

The Best Bodyweight Exercises You've Never Heard Of

Five FREE Exercises

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Thanks for signing up to receive your five free exercises!

Below, you'll find pictures and detailed descriptions of how to perform each of the exercises and why they're so effective.

If you'd like to go back and see the exercises performed in video, you can access the main page any time here.

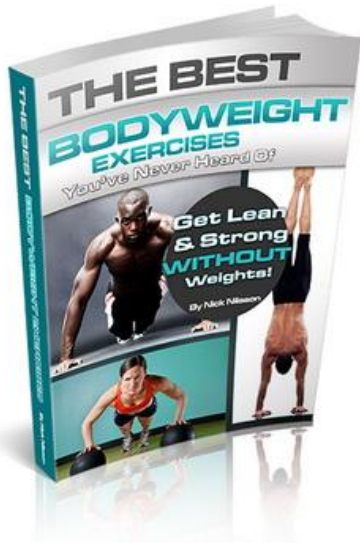
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Nick Nilsson
The Mad Scientist of Muscle



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Upside Down Bodyweight Rows

This is a great bodyweight back exercise that's similar to a chin-up in that you're using your entire bodyweight. It's different, however, in that your body position is a "row" rather than a vertical pull.

It's a good alternative to chins, especially if you don't have the equipment to do rowing exercises. Also, it's like doing a row with ZERO back stress (because you're suspended from a bar).

So if you've got a strong upper back but your lower back isn't great, this is a good one for you.

Fair warning, it does require a little adventurousness to get into position but it's nothing too crazy.

Grip the bar with your hands a little wider than shoulder width - you want them a bit wider because of how your legs are going to be held during this movement (you'll see).

Pull your legs up.



Now bring your left leg underneath the bar.



Then your right leg.

You're now hanging from the bar with both thighs tucked up into your chest and your legs all the way through like halfway through a "skin the cat" gymnastics maneuver. We won't be going all the way around into a full 360 degrees, though, because your shoulders function better when the ligaments are still attached...



This bottom position gives you a nice stretch on the muscles of the upper back, so I definitely encourage you to sink down into and hold at the bottom.

Now, keeping that position, just row yourself up until your hamstrings touch the bar. Try and force your shoulder blades back behind your body.



Simple as that! It's a pull-up/inverted row with ALL your bodyweight.

One-Arm Version (harder)

Now, if you're strong and looking for even greater tension on the back, you can try this version. It's a one-arm focused rowing movement, with the other arm braced to the side for stability, which allows your working arm to just function in movement and not movement and stability.

For this one, you'll need something to the side to grab onto. I'm just using the side upright of my power rack.

Grip with one hand on the bar then grab lower down to the side with the other. Get your legs up and around the bar, like in the previous version.



Once your legs are around the bar and you're in the bottom position, you're ready to row.



Pull directly up. The vast majority of the tension will go to the side with the hand on the bar. There will be some bracing tension going through the other side, but the goal is pull primarily with the "working" arm.



When you're done, I would recommend taking a short break before switching to the other arm. Because even though the bracing side shouldn't be working as hard, it IS still working and your strength will be reduced.

With a little recovery, you should be good to go again on the other side within 30 to 60 seconds.



[Click to see the video for this exercise...](#)

One-Arm Outrigger Bench Push-Ups

This is a simple variation of the push-up that's going to give you two major benefits...

1. It puts more tension on one arm, similar to a regular one-arm push-up, only focusing more on the chest than on the triceps, like regular one-arm push-ups do.
2. It puts a great stretch on the other non-working pec as you're coming down into the push-up.
3. You'll be able to use more resistance than just plain bodyweight, making this exercise more effective for building muscle mass.

Okay, so that's 3 things...

In order to perform this one, you'll need to be able to do at least 15 to 20 normal push-ups, though if you really wanted to, you could potentially do these on your knees, too.

For this, you'll need a bench or a chair or even just stairs...basically anything you can set your other hand on that's about a foot and a half off the ground or so. I'm using just a regular flat bench.

Set one hand flat on the bench and the other hand on the floor a little ways away from the bench. Keep your body stiff and straight.



Now lower yourself down, like you would in a regular push-up.



As you can see, my left side is getting the brunt of the load, which works the left pec more. My right arm is being placed in a great pec-stretch position every single time I come down to the bottom.

The other good thing is that this stretch position is done against resistance (because that pec is also supporting your bodyweight). As you push up, that right pec will also contribute to the movement somewhat, so it's not a true one-arm push-up where the whole load is on one side.

You get two type of work in one shot...then you switch arms. Same exact execution.

The second side you do, you'll not get as many reps since you'll already be fatigued from the first. It's fine to take your regular rest period between sides, if you want, in order to keep things more even.

This is a great push-up variation for when you're travelling for a couple of reasons...first, you get more resistance and second, that stretch helps counteract the inwards-pulling position you tend to acquire while travelling (sitting for long periods in a plane or car).



[Click to see the video for this exercise...](#)

Towel Speedskater Squats

I like to also call these "Speedskater Squats" because of the position your body is in when you squat down.

This is a great exercise for targeting the entire lower body, including the adductors and the gluteus medius and minimus muscles of the hip, which as abductors are critical to lateral movement.

First, loop a towel around a pole or other solid object and grasp the ends of it. Stand on one leg (start with the one closer to the post - this will focus on the adductors) and lean away from the post.



Now come down into a single-leg squat. Touch your knee to the ground then push back up. Do your best to NOT push with your back leg...you want as much of the push to originate from your front leg as possible.

The grip on the towel allows you to lean during the movement.



The next variation targets the abductors (which means the muscles that bring the leg away from the mid-line of the body...in this case, the gluteus medius and minimus muscles).

Using the same towel setup, stand on the leg further away.



Come down into a single leg squat then push back up.



When you've done your reps on one side, then switch to the other.





You can very easily add resistance to this exercise by holding a dumbbell or kettlebell (or even just a heavy bag) in your free hand. The execution is exactly the same.





To get even MORE stretch on the glute, set your foot up on a Step platform or other solid flat block and do the exercise..pretty much anything that won't slide out under you.

This means your back leg will have further to go before it hits the ground and stops the movement, increasing the stretch on the glutes at the bottom.

That's the exercise! As you can see, this is a good one that you can perform pretty much anywhere...all you need is something solid to loop a towel around and a towel and you've got yourself an excellent lateral-tension exercise.



[Click to see the video for this exercise...](#)

One-Arm Hammer Planks

This is a unique variation of the Plank exercise that can help you get the tight, rock-solid abs you want (of course, it goes without saying that you have to lose any extra fat you've got to be able to SEE that you've got abs!).

It's going to develop a rock-solid core as well tightening up your entire midsection and waist...and dare I say flatten your belly...

Now the regular Plank is a simple exercise and a very effective one for developing core strength and stability. That is an exercise I start even complete beginners off with because of the tremendous core-focused benefits you can get from it.

This version of the plank cranks the difficulty up a LOT...it's definitely not a beginner version. You should be able to do at least 2 to 3 minutes of a normal plank before attempting this one.

You're going to be doing the plank with one arm instead of two. The arm you're bracing on will be set perpendicular to your body, which is the reason I call this one a "hammer" plank (it mimics the hammer curl and you'll be exerting force against the ground with your fist, like a hammer).

And instead of setting the forearm in line with body and tilting so you're doing a side plank, you will instead be keeping your shoulders parallel with the ground, using your arm position to brace the core.

It's a VERY tough position and targets the obliques and deep muscles of the core strongly (the transverse abdominus, for example) by focusing on anti-rotation tension.

What that means is that you'll be exerting force to PREVENT rotation of the spine. This is a much safer way to target "rotational" muscles without actually rotating the spine.

When doing this one, you have two options...legs together or separated (I just did the legs-together version in the demo). Keeping your legs together will increase that torsion through the core. Setting the feet wide will make the exercise easier as part of the work that the abs should be doing will be done with leg stabilization.

Here's the position you will be in for the One-Arm Hammer Plank.

Notice how the arm is set and how my shoulders are kept square to the ground. This is the MOST important thing to note for the exercise...because if your body

tilts up on it's side, it turns it into a Side Plank, which is a whole difference exercise. Don't make it easy on yourself :).



In order to maintain that shoulders-square position, you must exert force with your fist against the ground, which carries through the arm and into the core.

Hold until your position starts to break then set your other forearm down and switch arms.



Keep repeating this side-to-side sequence until you're unable to hold yourself up (with shoulders square to the ground) on either side.

This is a VERY challenging plank movement. To give you an idea of how hard it is, I can do a normal plank for about 4 minutes...I was less than a minute on this, even switching between arms.

You will feel this one from the moment you start it and it will develop tremendous anti-rotational core strength and stability, in addition to tightening the entire midsection and waist.



[Click to see the video for this exercise...](#)

Shifting-Grip Pike Handstand Push-Ups

If you're familiar with the **handstand push-up**, you know how stupid hard it is to do properly and with full range reps. THAT is what makes it such a great exercise. In my experience, NOTHING will build your shoulders faster than handstand push-ups.

But as I mentioned, they're TOUGH to do. An alternative is called the Pike Handstand Push-Up, where you have your feet resting on a bench with your body in a pike position.

This is a GREAT variation that takes up some of your bodyweight, making the exercise more manageable but still just as effective.

In addition, I've got another twist...as you're doing the exercise, on every rep you're going to be shifting your grip outwards (just a little on every rep until you get as far out as you feasibly can) then inwards to target slightly different movement patterns and delt fibers (and more focus on the triceps, too).

This really targets all aspects of the delt complex effectively.

So start by setting up a flat bench or chair. Set your hands on the ground a few feet in front of it.



Get yourself into a pike position...you don't necessarily have to have a vertical upper body for this to be effective.



Lower yourself to the ground until your head touches (you may want to set a towel on the ground here, depending on where you're training).



While taking up some of your bodyweight on your head, rotate your hands and slide them outwards on the floor.



Now press up into the handstand.



Lower back down then slid your hands out again.



Then press up.



Lower back down then slide your hands out again.



Then press up.



Once you're as far out as you can go, reverse it and slide your hands IN on every rep (I won't show that here in pictures as it's basically the exact same photos in reverse!).

Bring your hands in as close as you like or are able to. The closer in you get, the more the triceps will be involved.

Continue moving inwards and outwards until you can't perform any more reps.

This is a GREAT variation of the handstand push-up that allows you to use reduced bodyweight resistance while still covering a multitude of angles on the delt complex.

