

Thanks for downloading this Breaking Muscle training program.

Copyright 2015 Breaking Muscle, LLC

Many Muscle Ups: A 4-Week Progression

By [Phil Hesketh](#)

A big moment for anyone who does CrossFit is achieving your first muscle up. But what happens then? **How do you increase your efficiency and work capacity when it comes to muscle ups?**

I have seen so many people try countless times to swing themselves up on the rings without first training a solid gymnastic foundation program. This can lead to injury or just bad practice, and therefore slower progression.

With the CrossFit Open approaching quickly, being able to do multiple muscle ups is an essential skill needed by anyone who wants to perform well.

The aim of this four-week program is to develop a base of strength for an athlete to be able to improve his or her muscle up ability. The program is targeting to athletes who can perform five to ten linked kipping muscle ups and two to five linked strict muscle ups.

It is suggested that athletes do the three sessions over a seven-day period with a rest day in between each session. It is also essential that athletes following the program, pay extra attention to their body, and ensure they are resting well

and performing adequate mobility and flexibility to complement the increased gymnastic volume.

It is a common thing in any gym to see people following a strength program to improve their weightlifting or powerlifting. These programs are usually progressive, based around percentages, and include a variety of different accessory movements in addition to the major lifts.

So why not apply the same principles to gymnastics? You can see in this program that there are a few constant themes across the four weeks. Each session is split up in to three parts:

1. **Strength:** Muscle ups (rings or bar) or a gymnastic complex
2. **Strength Assistance:** Ring dips, pull ups, chin ups, skin the cats, ring push ups, ring flys
3. **Positional Assistance:** Ring support holds, L-sit holds, false grip holds, hollow and arch holds/rocks.

All the content of the program follows a basic linear progression across the four weeks. Some movements progress in reps and others in weight. Because of the varied nature of CrossFit, it is important to train both for muscular strength as well as endurance.

Each week starts with a volume session where athletes will perform a set number of reps per minute, increasing in difficulty as the program progresses. This is one of the more effective

ways I have found to improve my own gymnastics, sometimes accumulating over 100 muscle up reps in one workout.

This format is also beneficial when it comes to interval-style workouts where a certain number of reps is required per round. One key thing with gymnastics is learning how much rest you need in between sets without pushing your body to a failure point. So by training in the EMOM (every minute on the minute) format, you can learn quickly where your thresholds lie.

In addition to the volume work, there is also a complex session each week to help improve endurance on the rings and bar. These complexes are mostly performed as strict reps. Strict work is incredibly important as it helps build both muscular and tendon strength so the body is strong enough to handle the demands of kipping reps.

The same rules apply to the strength assistance work. The variations of pull ups and ring dips are programmed to help develop the athlete's push and pull strength, which is obviously important in gymnastics. These reps progress in weight each week. If the athlete is able to push and pull his or her own bodyweight, then weight can be added to create an additional stimulus – just as you would with a barbell to improve for a weightlifting movement.

The positional work in this program is important to increase strength in a static hold, and again increase muscular and tendon strength. Ring support and false grip holds can be progressed by adding load and increasing time under tension. It is essential to increase your strength in these

positions as an athlete can often be holding onto the rings for thirty to forty seconds and beyond when performing multiple linked reps.

The hollow and arch hold work is arguably the most important part of the program. Although this work may seem repetitive and sometimes tedious, it is incredibly important to make sure the athlete can maintain the right body position throughout the more complex gymnastic movements.

There is a two-part test at the end of the four-week program to assess how you have improved. This test can be repeated over time to measure growth in performance. With regard to scaling, if you cannot perform the required amount of reps with good position and form, do not hesitate to scale back the reps or weights slightly until you can.

For all the movement videos, check out the [YouTube Playlist](#)

Or copy and paste this URL: <http://bit.ly/16Z2GoO>

Week 1		
Session 1	Session 2	Session 3
Kipping MU- 3 reps EMOM x 10 mins	Strict C2B pull Ups 4x8@BW	Ring Complex: 2 strict ring pull ups, 2 strict MU, 2 strict dips. X 5 sets
Strict ring Dips 5x10@BW	Ring support holds 0:15 x 6	Ring push ups - 5x10@BW
Hollow hold - 0:20 x 5	Hanging L-sit 0:15 x 6	Hollow rock - 0:20 x 5
Arch hold - 0:20 x 5		Arch rock - 0:20 x 5

Week 2		
Session 1	Session 2	Session 3
Kipping MU- 4 reps EMOM x 5 mins, rest 2 mins, repeat	Strict C2B pull ups 4x8@+2.5kg	Bar Complex: 2 strict T2B + 2 strict pull ups + 2 bar MU x 5 sets
Strict ring Dips 5x8@+5kg	False grip holds 0:15 x 6	Skin the cat - 3x3
Hollow hold - 0:25 x 5	Ring push up hold 0:30 x 6	Hollow rock - 0:25 x 5
Arch hold - 0:25 x 5		Arch rock - 0:25 x 5

Week 3		
Session 1	Session 2	Session 3
Kipping MU- 2 reps every 30 seconds x 10 mins	Strict C2B pull ups 4x6@+5kg	Ring Complex: 2 strict ring pull ups, 2 strict MU, 2 strict dips. X 5 sets (+5kg)
Strict ring dips - 6x6@+10kg	Ring support holds 0:15 x 6 (+5kg)	Ring push ups 5x8@+5kg
Hollow hold - 0:30 x 5	Hanging L-Sit 0:20 x 6	Hollow rock - 0:30 x 5
Arch hold - 0:30 x 5		Arch rock - 0:30 x 5

Week 4		
Session 1	Session 2	Session 3
Kipping MU- 1 max effort set, immediately followed by 2 reps every 30 seconds until you have completed 40 reps	Weighted C2B pull up - 1 rep max	Bar Complex: 3 strict T2B + 3 strict pull ups + 3 bar MU x 5 sets
Hollow hold - 0:35 x 5	Weighted strict ring dip - 1 rep max	Skin the cat - 3x4
Arch hold - 0:35 x 5	False grip holds 0:15 x 6 @+5kg	Hollow rock - 0:35 x 5
	Ring push up hold 0:40 x 6	Arch rock - 0:35 x 5