One of the earliest training devices developed specifically for climbing, fingerboards are still one of the best ways to target the most critical of all climbing strengths: contact strength. They can't be beaten for convenience and specificity--they make it easy to target particular strengths and weaknesses, control the exact duration and amount of resistance on a particular exercise, and gauge your progress. They are also relatively inexpensive and take up little space. Installing a training board above a doorway in your house makes it easy to get a quick workout in any time.

Rock Rings offer the same benefits in a more compact and portable, yet less expensive package. In addition, their single-point suspension allows freedom of movement, emphasizing the critical element of body tension while also relieving stress to the joints, thereby preventing injury.

Installation

Inspect Your Board

Before installation, take a moment to inspect your new board or Rock Rings. Look for any cracks or defects that may have occurred in shipping. If any imperfections exist, contact Metolius or your Metolius dealer immediately. If everything looks okay, you can move on to the next step.

Choose a Location

Don't underestimate the effect that location will have on the success of your training program. It is a lot easier to spend time in a warm, well-lit room than a freezing garage or dank basement. It is tough enough for most of us to stick to a training program under the best of conditions, so give yourself every advantage: warmth, light, music, or whatever it takes for you to create a positive training environment.

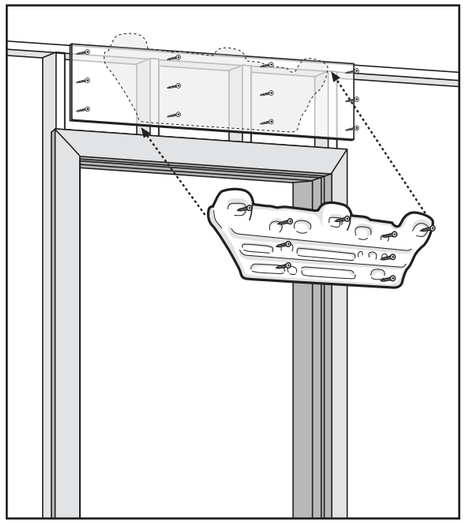
Training Boards

Installation above a doorway is the easiest way to go. Some other possibilities are an exposed rafter, beam, or ceiling joist, a wall-mounted bracket that holds the board a few feet away from the wall, or a freestanding frame. Training boards need a few feet of space in front of and behind the vertical plane of the board to allow room for your lower body. Don't mount your board directly on a flat wall.

Ideally, the board should hang with the uppermost holds near the height of your full extension, but any place with enough height to get your feet off the ground, a safe landing zone, and adequate headroom will suffice.

We will describe the procedure for over-the-doorway installation, but much of the information applies to any installation method. However you mount your training board, be sure that it is absolutely solid and cannot shift in any direction. It is easy to underestimate the forces you can generate on a training board, so be conservative, and consult an engineer if you are in doubt.

It is critical to have your training board level, centered above your doorway opening, and anchored securely to several structural framing members inside your house's wall. In order to accomplish this, you will first attach a plywood mounting board to your house's framing members. This will allow you to establish a solid connection regardless of the spacing or position of the framing members relative to the doorway opening. Then you will attach the training board to the mounting board so that it is centered above the doorway and level.



What you will need:

1. ¾″ plywood mounting board:
   - 36″x 10″ for Simulator
   - 26″x 12″ for Pure Force
   - 26″x 8″ for Slim Gym
   - 34″x 9″ for Wood Grips Board
2. Decking screws #9 x 3″
3. Power drill and bits, including phillips or square drive
4. Level
5. Tape measure

1) Locate the framing members (the 2″x 4″ studs inside the wall) behind your chosen location. Exposed framing would make this task easier. However, fire codes require wallboard on all interior walls and ceilings, so you will probably need to use a stud finder to locate the framing members. Your house's wall studs are usually spaced on 16″ centers (i.e., the distance from one stud's center point to the next), so once you find the first stud it should be easy to find the rest. Although, headers above doorways can be framed in a wide variety of configurations, so make sure you verify the location of each stud you'll be using.

You must attach the plywood mounting board to at least two solid framing members, preferably three or four. The specified mounting board sizes are approximate. Make the mounting board larger to pick up more framing members if you need to. Remember, your training board must end up centered above the doorway opening. Make sure the plywood mounting board is large enough to pick up several framing members and to allow you to position the training board correctly.

2) Attach the mounting board to the framing members using at least three screws per framing member, spaced at equal intervals. You must drive the mounting screws into solid framing members. Screws driven only into drywall, plaster or paneling will not be strong enough to support you. Since you'll likely be screwing through drywall, you won't be able to visually verify the quality of the attachment. Make sure that the screws go in solidly and there is resistance all the way in.

Keep the eventual position of the training board in mind at this point. If any of the screws you are inserting now will conflict with the screws that hold the training board to the mounting board, leave them out. Later, when you install the training board, drive long screws all the way through the training board and the mounting board directly into the framing members.

3) Attach your training board to the mounting board. Use the tape measure and the level to make sure that it is centered in the doorway opening and absolutely level.

Screw your training board to the mounting board with the enclosed screws, using all of the holes provided. Some of the training board models include 2 different lengths of screws. If this is the case with your board, use the longer screws in the upper (deeper) holes or in any position that will allow them to go through the mounting board and into a framing member as described in step #2. Be careful not to over-tighten the screws, or you could risk damaging the board.

Rock Rings

Rock Rings can be suspended from any solid anchor point, a pull-up bar, tree limb, eye-hooks in an exposed beam or framing member, etc. Ideally, the rings should hang near the height of your full extension, but any place with enough height to get your feet off the ground and adequate headroom will suffice. Make sure that the anchor points you choose can withstand the loads you will be placing on them, and that they can't slide or move while the rings are in use. It is easy to underestimate the force you will be able to generate, so be conservative and consult an engineer if you are in doubt.

Training

Fingerboards and Rock Rings are most effective at training contact strength, body tension and general upper-body strength. Contact strength, also referred to as finger strength, is simply the ability to hold onto the holds (as opposed to the ability to move between the holds). It is the single most important type of strength for a climber to have. If you can't even hold on to the grips, there is no way you will be able to move between them. Body tension, sometimes called core strength, allows you to distribute the force you are generating between your points of contact and to direct your movement. It allows you to weight your feet and save energy. This type of strength (or the lack thereof) is especially noticeable in controlling swings around the lips of roofs or on steep rock in general, but it is critical to all climbing movement.

Open-Hand

Crimp

How to Grasp the Grips

You should use an open-handed grip as much as possible. Most climbers are weaker open-handed than crimped, so you may find this difficult at first, but you'll get used to it. Training open-handed will increase your crimp strength (but not vice-versa), and it is essential for holding pockets, slopers, and certain edges, as well as making moves at maximum stretch and catching dynos. Most importantly, however, using an open hand lowers the potential for injury. As you adapt to training, you can incorporate a little crimp training to increase your maximum edge-holding power, but keep it to a minimum.

Warm Up, Warm Down

It is critical to warm up thoroughly. You can start by climbing, bouldering, or doing easy pull-ups and dead hangs, along with gentle stretching. Make the first 15 minutes ridiculously easy and gradually increase the intensity until you're at full power.

Reverse this process at the end of your session to prevent injury and speed up recovery. The warm down should be even easier than the warm up. It should feel as if you're doing almost nothing. The idea is just to keep the blood flowing for 15 or 20 minutes after the high intensity part of your workout.

Recovery

To maximize your gains and prevent injury, you should always be fully recovered before a training session. Not resting enough between workouts will soon lead to a plateau, quickly followed by injury and burnout. If it takes you longer than normal to feel warmed up, or if you haven't noticed any improvement in three or four sessions, you probably need more rest. Listen to your body and be flexible with your training schedule.

Making It Easier

If you find certain exercises or holds too difficult at first, you can put one foot on a chair or have a training partner assist you by taking off as much weight as necessary. Be sure to have a clean, open, well-padded landing area, as an awkward, off-balance fall is a greater possibility when your feet are helping to take your weight.

Metolius Climbing (541) 382-7585 **metoliusclimbing.com**
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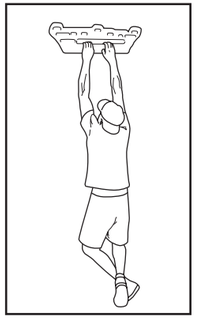
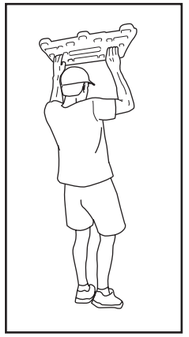
Excercises

Dead Hang

This is the fundamental exercise for developing contact strength. It can be performed with two arms or one. You should master the two-arm dead hang on any particular hold before attempting any other exercise on that hold. Never lock your elbows completely. Always keep a slight bend to prevent injury.



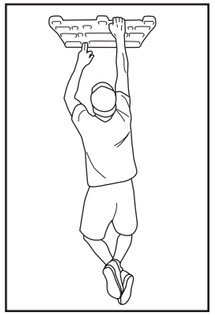


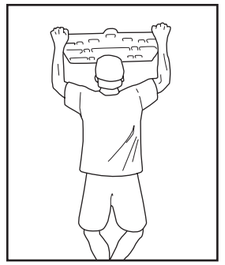
Bent-Arm Hang

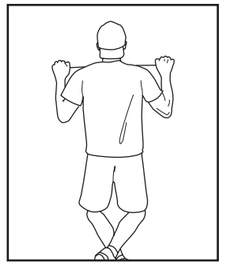
A variation of the dead hang which will begin to develop your ability to pull through and lock-off. This can be done at any angle, and should be varied as much as possible. Pull yourself up to the designated angle and hold a static contraction for the designated amount of time. Be careful of doing maximal contractions at full lock-off, as they can be as injurious as fully locked-out elbows.

Offset Hang

This exercise begins to develop one-arm power. Begin as with the two-arm dead hang, but choose a lower and/or worse hold with the assisting hand. Center your weight under the arm to be loaded and perform the hang giving yourself just enough help with the other hand to complete the exercise. A variation that is good for training lock-off strength is to take two similar holds at the same height, but at least shoulder width apart. Pull up part way and lock-off as in a bent-arm hang. Shift your weight all the way to one side and hold a contraction. Shift your weight laterally, all the way to the other side, without lowering your body and hold an equal contraction. Repeat. Vary the angle of your lock-off, the duration of your lock-off, and the number of repetitions.







Pull-up

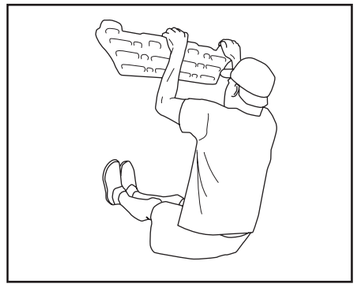
Try to be as smooth as possible. Don't jerk, kip, swing, or otherwise cheat. Keep your lower body quiet. Don't lock your elbows completely at the bottom. Focus on maintaining perfect form, and don't worry about the number of repetitions.

Offset Pull-up

The first step to one-arm pull-ups. Position yourself with your weight centered under one arm, as if to do a one-arm pull-up. Choose a lower hold with the other hand and give yourself just enough assistance to complete the exercise.

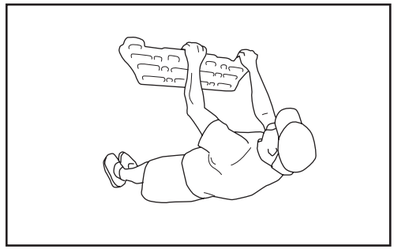
One-arm Pull-up

Now you really have some power! Follow the same guidelines as for pull-ups, but rotate your body inward to center your weight under the arm you're using. If you're getting close but can't quite do one-arms, do an offset pull-up, but perform the negative contraction (lower yourself) as a pure one-arm. The potential for injury is very high, so it is absolutely critical to be smooth. Don't bounce!



L-Hang

The emphasis here is on core strength. Choose a hold that you're fairly comfortable on. You can dead-hang or bent-arm hang. Pull your legs up from the hips, keeping your knees straight. Hold a static contraction with your legs at 90° to your torso or do slow repetitions raising your legs as far as you can but only lowering to about 45° below horizontal. If you lower your legs all the way, it will take the tension off your abs and constitute a rest. The idea is to keep your abdominal muscles contracted the entire time. If straight leg raises are too difficult, bend your knees at a 90° angle.



Front Lever

This is a very advanced exercise in which the body is held rigidly, parallel to the ground, by levering off the arms. Begin by pulling your feet up until your body is perpendicular to the ground, feet up, head down. Slowly lower your feet, holding your body totally rigid, until your body is parallel to the ground. Work up to these by performing them first with both legs bent at the knees, and then with one leg straight and one bent. If you are one of the rare few who can do a good front lever, try it with one arm.

Ten-Minute Sequences

The ten-minute sequence consists of ten tasks, one performed at the start of each minute, with the remaining time used to rest until the start of the next minute. Some tasks will simply be one exercise, and some tasks will include two or more exercises. It is an excellent format for training both strength and stamina in the same workout, for improving your recovery, or just for warming up. It is also a great way to simulate the demands of your current project. We have included a sample routine for each fingerboard and one for Rock Rings, but the ten-minute sequence is most effective when you custom tailor it to your own personal needs. Be creative and don't limit yourself. It could be five minutes or thirty minutes; you could do it in 45-second cycles or two-minute cycles. Experiment with your training, and keep it as varied as possible.

Simulator

Minute	Task	Hold
1st	10 sec. Dead Hang	Big Slopers
	3 Pull-ups	Jugs
2nd	15 sec. Bent-Arm Hang	Medium Edges
	2 Pull-ups	3 Finger Pockets
3rd	10 sec. Offset Hang (lock-off variation) 5 sec. each side	Large Edges
4th	15 sec. L-Hang	Jugs
5th	3 Offset Pull-ups	Jug/2 Finger Pocket
	3 Offset Pull-ups	Repeat, reversing holds
6th	30 sec. Dead Hang	Medium Edges
7th	10 Pull-ups	3 Finger Pockets
	20 sec. Dead Hang	Large Edges
8th	15 sec. L-Hang	Deep 3 Finger Pockets
9th	5 sec. Dead Hang	2 Finger Pockets
10th	20 sec. Bent-Arm Hang	Small Edges
	Pull-ups to failure	Jugs

Slim Gym

Minute	Task	Hold
1st	30 sec. Dead Hang	3 Finger Pockets
	2 Pull-ups	Big Sloper
2nd	20 sec. Dead Hang	2 Finger Pockets
	3 Pull-ups	Center Jug (both hands)
3rd	15 sec. L-Hang	Jugs
4th	4 Pull-ups	Edge
	15 sec. Hang	Edge
5th	30 sec. Bent Arm Hang	3 Finger Pockets
6th	3 Offset Pull-ups	Edge/3 Finger Pockets
	3 Offset Pull-ups	Repeat, reversing holds
7th	15 sec. Dead Hang	2 Finger Pockets
8th	5 Pull Ups	Edge
9th	15 sec. Dead Hang	Left Hand (2 Finger Pocket)
		Right Hand (3 Finger Pocket)
	15 sec. Dead Hang	Repeat, reversing holds
10th	3 Pull Ups	Slopers
	Dead Hang (To Failure)	Slopers

Pure Force

Minute	Task	Hold
1st	4 Pull-ups	Large Edge
2nd	15 sec. Dead Hang	Center Jug (both hands)
	10 sec. L-Hang	Outer Jugs
3rd	2 Pull-ups	3 Finger Pockets
	20 sec. Dead Hang	2 Finger Pockets
4th	2 Offset Pull-ups	Lg. Edge/3 Finger Pocket
	2 Offset Pull-ups	Repeat, reversing holds
5th	5 sec. One-arm Dead Hang	Center Jug
	5 sec. One-arm Dead Hang	Repeat, reversing arms
6th	15 sec. Bent-Arm Hang	Medium Edges
7th	10 Pull-ups	3 Finger Pockets
	20 sec. Dead Hang	Large Edges
8th	3 Offset Pull-ups	Jug/2 Finger Pocket
	3 Offset Pull-ups	Repeat, reversing holds
9th	20 sec. Dead Hang	2 Finger Pockets
10th	5 Pull-ups	Jugs
	Dead Hang to failure	Big Slopers

Rock Rings

Minute	Task	Hold
1st	3 Pull-ups	Jugs
2nd	10 sec. Bent-Arm Hang	Medium Edges
	15 sec. Dead Hang	3 Finger Pockets
3rd	2 Offset Pull-ups	Lg. Edge/3 Finger Pocket
	2 Offset Pull-ups	Repeat, reversing holds
4th	20 sec. L-Hang	Large Edges
5th	5 Pull-ups	Medium Edges
6th	20 sec. Bent-Arm Hang	3 Finger Pockets
7th	15 sec. L-Hang	Medium Edges
	15 sec. Dead Hang	Medium Edges
8th	10 sec. Offset Hang	Med. Edge/3 Finger Pocket
	10 sec. Offset Hang	Repeat, reversing holds
9th	20 sec. L-Hang	Large Edges
10th	5 Pull-ups	Medium Edges
	Dead Hang to failure	3 Finger Pockets

Wood Grips

Minute	Task	Hold
1st	20 sec. Dead Hang	Deep, 4 Finger Pockets
2nd	10 sec. Dead Hang	Deep, 3 Finger Pockets
	3 Pull-ups	Slopers
3rd	15 sec. L-Hang	Jugs
4th	5 Pull-ups	Deep, 4 Finger Pockets
	30 sec. Dead Hang	Shallow, 4 Finger Pockets
5th	30 sec. Bent Arm Hang	Medium 4 Finger Pockets
6th	5 Offset Pull-ups	Top 3 Finger Pocket/Bottom Edge
	5 Offset Pull-ups	Repeat, reversing holds
7th	15 sec. Dead Hang	2 Finger Pockets
8th	5 Pull Ups	Bottom Edge
9th	15 sec. Bent Arm Hang	Deep, outer, 3 Finger Pockets
	15 sec. Dead Hang	Shallow, outer, 3 Finger Pockets
10th	3 Pull Ups	Slopers