



# TOP 16 TIPS TO INCREASE YOUR PULL UPS

A quick guide to boosting your pull up performance in no time

## 1. Do scapular shrugs

[Scapular shrugs](#), also known as hanging shrugs, are amazing for getting better at clean pull-ups and learning to recruit all involved muscles. You start by hanging completely relaxed on a bar. Keep your arms straight and then pull your shoulder blades down your back to lift your body a few inches. Then slowly release the tension and return to the initial position. Rinse and repeat. If you are good at scapular shrugs, you won't need momentum or kipping to initiate your clean pull-ups. If a scapular shrug is too difficult in the beginning, use a resistance band for support.

## 2. Train your grip strength

Without proper grip strength, you will exhaust earlier and fail before you can reach your maximum amount of pull-ups. Dead hangs on a bar, hangboard training, towel pull-ups, or using finger and grip strengtheners are great ways to get that strong grip. [Read more about grip strength training here.](#)

## 3. Vary your pull up training

Whenever you reach a plateau, it can certainly help to [vary your pull-up training](#) and create new training stimuli. Incorporate archer pull-ups, typewriter pull-ups, flex hangs, and chin-ups, vary the type of grip (underhand, overhand, hammer) and speed, and use some extra weight from time to time during your workouts. Cycle between narrow and wide grip, as a wider grip puts more stress on your latissimus, whereas a narrow grip focuses on your biceps. You can also use gymnastic rings instead of a bar or a towel wrapped around the bar to vary the load on your upper body muscles. Be creative! That's probably the most important part.



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### 4. Incorporate blood flow restriction training

Blood flow restriction training is a technique of binding your limbs to reduce blood flow during exercise to stimulate additional muscle growth, promote hypertrophy, and recruit more fast-twitch muscles. Use it to break through plateaus in your pull up training. Please note: It certainly is an advanced technique and should be used with care. [Read more about that in this article.](#)



### 5. Train regularly

Regular pull-up training is key to achieving new heights. Aim for two to three pull-up training days a week with at least one day in between where your pull-up muscles can regenerate and grow.

### 6. Strengthen your biceps

The biceps is one of the main muscles you are using for your pull-ups besides your latissimus. It is innervated the most when you do narrow pull-ups. A dedicated biceps training with dumbbells or a barbell can, thus, increase your pull-up performance. As always, vary the exercises to get the best training stimulus.

### 7. Try the cluster training method

To set a proper training stimulus and boost muscle growth, you need a certain training volume. A great method for achieving that is the cluster training method. Set yourself a goal above 10 repetitions, that you aren't able to do in a row, yet. Now, do as many pull-ups per set as you can with a clean technique, take a short intraset rest, and do some more until you've reached your goal. That's called clustering. Then take a longer rest and repeat that three to four times. This will give your muscles a clear impulse to adapt and grow in the following.

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### 8. Focus on control

Avoid swinging or kicking your legs and let yourself down as controlled as possible. If you haven't developed the strength for a clean pull up, use resistance bands and do negative pull-ups, where you start in the highest position and focus on the negative part, or start with Australian pull-ups.

### 9. Use the full amplitude of movement

Always go as low as possible and straighten your arms. This will train and recruit the maximum number of muscles that are involved during pull-ups. It also helps to prevent the shortening of those muscles.

### 10. Supplement creatine

Creatine supplementation increases the body's level of creatine phosphate and thereby helps your body to facilitate the recycling of Adenosine Triphosphate (ATP), which in turn provides your muscles with more energy. Although it is produced naturally in your body, an additional intake will serve as a buffer against fatigue and allows you to maintain a higher load during a certain exercise or do more repetitions. [Read more about other supplements that can improve your performance here.](#)

### 11. Train pull-up endurance with resistance bands

To increase the maximum number of pull-ups, you not only have to work on your overall upper-body strength, but also on your strength endurance. Use a resistance band wrapped around a bar to support one of your legs and offload some of your weight. Choose a band so you can do more than 20 pull-ups in a row.

### 12. Incorporate other exercises in your training as well

To become better at pull-ups, it's beneficial to train the entire upper body, or, even better, your entire body including your legs. This will lead to an increased release of growth hormones, better muscular balance, and less risk of injury.

### 13. Finish your workout with negative repetitions

Negative pull-ups are highly effective as a finisher and also lower the risk of tendonitis, as they lengthen and strengthen the muscle-tendon units in the process. First, do as many regular pull-ups as you can. Then skip the part where you pull yourself up and start from the highest position. Your muscles are now maximally shortened. Lower yourself slowly and let

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your muscles work against the increasing stretch. Repeat that until you cannot control the descent anymore.

### **14. Alternatively, try an ultra-slow pull-up as a finisher**

Another awesome finisher is the ultra-slow pull-up. Just do one single pull-up as slow as possible. 1 minute for the entire pull-up would be an awesome performance. Going that slow will make finding and training the weakest link very easy.



### **15. Always use a clean technique**

To avoid long-lasting injuries, such as the well-known impingement syndrome, and enjoy ongoing progress, you should do pull-ups only with a clean technique. That includes keeping body tension throughout the entire movement, not using swinging and kipping, and pulling your shoulder blades back and towards the floor.

### **16. Listen to your body and give your muscle time to grow**

Seeing fast progress in a short time can increase the temptation to train even more and to rest insufficiently in between pull up training days. Listen carefully to your body and avoid overuse injuries. Your muscles and tendons need time to adapt to the training stimulus and grow. Let them rest for one or better two days. You will see faster gains when you rest properly. It can also work wonders to suspend pull-up training for an entire week from time to time, whenever you are feeling stuck on a certain level. Besides that, you can always focus on other body parts during those days.

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That's it. Have fun playing around with those tips and seeing your pull-up performance improve!

Cheers,  
Nick

### **Want to dive deeper into bodyweight training?**

Here are some helpful articles about pull-up training and increasing grip strength:

[How to Train Pull-Ups like a Ninja Warrior – The 6 Essential Exercises](#)

[Blood Flow Restriction Training: The Secret Tool for Stronger Arms](#)

[Top 9 Grip Strength Exercises for Ninja Warrior, Climbing, and Bouldering](#)

[The Hangboard Workout for Getting Incredible Finger Strength](#)

[How to Do a One Arm Pull Up / Chin Up \(Guide With Progression\)](#)

### **Looking for the best training equipment to increase your upper-body strength?**

Check out my recommended gear under:

<https://www.ninjawarriorx.com/ninja-warrior-equipment/>

#### **Please note:**

Physical training can lead to injury if not done properly. Always listen to your body and respect your limits. The implementation of all tips is at your own risk.