Pull-up Workouts

Refer to the "Pull-up Training Guide" for training sets and target volume for each pull-up ability group.

Ladders: High volume/moderate intensity (10-20 minutes)
RX: Strict pull-ups
Scale: Partner-assisted pull-ups

Athletes should be grouped by ability (based on their training set), with 2-4 athletes per pull-up bar. Using the "I go, you go" technique, athletes should do as many ascending ladders as they can in the time allotted without burning out. The highest set of each athlete's ladder is equivalent to their training set.

Each ladder takes 1-2 minutes to complete, with 3+ minutes of recovery between ladders.

Escalators: High intensity/moderate volume (10-15 minutes)
RX+: Unbroken sets of strict pull-ups
RX: Strict pull-ups (sets may be broken)
Scale: Jumping pull-ups

Every minute on the minute, athletes add one pull-up until they miss a set. Athletes complete as many rounds (minutes) as possible. This is a high intensity workout, so avoid doing it more than once a month.

Athletes may be required to do unbroken sets of pull-ups, or may be allowed to break up their sets of pull-ups, as long as they complete the required quantity of reps within each minute.

When an athlete misses an unbroken set, or fails to accumulate enough total reps within the minute, s/he is out. The goal is to be the last person on the pull-up bar.

Minute 1 = 1 pull-up, minute 2 = 2 pull-ups, minute 3 = 3 pull-ups…until the athlete misses a set.

Pyramids: High volume/moderate intensity (10-20 minutes)
RX: Strict pull-ups
Scale: Partner-assisted pull-ups

Athletes should be grouped by ability (based on their training set), with 2-4 athletes per pull-up bar. Using the "I go, you go" technique, athletes should do as many pyramids as they can in the time allotted without burning out. The highest set of each athlete's pyramid is equivalent to their training set.

Each pyramid takes 1-3 minutes to complete, with 3+ minutes of recovery between pyramids.

Elevators: Moderate to high intensity/low volume (10-20 minutes)
RX: strict pull-ups (RX athletes will also do jumping pull-ups, partial ROM pull-ups, isometric holds, and dead-hangs because of how the training session is designed)
Scale: jumping pull-ups, partial ROM pull-ups, isometric holds, and dead-hangs

Athletes from the same approximate ability group mount the pull-up bars at the same time. Get as many athletes on the pull-up bars at the same time as possible (from the same ability group).

The coach calls out different floors: basement (athletes are laying with their chest on the ground, as in a burpee), ground floor (athletes are standing on the ground directly underneath the pull-up bar), bottom floor (athletes are hanging from the pull-up bar with arms fully extended), middle floor (1/2 way up), top floor (top position, chin above bar), roof-top (chest/neck to bar).

Athletes hold position until the coach calls out the next floor (except "roof top"—athletes automatically return to the down position/bottom floor after a chest-to-bar pull-up). For example, coaches can leave athletes in the bottom position of the pull-up (dead-hang) for several seconds before giving the next command.

Coaches should periodically call the command "ground floor" or "basement" to keep the intensity moderate. It will also give the athletes a break from hanging on the bar, allowing the training sessions to last longer and to increase volume.

Also, when working with novice ability groups, calling the command "top floor" while they are either in the "basement" or "ground floor" will allow them to do a jumping pull-up. Calling the command "middle floor" while they are in the down position (bottom floor) will allow them to do a partial ROM pull-up.

Ability groups are beginner <1 pull-up, novice 1-5 pull-ups, intermediate 6-10 pull-ups, advanced 11-15 pull-ups, expert 16-20 pull-ups. Each ability group will do elevators until the last person remains on the bar (aim for approx. 5 minutes of elevators per ability group).

Elevators are a competition workout, so the goal is to be the last person on the bar.

Bus Stops: High volume/moderate intensity (10-20 minutes)
RX: Strict pull-ups
Scale: Partner-assisted pull-ups

Athletes pause briefly in the top and/or bottom position of the pull-up for a pre-determined number of seconds, or based on a command given by the coach.

Pausing will make pull-ups more difficult, but try to use one's normal training set. Athletes can use straight sets, ladders, or pyramids when doing pausing pull-ups. Do not go to failure and keep the rep schemes low. During partner assisted pull-ups, the athlete will still pause at the bottom and/or top position of the pull-up. S/he will just get a spot to get into the "up" positon.

Moving Walkways: High volume/low to moderate intensity (15-25 minutes)
RX: Strict pull-ups
Scale: Jumping pull-ups

Every 10, 15, 20, or 30 seconds, athletes perform 1 pull-up for a specified number of rounds or until the athlete misses a set.

EMOMs: High volume/moderate intensity (15-20 minutes)
RX: strict pull-ups
Scale: Jumping pull-ups

Every minute, athletes perform a fixed quantity of pull-ups for a specified amount of time (or until the athlete misses a set). The quantity of reps does not increase or change between each minute. Pull-up sets may be broken or unbroken. One technique is to have athletes perform a straight set equivalent to their training set.

Cliffhangers: High volume/moderate intensity (10-20 minutes)
RX: strict pull-ups
Scale: Partial ROM pull-ups

Athletes with similar ability pair up and mount the pull-up bar at the same time. The first athlete executes a pullup while the other hangs in the down positon. When the first athlete is finished, s/he remains on the pull-up bar in the down position while the second athlete executes a pull-up. Both dismount. Both remount the bar after they are recovered, and do two pull-ups in this fashion, etc. The goal is to do an ascending pull-up ladder in this fashion until each reaches his/her training set.

Essentially, athletes are using the "I go, you go" approach, but without dismounting the bar between sets. Athletes only dismount the bar between ladders.

If athletes have different training sets, the athlete with the lower training set will remain in the down position until the other finishes. Both athletes are required to work at the same time. If one athlete drops off the bar, the other must stop working. Work may resume when both athletes are on the bar.

Sally: Low volume/high intensity (3 minutes)
RX+: Unbroken sets of strict pull-ups
RX: Strict pull-ups (sets may be broken)
Scale: Jumping pull-ups

Do pull-ups to the song, "Bring Sally Up. Athletes can either stay on the bar the entire time, or come down between reps. The song is 3 minutes long and has 30 pull-ups in it.

Burpee Pull-ups: high volume/moderate intensity (15-20 minutes)
RX: Strict pull-ups
Scale: Jumping pull-ups

Athletes can do straight sets, ladders, or pyramids using their training set, but each pull-up is a "burpee pull-up."

Super-Sets: high volume/moderate intensity (15-20 minutes)
RX: Strict pull-ups/hanging leg-raises
Scale: Jumping pull-ups/knees to elbow

Athletes do a set of pull-ups, then a set of hanging leg-raises. Athletes can do straight sets, ladders, or pyramids using their training set, but each set of pull-ups is matched with a set of hanging leg-raises.

Face Off: low volume/high intensity (1-3 minutes)
RX: Strict pull-ups
Scale: Partial ROM pull-ups

Two athletes of similar ability both mount the bar at the same time. One athlete does one pull-up, while the other hangs on the bar. The second athlete does one pull-up, while the other hangs on the bar, etc. They match each other's sets of "one" pull-up until one misses a set. This is a high intensity workout, so avoid doing it more than once a month.

Essentially, athletes are using the "I go, you go" approach, but without dismounting the bar.

Ladders+: High volume/moderate to high intensity (15-20 minutes)
RX: Strict pull-ups
Scale: Partner-assisted pull-ups

Athletes should be grouped by ability (based on their training set), with 2-4 athletes per pull-up bar. Using the "I go, you go" technique, athletes should do as many ascending ladders as they can in the time allotted without burning out.

The highest set of each athlete's ladder is equivalent to 1/2 (50%) of their max set.

Each ladder takes 2-3 minutes to complete, with 3+ minutes of recovery between ladders.

Pyramids+: High volume/moderate to high intensity (15-20 minutes)
RX: Strict pull-ups
Scale: Partner-assisted pull-ups

Athletes should be grouped by ability (based on their training set), with 2-4 athletes per pull-up bar. Using the "I go, you go" technique, athletes should do as many pyramids as they can in the time allotted without burning out. The highest set of each athlete's pyramid is equivalent to 1/2 (50%) of their max set.

Each pyramid takes 2-4 minutes to complete, with 3+ minutes of recovery between pyramids.

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