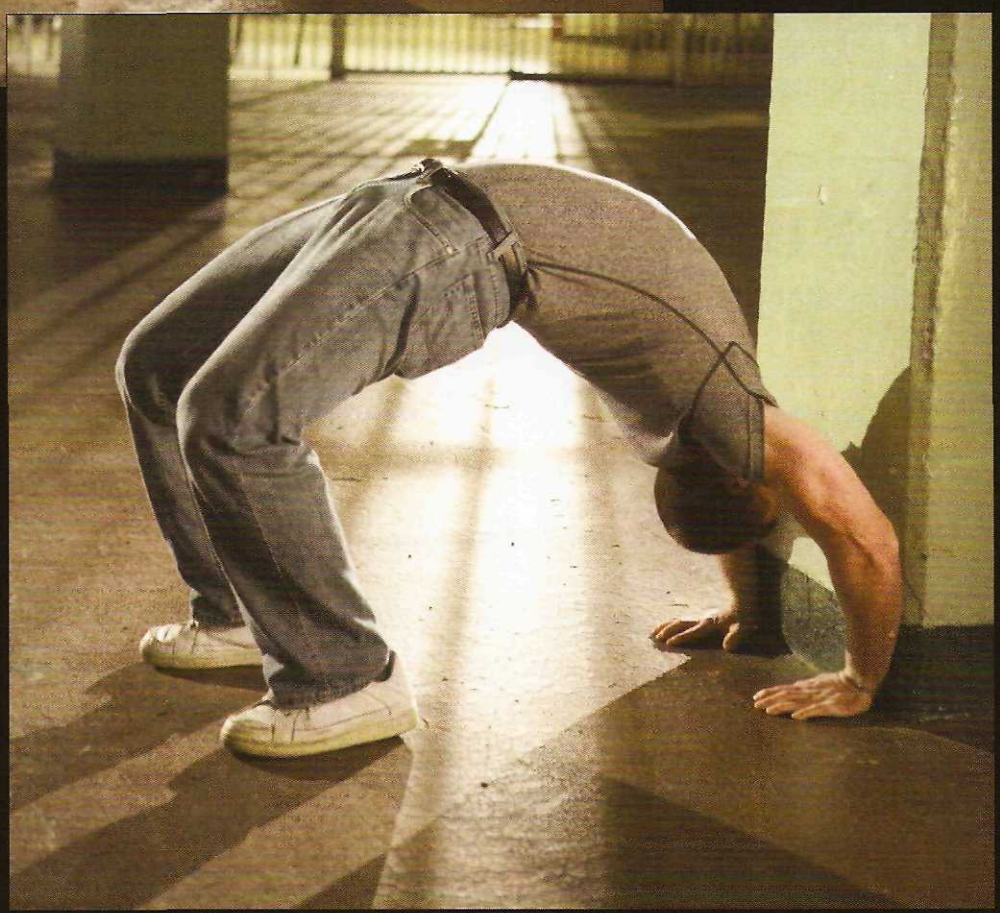
NEGATIVE

- Take one hand off the wall and lower it by a few inches before placing it securely on the wall again.
- Now do the same with your other hand, placing it even farther down the wall.
- Repeat this process, making sure you push hard through the wall when only one hand is making contact.
- At first, use small "steps" with your hands as you find your way.
- Take as many hand "steps" as you need, and shuffle your feet forwards as you go.
- Try to breathe normally during all wall walking.
- Keep taking these steps until you are close to the bottom of the wall.
- When you are ready, place one palm flat on the floor next to the wall, and put your weight through it.
- Now place your other palm on the floor.
- Straighten your arms and legs as much as possible.
- Arch your back and push your hips as high as you can.
- You will now be in a full bridge hold next to the wall.









POSITIVE

- Lower your butt and shoulders to the floor, and stand up.
- To perform your subsequent rep, reposition yourself next to the wall.

"HIDDEN STEPS" WALL WALKING BRIDGES (DOWN)

- Begin by only taking a few hand-steps down the wall, and push away or try to walk back up
- Mark the depth you got to using chalk or tape (or get a training partner to do it)
- Over time, keep increasing your depth until you can walk down the entire wall

Very few athletes manage to walk down the wall first time of asking. But if you mark your depth and work on being progressive, you will achieve this feat sooner than you think.

PROGRESSION LEVELS WALL WALKING BRIDGES (DOWN)

• BEGINNER STANDARD:	1 set of 3 reps
• INTERMEDIATE STANDARD:	2 sets of 6 reps
• PROGRESSION STANDARD:	2 sets of 10 reps

Once you've mastered the basic movement, begin this exercise with one set of 3 full reps—to the floor and back up. Add reps until you can perform one set of 6 repetitions. Once you achieve this, add a second set of 3 and build up to two sets of 10 before moving to Step 8.

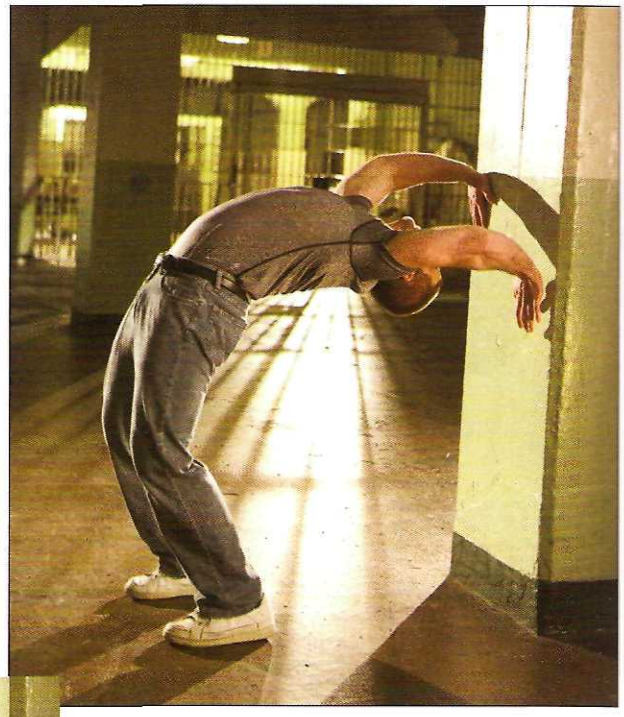
STEP 8:
WALL WALKING BRIDGES (UP)

OVERVIEW

Now that you can walk *down* the wall, the next step is learning to walk *up*. Walking down will have given you the balance and flexibility to walk up—the range of motion is just the same—but walking your bodyweight up a wall requires greater strength, due to the fact that you're fighting gravity, too. So this next step makes for a perfect progression. It also makes for a good special exercise to prepare you for harder bridging. This exercise is an important step in the series. Previous bridging has involved pushing your body into an arch using your arms and legs. That method also involves strength in your hip extensors, the glutes, spine and hamstrings, to create the body arch. But now you are also *straightening* your body. This requires increased strength from the hip flexors, the abs and thighs. At this level, bridges are becoming a total-body workout. We're beginning to strengthen our entire body with bridges now—posterior *and* anterior chains.

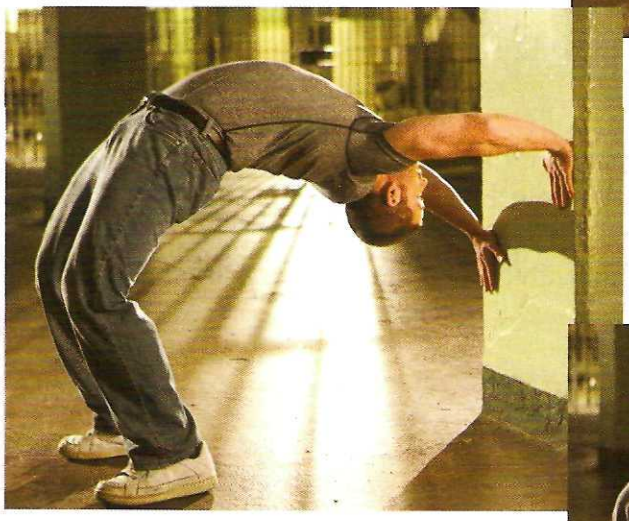
BASIC POSTURE

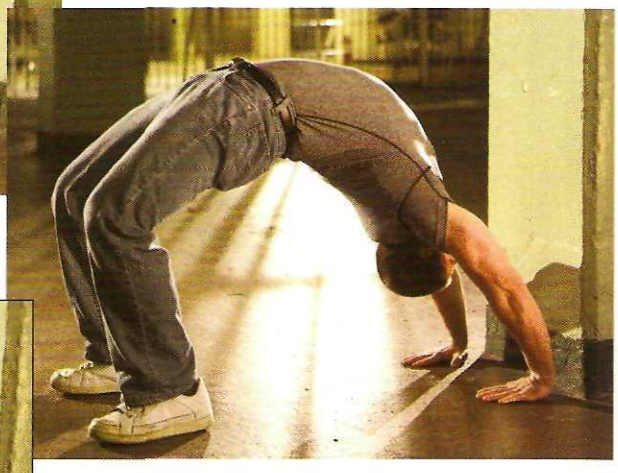
- Assume the same basic posture you learned for walking down the wall.

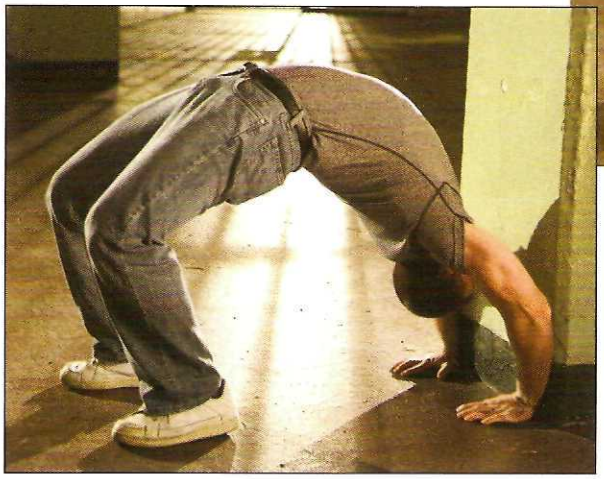


NEGATIVE

- Take mini-steps down the wall with your hands, as before.
- Shuffle your feet forwards when you need to.
- Finish in a bridge hold next to the base of the wall.

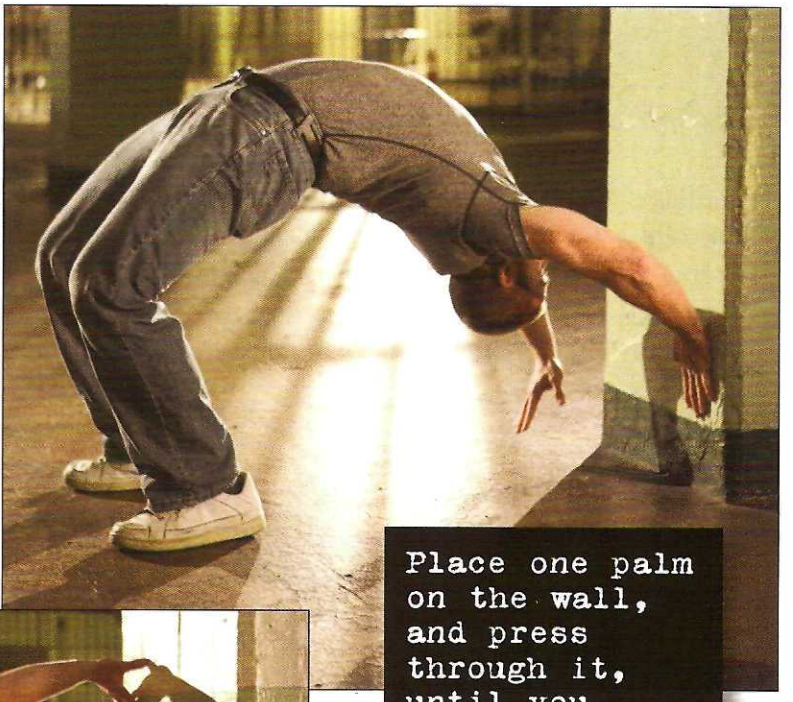




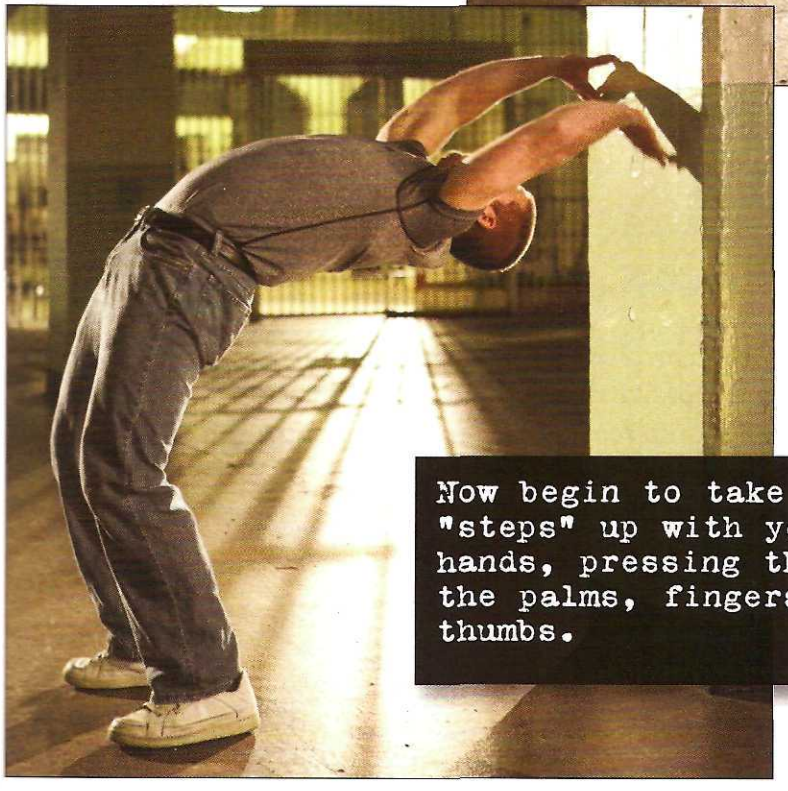


POSITIVE

- Place one palm on the wall, and press through it, until you generate enough tension to support you briefly.
- Then place your second palm on the wall, in line with the first.
- Now begin to take mini "steps" up with your hands, pressing through the palms, fingers and thumbs.
- Try to breathe normally during all wall walking.
- Keep taking these hand steps until you are nearly back to the standing position.
- From here, gently push away from the wall, and return to the standing position.
- Repeat the exercise.



Place one palm on the wall, and press through it, until you generate enough tension to support you briefly.



Now begin to take mini "steps" up with your hands, pressing through the palms, fingers and thumbs.

"HIDDEN STEPS" WALL WALKING BRIDGES (UP)

- Mark the depth from which you can successfully come back up using tape or chalk
- Gradually try to get this marker lower from workout to workout, until you can go all the way from the bridge hold back up

Begin this exercise by only hand walking down to a point where you are certain you can walk back up. Mark your progress and you'll find you rapidly increase your depth over time.

PROGRESSION LEVELS WALL WALKING BRIDGES (UP)

- BEGINNER STANDARD: 1 set of 2 reps
- INTERMEDIATE STANDARD: 2 sets of 4 reps
- PROGRESSION STANDARD: 2 sets of 8 reps

The reps drop here, because one rep involves both going down and coming back up. When you can complete 2 reps like this, start adding to the set gradually until you can perform 4 full down-and-up repetitions. From there, add a second set of 2 and build up to two sets of 8.

STEP 9: CLOSING BRIDGES

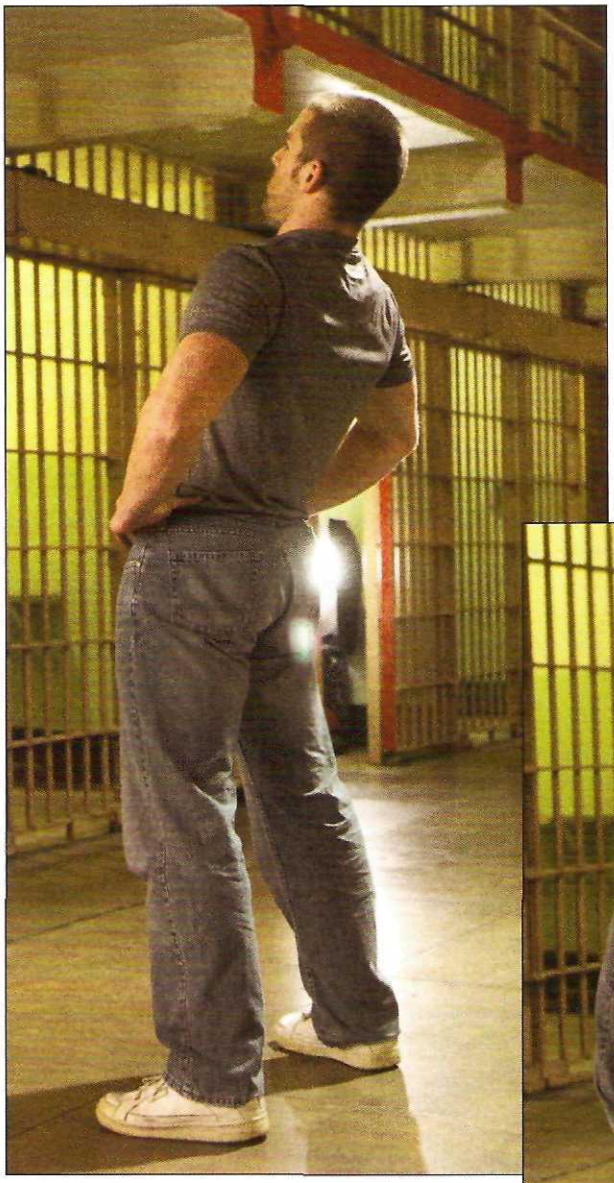
OVERVIEW

Thanks to the last two steps, you've increased your muscular power and tension-flexibility in bridging by going up and down using a wall. The goal now is to achieve a stand-to-stand bridge; that is, going up and down into a bridge, but without the support of the wall. This is a hard ask, but it can be done. Since, as with wall work, *going up* from a bridge to standing is harder than *going down* from standing to a bridge, we're going to focus first on going down. Going from standing to a bridge is called a *closing bridge*. Closing bridges not only increase your control and flexibility, they are also a great exercise for building elastic strength in the anterior chain—the abs, the waist, hips and legs. This is because during wall bridges, much of the moving force is transmitted through the arms into the wall; but without the wall to take the pressure, bridging like this is a great workout for the lower body and midsection.

Make certain you are a master of wall-walking before you even *attempt* this technique. It's not a matter of falling backwards, but smoothly bending backwards and placing your hands on the floor. Care should be taken in any kind of closing bridge to protect the head and spine in case of falls. Before you start your training, make certain there's nothing behind you for the distance of your height. If you want to cushion your fall before you start your set, you can.

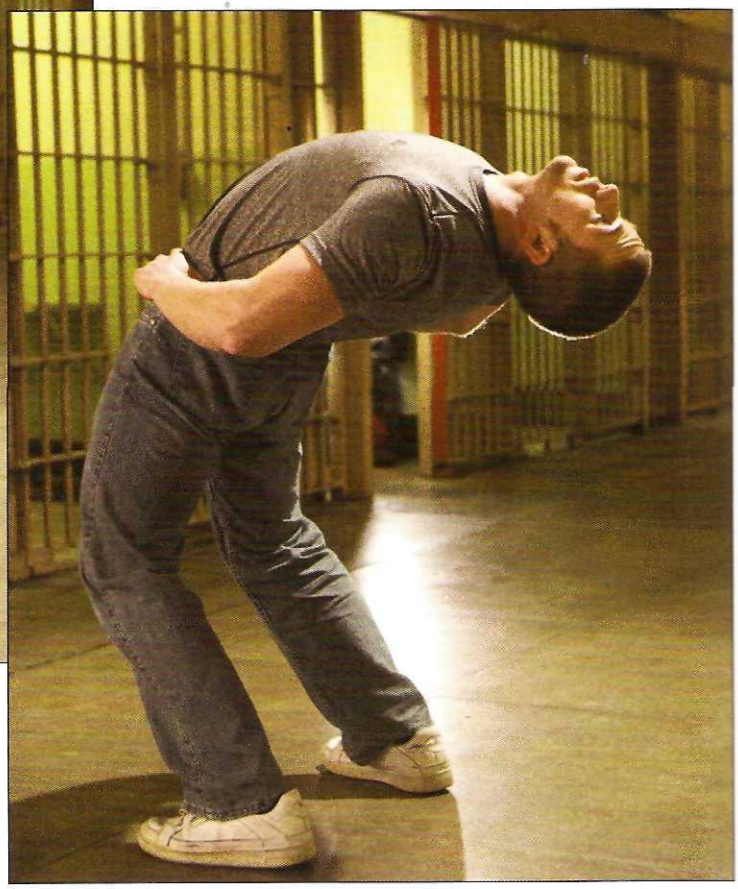
BASIC POSTURE

- Your posture should be natural, with the feet about shoulder width apart.
- Place your hands on your hips.
- Relax your breathing and try to breathe normally throughout the exercise.

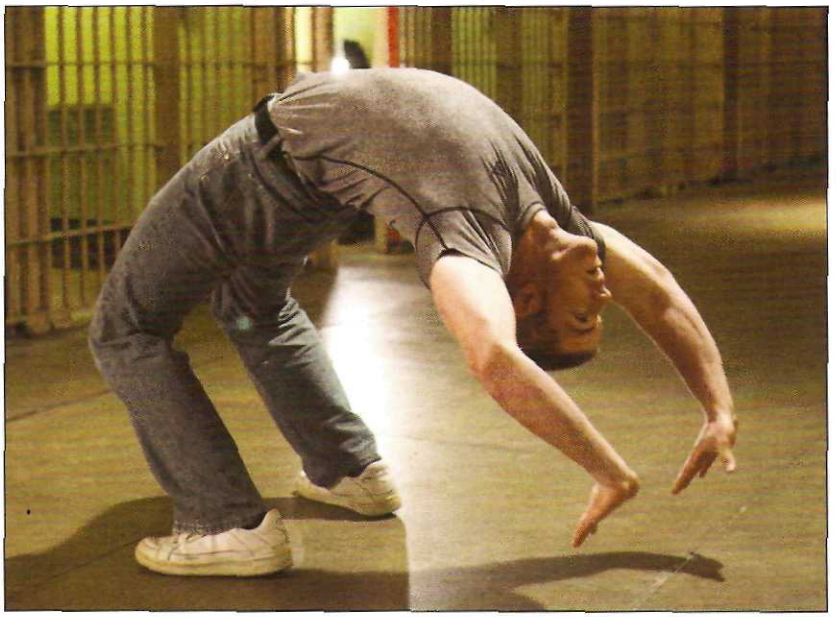


NEGATIVE

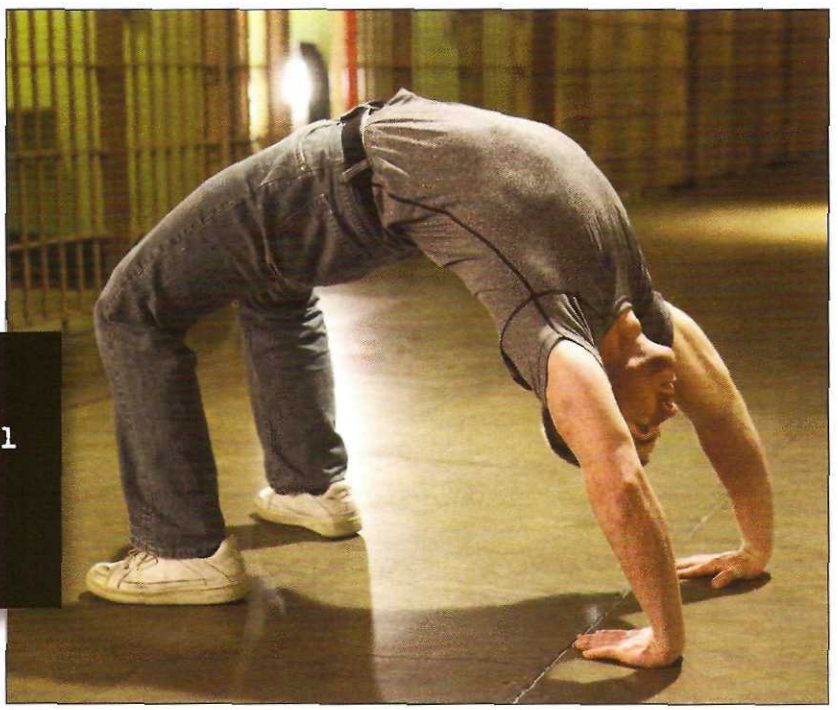
- Push your hips forwards as you simultaneously arch your spine.
- When your hips are as far forward as possible with fairly straight legs, begin bending your knees and keep shifting your gravity forward.
- As you do this, draw your chin up and look towards the wall behind you.



- Continue arching until you can see the floor a few feet behind you.
- Once you can see a place to put your hands, take your hands off your hips and begin to bring them up over your shoulders.
- Continue shifting your gravity forward as your hands pass beyond your head, and place your and palms on a point you can see.



- It's important to *place* your hands on the floor under full control—don't just fall back onto your hands.
- Once your hands are secure, lean back and put some of your bodyweight through your hands and fingers.
- Straighten your arms and legs as much as possible.
- Arch your back and push your hips as high as you can.
- You will now be in a full bridge hold on the floor.



It's important to *place* your hands on the floor under full control-don't just fall back onto your hands.

POSITIVE

- Lower your butt and shoulders to the floor, and stand up.
- Reposition yourself correctly before performing your next rep.

"HIDDEN STEPS" CLOSING BRIDGES

- Make this exercise more progressive by using a set of stairs. Stand at the foot of a carpeted stairwell and bridge back until your hands rest on one of the higher steps
- Reach back to lower steps each time you bridge, until you can bridge to the floor

Most athletes should gradually work up to closing bridges by using a set of stairs; bridge back onto lower steps over time, until you can bridge all the way back onto the floor.

PROGRESSION LEVELS CLOSING BRIDGES

- BEGINNER STANDARD: 1 set of 1 reps
- INTERMEDIATE STANDARD: 2 sets of 3 reps
- PROGRESSION STANDARD: 2 sets of 6 reps

Once you have worked through closing bridges on the stairs (if you need to), begin by performing one rep on flat ground. Once you can perform 3 reps in succession, add a second single rep after a rest. Build up to two sets of 6 before moving to Step 10—the Master Step.

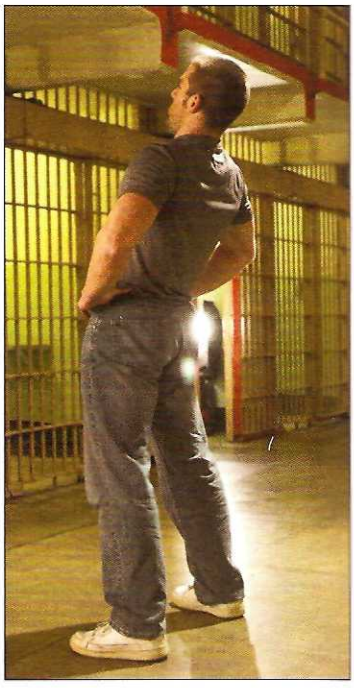
STEP 10: MASTER STEP STAND-TO-STAND BRIDGES

OVERVIEW

We've reached the Master Step of the bridge series—the stand-to-stand bridge. A stand-to-stand bridge is just what the name suggests. You go from standing, back into a bridge, then push up into the standing position again. So half this technique involves something you've already worked on—the previous step, the closing bridge. After performing a closing bridge, instead of sitting down and standing up again, you just push yourself back into the standing position. This sounds simple, but it's far from easy. Performing stand-to-stands correctly requires total body strength, high-level suppleness in the front and back of your body, good balance and coordination, and considerable tension-flexibility in the shoulders. It even heals old aches and pains that slow you up. Despite the massive importance of all these qualities, bridging in the West is neglected to the point where—at least outside prison walls—it's virtually a forgotten art. Once you can perform this exercise, you can count yourself as one in ten thousand athletes.

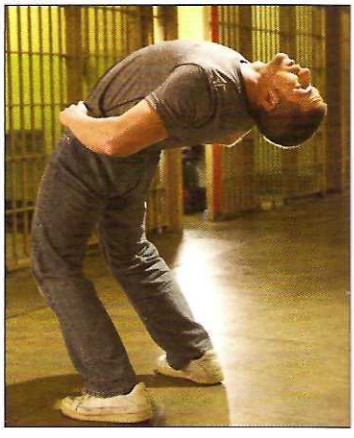
Before you start, you need to take the proper safety precautions you took for closing bridges; you need to establish the area you are training in is safe. For at least the distance of your own height behind the point where you'll be standing, make certain your training area is clear and safe. No sharp objects to hurt your hands or spine, and definitely no table edges to clonk your skull on. If falling is a real concern, you can always pad out the area behind you with blankets, pillows or cushions. Confidence is a big part of success in learning stand-to-stands, so do whatever you personally need to do to feel confident and safe. But a safe area won't help if you use poor technique. Remember to perform this exercise under *muscular control*—it's not meant to be explosive. Stand-to-stands don't require momentum to help you get back up. If you've learned closing bridges incorrectly, by *falling* back onto your hands, this is going to seem rough; maybe even impossible to you. But if you've learned to get to the floor using strength, flexibility and by shifting your center of gravity down and forwards, then this shouldn't pose too much of a problem—because all you are doing is reversing the feeling and technique of a closing bridge. You have to be able to do this shift to fully understand what I mean.

BASIC POSTURE

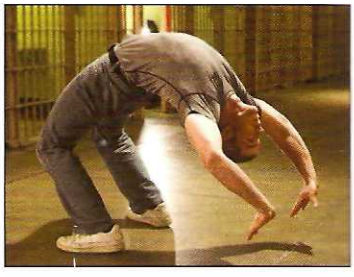


- Your posture should be natural, with the feet about shoulder width apart.
- Place your hands on your hips.
- Relax your breathing and try to breathe normally throughout the exercise.

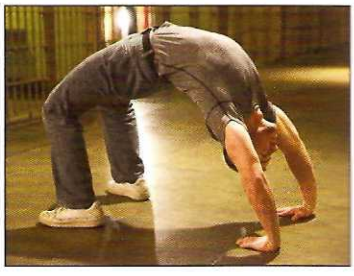
NEGATIVE



- Push your hips forwards as you simultaneously arch your spine.
- When your hips are as far forward as possible with fairly straight legs, begin bending your knees and keep shifting your gravity forward.
- As you do this, draw your chin up and look towards the wall behind you.
- Continue arching until you can see the floor a few feet behind you.
- Once you can see a place to put your hands, take your hands off your hips and begin to bring them up over your shoulders



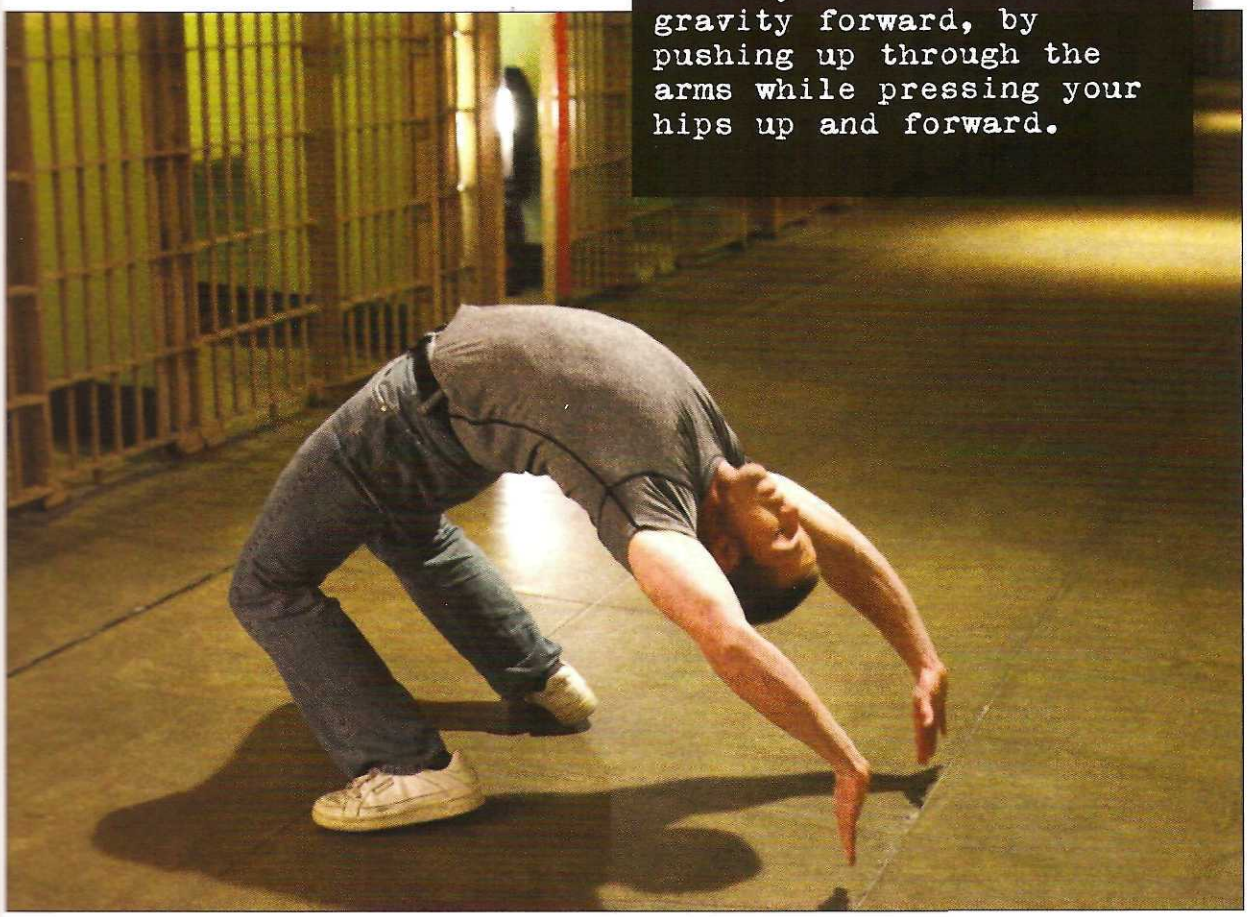
- Continue shifting your gravity forward as your hands beyond your head, and place your and palms on a point you can see.
- It's important to *place* your hands on the floor under full control—don't just fall back onto your hands.
- Once your hands are secure, lean back and put some of your bodyweight through your hands and fingers.



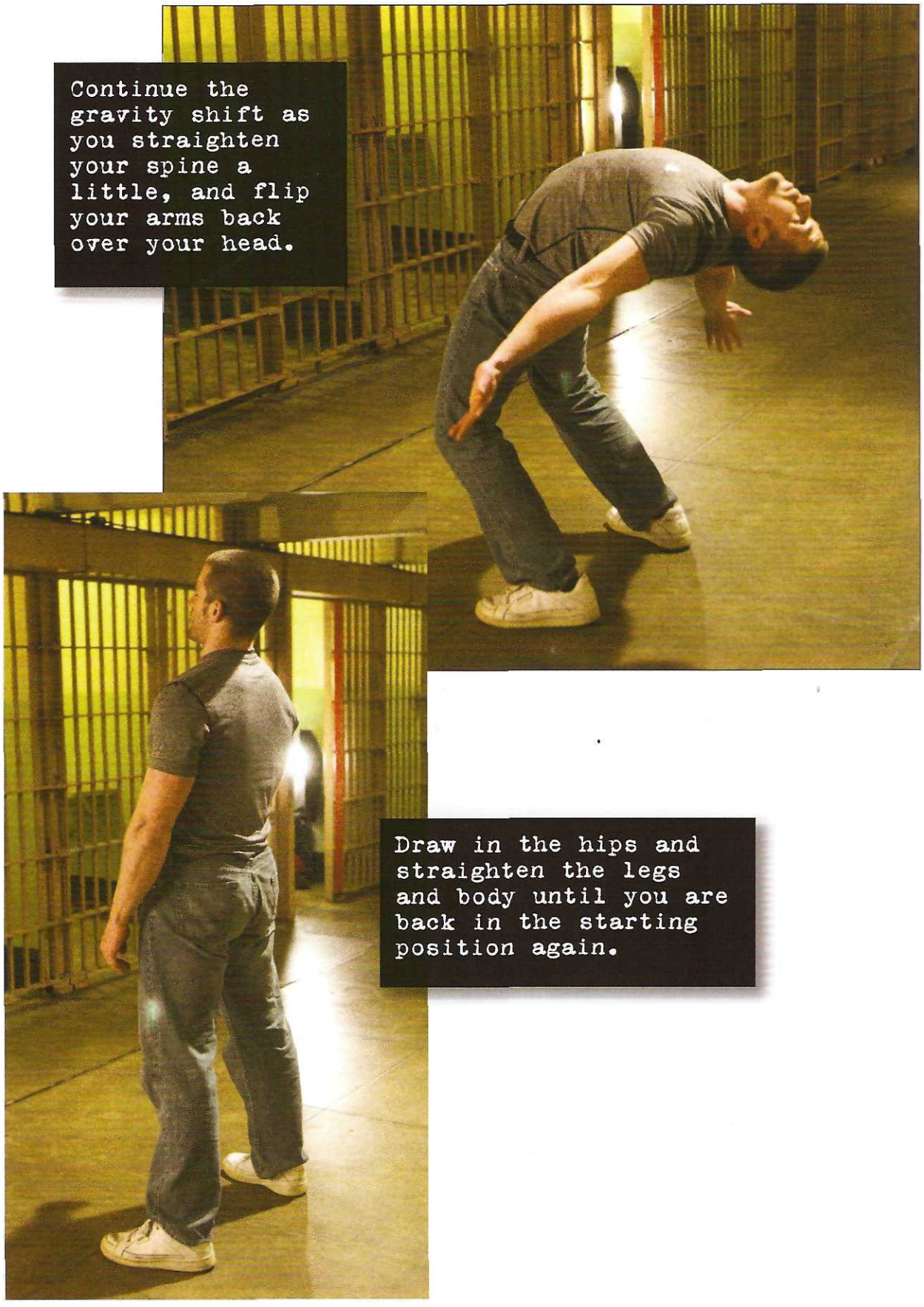
- Straighten your arms and legs as much as possible.
- Arch your back and push your hips as high as you can.
- You will now be in a full bridge hold on the floor.

POSITIVE

- Shift your centre of gravity forward, by pushing up through the arms while pressing your hips up and forward.
- Continue until more of your weight is going through your legs, and less through your hands.
- If you need to take mini "steps" forwards with your hands as you go, do it.
- Keep going until your palms aren't needed any more and lift off the floor.
- Continue the gravity shift as you straighten your spine a little, and flip your arms back over your head.
- Place your arms by your side and pull your chin down to its normal position.
- Draw in the hips and straighten the legs and body until you are back in the starting position again.



Shift your centre of gravity forward, by pushing up through the arms while pressing your hips up and forward.



Continue the gravity shift as you straighten your spine a little, and flip your arms back over your head.

Draw in the hips and straighten the legs and body until you are back in the starting position again.

BRIDGE SERIES SUMMARY

For ease of reference, let's take a look at the ten steps of the bridge series all together.

STEP 1: SHORT BRIDGES

Step one: Short bridges. Build to three sets of fifty. Then begin;

STEP 2: STRAIGHT BRIDGES

Step two: Straight bridges. Build to three sets of forty. Then move to;

STEP 3: ANGLED BRIDGES

Step three: Angled bridges. Build to three sets of thirty. Then begin;

STEP 4: HEAD BRIDGES

Step four: Head bridges. Build to two sets of twenty-five. Then move to;

STEP 5: HALF BRIDGES

Step five: Half bridges. Build to two sets of twenty. Then begin;

STEP 6: FULL BRIDGES

Step six: Full bridges. Build to two sets of fifteen. Then start;

STEP 7: WALL WALKING BRIDGES (DOWN)

Step seven: Bridge walking down the wall. Build to two sets of ten. Then move to;

STEP 8: WALL WALKING BRIDGES (UP)

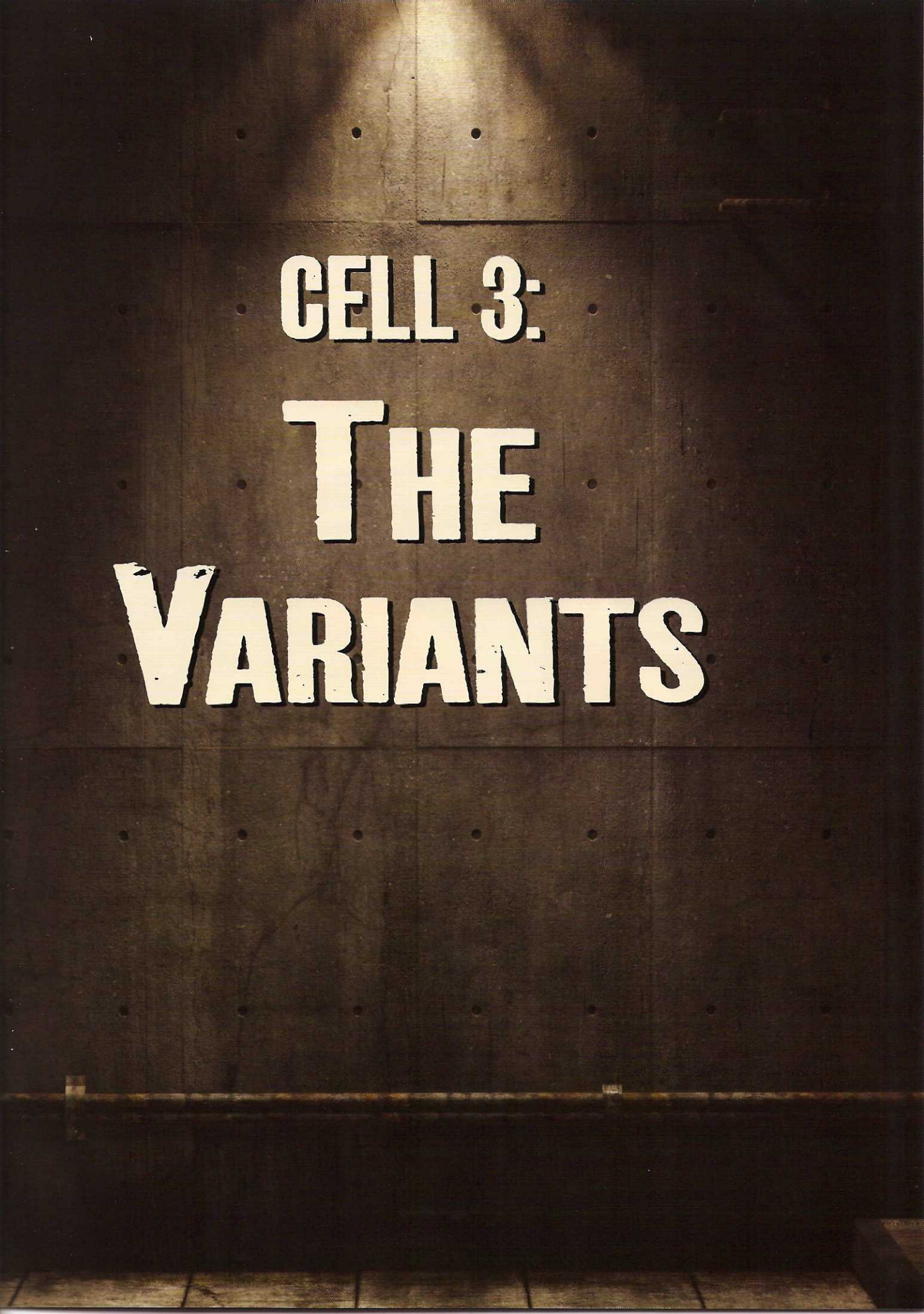
Step eight: Bridge walking down and up the wall. Build to two sets of eight. Then go to;

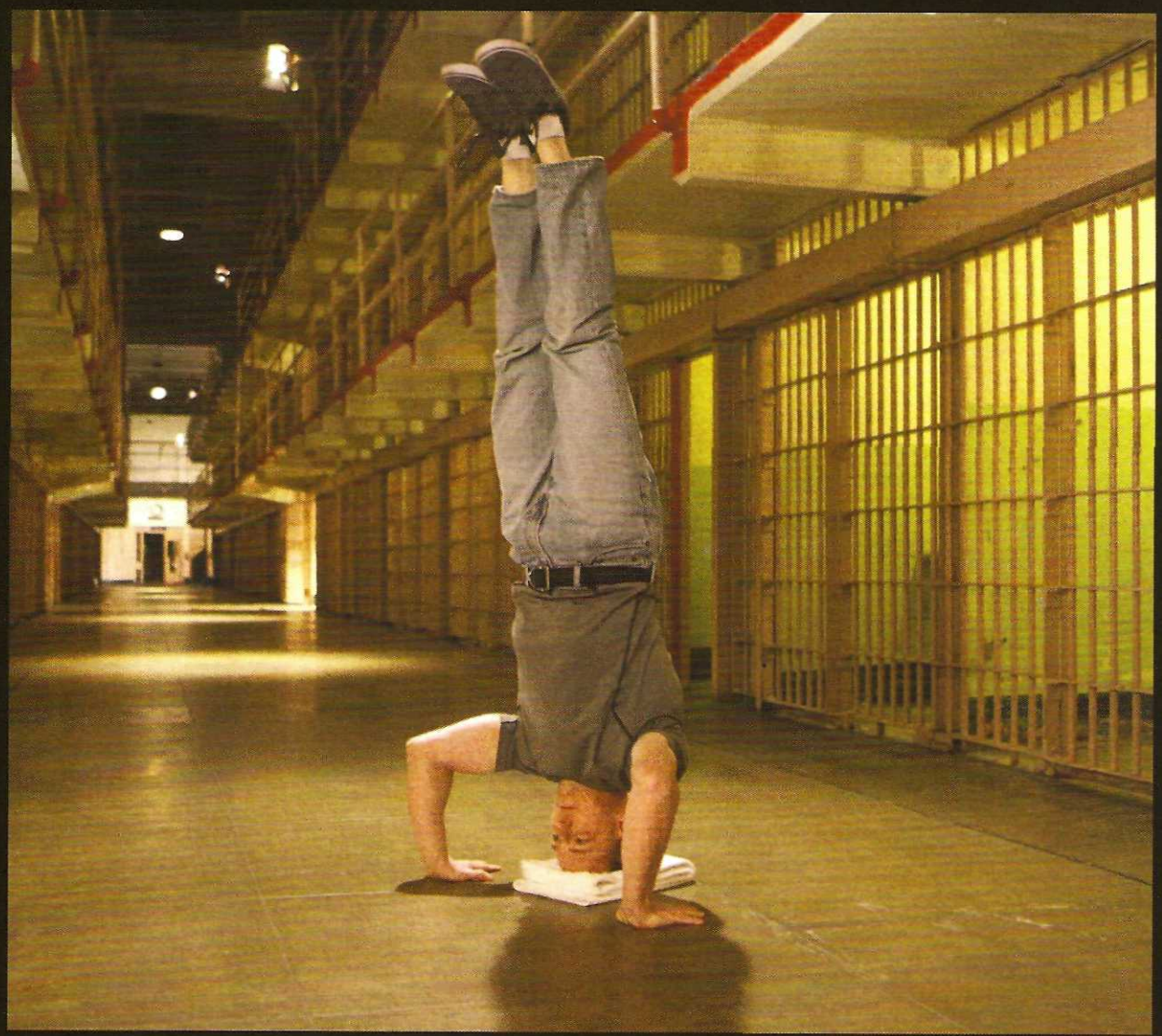
STEP 9: PARTIAL CLOSING BRIDGES

Step nine: Closing bridges. Build to two sets of six. Then finally advance to;

STEP 10: MASTER STEP STAND-TO-STAND BRIDGES

Step ten, you've reached the Master Step: Stand-to-stand bridges.


CELL 3:
THE
VARIANTS



CELL 3: THE VARIANTS

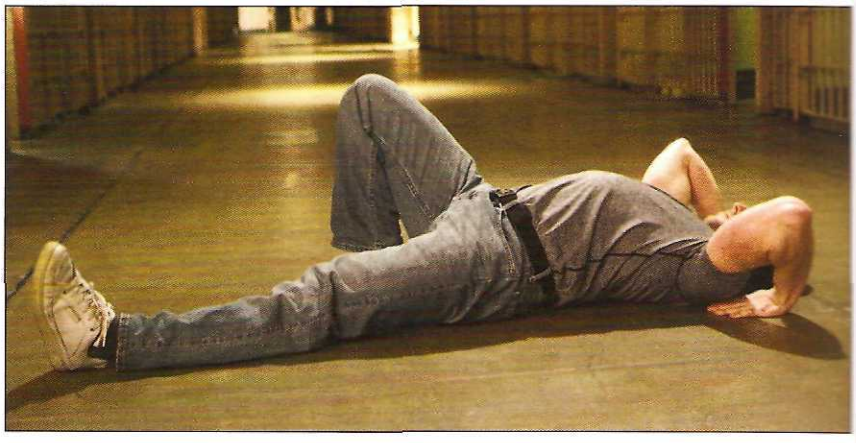
Now you've got those ten steps as a fundamental resource, as the cornerstone of your back training, we're going to give you some more weapons for your armory. You may not ever feel the need to use these exercises we're about to show you. You may just want to stick with bridging. That's fine. But no matter how good, or even essential, any movement series is, it's good to have some variations in your pocket.

This is particularly true when it comes to anything which involves the back or spine. If done correctly, bridging can help heal old back injuries, but so many athletes carry injuries or minor aches and pains in this area anyway that it can be helpful to have a few variant exercises if you need to work around a pulled muscle or stiff lower or upper back. It never hurts to have more movement skills under your belt, provided you apply them right and don't overuse them.

TRIPOD BRIDGE

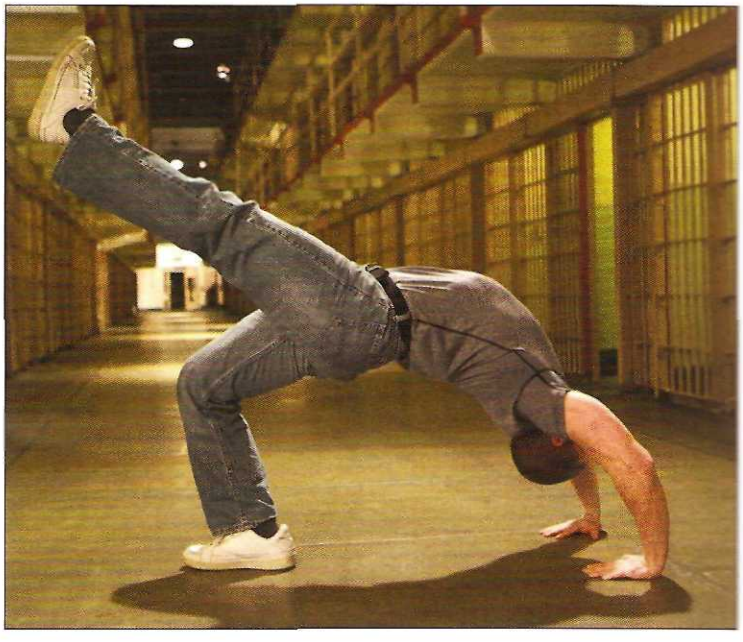
OVERVIEW

Once you've mastered the full bridge, tripod bridges are an excellent and challenging variant. As the name suggests, you push up into the bridge position using just three limbs instead of the usual four. Since the legs are stronger than the arms, the best way to learn is to push up using two arms and just one leg, like this.



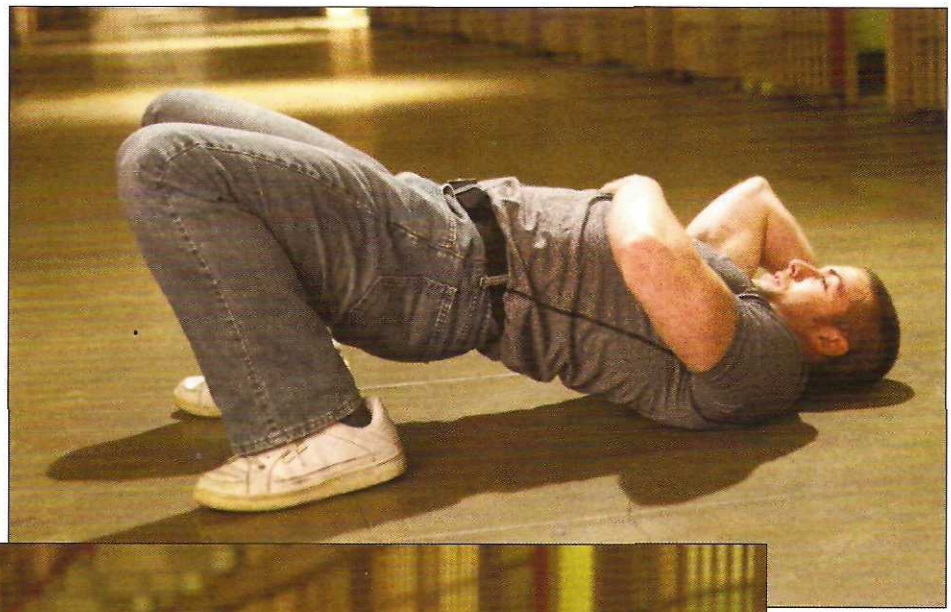
PERFORMANCE

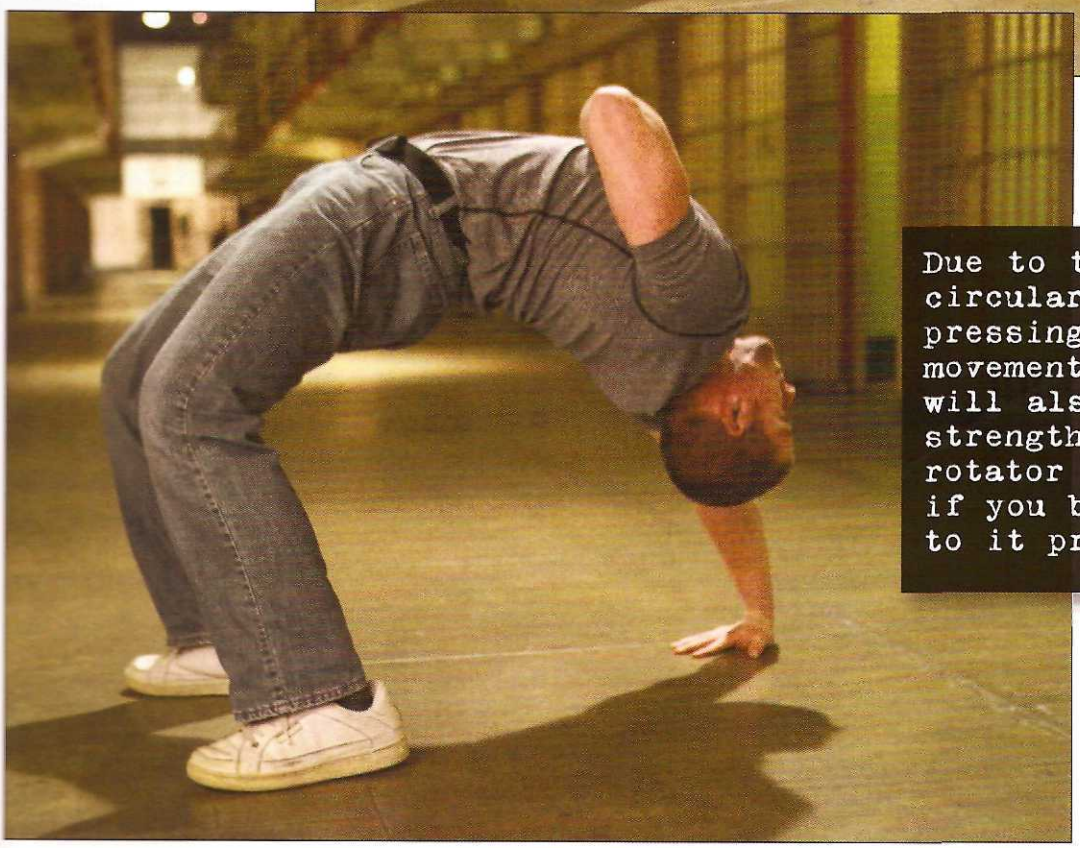
This variation will really test your leg and trunk strength. That makes tripod bridges a good "assessment" exercise. If you've got any weaknesses in the bridge, they'll start to show in this technique. But if you're okay, try to build up to sets of fifteen reps. If that gets easy, you're ready to try the advanced variation, where you use two legs and just one arm, like this.



PERFORMANCE

This is a lot tougher, and will really maximize your arm and shoulder strength. Due to the circular pressing movement, it will also strengthen your rotator cuffs if you build up to it properly. If one-arm tripod bridging is too easy, you can explore "gecko bridges" pushing up with one arm and the opposite leg stuck out. Gecko bridge holds are discussed in the *Convict Conditioning* book. The gecko version provides variety, strengthens your arms and legs, and improves your balance for bridging. Because your lumbar muscles have to generate extra tension to keep your body stable, this is great for giving you a lower back made out of steel. Excellent variation to add into your program from time to time.

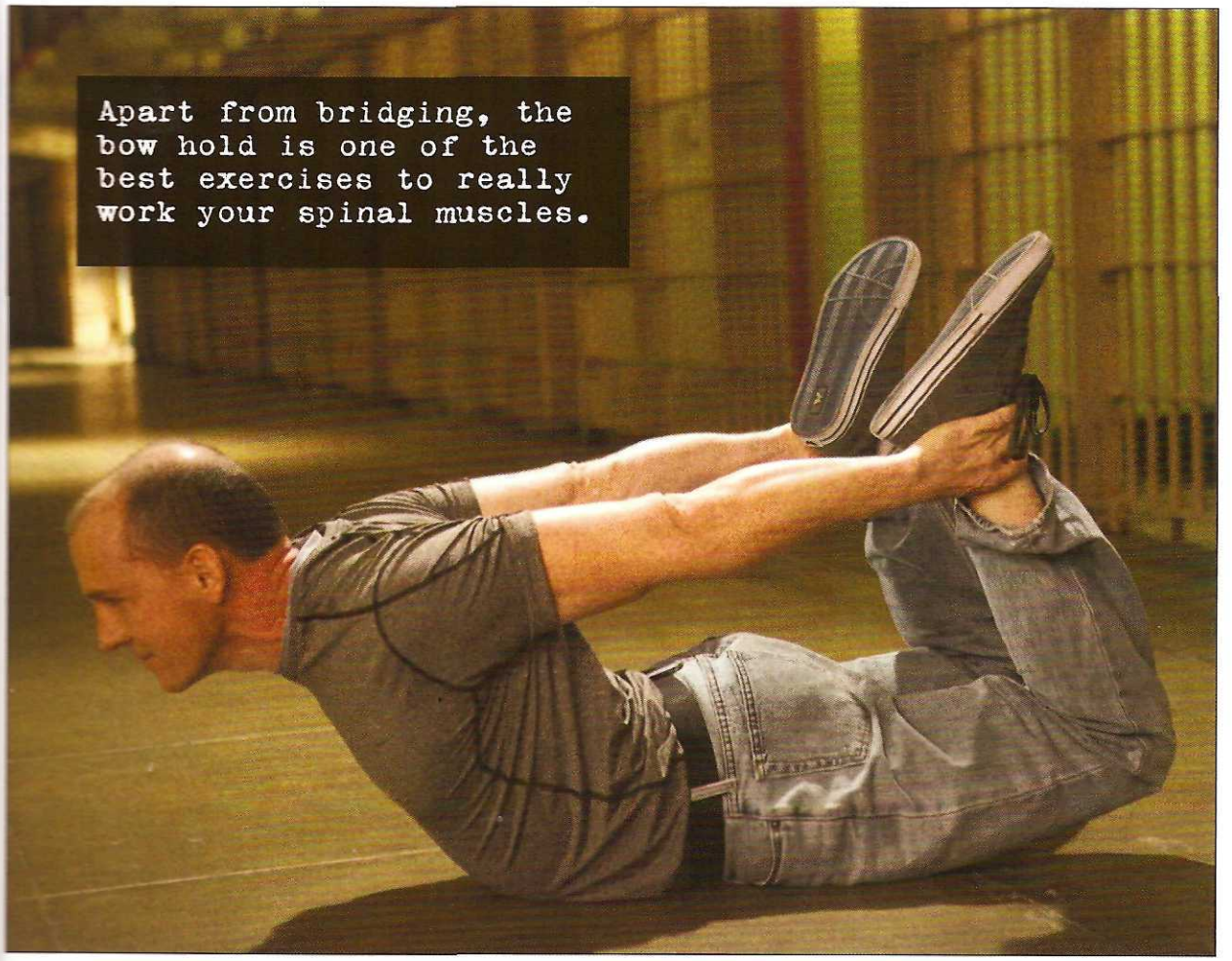




Due to the circular pressing movement, it will also strengthen your rotator cuffs if you build up to it properly.

OVERVIEW

A lot of athletes—men in particular—know lots of bodyweight exercises for the showy muscles of the body. But they neglect the functional muscles—and no muscles are more functional for strength and fitness than the spinal muscles and posterior chain. They might be able to show you ten different pushup variants, but if you ask them to show you a good exercise for conditioning the spine they'd be lost. That's one reason why it's good to know the bow hold. Apart from bridging, the bow hold is one of the best exercises to really work your spinal muscles. It's simple, safe, and fairly easy to learn. You just lie face down on the floor and lean back, grasping your ankles and pushing your chest and knees as high as you can. Your body looks like a bow; hence the name. Let's take a look at how it's done.

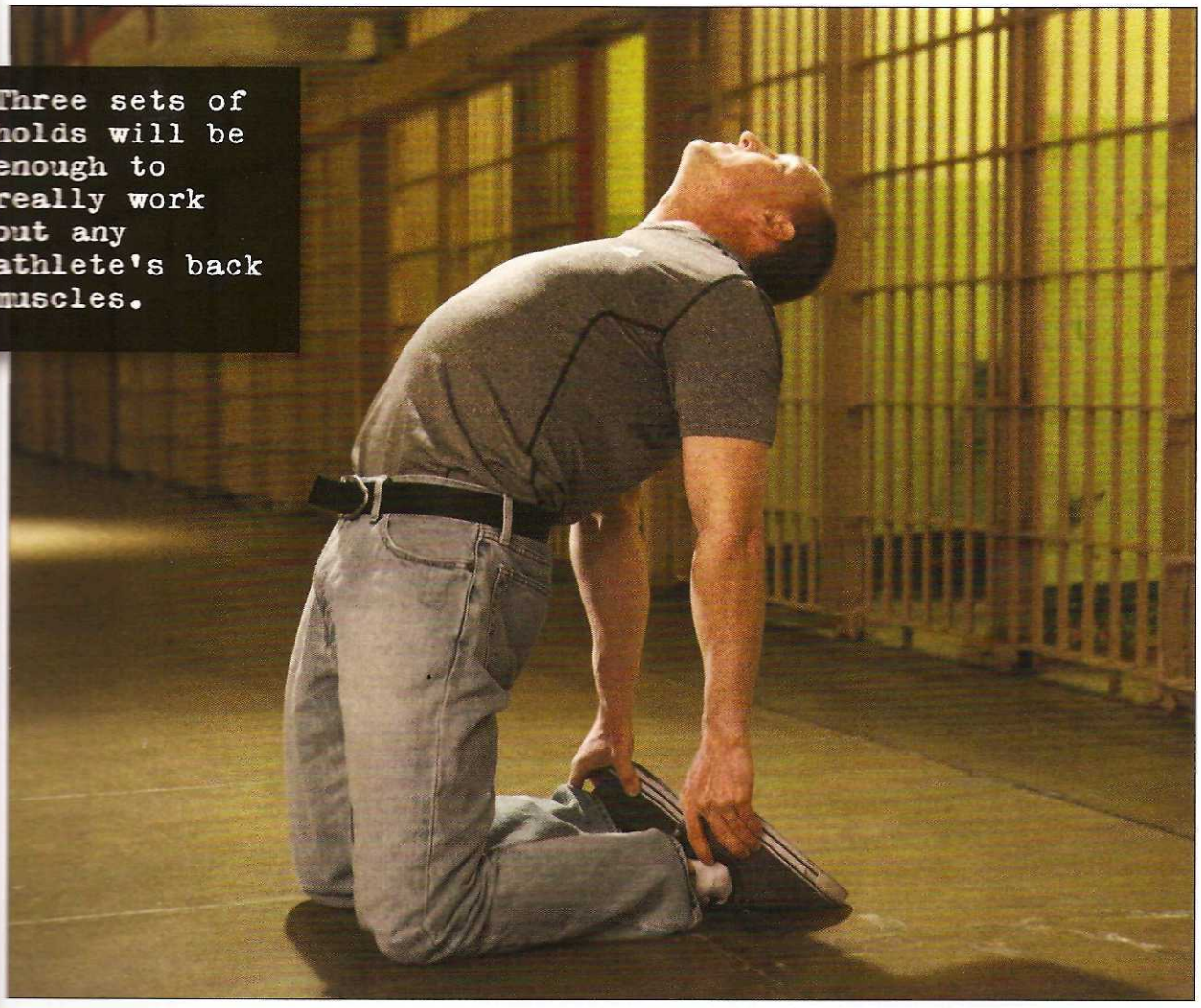


TRAINING IDEAS

This is a great exercise to add to your routine. It's not a substitute for bridging, which is better, but it does work the spinal muscles well and provide a good anterior chain stretch. It's a great alternative to bridging if you're feeling tired, or if your arms are exhausted from training. You can build up to thirty second holds, or just hold the top position for a two count then lower back down and go for reps. Two or three sets of ten reps makes for a great spinal workout, with very little total body burn-out.

OVERVIEW

Once you've mastered the bow hold, the camel hold is a great spinal exercise to work with. The camel is a lot like the bow, but you do it upright, instead of on your belly. You just kneel on the floor and lean back, grasping your ankles and pressing the hips forward. Because you can't use the leg muscles as much this way, the spinal erectors need to do most of the work, so the camel position is progressively more demanding than the bow position on the ground. As a result, the deeper muscles of the spine are activated really well. Let's see how it's done.



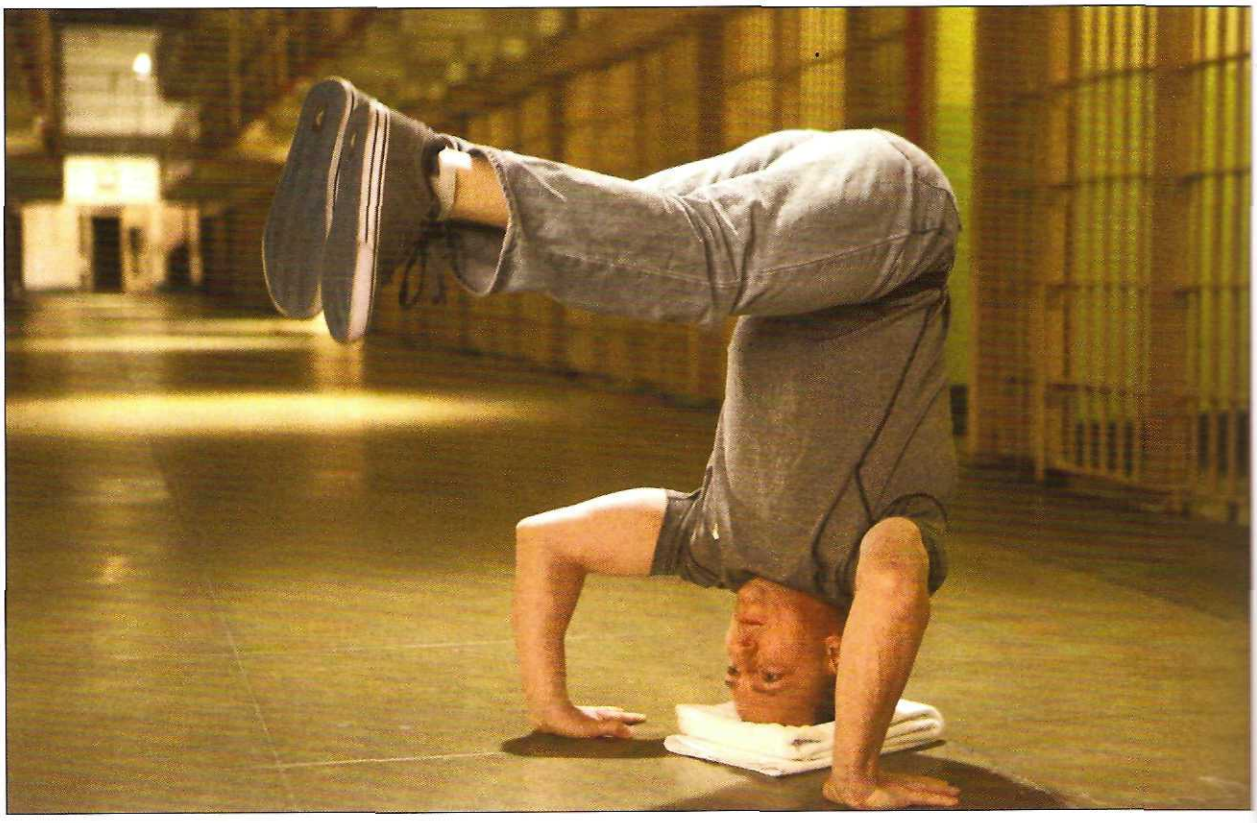
TRAINING IDEAS

This exercise is actually pretty hard, particularly if you have a tight anterior chain, and your back's not as strong as it should be. Most beginners and intermediates should learn the bow first. It's always useful to have some static, or isometric exercises in your back training toolkit, because from time to time you might not want to do regular bridges, maybe because of a shoulder injury, a wrist injury, or you just want some variety. Camel holds will keep the deeper muscles of your spine toned and in great condition if you need to substitute them for a while. Once you can do this exercise perfectly, build up to thirty second holds. Three sets of holds will be enough to really work out any athlete's back muscles.

INVERSE HYPEREXTENSIONS

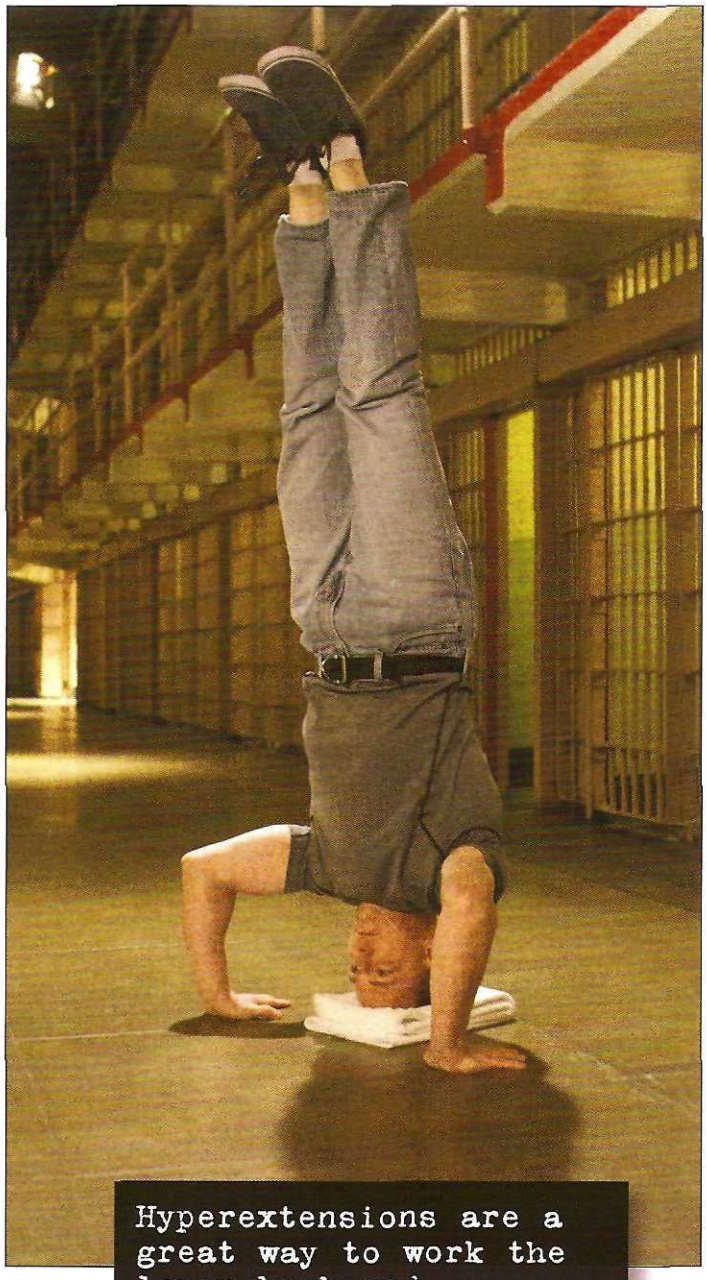
OVERVIEW

Hyperextensions and rear hyperextensions are exercises for the lower back and posterior chain which involve straightening the body at the hips. You normally need a special exercise unit to perform this exercise, or at least the help of a partner. But prisoners have figured out a way to perform hyperextensions alone, and without any custom-made apparatus. You perform a headstand, and lower your legs down towards the floor, without letting them touch the ground. From there, you raise your legs back up straight, using only the spinal muscles, glutes and hamstrings. Here's what it looks like.

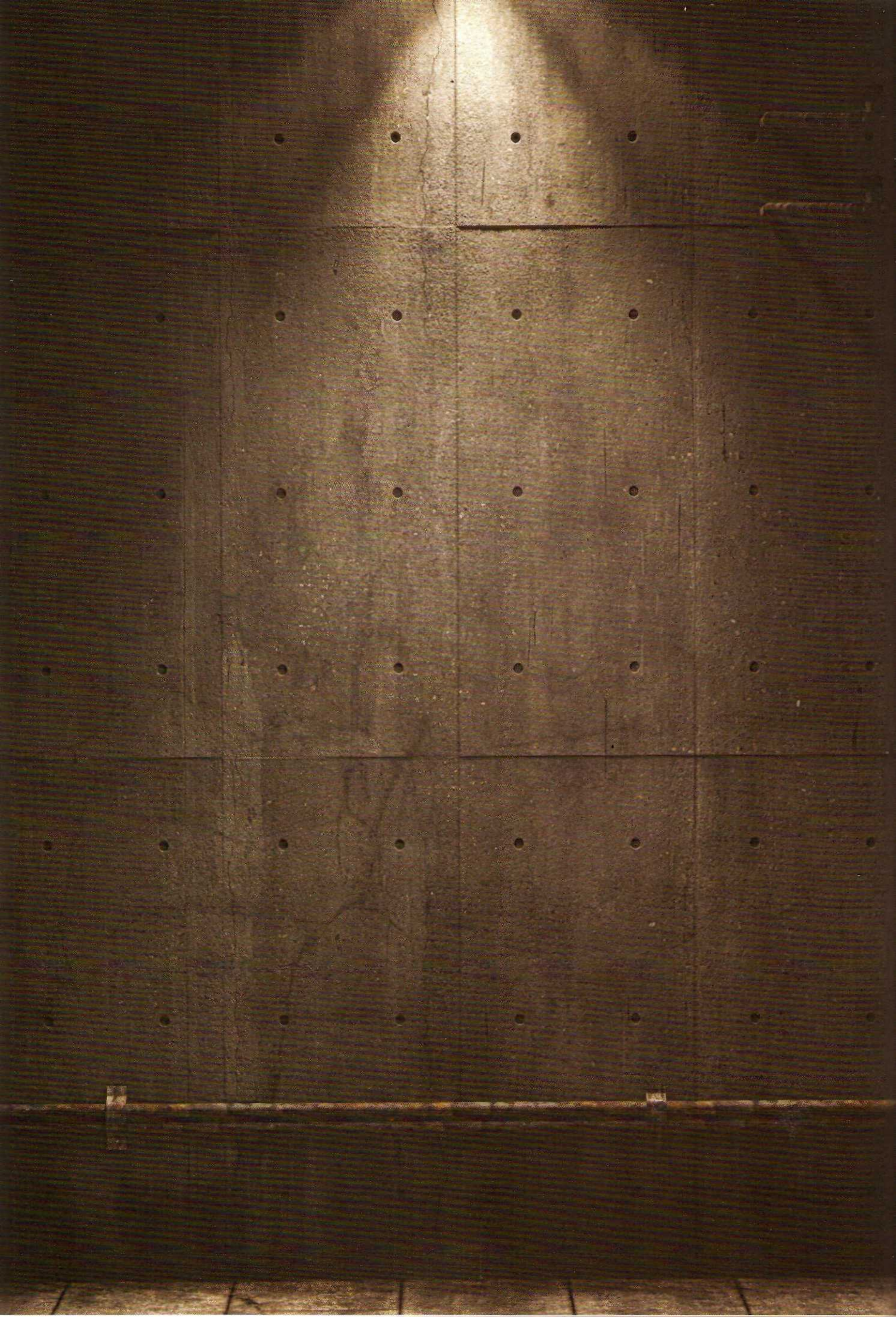


TRAINING IDEAS

This is never an exercise which is going to build thick, powerful back muscles. But hyperextensions are a great way to work the lower back and hamstrings safely. In a deadlift or good morning, your feet are on the ground, so the weight passes through your spine. This makes these exercises riskier if you have a bad back. But, because your feet are in the air during wall hypers, minimal pressure is running down through your spine. This makes this exercise a perfect warm up for a stiff back, or alternately, a therapy drill to loosen up your posterior chain and force lots of healing blood into a sore back. Be strict and work up to three or four sets of double figures to see good results. To make this movement easier, perform it from a shoulderstand; to make it harder use a handstand.



Hyperextensions are a great way to work the lower back and hamstrings safely.



You are now in possession of the most advanced bridging progressions in the whole world. There's no excuse for a bad back or a weak spine any more. We've given you the techniques. All you need to do is bring the willpower and actually start. Nobody can do it but you. But you can do it. If you need support, come and visit us at the forum at **dragondoor.com**. We're there.

Until next time, keep doing those bridges!

Erect Twin Pythons of Coiled Beef Up Your Spine and Develop Extreme, Explosive Resilience—— With the Dynamic Power and Flexible Strength of Advanced Bridging

Paul Wade's *Convict Conditioning* system represents the ultimate distillation of hardcore prison bodyweight training's most powerful methods. What works was kept. What didn't, was slashed away. When your life is on the line, you're not going to mess with less than the absolute best. Many of these older, very potent solitary training systems have been on the verge of dying, as convicts begin to gain access to weights, and modern "body-building thinking" floods into the prisons. Thanks to Paul Wade, these ultimate strength survival secrets have been saved for posterity. And for you...

Filmed entirely—and so appropriately—on "The Rock", Wade's *Convict Conditioning Volume 4, Advanced Bridging: Forging an Iron Spine* explodes out of the cellblock to teach you in absolute detail how to progress from the relative ease of a Short Bridge—to the stunning, "1-in-1,000" achievement of the Stand-to-Stand Bridge. Ten progressive steps guide you to inevitable mastery of this ultimate exercise for an unbreakable back.

This home-study course in ultimate survival strength comes replete with bonus material not available in **Paul Wade's** original *Convict Conditioning* book—and numerous key training tips that refine and expand on the original program.

Prowl through the heavily and gorgeously-illustrated 80-plus-page manual and devour the entire film script at your animal leisure. Digest the brilliant, precise photographs and reinforce the raw benefits you absorbed from the DVD.

Paul Wade adds a bonus **Ten Commandments for Perfect Bridges**—which is worth the price of admission alone. And there's the additional bonus of **4 major Variant drills** to add explosivity, fun and super-strength to your core practice.

Whatever you are looking for from your bridges—be it supreme suppleness, a tigrishly powerful spine, extreme resilience against injury, or a godlike level of strength-flexibility—it's yours for the progressive taking with *Convict Conditioning Volume 4, Advanced Bridging: Forging an Iron Spine.*

Dragon Door Publications, Inc.
www.dragondoor.com

Visit the Dragon Door website today. Sign up as a subscriber and receive free downloads of articles, news of new products and much more.