

Want to Improve Your Climbing?

Adapted from Eric Horst's *Training for Climbing* and *How to Climb 5.12*

10-Week Mesocycle

4 Weeks - Endurance climbing: pick problems that are well below your ability and climb without breaks. Do increasing numbers of laps (ascent + downclimb) and do not allow yourself to get pumped out. Find rests while doing laps. Your goal is to build endurance – endurance allows you to not pump out on harder or longer stuff than you're used to.

3 Weeks – Anaerobic climbing: now's the time to work climbs. Warm up sufficiently with stretching and some laps on easy problems, and now pick climbs at your limit or above them. You're building strength in this step. Remember, even if you make great strides, this is a process. There's more to come!

2 Weeks – Anaerobic endurance climbing: this week is working hard problems with no breaks. You should be tired! Keep a ratio of 3:1 climbing to rest. Now you're getting somewhere! If you can climb endurance AND strong, just wait until you're not torturing yourself – sending's going to be easy.

1 Week – Take the week off. When you're done, go climbing and be amazed!

Improvement in General

Mental – *If you're scared of heights, of topping out, or just don't feel comfortable* doing something on a route, hang in there – literally. Stop where you are and get control. Look at where you are and let your brain take over the emotional response you're experiencing.

If you say, "I can't do that," or "I won't be successful" – you're right, you can't or you won't. Stop that! We negative self-talk is a major reason why you aren't sending. If you don't believe, you won't send. It's that simple.

Physical – *If you feel like your legs are too weak* – skip down to "skill." Legs are never the problem.

If you feel like you can't hang on – don't buy one of those squeeze finger deals. They don't work that well. Work on vertical pinch skills. Work on crimps (open and closed). Really watch your hand work and don't cheat on easy holds – open crimp jugs. Don't overdo it, though. If your hands are sore, take it easy. Finger injuries are super common. If you're new to climbing, it's okay if your hands shake and you can't hold stuff, but if you're not that new (a few month in), this is bad news.

If you get pumped easily – see the cycle training above

If you just feel weak – Balance. Work out your core. There's tons of exercises out there that work your core and the core is where your power comes from. At the same time, remember that injury comes out of imbalance. Don't spend all your time doing abs and pull ups – do push ups and back workouts to balance your shoulders. Work opposing muscles!

Skill - **Most of the time, this is your problem.** Climbing is not an inherent skill for most of us.

If you are a new climber, everything feels weird. You would be best advised to research specific climbing moves and holds. Try lots of different problems – and get OUTSIDE. Bouldering in the gym doesn't translate that well outdoors. Your goal right now isn't to get numbers; it's to climb a high volume of beginner problems to learn the terrain that's out there.

If you are an established climber, continue to work on volume of climbs at the levels you're comfortable at. You're not a VX climber unless you can go anywhere and climb VX routes. No VX should shut you down. If it does? Work on skills you are missing – try doing laps, down climbing, climbing faster, watch footwork and handwork, there are a lot of drills out there. Try doing climbs differently. Do whatever you can to add tricks to your bag.