

BACK

TO THE DRAWING BOARD

THE VARIABLES

▽ BENT OVER UNDERHAND ROW ▽

BENT OVER UNDERHAND ROW STEPS

1. Load a barbell with the appropriate weight.
2. Grip the barbell slightly wider than shoulder width apart with a supinated grip (palms facing forward).
3. Bend your knees slightly and bend at your waist until your torso is angled about 30 degrees from the floor. Let your arms hang perpendicular to the floor. This will be your starting position.
4. Exhale and bring the bar up to your torso in a controlled manner.
5. Squeeze your back muscles at the top of the motion for 1 to 2 seconds.
6. Return to the starting position and repeat for the desired amount of reps.

LOW CABLE PULLEY ROW (BACK PAIN ALTERNATIVE)

1. Load a barbell with the appropriate weight.
2. Grip the barbell slightly wider than shoulder width apart with a supinated grip (palms facing forward).
3. Bend your knees slightly and bend at your waist until your torso is angled about 30 degrees from the floor. Let your arms hang perpendicular to the floor. This will be your starting position.
4. Exhale and bring the bar up to your torso in a controlled manner.
5. Squeeze your back muscles at the top of the motion for 1 to 2 seconds.
6. Return to the starting position and repeat for the desired amount of reps.

THE VARIABLES

▾ SINGLE ARM DUMBBELL ROW ▸



SINGLE ARM DUMBBELL ROW STEPS

1. Grab a bench and place a dumbbell on one side. For the purposes of this description let us say the dumbbell is on your left side.
2. Put your right knee on the bench with your knee right below your hip.
3. Place your right arm on the bench directly below your shoulder.
4. Grip the dumbbell on the floor with your left hand. This will be your starting position.
5. Pull the dumbbell up to the side of your chest while keeping your elbow close to your body.
6. Squeeze at the top of the movement for 1 to 2 seconds.
7. Return the weight to the starting position.
8. Repeat for the desired number of reps before switching sides. When switching sides the leg and arm directions are reversed.

THE VARIABLES

▽ SINGLE ARM DUMBBELL ROW ▽

COMMON MISTAKES

1. Pulling with your arms. This may seem counterintuitive. It's as if we are trying to detach two inherently connected variables. You will always need to involve your arms in a pulling exercise, but you need to be careful not to remove your lats entirely from the equation. It is very easy to focus on moving the weight without stretching the lat. When performing the movement, allow the weight to stretch your lat muscles and then pull upwards so your elbow goes towards the ceiling.
2. Using momentum. Sometimes we are so focused on getting a result that we turn a blind eye to our plan. The goal of our exercise is to stretch and strengthen the target muscle, not appear as if we achieved the greatest corollary. Choose a weight you can control and contract the muscle with. Avoid wrenching your body to move the weight. This will limit your growth and leave you returning to the drawing board after months of insufficient growth.

THE VARIABLES

T-BAR ROW



T-BAR ROW STEPS

1. Position a barbell into a landmine attachment or into a stable corner to prevent it from moving. When moving the ladder, choose something metal so as not to damage the gym walls.
2. Attach the desired handle to the bar (if you don't have an appropriate handle, you can place the bar in the crevice of a v-handle) and add an appropriate weight.
3. Stand up with the weight and bend over at about 30 degrees. Allow your arms to hang perpendicular from your body. This will be your starting position.
4. Pull the weight up to your upper abdominals and contract your back.
5. Return to the starting position and repeat for the desired amount of reps.

THE VARIABLES

▾ T-BAR ROW ▴

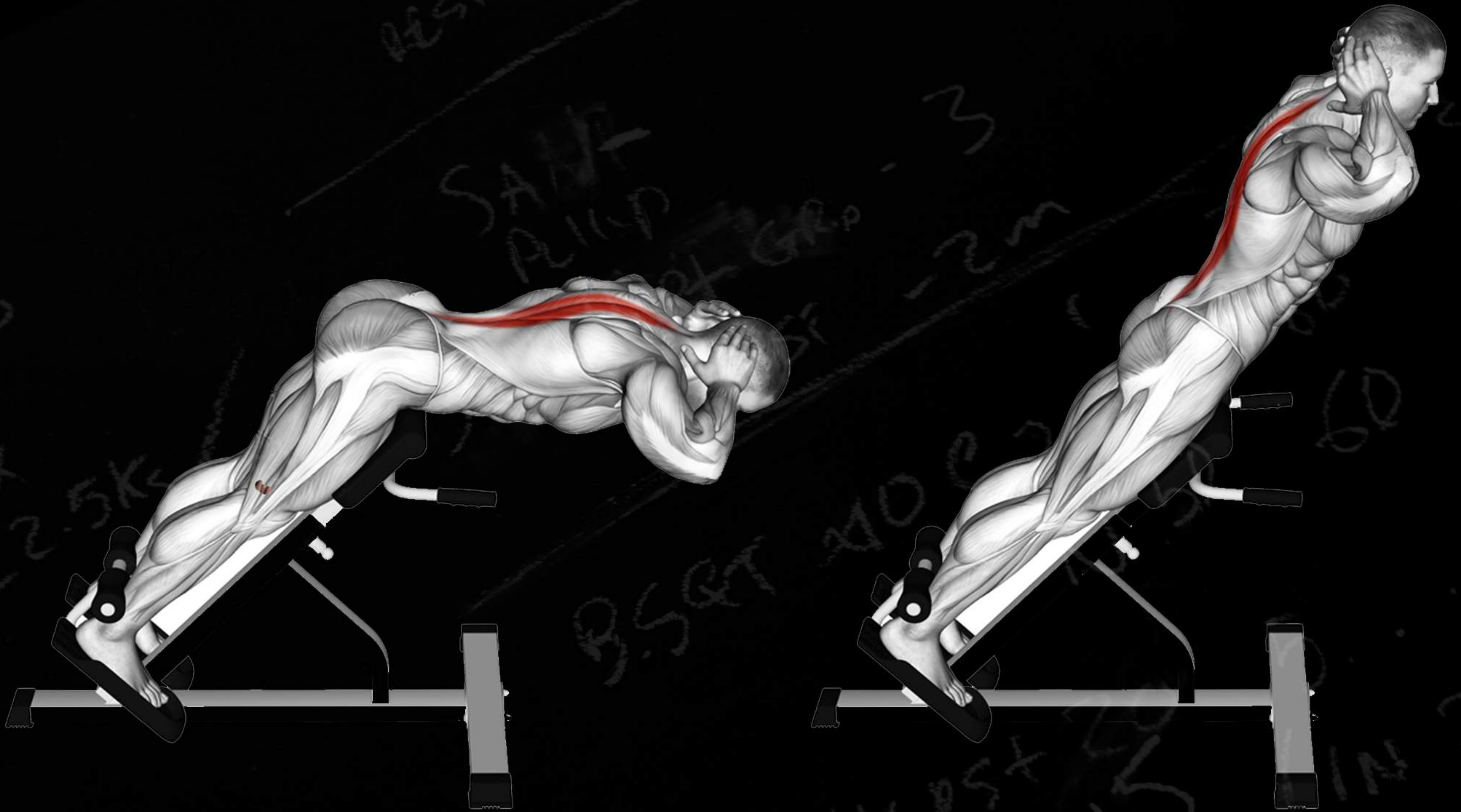
COMMON MISTAKES

1. Swinging your back. It is human nature to try to accelerate progress through quick periods of explosive work. Muscle and strength, like many equations, are rate limited. You must accept that lifting beyond your means consistently will not increase your growth rate. Avoid shorting the length of the lift by moving your torso towards the bar and using your hips to move the weight. Trust your plan and you will grow consistently.

2. Pulling with your arms. Again, we are faced with the conundrum of separating the work of our biceps and back muscles. Remember that your goal here is to grow the back through a significant stretch and contraction. Let the bar pull upon your back, providing significant stretching, before you bring the elbows back and squeeze. This exercise should leave you with a solid back pump, not only throbbing biceps.

THE VARIABLES

HYPEREXTENSION



HYPEREXTENSION STEPS

1. Find a hyperextension bench and grab a plate of your desired weight.
2. Secure your feet in the foot pad and adjust the bench so that it supports your legs while allowing you to bend at the waist.
3. Cross your arms in front of you and straighten your torso. This will be your starting position.
4. Bend forward at your hips while keeping a straight back. Continue until you feel a stretch in your hamstrings.
5. Pause and return your torso back to the starting position so that there is a straight line from your legs to your head.
6. Repeat for the desired amount of reps.

THE VARIABLES

HYPEREXTENSION

COMMON MISTAKES

1. Bringing your torso too far back. If the purpose of the exercises is to relax and contract the muscles, it stands to reason that the greater range of motion would equate to greater growth. This theory is put to test during the hyperextension. People typically go past a neutral spine and arch their back at the top of the movement. This not only provides no more muscular stimulation, it can put the lower back under undue stress. We are at the drawing board level, so let us remove that misconception from all future iterations.

2. Rounding your back. This is the inverse of the previous mistake. While we descend, we want to go as far as possible to maximally stretch the lower back. This may lead to us rounding our back to go all the way down. Every person's flexibility level is different, and many cannot go all the way down without arching their back. To avoid putting too much stress on your spine, bend at your hip until you feel a stretch in your hamstrings while keeping your back straight.

THE VARIABLES

▾ LAT PULL DOWN ▾



LAT PULL DOWN STEPS

1. Attach a wide grip bar to the overhead pulley and grip the bar with a pronated grip wider than shoulder width.
2. Adjust the seat to a comfortable level and sit down. Lean back about 30 degrees and point your chest up. This will be your starting position.
3. Pull the bar with your elbows pointing straight down. Pull through your armpits to engage the lats and avoid overusing your biceps.
4. Bring the bar to your upper chest without moving your torso.
5. Contract your back muscles for 1 to 2 seconds.
6. Return to the starting position and repeat for the desired amount of reps.

THE VARIABLES

▾ LAT PULL DOWN ▾

COMMON MISTAKES

1. **Swinging.** This is the most common error amongst people using the lat pull down machine. Many choose a weight based on another's planned path and attempt to pull the weight down by any means necessary. This can translate to incomplete reps, rotator cuff strain, and focus on other muscles in the back. The goal of this exercise is to work the lats, so focus on controlling the weight in a safe manner. The drawing board has plenty of room for other mid back movements.
2. **Gripping the bar too wide.** The width of your arms does not continuously correlate to the width of your back. While you should put your arms wider than shoulder width, there is a limit on an acceptable width. Placing your arms too far apart shortens the range of motion and decreases the work done. It can also aggravate existing shoulder injuries such as impingements.
3. **Bringing the bar behind the neck.** Another variation of the lat pull down. Pulling the weight behind the neck can decrease the weight used and minimize momentum, but at a cost. Bringing the bar behind the neck can create rotator cuff strain that may not only limit your growth, but keep you staring at the drawing board for the next few months.

THE FORMULA

Your drawing board has now taken shape. You understand your constants, your exercise variables, and the environment in which you will deploy your efforts. Follow this program weekly to build a foundation for a legendary back. Perform each workout once per week. You can follow these workouts with additional bicep work or add in triceps. Remember your pathway and build with purpose.



THE FORMULA

WORKOUT #1

Workout # 1				
Exercise- Every 2 movements are Supersets				
	Sets	Set 1 & 2 Reps	Set 3 & 4 Reps	Set 5 & 6 Reps
Bent over barbell row underhand 0 seconds REST	6	16 reps at 60%	10 reps at 75%	12 reps & 16 reps at 70%
Hyperextension 20 seconds REST	6	12 reps	12 reps	12 reps
Lat pull down 0 seconds REST	6	16 reps at 60%	10 reps at 75%	12 reps & Failure both at 70%
T Bar Row 20 seconds REST	6	16 reps at 60%	10 reps at 75%	12 reps & Failure both at 70%

WORKOUT #2

Workout #2				
Exercise- Every 2 movements are Supersets				
	Sets	Set 1 & 2 Reps	Set 3 & 4 Reps	Set 5 & 6 Reps
Single Arm Dumbbell Row 0 seconds REST	6	16 reps at 60%	10 reps at 75%	12 reps & Failure both at 70%
Hyperextension 20 seconds REST	6	12 reps	12 reps	12 reps
Lat pull down 0 seconds REST	6	16 reps at 60%	10 reps at 75%	12 reps & Failure both at 70%
Low Cable Pulley Row 20 seconds REST	6	16 reps at 60%	10 reps at 75%	12 reps & Failure both at 70%