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## Armstrong Pull-up Program

1. This program was used by Major Charles Lewis Armstrong, USMC to prepare himself to attempt to set a world record in number of pull-ups completed in a single exercise session. The program provides the necessities for successful physical improvement namely, VARIETY, OVERLOAD, and REGULARITY. Users have achieved remarkable results in only 6 to 8 weeks. This means that most, if not all, have been able to meet the performance level they have set out to achieve, a single set of twenty repetitions.

It can not be overemphasized that his program depends upon regularity. Daily performance of the exercises listed in the following paragraphs holds the true key to reaching and to maintaining the twenty repetition level.

### The Morning Routine

Each morning perform three maximum effort sets of normal pushups. The pushup is one of the best, single exercises for strengthening the entire set of muscles that makes up the shoulder girdle. Major Armstrong described his morning routine in the following manner. "After rising, I would drop onto the deck and do my first set of pushups. I would then move into the head (bathroom) and start my morning toilet. I would return after a few minutes and do my second maximum effort set after which, I would go back into the head to shave. After shaving, I would return to the bedroom and complete the third and final set. Having completed all of the pushups, I was awake and ready for a relaxing shower. "

This routine should be followed during the entire training period. Since it takes most of us at least four weeks to reach our goals, you will probably find that you have inadvertently established a morning routine that is easy enough to keep as a lifetime habit, if not, you will at least appreciate the morning shower a little more.

It has been noted that this pushup routine helps to alleviate any soreness during the first couple of weeks. It is recommended that you use the pushup routine everyday during this period so that you feel more comfortable during your initial adjustment to this regime of exercises.

### Training Routines

The following represents the heart of the training program. I recommend that you do not attempt the pull-ups until 3 or 4 hours after the pushup routine was completed. The program is conveniently divided into five training days. This is easily translated into a Monday through Friday approach to pull-up training. It is important to cease the pull-up routine for two days, Saturday and Sunday. Further, it is necessary to use consecutive days (not to skip days) when on the pull-up routine. Finally, it is more important to do the pull-ups than it is to do the pushups.

The training program was developed to improve performance in a specific exercise, the overhand pull-up. The program can be adapted to doing chin-ups and flexed arm hangs. The program depends upon quality exercises, numbers of repetitions are unimportant. When you are doing these routines you should concentrate on perfect execution of each repetition. The only person that you can fool is yourself.

#### Day 1

Five maximum effort sets. Rest 90 seconds between each set. Do not concern yourself with numbers. You will find that you will increase the numbers in the last two sets before you see much improvement in the first three. Make sure that each set is a maximum effort set.

#### Day 2

Pyramid Day. Start the pyramid with one repetition, the next set has two repetitions, the next has three. Continue in this fashion until you miss a set. (e.g. your last set was five, your next set would be six, but you could only do four. You missed

a set) Do one more set at a maximum effort. Rest 10 seconds for each repetition in the previous set.

### Day 3

Do three training sets with a normal overhand grip. Rest 60 seconds between each set. Do three training sets gripping the bar so that your palms are toward your face and your little fingers are touching each other. Rest 60 seconds between each set.

### Day 4

Do the maximum number of training sets that you can accomplish. Rest 60 seconds between each set. You do training sets until you fail to do perfect training set. This day can wind up being the longest training day as you continue with the program because you will find it easy to do lots of training sets.

### Day 5

Repeat the day that you found to be the hardest in the previous four days. This will change from week to week.

### Training Sets

Training Sets are easy to define, but require some experimentation to determine for the individual participating in the program. A training set a specified number of repetitions. That means one individual may have 3 repetitions in his training set, but another individual may have more or less. The key to determine the proper number of repetitions in a training set comes on Day 3. You must perform nine training sets that day. If you only do twelve repetitions in your best single set (a PFT set or a maximum effort set), then your training set would probably have one or at most two repetitions. If you were concerned with gross numbers performed, you might try for the higher numbered training set. This is not advised. It is much more important for you to successfully complete the scheduled workout on Day 3, doing one repetition per training set, than it is for you to complete only 6 or 7 sets, trying two or three repetitions in each training set. Day 3 calls for you to do nine training sets. Adjust your training sets so that you can complete this routine properly.

The best gauge for the number of repetitions in the training set comes on Day 4. If you successfully complete Day 3, try to raise the number of repetitions in your training set by one when you do Day 4. If you get a least nine sets done on Day 4, that tells you that your training set ought to be one repetition higher. If you get less than nine sets, you will still have accomplished a good day's work, and confirmed that your training set was correct for this week.

It is important that you do not change the repetitions in a training set in midstream. When you schedule yourself to the day's routine using three repetitions in your training set, do not change it to two when the exercises get hard.

### Modifications

Ladies will find that this program adapts well to the flexed arm hang. Training sets are simply translated into hang times.

Chin-ups may be substituted for those who prefer this technique, however, day 3 must still be completed exactly as described with 6 sets done with the overhand grip.

It is highly recommended that you follow this program using overhand grip as most of the obstacles that you will have to get over at OCS require an overhand grip.

### Maintenance and Final Thoughts

Once you have achieved your goal, you will remain at that plateau by doing at least 50 repetitions each day. Though this may sound like a large number of repetitions at this point in time, it is not, as you will happily discover during your time on the program.

The program will work for anyone who will make a sincere attempt. You cannot expect any physical training

program to work for you if you do not practice it regularly. In the first few weeks you may find that you are able to do fewer repetitions. This is a normal physiological reaction called teardown. As you continue, you will improve.

If your performance is at the 12-15 repetition level when you begin this program, then it will take about 4 weeks to complete. If you are lower than that it will take longer. Have heart because if you continue with the program, you will reach the 20 repetition level.