

# What is training and should I be doing it?

## Introduction

Alright, let's get something straight, training isn't for everyone because training hurts, it can be really boring and it's generally pretty unsociable (the curse of the stopwatch). Otherwise, training is for everyone and it doesn't take Sherlock to work out that there's plenty climbers (like me) who flippin love training. Some of us just love the feeling of doing more and more until your forearms feel like lead balloons and you can barely drag yourself off the mat (maybe for another set). Whilst many train because they thrive on the feeling of having succeeded on a route (of any grade!) that only a season ago felt far out of reach.

Regardless of whether you're motivated to train because you really want to improve at climbing or if you just like battering yourself, you should be honest with yourself about what you want to get out of it. If you don't, then you probably won't get much out of the sessions and you could end up disappointing yourself.

So, what the heck is training? The word 'training' for many climbers variously conjures up monochrome images of sweaty topless, lycra-clad men in a dark cellar swinging around on bits of wood for hours on end until their fingers bleed; or a climber-come-nerd analysing how the amount of force they can apply with their pinky varies depending on the angle they bend it at. *Forget that.* Training doesn't have to be that!

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## The secret (shh... don't tell anyone)

Training involves stressing your body so that it makes adaptations and gets stronger or fitter or whatever. Training is structured, progressive and measurable. If you want to get better at climbing, training should also be relevant to climbing!

So, the secret is, you've got to stress your body in a relevant way. This means

- (i) It's got to be hard, and you've got to keep making it harder.
- (ii) You've got to mix it up to keep your body on it's tip toes
- (iii) You've got to keep track of it somehow, just so you know how much harder to make the next session!

## Some extra points

For the majority of climbers, the majority of training should be on a climbing wall or outside. Once you've nailed those, you can start thinking about adding other stuff. Training outside will improve your technique and get you used to the rock, but can be awkward for those without much time or if you're new to an area (think benchmarking).

For all the sessions I've written in the accompanying documents, I've suggested where I think they are best trained and how you can adapt them for the outdoors or a home setup.

### Individuality:

Also, remember, everyone is different. What works for others may not work for you and vice versa. Experiment a bit and pay attention to what works. Over time you'll get a pretty good feel for it.