

BEGINNER CALISTHENICS



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This is for informational purposes only. Consult a physician before performing this or any exercise program. I am not a personal trainer, If you choose to work with the forthcoming advice, you are agreeing to accept full responsibility for your actions.

Table Of Contents

Starting out 3

Gaining & Losing weight 4

Training at home 5

Beginner routine 6 - 10

Negatives 11

Compound exercises12

ROM13

Progressive overload14

Rest/Recovery & Deloading.....15

Setting a goal16

Reps and sets17

Beginner/Intermidate exercises18

Beginner Skills19

Crafting a skill focused routine.....20

Contact me 21

Starting Out

Firstly I want to congratulate you on taking the first step to changing your life for the better, calisthenics isn't just a work out, its a lifestyle that will stay with you for the rest of your life. The skills you learn won't only impress others but better yourself, the discipline you will develop from training consistently will help you in every aspect of your life, and I'm so proud that you decided to be more than average and take control of your life. This is just the beginning for you :)

Now then, when starting calisthenics it is important to first condition your body by mastering the basics, this means being able to perform clean form, full ROM (Range of motion) reps for exercises like pull-ups, and pushups.

You want to build this foundational basic strength before trying to move on to more advanced skills. Skipping steps and trying to jump ahead will often limit what you can do and is the main reason most people plateau. Also If you are overweight it will be important to first lose the excess weight as this is considered dead weight and will only make exercises more difficult. (This is elaborated on in the next page)

For those with no prior fitness experience or training I recommend spending time conditioning your body by doing the beginner workout at least 3 times a week with a day in between to rest, the rest days can be used to work on mobility, flexibility or cardio.

Being able to control your speed at any point in a movement is what true control/ mastery looks like, which is why it's so important that you don't skip steps, only when you train through the entire ROM of a movement is when you will master every aspect of it.

Gaining & Losing Weight

The key to gaining weight as a skinny person is simple, EAT MORE and train consistently, I'm sure you're saying to yourself "but I already eat a lot" I promise you, it is not enough, you need to be eating enough to be in a **calorie surplus**. A **calorie surplus** being eating more calories than your body burns. There is no secret or special hack, consume more calories, train hard, and results will come. You can find out how many calories you need via an online calculator, this can be found in helpful resources in the discord, Link is in my Instagram bio.

Now on the other side, losing weight is also very simple, its not easy but its as straight forward as being in a **calorie deficit** and training consistently. As long as your are consuming less calories than your body needs you will lose weight. Also increasing your water intake and reducing your sugar consumption will help tremendously. This combined with consistent training and a proper diet will accelerate the process.

Training At Home

The wonderful thing about calisthenics is that it does not require a gym membership, all you need is yourself and minimal equipment, here's a list of recommended equipment that will be beneficial in your journey.

Wrist wraps - These help take pressure off your wrists and protect them from Injury. (highly recommended)

Chalk - This will help with your grip, and stop you from slipping while on the pull-up bar, cheap but effective. (highly recommended)

Parallettes - These are the parallel bars you have most likely seen me use in most of my videos, they're portable, lightweight, and help with shoulder stability, balance, control, and provide elevation off the floor, making skills like the L sit much easier. (highly recommended)

Gymnastic rings - In case there is no access to a pull-up bar, these are a great alternative, they can be hung from stable beams and provide the same functions as a pull-up bar, with the added benefit of allowing you to move through a wider range of motion. The instability of the rings also helps build shoulder stability since your body is working harder to keep you stable. (Not mandatory but can be beneficial)

Note

Calisthenics Equipment now available at [Malkymalk.com](https://malkymalk.com)

Beginner Routine

Complete Beginner Workout Schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Warm-up Conditioning day	Rest/Legs/Cardio	Warm-up Conditioning day	Rest/Legs/Cardio	Warm-up Conditioning day

Beginner -> Intermediate Workout Schedule 1

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Warm-up Push/Pull/Core	Rest/Legs/Cardio	Warm-up Push/Pull/Core	Rest/Legs/Cardio	Warm-up Push/Pull/Core

Beginner -> Intermediate Workout Schedule 2

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Warm-up Pull/Core	Warm-up Push	Rest/Legs/Cardio	Warm-up Pull/Core	Warm-up Push

If you are a complete beginner refer to the first workout schedule and perform the conditioning circuit. If you are a bit further along then choose from the pushing and pulling table on **page 16** to build your training schedule. For the weekends, you can choose to continue the every other day schedule or rest. I personally use the weekends as a chance to give my body some extra time to recover.

Calisthenics skills can be split up into pushing and pulling skills. For example the hanging L sit and pulling portion of the muscle up can be trained on pull days. The pushing portion of the muscle up can be trained on push days. I personally follow schedule 1 where I do both pushing and pulling on the same day.

Complete Beginner

Conditioning workout Circuit

- 10 pullups
- 20 pushups
- 1 minute plank
- 10 bodyweight squats
- Rest needed varies, but for complete beginners 2-5 minutes should be more than enough
- 3-5 sets

Note If unable to complete a full rep of a pullup or pushup refer to the next page

Going through all exercises one after the other with minimal rest in-between is most beneficial. It's important to keep your heart rate up, so try not to take too long between exercises. Going through all exercises counts as 1 set.

Warmup

It's important to warmup before training, warming up dilates your blood vessels, making sure your muscles are supplied with oxygen. It also "warms you up" making your muscles more flexible and efficient. You're most prone to injury if you just jump into an exercise without proper prep, don't neglect the warmup.

For a wrist warmup/strengthening exercises, check the program videos folder

Injuries

It's important to treat injuries with a high priority, if something doesn't feel right or a muscle is pulled, stop training and give yourself time to recover. Ignoring minor injuries can result in more serious injuries in the future. Don't get sucked into trying to make progress as fast as possible, remember that this is a lifestyle, you will have plenty of time to train, don't sacrifice long term success for short term gains.

The Pull-up

The pull-up is a fundamental and crucial exercise in calisthenics due to its ability to target multiple muscle groups simultaneously, making it an excellent compound movement.

By engaging the back, biceps, shoulders, and core, pull-ups effectively build upper body strength and muscular endurance. Additionally, mastering the pull-up is a testament to one's body control and functional strength.

As a foundational calisthenics exercise, it serves as a stepping stone for more advanced moves like muscle-ups

The Pushup

The push-up is another fundamental and indispensable exercise in calisthenics, renowned for its effectiveness in building upper body strength and endurance. By primarily targeting the chest, shoulders, triceps, and core, push-ups are a versatile compound movement that engages multiple muscle groups simultaneously.

Push-ups not only help to develop muscular strength but also improves stability and promotes a balanced physique. Furthermore, push-ups can be modified to suit varying fitness levels, making them accessible to beginners and challenging for advanced practitioners.

Exercises to build strength for pushups and pullups

Pull-ups

Active Hangs (10 -30 secs / 3-5 sets)

Scapula Shrugs (10 reps / 3-5 sets)

Australian/Horizontal pull-ups (10 reps / 3-5 sets)

Negative pull-ups (5-10 reps / 3-5 sets)

Band assisted pull-ups (5-10 reps / 3-5 sets)

- Start with active hangs and scapula shrugs
- Once you feel confident in your ability to perform those exercises, begin training Australian pull-ups and negative pull-ups
- Use band assisted pull-ups if you feel like negatives are too difficult or aren't working for you

Pushups

Pushup support hold (30 secs / 3-5 sets)

Negative pushups (5-10 reps / 3-5 sets)

Incline Pushups (5-10 reps / 3-5 sets)

- Start off with the pushup support hold (top position of the pushup) to get your body used to the starting position
- Next find a elevated surface and perform your pushups there, you can start on the wall and gradually lower the elevation (Can use a stable chair or bed) eventually youll be strong enough to move down to the floor.
- Additionally Negative pushups can be very effective for bridging the gap between a lower elevation and the floor.

Note what's a negative? check the next page

The Core

Core exercises play a pivotal role in calisthenics, serving as the foundation for many bodyweight movements and providing numerous benefits for overall strength and stability. The core muscles, including the rectus abdominis, obliques, transverse abdominis, and lower back muscles, are engaged in various calisthenics exercises, making a strong core essential for proper form and injury prevention.

Incorporating core-specific movements, such as planks, hollow holds, leg raises, and L-sits, ensures that the entire midsection is effectively targeted. Additionally, the versatility of core exercises allows for progressive difficulty, accommodating both beginners and advanced practitioners.

Recommended exercises (Ordered by difficulty)

Planks

Hollow body hold

Leg raises (Hanging from bar or laying on floor)

L sit

Negatives

Negatives are a very effective way to build up strength to an exercise that is too difficult, they are the reverse of the exercise, also known as the *eccentric*. The golden rule of calisthenics is that doing the negative will always bring you the positive.

Take the pull-up for example, if you are not strong enough to do a full pull-up what you would do instead is start from the top position and lower yourself back down slowly to the starting position. Repeat this until you've gained enough strength to be able to do a full pull-up.

Remember this for the future, it will be very important in developing strength for much harder skills.

Compound Exercises

One of the reasons why calisthenics exercises are so effective at burning calories and gaining mass is because most exercises are compound exercises.

Compound exercises are exercises that work multiple parts of your body at the same time, good examples of these are L-sit pull-ups and pushups. L-sit pull-ups target your back, arms, engage your core and pushups target your chest, triceps and shoulders.

Isolated exercises have their place but for gaining overall muscle mass, saving time and burning calories these are more effective and will be the main type of exercises used in this program.

Range Of Motion (ROM)

We often hear the term full ROM thrown around, but what is it and why is it so important? Using full ROM in an exercise is crucial for building strength. Half reps and isolated movements have their place, but not going through the entire ROM can hurt your progress going forward.

The reason why we see so many people plateau is because of their lack in strength, either at the beginning or at the end of a movement. This is due to not going through the entire ROM during training.

Slow and controlled repetitions with good form through the full ROM will build the most strength. Fast uncontrolled half reps are not as beneficial for building strength.

Progressive Overload

An important term to be familiar with is Progressive overload. This is the increase in stress placed on the body over time. If you continue to perform the same exercises without increasing the difficulty or adding different variations you will plateau and stop seeing progress. This is why its important to keep track of your progress so you can know when it might be time to move on to harder variations.

This can be done by either increasing the number of reps per set, increasing the number of sets or by progressing to a more difficult variation of an exercise.

(Ex. Pullup ***Easy*** -> Weighed Pullup ***Harder***)

As a beginner when you start you'll be seeing progress relatively quickly. As we progress we need more stimulation to keep the growth going. Progressively overloading our muscles will force them to adapt and get stronger.

Rest/Recovery

Resting is more important than training, let me elaborate. You don't get stronger when you leave the gym. Strength only develops when you give your body the chance to recover. It's important to take your rest days seriously, neglecting rest can negatively impact your performance. Make sure you're getting proper sleep and take a break when needed, take care of your body.

Deloading

Deloading is an important term to know, think of it as a vacation for your body. All the wear and tear your body goes through while you are training cannot be fully recovered from a single day of rest. Over time, this wear will build up, and you will not feel fully recovered. Exercises that used to be easy will now be difficult for you. For every 3-4 weeks of training you should take a full week off.

Some prefer to do light training during this week (Ex. 2 sets of each exercise with reduced intensity). I personally prefer to rest for the week but the decision is yours, just make sure that if you do train, its at a much lighter intensity than normal.

Setting A Goal

Once you've completed your beginner conditioning its time to decide what it is you want to do. Do you want to focus on skill training? Or are you just looking to build body mass?

If you are interested in learning calisthenics skills, you will be focused on low reps and skill progressions. If you are interested in just putting on size, you will be focused on high reps and different variations to sculpt your body the way you want.

You will gain mass and strength regardless of which way you decide to go.

Reps & Sets

For strength training
General rep range 3-8 reps
Longer rest times (3-5 minutes)

For hypertrophy training
General rep range 10-15 reps
Shorter rest times (1-2 minutes)

Rather than give a static number of reps or sets for each exercise, I want you to be able to determine how many you should do on your own. I always give the Guideline of 3-5-10 reps and 3-5 sets because that is the typical range for strength training. However that number can change depending on how difficult an exercise is. For example pushups, a relatively easy exercise can easily be 10-20 reps for 5 sets. Something like the handstand pushup which is significantly harder would warrant something like 2-3 reps for 5 sets. The reps and sets will change Depending on how difficult an exercise is.

Play around with this number and find the best range. Don't be afraid to experiment, remember this is a lifestyle, take your time and learn along the way.

When training to gain body mass, its important to train with enough volume to overload your muscles. Progressively increasing the number and difficulty of reps will yield the best results.

Beginner -> Intermediate Exercises

Pushing

- ***Beginner** Regular Pushups (Targets chest, triceps)
- ***Intermediate** Explosive Pushups (For fast twitch muscle fibers)
- ***Intermediate** Diamond Pushups (More emphasis on triceps)
- ***Intermediate** Wide Pushups (Targets chest, shoulders, up arms)
- ***Beginner** Regular Dips (Targets chest, triceps, shoulders, upper back, lower back)
- ***Intermediate** Weighted Dips (Same as dips)
- ***Beginner** Pike pushups (Targets shoulders and triceps)
- ***Intermediate** Wall HSPU (Targets shoulders and triceps, Face to wall more difficult than back to wall)

Pulling

- ***Beginner** Regular Pull-ups (Targets most back)
- ***Beginner** Australian/Horizontal Pull-ups (Targets back)
- ***Beginner** Chin ups (Targets biceps and back)
- ***Intermediate** Explosive pull-ups (To chest)
- ***Intermediate** Weighted pullups (Same as pull-ups)
- ***Intermediate** Muscle ups (Breakdown on skills page)
- ***Intermediate** High Pull-ups
- ***Intermediate** L-sit pullups (Back and Core)

Core

- ***Beginner** Planks
- ***Beginner** Knee raises
- ***Beginner** Half Leg raises
- ***Beginner** Hollow body holds
- ***Intermediate** Half Leg raises (Hanging from bar or laying on floor)
- ***Intermediate** Full leg raise (toes to bar)

Beginner Skills

L sit

The L sit is a fundamental calisthenics skill, helping you develop the necessary core strength to move on to more difficult exercises like the L sit pullup and the dragon flag, follow the progressions below to develop the strength to hold an L-sit

Progressions

***Easiest** Hanging knee raise hold (30 sec / 3-5 sets)

Alternating 1 leg hold (20 sec/ 3-5 sets)

Hanging L sit hold (10 sec / 3-5 sets)

***Hardest** Floor L sit hold (5-10 sec/ 3-5 sets)

***Note** visual representation
of muscle in program videos
folder

Muscle up

The muscle up can be broken down into 3 parts: **Pulling**, **Pushing**, and the **Technique**.

For the pulling portion, you need to develop enough explosive pulling strength to get high enough to reach the transition point. To develop this you need to start training for high pullups, try to pull to your waist, at first you wont get very high but over time you will be able to pull higher.

For the pushing portion you need to develop enough strength to push through once you've gone through the transition. This can be developed via slow and controlled reps of straight bar dips , these will help you develop the strength to push out once your on top of the bar.

Lastly the technique. The most common mistake people make is pulling straight up, which puts the bar directly in your way, The proper technique is to go around the bar in an arc when pulling up.

Muscle up training

Explosive pullups (3-5 full power reps 3-5 sets)

Straight bar dips (5-10 slow controlled straight bar dips 3-5 sets)

Crafting a skill focused routine

If your main focus is to develop strength for calisthenics skills, then your routine is going to be focused around that.

Its important to start with your most difficult exercise first. Then go from hardest to easiest, you want to be fresh and have all your strength for the main skills. Also be sure not to spread yourself thin working on too many things at once. You will exhaust yourself trying to learn 5 skills at once. Picking 2 or 3 skills is more optimal and will yield better results.

Routine breakdown

Current Level progression(12 sec hold 3-5 sets)

Dynamic progression before current level (5-10 second

Accessory Exercise 1

Accessory Exercise 2 (optional)

Routine breakdown example

L sit alternating leg hold (Main)

Hanging knee raises (dynamic)

Leg raises (Accessory)

Hollow body hold (Accessory 2)

Contact Me

I'd appreciate any feedback on your experience with this program, if things were unclear or if you would like more information on a topic send me a message.

Thankyou for your support and I hope to see your improvement, be sure to drop your progress in the #progress-updates channel in the Discord.

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For training equipment:
[Malkymalk.com](https://malkymalk.com)

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