

FOUNDATION & BODY SHAPE			
Hollow body floor hold	4 × 20–30 sec	Beginner	Lower back pressed flat, arms by ears, chin neutral. The core shape of every handstand.
Hollow body rocks	3 × 10 rocks	Beginner	Rock front to back WITHOUT losing hollow shape. Trains active core under movement.
Hollow body breathing	3 × 30 sec	Beginner	Hold hollow and breathe normally. Trains maintaining shape while breathing in HS.
Hollow body with band	3 × 20 sec	Beginner	Band around ankles adds tactile feedback — feel the shape more clearly.
Arch-to-hollow switch on floor	3 × 10 reps	Beginner	Controlled oscillation between arch and hollow. Builds body shape awareness.
Straight-arm plank hold	4 × 30 sec	Beginner	Straight arms, shoulders elevated (scapular protraction). Directly trains HS shoulder position.
Plank shoulder shrugs	3 × 10 reps	Beginner	In plank: protract and retract scapula. Isolates scapular control — essential for active HS.
Pike hold on floor	3 × 30 sec	Beginner	Hamstring + hip flexor prep. Straight legs, fold as deep as possible.
Wall handstand walk-in	10 reps	Beginner	Stand facing wall, walk hands down into HS position. Teaches weight transfer and wrist loading progressively before any kick-up.
Box handstand hold	5 × 30 sec	Beginner	Hands on floor, feet on a box at hip height — pike position. First real wrist loading drill. Do this before any wall HS.
Box handstand shoulder shrugs	3 × 10 reps	Beginner	In box HS position, actively shrug shoulders up and down. First isolated serratus drill in an actual inversion.
Pike on box — heel drive	3 × 10 reps	Beginner	In box HS pike, push heels toward ceiling one at a time. Teaches the kick-up motion under controlled load.
Hollow body on stability ball	3 × 20 sec	Intermediate	Harder to maintain — ball adds instability and requires more precise core tension.
RTO plank (rings turned out)	3 × 20 sec	Intermediate	Rings turned out in plank. Requires and builds rotator cuff stability.
L-sit hold	4 × 10–20 sec	Intermediate	On parallel bars or floor. Builds compression strength needed for press handstand.
WRIST & SHOULDER PREP			
Wrist circles	2 × 10 each direction	Beginner	Forward + backward. Never skip — wrists are the most loaded joint in HS.
Wrist flexion/extension stretch	2 × 30 sec	Beginner	On floor, fingers forward then backward. Full range of motion each direction.
Prayer stretch	2 × 30 sec	Beginner	Palms together, push down. Wrist flexor stretch.
Reverse prayer stretch	2 × 30 sec	Beginner	Backs of hands together, push up. Wrist extensor stretch.
Wrist weight shifts on all fours	2 × 10 reps	Beginner	Shift weight forward over knuckles then to fingertips. Wrist loading under movement.
Fingertip push-ups on wall	3 × 8 reps	Beginner	Stand 30cm from wall, push away using only fingers. Builds fingertip pressing strength.
Bear crawl forward/backward	2 × 10m	Beginner	Loaded wrist mobility under movement. Forward and backward — don't skip backward.
Knuckle push-ups	3 × 8 reps	Beginner	Wrist strengthening. Neutral wrist position — useful for anyone with wrist pain.
Wall shoulder opener	3 × 30 sec	Beginner	Arms overhead on wall, let chest drop toward floor. Opens thoracic and shoulder flexion.
Doorway pec stretch	2 × 30 sec each	Beginner	Arm at 90°, chest open through doorway. Anterior shoulder mobility.
Overhead shoulder shrugs	3 × 10 reps	Beginner	Arms overhead, elevate and depress scapula. Isolates the exact HS shoulder action.
Wall slides	3 × 10 reps	Beginner	Forearms on wall, slide up. Scapular upward rotation — critical for overhead stability.
Pike push-ups	3 × 8 reps	Beginner	Shoulder pressing strength with bodyweight. Direct HS press preparation.
Cuban press	3 × 10 reps	Intermediate	External rotation strength — important injury prevention for overhead training.
Bottom-up KB press	3 × 5 each	Intermediate	KB upside down, extremely unstable. Forces wrist and shoulder stability simultaneously.
Bottom-up KB hold overhead	3 × 20 sec	Intermediate	Just hold the inverted KB overhead. Shoulder micro-stability endurance.
Banded overhead distraction	2 × 30 sec	Intermediate	Band around wrist overhead, let it pull. Opens shoulder capsule.

WALL DRILLS			
Wall tuck HS hold	5 × 20 sec	Beginner	Back to wall, knees tucked to chest. Finds your balance point over your hands without the full straight-body challenge. Bridge between wall hold and freestanding tuck.
Wall straddle HS hold	5 × 20 sec	Beginner	Back to wall, legs straddled wide. Lower centre of mass makes it easier to feel true vertical over your hands.
Wall HS slide to tuck	5 reps	Beginner	Start in wall HS hold (back to wall, full extension). Slowly bring knees to chest into tuck while maintaining hand pressure. Then extend back out. Teaches you to manipulate shape without losing balance over your hands.
Chest-to-wall shoulder touch	5 × 10 reps	Beginner	In chest-to-wall HS, slowly lower one shoulder toward wall and back. Teaches unilateral shoulder control — direct OAH prep.
Wall HS hold with leg split	5 × 20 sec	Beginner	Back to wall, one leg on wall one leg free. First taste of asymmetric load over your hands.
Kick-up to wall + immediate shape check	10 reps	Beginner	Kick up, freeze, then mentally scan: wrists stacked? shoulders active? ribs in? hips over? Don't just hold — audit.
Wall HS to controlled lower (one leg)	5 reps each	Beginner	From wall HS, lower one leg slowly to horizontal and hold 3 sec. Builds single-leg eccentric control.
Wall HS hold — chest to wall	5 × 45 sec	Beginner	Hips above shoulders, ribs in, no arch. Focus on stacking: wrists → elbows → shoulders → hips → heels.
Wall HS hold — back to wall	5 × 45 sec	Beginner	Easier entry, good for beginners finding the vertical feeling. Check arch tendency.
Wall HS kick-up consistency	15 reps	Beginner	Same leg every rep. Aim for same height, same position. Build muscle memory.
Wall HS shoulder shrugs	3 × 10 reps	Beginner	In wall HS, actively push floor and release 10 times. Serratus and shoulder endurance.
Wall HS rib check	3 × 20 sec	Beginner	In hold, pull ribs in then release. Feel the difference — ribs IN is correct.
Fingertip pressure in wall HS	4 × 20 sec	Beginner	While holding, shift weight to fingertips and back repeatedly. Trains balance reflex.
Wall pike HS hold	5 × 20 sec	Intermediate	Back to wall, hips piked and legs forward. Trains the pike shape under safe conditions before going freestanding.
Wall HS slide to straddle	5 reps	Intermediate	From wall HS, slowly open legs to straddle and back to full. Controls centre of mass shift — direct prep for straddle press.
Wall HS slide to pike	5 reps	Intermediate	From wall HS, slowly pike hips forward bringing legs down to horizontal and back up. Eccentric and concentric control of the press shape.
Toes-only wall touch	5 × 30 sec	Intermediate	Back to wall, only toes contact. Shift weight to hands. Goal: toes barely touching.
One big toe touch	5 × 20 sec	Intermediate	Progress from toes-only — only one big toe on wall, other foot free.
Alternating toe taps	3 × 10 reps	Intermediate	In wall HS, tap one foot off and on the wall repeatedly. Builds single-leg stability.
Heel drag down the wall	5 reps	Intermediate	Slowly lower heels down wall while maintaining body shape. Eccentric control.
Walk hands away from wall	5 × 10 sec	Intermediate	In wall HS, walk hands 5–10 cm away. Harder balance point — real freestanding prep.
Wall HS negatives	5 reps	Intermediate	Kick up, hold, then slowly lower one leg at a time. Eccentric shoulder strength.
Wide grip wall HS hold	3 × 20 sec	Intermediate	Hands wider — different muscle recruitment, more shoulder width stability.
Pirouette step off wall	5 reps each way	Advanced	In wall HS, turn 90° away from wall in controlled small steps. HS pirouette prep.
Wall HS with weight vest	3 × 30 sec	Advanced	Add load for shoulder endurance. Only after base endurance is solid.
Wall HS with band at hips	3 × 20 sec	Advanced	Band pulls you away from wall, you resist. Trains active balance in wall HS.
Handstand push-ups on wall	3 × 5 reps	Advanced	Full ROM HS push-up against wall. Shoulder strength for press HS.
Deficit HS push-ups	3 × 5 reps	Advanced	Hands on parallettes or plates — deeper ROM. Advanced shoulder strength.
Narrow grip wall HS hold	3 × 20 sec	Advanced	Hands closer together — harder stability challenge for wrists and shoulders.

BALANCE & FINGERTIP CONTROL			
HS balance timer	End of every session	All levels	Film yourself, count seconds, log weekly. Non-negotiable progress tracking.
Finger spread awareness drill	In every hold	Beginner	In wall HS, consciously spread all fingers maximally wide. More contact = more control.
Individual finger lifts on floor	3 × 10 each	Beginner	In plank, lift each finger one at a time. Builds finger-by-finger awareness.
Fingertip rescue drill	10 reps	Intermediate	When you feel yourself tipping forward: press ALL fingertips into floor. Practice intentionally.
Controlled over-balance drill	5 reps	Intermediate	Kick up, let yourself tip slightly forward, then rescue with fingertips. Active balance reflex.
Tipping point holds	5 reps each way	Intermediate	Find the very edge of balance forward and back intentionally. Learn your balance window.
One-finger lift drill	3 × 10 sec	Intermediate	In wall HS, lift one finger at a time. Isolates each digit's role in balancing.
Pinky engagement drill	3 × 20 sec	Intermediate	Most people ignore the pinky. Press it into floor — feel the stability change.
Fingertip plank hold	3 × 20 sec	Intermediate	Plank on fingertips only. Builds finger strength and endurance for HS corrections.
Fingertip push-ups on floor	3 × 8	Intermediate	Strength for the pressing rescue movement in freestanding HS.
Asymmetric hand drill	10 kick-ups	Intermediate	One hand slightly forward, one back. Trains corrections on non-ideal landings.
Wrist angle experiments	5 reps each angle	Intermediate	Try 0°, 15°, 30° hand turnout. Find YOUR optimal hand position.
HS on parallelles	5 × 15 sec	Intermediate	Elevated grip gives more wrist range for corrections. Step up from floor HS.
Two-finger balance attempts	5 attempts	Advanced	On parallelles — extreme fingertip training for advanced practitioners.
Balance board planche lean	3 × 20 sec	Advanced	Lean on balance board to train active wrist adjustments.
Towel grip HS	5 kick-ups	Advanced	Thin towel under palms — unstable surface, forces finger micro-adjustments.
Sand tray HS	5 kick-ups	Advanced	Fingertips in sand — visual feedback of pressure distribution after each attempt.
KICK-UP TECHNIQUE			
Dominant leg kick-up practice	15 reps	Beginner	Same leg every rep, always. Build muscle memory with one consistent motor pattern.
Line drill kick-up	15 reps	Beginner	Tape a straight line on floor. Place index fingers ON the line every rep. Consistency drill.
Straddle kick-up	10 reps	Beginner	Legs wide on the way up — lowers centre of mass and makes initial balance easier.
Spotted kick-up	10 reps	Beginner	Partner holds ankle — removes fear completely, teaches the vertical feeling.
Kick-up to 3/4 height	10 reps	Beginner	Don't go to full vertical yet. Practice arrival control at a manageable height.
Back-to-wall kick-up	10 reps	Beginner	Kick into the wall — good for timid kickers who always under-kick.
Kick-up → bail immediately	10 reps	Beginner	Kick up, immediately bail via cartwheel. Builds confidence and removes fear of falling.
Kick-up → hold → cartwheel out	10 reps	Beginner	Every rep has a planned exit. Makes every kick-up purposeful.
Kick-up + 5 sec wall + bail	10 reps	Beginner	Controlled approach, 5 sec wall hold, then clean bail. Quality over quantity.
Lunge entry practice	15 reps	Beginner	Just the lunge step without kicking up. Plant hands, shift weight forward, feel the moment before the kick. Most beginners never isolate this.
Kick-up to wall — count steps	10 reps	Beginner	Same number of approach steps every single rep. Two steps, same foot, same rhythm. Consistency before height.
Slow kick-up	10 reps	Intermediate	Kick as slowly as possible — removes momentum, forces shoulder and core strength.
Box kick-up (height target)	10 reps	Intermediate	Kick to a target height on the wall, not to the top. Control your arrival point.
Pike kick-up	10 reps	Intermediate	Legs straight and together — harder, cleaner. Prepares for press HS.
Kick-up with metronome	10 reps	Intermediate	1 beat approach, 1 beat kick — trains rhythmic consistency in approach.
Wall-facing kick-up sets	10 reps	Intermediate	Kick toward wall, stop just before touching. Forces controlled arrival at vertical.

FREESTANDING HOLD DEVELOPMENT			
PR attempt protocol	3 max attempts	All levels	At START of session when fresh: 3 max hold attempts before any fatigue.
Greasing the groove	Every 1–2 hours	All levels	3–5 kick-ups throughout the day. Neural encoding — most effective for skill acquisition.
Tuck HS hold	5 × 10–20 sec	Beginner	Fully tucked — most stable shape. Good for finding balance point for first time.
HS in a corner	10 kick-ups	Beginner	Two walls catch you on two sides — more freedom than one wall, less than open space.
Chest-to-wall freestanding attempt	10 kick-ups	Beginner	Kick up facing the wall, stop before touching. Forces you to find balance without the wall as a crutch — but it's right there if you need it.
Finger pressure hold test	3 × 10 sec wall	Beginner	In wall HS, press fingertips so hard the heels of your hands lift slightly off. The single most important drill for learning freestanding balance.
Kick-up into freestanding (no wall)	15–20 reps	Intermediate	Just reach vertical and bail. Focus on ARRIVING, not holding yet.
Kick-up + hold attempt + log	3 attempts	Intermediate	Every session: 3 max-effort holds. Record seconds. The fundamental daily metric.
Accumulation holds	60 sec total/session	Intermediate	Goal: accumulate 60 sec of total freestanding time per session in any hold lengths.
Straddle HS hold	5 × 10–20 sec	Intermediate	Wider legs = lower CoM = easier balance. Good stepping stone to full HS.
Pike HS hold	5 × 10–15 sec	Intermediate	Hips piked, legs forward at 90°. Intermediate between tuck and full.
Split HS hold	5 × 10 sec each	Intermediate	One leg forward, one back. Often easier for flexible people than full straight HS.
Straddle to close drill	5 reps	Intermediate	Hold straddle HS, slowly close legs to full — much harder balance.
Tuck to full extension	5 reps	Intermediate	From tuck hold, open to full extension slowly. Strength + balance challenge.
HS with spotter at hips	10 kick-ups	Intermediate	Spotter holds waist (not ankles) — allows real micro-balance with safety net.
HS on soft mat	10 kick-ups	Intermediate	Forgiving surface — less wrist stress, good for high volume sessions.
HS on parallel bars	10 kick-ups	Intermediate	More range for fingertip corrections. Wrists in neutral — easier on joints.
One-toe spot to freestanding	10 kick-ups	Intermediate	One big toe lightly on wall. Remove it the moment you feel vertical.
Ladder set holds	1–2–3–4–5 sec	Intermediate	Hold 1 sec, rest. Hold 2 sec, rest. Climb the ladder. Then descend.
EMOM kick-ups	10 min EMOM	Intermediate	Every minute on the minute: 3 kick-ups. 10 minutes total.
Rest-pause holds	3 × to failure	Advanced	Hold to failure, rest 10 sec, hold again. Extends time under tension.
STRENGTH BUILDERS			
Serratus push-ups	3 × 10 reps	Beginner	At top of push-up, push extra — scapular protraction. Hugely important for active HS shoulders.
Bar support shrugs	3 × 10 reps	Beginner	Support on parallel bars, shrug up and down. Scapular control isolation.
Prone Y-T-W-L raises	3 × 10 reps	Beginner	Lying face down, raise arms in each letter shape. Full rotator cuff conditioning.
Scapular pull-ups	3 × 10 reps	Beginner	Hang from bar, depress scapula only — no elbow bend. Scapular control.
Band pull-aparts	3 × 15 reps	Beginner	Rear delt and rhomboid health. Antagonist balance for all the pressing.
Face pulls	3 × 15 reps	Beginner	Cable or band. External rotation, injury prevention for overhead training.
Tuck press negatives	5 reps	Beginner	Same but tucked — easier version of press HS eccentric.
Rice bucket training	3 × 2 min	Beginner	Plunge hand in rice, rotate and grab. Classical finger/wrist conditioning.
Dead hang finger curls	3 × 10 reps	Beginner	Hang from bar, curl fingers open and closed. Tendon health maintenance.
Sleeper stretch	2 × 30 sec each	Beginner	Lying on side, internal rotation stretch. Posterior capsule mobility.
Z-press	3 × 8 reps	Intermediate	Seated on floor, overhead press. Mimics HS press demands without balance challenge.
Loaded overhead carry	3 × 20m	Intermediate	KB or dumbbell overhead, walk 20m. Builds overhead stability endurance.
Single-arm overhead carry	3 × 20m each	Intermediate	One-arm loaded carry — asymmetric stability, HS OAH prep.
Ring support hold	4 × 20 sec	Intermediate	Straight-arm support on rings — RTO position, serratus and shoulder stability.

Band overhead walks	3 × 10m each	Intermediate	Band around wrists, arms overhead, walk sideways. Shoulder stability endurance.
Ab wheel rollout	3 × 8 reps	Intermediate	Hollow body under load. Direct core transfer to HS shape.
Hanging leg raises	3 × 10 reps	Intermediate	Compression + hollow body combined. Good for press HS preparation.
V-ups	3 × 15 reps	Intermediate	Dynamic hollow body. Core power and awareness.
Planche lean	3 × 20 sec	Intermediate	Straight arm, lean forward in plank position. Shoulder prehab and strength.
Straddle press negatives	5 reps	Intermediate	Stand in straddle, slowly lower to floor. Eccentric press HS training.
Box pike press	5 reps	Intermediate	Feet on box, press toward vertical. Press HS progressive training.
Dragon flag negatives	3 × 5 reps	Advanced	Extreme hollow body strength. Lower as slowly as possible.
Press HS from L-sit	3 × 3 reps	Advanced	From parallel bars L-sit, press up to HS. Elite pressing strength goal.
INVERSION PREP & ENTRY VARIATIONS			
Headstand hold (tripod)	4 × 30 sec	Beginner	Tripod headstand. Safe inversion practice — builds inversion comfort.
Crow pose hold	4 × 20 sec	Beginner	Builds wrist loading comfort and inversion entry confidence.
Forearm stand hold	4 × 20 sec	Intermediate	Easier than HS — builds inversion comfort and shoulder endurance with less wrist load.
Cartwheel to HS stop	5 reps each way	Intermediate	Do a cartwheel, try to pause at the vertical point. Control at speed.
Crow → HS kick-up	5 attempts	Advanced	From crow, kick both legs up simultaneously. Advanced combined drill.
Standing → tuck → pike → full HS	5 reps	Advanced	Progressive entry through shapes in one movement. Requires strong press.
HS → bridge over-balance	5 reps	Advanced	Over-balance into a backbend exit. Requires spinal and shoulder flexibility.
Round-off to HS stop	5 reps	Advanced	Round-off then pause vertical. Gymnastics-based power + control.
Tic-tac to HS	5 reps	Advanced	Run at wall, foot push off wall, into HS. Parkour entry drill.
Back walkover into HS	5 reps	Advanced	From bridge, kick over into HS. Requires flexibility and power.
FLEXIBILITY & MOBILITY			
Overhead flexibility test	Daily check	Beginner	Can you get arms fully vertical by ears with hollow body while standing? If not, do daily.
Lat stretch on bar	3 × 30 sec	Beginner	Hang, let lats lengthen. Opens overhead range essential for HS alignment.
Thoracic extension on foam roller	3 × 30 sec	Beginner	Mid-back mobility. Tight thoracic spine causes arch in HS.
Chest opening on foam roller	3 × 30 sec	Beginner	Opens anterior shoulder and chest for full overhead range.
Hamstring stretching	3 × 45 sec each	Beginner	Tight hamstrings affect kick-up and pike quality. Daily work.
Hip flexor stretch	3 × 45 sec each	Beginner	Tight hip flexors cause arch in HS. Critical and often overlooked.
Downward dog heel alternations	2 × 10 reps	Beginner	Dynamic mobility for calves, hamstrings, and shoulders together.
Wall overhead reach	3 × 30 sec	Beginner	Stand facing wall, slide arms up while keeping hollow. Tight shoulder test.
Pancake / straddle stretch	3 × 60 sec	Intermediate	For straddle HS and press HS. Wide leg seated, chest to floor.
Pike compression holds	4 × 20 sec	Intermediate	Seated, compress legs to chest. Trains press HS hip flexor compression.
Pancake stretch rocking	3 × 10 reps	Intermediate	In straddle, rock forward and hold. Increases hip and groin range over time.

ADVANCED / VARIATION DRILLS			
One-arm HS lean	5 reps each side	Advanced	Lean weight to one arm, light touch with other. Foundational OAH prep drill.
HS pirouette	5 each way	Advanced	360° rotation in freestanding HS. Weight shifts fully to one arm briefly.
HS walking forward	3 × 5m	Advanced	Walk on hands forward. Trains dynamic balance and shoulder endurance.
HS walking backward	3 × 5m	Advanced	Harder than forward — different weight shift mechanics.
HS push-up freestanding	3 × 3 reps	Advanced	Full range HS push-up without wall. Requires solid 10+ sec hold first.
HS on parallettes with push-up	3 × 3 reps	Advanced	Combines parallette HS stability with push-up strength. Full package.
HS snap-down	5 reps	Advanced	Kick up to HS, snap feet down fast. Power and timing.
Cast to HS (on bar)	5 reps	Advanced	Swing from bar, cast up to HS. Gymnastics skill — requires bar.
HS on beam / narrow surface	5 attempts	Advanced	On gymnastics beam or 2×4 plank on floor. Narrow base challenge.
HS on sand	10 kick-ups	Advanced	Beach HS. Total proprioceptive challenge — grip and surface change completely.
Handstand on knuckles	5 kick-ups	Advanced	On fists — wrist in neutral. Different stability challenge, good for wrist pain prevention.
Double pirouette	3 each way	Elite	Two full rotations in HS. Very advanced — requires solid single pirouette first.
Tiger bend push-up	3 × 3 reps	Elite	Forearm → straight arm in HS. Tricep and shoulder power.
HS on fingers only	5 attempts	Elite	Handstand on fingertips only, no palms. Extreme finger strength.
HAND & FINGER SPECIFICS			
Individual finger lifts in plank	3 × 10 each	Beginner	In plank, lift each finger one at a time. Foundational finger awareness drill.
Finger spread awareness	In every hold	Beginner	Consciously spread all fingers maximally wide during every hold.
Index finger line drill	15 reps	Beginner	Tape an X on floor, place index fingers exactly on it every kick-up. Consistency.
Dead hang finger curls	3 × 10	Beginner	Hang from bar, curl fingers open/closed. Tendon health for daily training.
Rice bucket training	3 × 2 min	Beginner	Classical finger and wrist conditioning. Plunge, rotate, grab, release.
Pinky engagement drill	3 × 20 sec	Intermediate	Most people ignore the pinky. Actively press it into the floor.
Asymmetric hand placement drill	10 kick-ups	Intermediate	One hand slightly forward, one back — trains corrections on imperfect landings.
Wrist angle experiments	5 reps each	Intermediate	Try 0°, 15°, 30° hand turnout. Find your optimal angle.
Fingertip plank hold	3 × 20 sec	Intermediate	Plank on fingertips only. Finger endurance specifically for HS.
Fingernail-down press (wall)	3 × 20 sec	Advanced	Press with the very tip of fingers on wall — extreme fingertip isolation.
Towel grip HS	5 kick-ups	Advanced	Thin towel under palms — unstable surface forces major finger micro-adjustments.
Sand tray HS	5 kick-ups	Advanced	Fingertips in sand tray — visual feedback of pressure points after each attempt.
GAZE & VESTIBULAR TRAINING			
Fixed gaze drill	Every kick-up	Beginner	Mark an X between hands before EVERY kick-up. Look at it. Non-negotiable.
Verbal counting in HS	Every hold attempt	Beginner	Count out loud during holds — prevents breath-holding, trains dual-tasking.
Eyes-closed wall HS	3 × 10 sec	Intermediate	Close eyes in wall hold. Vestibular system forced to activate — transfers to free HS.
Peripheral gaze HS	5 × 15 sec wall	Intermediate	Soften gaze, don't focus sharply. Some people balance better with soft eyes.
Head position experiments	5 reps each	Intermediate	Try neutral vs slight tuck vs extended. Find YOUR optimal head position.
Balance board eyes closed	3 × 30 sec	Intermediate	Stand on balance board, eyes closed. General vestibular training that transfers to HS.
Metronome focus in wall HS	3 × 30 sec	Intermediate	Listen to metronome while holding. External focus quiets mental noise.
Distraction training	5 × 20 sec wall	Intermediate	Hold wall HS while someone talks to you or loud music plays. Competition prep.
Gaze after rotation	5 kick-ups	Advanced	Spin 3× on the spot, then immediately kick up. Trains balance from disoriented state.

SHOULDER GIRDLE ISOLATION			
Scapular wall slides	3 × 10 reps	Beginner	Forearms on wall, slide arms up. Serratus activation — hugely important for HS.
Serratus push-ups	3 × 10 reps	Beginner	At top of push-up, push extra into the floor. Scapular protraction isolation.
Handstand shrugs on wall	3 × 10 reps	Beginner	In wall HS, depress and elevate scapula. Feel the difference in alignment.
Bar support shrugs	3 × 10 reps	Beginner	On parallel bars, shrug up and down. Direct scapular control.
Overhead band pull-aparts	3 × 15 reps	Beginner	Band overhead, pull apart while keeping arms up. Rotator cuff + rear delt.
Prone Y-T-W-L raises	3 × 10 reps	Beginner	Face down, raise arms in Y-T-W-L. Full rotator cuff conditioning.
Sleeper stretch	2 × 30 sec each	Beginner	Internal rotation stretch lying on side. Posterior capsule mobility.
Ring support hold RTO	4 × 20 sec	Intermediate	Straight-arm rings support, rings turned out. Serratus and rotator cuff stability.
Band overhead walks	3 × 10m each way	Intermediate	Band around wrists, arms overhead, walk sideways. Endurance drill.
Loaded overhead carry	3 × 20m	Intermediate	KB overhead, walk 20m. Shoulder stability endurance.
Single-arm overhead carry	3 × 20m each	Intermediate	Asymmetric — trains the shoulder independently for OAH prep.
Bottom-up KB press	3 × 5 each	Intermediate	KB upside down, extremely unstable. Wrist + shoulder simultaneously.
Bottom-up KB hold	3 × 20 sec	Intermediate	Just hold the inverted KB overhead. Pure shoulder micro-stability.
REPETITION & VOLUME PROTOCOLS			
Greasing the groove	Every 1–2 hours	All levels	3–5 kick-ups throughout the day. Best neural encoding protocol for skill acquisition.
Micro-session protocol	5 min × 5/day	All levels	5 minutes, 5 times per day. Total volume without fatigue accumulation.
PR attempt protocol	3 attempts start of session	All levels	Always attempt max hold FIRST when fresh — before any fatigue.
EMOM kick-ups	10 min EMOM	Intermediate	Every minute on the minute: 3 kick-ups. 10 minutes total. Volume + consistency.
Ladder set holds	1–2–3–4–5 sec	Intermediate	Hold 1 sec, rest. Hold 2 sec, rest. Climb to max, descend. Progressive loading.
Accumulation holds	60 sec total/session	Intermediate	Goal: 60 sec total freestanding time per session in any length holds.
Volume day / intensity day	Alternate daily	Intermediate	Alternate high-rep days (volume) with max-hold days (intensity).
Timed kick-up blocks	5 min blocks	Intermediate	Strict 5-minute blocks of kick-ups. Count total successful holds per block.
Rest-pause holds	3 × to failure	Advanced	Hold to failure, rest 10 sec, hold again. Extends time under tension.
Cold start kicks	3 kick-ups on waking	Advanced	First thing in morning, no warm-up. Trains consistency across physiological states.
PROPRIOCEPTION & INSTABILITY			
Barefoot vs socked comparison	5 reps each	Beginner	Feel how grip changes between surfaces. Increases surface awareness.
HS on parallelles	10 kick-ups	Intermediate	Wrist neutral, more finger range. Standard upgrade from floor HS.
HS on yoga blocks	5 kick-ups	Intermediate	Slightly elevated, slightly wobbly. Intermediate instability.
HS on folded yoga mat	5 kick-ups	Intermediate	Soft, slightly unstable — gentle intro to instability training.
HS on foam pad	5 kick-ups	Intermediate	More unstable than mat. Grip and feedback change significantly.
Parallelles with turned-out grip	5 kick-ups	Intermediate	External rotation at wrist — different muscle engagement pattern.
HS on balance board	5 attempts	Advanced	Board rocks front-to-back — directly trains the most common imbalance axis.
HS on sand	10 kick-ups	Advanced	Beach HS. Total proprioceptive challenge.
HS on knuckles	5 kick-ups	Advanced	On fists — wrist in neutral. Stability and wrist challenge combined.
Fingertip parallelle HS	5 attempts	Elite	Only fingertips on bar. Maximum finger strength demand.

TRANSITION DRILLS			
Forward roll bail	5 reps	Intermediate	Bail via controlled forward roll — advanced safe exit. Eliminates fear of falling.
HS → lower to pike	5 reps	Intermediate	Controlled descent to seated pike. Eccentric shoulder and core strength.
HS → lower to straddle	5 reps	Intermediate	Controlled descent with legs wide. Flexibility + eccentric strength.
Cartwheel to HS stop	5 reps each way	Intermediate	Pause at vertical point during cartwheel. Timing and control.
HS → split descent	5 reps each	Advanced	One leg comes down at a time. Asymmetric control.
HS → walk → stop	3 × 3 steps	Advanced	Walk a few steps, try to stop and hold. Dynamic to static transition.
HS pirouette entry	3 reps each way	Advanced	Walk into pirouette rather than kicking up. Advanced entry variation.
Crow → HS kick-up	5 attempts	Advanced	From crow, kick both legs up. Combined skill.
HS → forearm stand	3 reps	Advanced	Lower from straight arm to forearms — tiger bend. Tricep strength.
HS → bridge	3 reps	Advanced	Over-balance into a backbend. Requires shoulder and spinal flexibility.
Round-off to HS stop	3 reps	Advanced	Round-off, pause vertical. Gymnastics power + control.
Standing → tuck → pike → full	3 reps	Advanced	Progressive entry through all shapes. Requires strong pressing ability.
PARTNER & SPOTTED DRILLS			
Ankle-hold spot	10 kick-ups	Beginner	Partner holds both ankles. Classic beginner spot — removes fear completely.
Partner alignment check	3 × 30 sec wall	Beginner	Partner stands side-on and calls out shape cues while you hold. Eyes on your form.
Partner tapping drill	3 × 20 sec wall	Beginner	Partner lightly taps different body parts to give correction cues.
Partner verbal counting	Every hold	Beginner	Partner counts out loud so you don't have to. Frees all mental bandwidth.
Hip-hold spot	10 kick-ups	Intermediate	Partner holds hips — allows real micro-balance with safety. Better than ankle spot.
One-ankle spot	10 kick-ups	Intermediate	Partner holds only one ankle. Forces some independent balance.
Finger-touch spot	10 kick-ups	Intermediate	Partner puts one finger lightly on your calf — mostly psychological.
Spot from side only	10 kick-ups	Intermediate	Partner stands ready but doesn't touch. Pure psychological safety net.
Mirror drill	10 kick-ups each	Intermediate	Two people kick up simultaneously facing each other. Timing and motivation.
Competitive hold timing	5 rounds	Intermediate	Both kick up simultaneously, last one standing wins. Game motivation.
MENTAL & FOCUS DRILLS			
Pre-kick-up ritual	Every session	All levels	Same 3 steps every time: set hands → look at spot → single breath → kick. Neural consistency.
Visualization hold	3 × 30 sec	All levels	Close eyes, visualize perfect hold for 30 sec, THEN kick up. Mental prep.
Cue word anchor	Every hold	All levels	Pick one word (e.g. 'long' or 'tight') and repeat it during every hold.
Video review at 0.5x	Weekly	All levels	Film every session from the side, watch at half speed. Reveals invisible faults.
Fear mapping	Once per week	Beginner	Write down what you're afraid of falling into. Then practice THAT bail specifically.
Verbal counting during holds	Every hold	Beginner	Count out loud. Prevents breath-holding and trains dual-tasking simultaneously.
Quiet mind drill	3 × 30 sec wall	Intermediate	In wall HS, count breaths 1–10 without losing count. Trains mental stillness.
Progressive relaxation in HS	3 × 30 sec wall	Intermediate	In wall hold, consciously relax face, jaw, neck one at a time. Reduces tension.
Distraction training	5 × 20 sec	Intermediate	Hold wall HS while someone talks to you or loud music plays. Builds focus.
Metronome focus drill	3 × 30 sec	Intermediate	Listen to metronome during wall hold. External focus quiets mental noise.

SHAPE VARIATIONS			
Tuck HS	5 × 15 sec	Beginner	Knees to chest — most stable shape. Find balance point here first.
Pike HS	5 × 10 sec	Intermediate	Hips piked, legs at 90° — intermediate shape between tuck and full.
Straddle HS	5 × 15 sec	Intermediate	Legs wide — lower CoM, more forgiving. Most practical stepping stone.
Full HS (legs together)	5 × max	Intermediate	The goal shape. Perfectly straight line from wrists to heels.
Split HS	5 × 10 sec each	Intermediate	One leg forward, one back. Easier for hypermobile people.
Arch HS (intentional)	5 × 10 sec wall	Intermediate	Deliberately banana. Learn the shape so you can feel and fix it.
Mexican HS	5 kick-ups	Intermediate	Exaggerated hollow, legs slightly past vertical forward. Some find it easier to balance.
Tuck to full extension in hold	5 reps	Intermediate	Open from tuck to full extension during hold. Strength + balance.
Straddle to close in hold	5 reps	Intermediate	Straddle hold, then slowly close legs. Much harder balance challenge.
One-leg HS	5 × 10 sec each	Intermediate	One leg fully extended, one tucked. Asymmetric — prep for one-arm HS.
GYMNASTICS-BORROWED CONDITIONING			
HS snap-down	5 reps	Advanced	Kick up to HS, snap feet down fast. Power and snap timing drill.
Cast to HS on bar	5 reps	Advanced	Swing from hanging, cast up to HS. Requires a bar. Gymnastics skill.
HS flat-back on mat	3 reps	Advanced	HS with straight body, lower to flat back on mat. Core strength.
HS pirouette	5 each way	Advanced	360° rotation. Weight shifts to one arm briefly.
Tic-tac to HS	3 reps	Advanced	Run at wall, foot push off wall, into HS. Parkour entry.
HS on beam / narrow surface	5 attempts	Advanced	Gymnastics beam or 2×4 on floor. Narrow base total challenge.
Back walkover into HS	3 reps	Advanced	From bridge, kick over into HS. Flexibility and power combined.
Kip to HS on bar	3 reps	Elite	Kip from hang to HS. Requires bar and precise timing.
Double pirouette	3 each way	Elite	Two full rotations. Very advanced — solid single first.
Press HS from L-sit on bars	3 × 3	Elite	From L-sit, press up to HS. Elite pressing strength.
Tiger bend push-up	3 × 3	Elite	Forearm → straight arm in HS. Tricep and shoulder power.
TIMING & FEEDBACK TOOLS			
Phone timer with audio beeps	Every session	All levels	Set repeating 1-second beep — count beats during holds. Accurate time tracking.
Slow-motion video (240fps)	Weekly	All levels	Film at 240fps if phone supports. See finger pressure and shape in detail.
Side-on video review	Every session	All levels	Film from side at 0.5× speed. Reveals shape issues invisible to self-perception.
Progressive hold log	Daily	All levels	Write best hold every single day. Trend visible over weeks — the most motivating data.
Sticky mat vs smooth floor	5 reps each	Beginner	Feel how surface friction changes finger correction ability and confidence.
Marked hand positions on floor	Every session	Beginner	Tape outlines of your hands — check placement consistency every kick-up.
Chalk on hands	As needed	Intermediate	Shows exact pressure distribution on floor — where are you actually loading?
Chalk footprint trace	After each hold	Intermediate	Chalk on feet — see exactly where you step out, showing consistent bail patterns.
Laser pointer on wall (waist)	Weekly check	Advanced	Tape laser to waist pointing at wall — see how much hips wobble during hold.