

CROSSFIT
108

WEIGHTLIFTING

HANDSTAND

HANDBOOK



HANDSTAND PROGRAM

BENEFITS OF HANDSTANDS

Handstands work your core and improve balance while giving you the benefits of increased circulation and lymph flow. You'll engage your whole body while using your shoulders, arms, core, and back.

Handstands

This manual is designed to help you practice the exercises you need to get your perfect handstand, which will then lead you to your handstand walks and push-ups.

The first thing to establish is your overhead mobility, as without this, getting your handstand technique correct is going to be quite difficult. If you struggle with mobility, check out the Overhead mobility manual. If you can successfully perform tests 1 and 2 then let's get started!

If you watch any gymnast perform a handstand, you will notice a perfect line from their toes down to their wrists. Their bodies are completely straight, as one unit. This is what we're looking for. We will start by focusing on the correct body position on the floor before we head upside down!



Hollow Body position

This is the most important part of the handstand and can be directly transferred to other practices including (and specially) lifting.

The hollow body position refers to a "posterior pelvic tilt" where you 'tuck' your pelvis in and draw your rib cage down. This is easier said than done, so here's a few ways to practice the hollow position, and a few common mistakes (you probably don't even realise you're making!)

*Aside from building the foundations for a good handstand, the hollow body position is important for building a stronger core and protecting your spine.



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Lying Hollow Position

1. Lie with your back on the floor and lift your legs up so that your feet point up to the ceiling.
2. From here, lift your head and shoulders off the ground and pull your hands away from your shoulders with palms facing up.
3. Push your lower back into the floor as hard as you can, leaving no gap between the floor and your back.
4. While pushing your back into the floor, slowly lower your legs. As soon as you feel your back arch, stop lowering.
5. Practice holding this position until you can comfortably hold for a minute, then next time, lower your legs. Continue to practice until you can hold for one minute with your legs only just off the floor.
6. Then repeat until you can hold your arms above your head, always keeping your lower back on the floor and head off.



Face Down Lying Hollow Hold

1. Start lying on the floor with your chest down.
2. Squeeze your heels together and point your toes.
3. Bring your chin to your chest/nose to the floor and arms above your head.
4. Stretch your arms out above your head, reaching as far as possible. Keep the arms straight and by your ears.
5. Now, tuck your pelvis in (as above) and hold. You are trying to pull your belly button up and away from the floor (while keeping hips and thighs on the floor)



You want to be able to hold both lying hollow positions for 3 sets of 60s comfortably. Practice each day until this is achieved.

Standing Hollow Position

1. Start standing with your head, shoulders and back against a wall. Your knees can be bent with your feet slightly in front of you.
2. Now, "tuck your pelvis in" – i.e pull your ribcage and hip bones closer together without moving your head and shoulders off the wall. This is 'posterior pelvic tilt'.
3. If you can flatten your lower back against the wall without your head and shoulders coming off, try and bring your arms up by your ears.
4. Do not bend the elbows, keep the arms straight and try and get your palms and wrist flat on the wall.



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Inverted/Pike Push Up Hold

Start with your feet elevated on to a box/chair/table and as it gets more comfortable, move on to the wall.

1. Start with your palms on the floor about shoulder width apart, and fingers spread out (pointy fingers should be parallel and pointing straight ahead)
2. Step up onto the box/chair and lift your hips up as high as you can
3. Keeping arms completely locked out, push your hips over your shoulders, and shoulders over your wrists. The aim is to maintain a straight line from your hips – shoulders – wrists, which we will then transfer into the handstand.
4. Now, tuck your pelvis in. There should be zero arch in your lower back.
5. Once this position is comfortable you can practice free standing pike holds and then progress to one leg pike holds. Once in the pike position raise one foot off the floor whilst maintaining a strong pike hold. This will help build the muscles required to hold yourself in the handstand position.

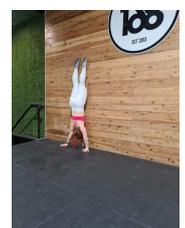
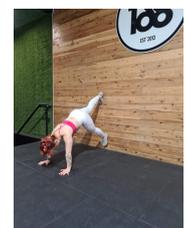
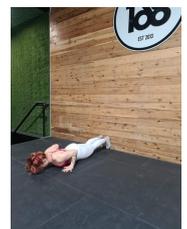


Wall Climb/Wall Facing Handstand Hold

Start practicing these after you have mastered the inverted push-up hold. You can start the wall climb with one or two steps and work your way up to chest-to-wall as your strength develops.

1. Start in a push up position with your feet against the wall. Push up and step your feet up the wall, making sure you lift your hips as high as possible. *If you step up the wall and don't lift your hips, your feet will continue to slip down
2. Walk your hands and feet up simultaneously (feet up and hands closer to the wall). As your strength builds, you can get your chest closer to the wall
3. Once you feel you can't go any further, bring your hips over your shoulders and shoulders over your wrists. Again, we are looking for posterior pelvic tilt.
4. Keep your heels together and point your toes
5. Nose to wall and arms by your ears.
6. Push the floor away with your hands, fingers spread apart.
7. Squeeze your butt and maintain posterior pelvic tilt
8. Thighs and stomach off the wall.

Continue to practice this until you can hold this position for 3 sets of 60s, with your chest just off the wall.



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Bunny Hops & Kick Ups

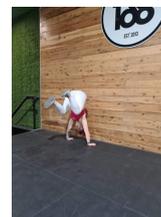
Start practising these in order to work on control on the kick up. The aim of the bunny hop is to lift yourself up and against the wall using the control and strength of your hips and core, rather than the momentum of a kick up. This will in turn assist you in your free-standing handstands.

1. Start with your hands shoulder width apart, about 10-12cm away from the wall. Walk your feet towards your hands. (If you keep falling back off the wall, your hands may be too close. Bring them away from the wall a little).
2. Keeping the arms locked out, lightly kick up with both feet, and try and pull you 'butt towards the wall'.
3. Don't kick your heels to your bum – the feet stay down, and you are just springing/bouncing off your toes. Keep legs almost straight.
4. Practice these until you are able to kick up into a handstand in a controlled manner.

Once you have control with your bunny hops, you can work on your kick ups. First on the wall, then freestanding.

1. Start with your hands in the same position as your bunny hops.
2. Using your hips and core to control, kick up both legs to the wall. You don't want to use the momentum from your legs, and smash into the wall. This should be a smooth, controlled movement.
3. Practice with both legs, but generally one side will feel more comfortable than the other.
4. Once up, maintain hollow body position with feet together, toes pointed, butt and back off the wall and shoulders-hips-wrists in a straight line.

From here, we practice heel pulls.



Heel Pulls

These are used to help you gain control of your free-standing handstand, with no reliance on the wall.

1. Kick up to the wall maintaining hollow body position
2. With heels together and pointing toes, take one heel away from the wall, only 1-2 cm.
3. Using fingers to balance and making sure hollow position remains, pull the other heel away from wall, 1-2 cm.
4. Keep practicing this until you feel comfortable with both feet away from the wall

