THE GROW STRONGER METHOD

THE IRON CROSS

The Simple System For Gymnastic Strength & Muscle

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FOREWORD BY ELLIOTT HULSE
LEGAL STUFF

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Use of the information provided is at the sole choice and risk of the reader. You must get your physician’s approval before beginning this or any other exercise or nutrition program. This information is not a prescription. Consult your doctor, nutritionist or dietician for further information.
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What you have in front of you is the ultimate companion to the Grow Stronger Method. It's the gymnastics manual I wish I had written, but not being one to waste an opportunity, I'm happy to share with you now.

Eli Poulos first showed up at my gym this past summer to attend a Lean Hybrid Muscle seminar. Late in the day, when I started showing some of the body weight and gymnastic work I was including in my own workouts, Eli started playing on the rings.

This kid just blew us away. His skills on the rings were just plain sick!

Eli had already raised a few eyebrows with his relative body strength. For a small guy he's very strong and made a very good showing with the kegs and stones and other lifts we demoed that day, but when it came to the rings I think we all were impressed.

He was demonstrating full body levers, both forward and reverse; muscle ups; and handstands. His control and ability to manipulate his body in space were inspiring.

Gymnastic work, hand balancing and rings work has become an instrumental part of my training these days. As you've undoubtedly heard me say before, strength is a function of
the nervous system. Specifically in the nervous system's ability to recruit the maximum amount of muscle fibers possible for any specific contraction.

Contrary to what most people think it's not the size of the muscle that determines the strength of the athlete, it's the athlete's ability to activate as many myofibrils, muscle fibers, as possible.

Nothing challenges the nervous system and the body's ability to generate tension like gymnastics and ring work. The stabilization and muscle control required transfers to deep muscle contractions and highly stable joints that will add pounds to all of your favorite lifts. That's why I use it and, if you want to become the strongest you possible, you should too.

This manual will show you the way.

Grow Stronger!
My name is Eli Poulos, I am a personal trainer and strength coach in Asheville, North Carolina. My favorite thing to do is train, get stronger, and teach others how to do the same.

This passion has led me to practice many modes of training, including powerlifting, bodybuilding, speed work, Olympic lifting, and, as you’ve probably guessed, gymnastic rings training.

I have always been amazed by Olympic gymnasts, but first started learning about the massive benefits of ring work when I stumbled across a T-Nation interview with renowned gymnastics coach Christopher Sommer.

In it he tells a story of one of his top gymnasts who was messing around in the weight room one day. Never having lifted before, this athlete, at a bodyweight of 135 lbs, deadlifted 405 lbs on his first day!

I was absolutely blown away. Not only because this athlete had pulled three times his bodyweight in a lift he’d never done before, but because this implied a tremendous carryover from gymnastic training to lifting, and by extension, other sports.

I immediately ordered a pair of rings. After research and some coaching on technique, I began using them regularly in my training, creating a program very similar to this one.

After eight weeks of ring training, (three of which were exclusively ring training, as I was on vacation and had no gym) I was ready to test this supposed carryover.
That day, I shattered my previous deadlift PR by a solid 35 lbs, my weighted pull-up by 20, and my bench press by 25. I believe that anyone can experience similar gains, especially if gymnastics rings are new to your training.

A year later, powerlifting dominated my training. I had just finished a training block, and because of too much volume and outside stress, I was severely over-trained.

I took three weeks off from external loading, and worked again on gymnastics. At the end of three weeks, all signs of overtraining had disappeared, I was more mobile and flexible than I had been in a long time. When I went back to lifting all of my lifts had, once again, improved. Go figure.

Although I have tremendous respect for gymnasts, and have achieved a level of proficiency at gymnastics rings skills, I do not consider myself a gymnast. I am a lifter who does gymnastics. You’re probably in the same boat, or at least want to be. This program is written for you, and anyone who wants to:

- Incorporate gymnastic rings into their current strength program without having to sacrifice their favorite lifts
- Become more proficient at controlling their movements
- Improve dynamic flexibility
- Try an entirely different style of strength training
- De-load from their current program while still maintaining or even gaining strength.

I hope this program helps you in your quest to grow stronger.

Enjoy.
If you're reading this, it's my guess you love to train and get stronger. You probably devote several hours a week to getting stronger, faster, more powerful, or better at your sport. You may even regard your time at the gym as a sort of ritual, a time to push yourself, clear your mind, and just act.

This outlook on training and the gym is extremely helpful, but what happens when life calls you away from the barbell? Say you want to spend an extended period of time in a place where gyms are scarce, or even non-existent?

While strength training is now extremely popular in America, there are many places where the crazes of strongman, powerlifting, and crossfit have not caught on. I love going on long wilderness hikes (several weeks or months at a time), but this and going to the gym are not very compatible.

So what do we do?

Pushups in the hotel room?

It's an option, but gets old fast. Enter gymnastics rings training. If you have a set of rings, all you need is a sturdy horizontal overhang, allowing for an almost total freedom of training location.

I have set them up on balconies, piers at the beach, swing sets, chin-up bars at the park, and even trees. Nearly anywhere you go, you'll find someplace to set up your rings. The limits on your strength training are now gone, because gymnastic rings are so portable, and capable of producing high levels of strength (to be discussed later). There are few things so freeing as the ability to train anywhere, at any time you choose, with maximum efficiency.

Just as gymnastic rings can free your training, they can free your body. Gymnastics is
defined as exercises aimed at developing or displaying physical agility and coordination. It is the sport of moving your body through space (to which rings training adds a strength element). Proficiency at certain gymnastics movements will help you to feel more confident in your movements, more in control of your body, and better able to use your strength to move in new ways. There is nothing like the feeling you get the first time you nail the muscle-up or a handstand.

By gaining these skills and learning to implement them in your training, you will be able to train anywhere, anytime and teach your body to be able to do almost anything.
Yes, but how will it make me stronger?

Obviously, weight training is the most widely adopted method of strength training. Heavy barbell lifts and Olympic lifts are wonderful for producing high levels of power and strength, and have gained the reputation of being the two most effective ways of getting stronger.

Bodyweight training has not gained the same notoriety for creating insanely strong athletes, which is a shame.

When we think bodyweight training we usually think endless reps and sets of pushups, situps, pullups, and air squats – great for building endurance and work capacity, or maybe as a finisher, but not so much for achieving superhuman levels of strength.

While this may be true for these particular movements, as it relates to the whole of bodyweight training -- it’s simply wrong.

With some intelligence and the right know-how, you can get extremely strong using nothing but your own body. Combined with the tactical use of the barbell and other tools your capacity for strength becomes limited only by your desire and determination.

“Yes, but how will gymnastic rings training make me stronger?”

If you have read the Grow Stronger Method, or listened to anything Elliott has said on the subject, you know maximal strength is a function of the nervous system becoming more efficient and powerful, not just your muscles getting bigger.

The way we train our nervous system is through maximal neuromuscular contraction (working against extreme resistance).

Gymnastic moves on the rings, especially static (isometric) positions, are among the best for generating maximal tension and contraction.
Why else would the Russian strength athletes of the last century – some of the strongest in the world – have devoted at least ten percent of their training to isometrics. Additionally, have you seen the feats of strength Olympic male gymnasts are capable of? Clearly there is something to this.

Because these movements teach your body how to hold still in challenging positions, they will have tremendous carryover to your other strength endeavors.

For example, levers train your back and core to hold straight, tight, and strong, which happens to be exactly what it needs to do during a deadlift or a heavy squat. Handstands train your shoulders and upper back to be extremely stable in the overhead-extended position, which is crucial at the end of a clean and jerk or push press.

You may also be wondering how we increase the resistance if our body weight is relatively fixed.

Obviously, in order to grow stronger, we have to progressively overload our muscles and central nervous system with more resistance in order to cause them to grow stronger. This is easy to do when weights are involved – you just lift more weight! When working with only your own bodyweight, however, you have to use leverage to your advantage.

Think about hoisting something heavy using a rope. Imagine standing at the top of a cliff and pulling that heavy something up towards you. This is the hardest way to move the object.

If you added a pulley into the system, the work gets easier, and if you added a second pulley opposing the first one, it becomes even easier.

The difficulty of the work changed, but the weight stayed the same. This is called mechanical advantage. We will use this principle in reverse to increase the resistance we have to work with. The progressions you find here are all about “removing pulleys” in order to make the work harder as you grow stronger.
Relative strength is the foundation of almost any athletic feat. A large component of sports like basketball, soccer, football, rugby, track and field, and MMA is the ability to quickly and effectively move your body through space.

This is only possible if you have high levels of relative strength, or strength compared to your body weight. Even sports that seem to be based entirely on absolute strength (the sheer amount of weight you are capable of moving) such as Powerlifting, Olympic Lifting, and Strongman have weight classes, putting athletes who are very strong for their size at an advantage.

Nowhere is relative strength more important than it is in men's gymnastics. In fact, the entire sport is based on it!

An athlete may be able to squat 600lbs – an amazing feat by any measure -- but if they don't have a high level of relative strength, a basic gymnastics move like a lever or an L-sit will be impossible for them. On the other hand, it is not unheard of for gymnasts to have a triple-body weight deadlift without ever having trained it.

There are three approaches to developing relative strength:

- Lose weight while maintaining or gaining strength.
- Maintain body weight while gaining strength
- Gain weight while getting disproportionately stronger.

Your diet, genetics, and goals will have the greatest effect on which of these approaches you should take.

If you are following a fat loss diet, the first approach is definitely what you should pursue. If you are happy with your body composition, or have an easy time gaining muscle, the second approach is for you because it's all about getting STRONG!

If you are looking to put on some muscle (not the main goal of this program, but likely a nice side effect) the third approach is for you.
HOW TO FOLLOW THE PROGRAM

This program is based on a three day split, training two main movements and two accessory movements each day.

As with the original Grow Stronger Method, we want to produce maximal strength without creating a lot of soreness and fatigue, leaving you with enough energy to do all of the other things you love to do.

Flexibility is a crucial component to gymnastics, and health in general, so we will begin each workout with a series of stretches. Then perform each exercise for its prescribed number of sets before moving on to the next one. Hold static positions for maximal time.

With the gymnastic rings, progress tends to be slower and subtler than in other strength sports.

It is harder to see improvement in a lever progression than it is in the bench press. In benching you get immediate feedback, both in terms of pounds lifted and reps completed. In gymnastics you don't really “see” progress until you progress to the next level.

We'll use time as our measure for progression in static positions. This way you'll get a concrete measurement of your ability. You'll also have a standard by which to judge your readiness for the next movement in a progression.

When you can hold a static position in good form for 10 seconds or do 10 good reps of a movement exercise you're ready to move on. For exercises like dips, pull-ups, and the static front raise hold, you can add weight as you continue to master the main movements.

If you're wondering how long you should spend on each phase, be patient. There is no specific amount of time that this program should take. Work on a phase until you have mastered every movement. Some will come earlier than others, but continue to work them all until your weaker moves are mastered as well.
Finally, you may be wondering how this program fits in with your favorite lifts and the rest of your training goals. This program is made to help you achieve the strength and skills necessary to perform basic and intermediate gymnastic floor and ring positions – and that is exactly what it will do.

That being said, it will only train upper body and core strength and power.

This program is low volume enough to include in your current training program as a replacement for some or all of your upper-body work, while still performing squats, deadlifts, and other lower body strength exercises.

It can also be used as a replacement for the gymnastic components of the original Grow Stronger Method, thereby allowing for heavy barbell lifts.

Use this at the beginning of your training session, and do what is necessary to continue developing lower body strength and power. Just like the original Grow Stronger Method, this program is designed to make you super strong without causing fatigue, chronic soreness, poor mobility or overtraining.
EXERCISE DESCRIPTIONS

STRETCHES

STRADDLE STRETCH
SQUAT TO STAND
SPIDERMAN LUNGE WITH REACH
SKIN THE CAT
Straddle Stretch

Sit on the floor and spread your legs until you feel tension. Keeping your spine as straight as possible, lean forward slowly and try to touch the floor in front of you. 2 sets of 60 seconds.
SQUAT TO STAND

Holding your arms straight in front of you, perform a squat. Hold at the bottom for about three seconds, and then lean forward and touch your toes. Straighten your legs, and continue to lean forward. 2 sets of 60 seconds.
SPIDERMAN LUNGE WITH REACH

Perform a lunge. Lean forward and touch the ground on either side of your front foot. Using one hand on the ground for stability, rotate your torso and reach the other arm towards the ceiling. 2 sets of 60 seconds.
Hanging from the rings, tuck your knees into your chest. Keeping your arms active, pull your feet over your head and behind you until you feel a stretch in your shoulders. Leave the position the same way you entered it. 2 sets of 60 seconds.
PHASE 1

DAY 1

BACK LEVER TUCK
FRONT LEVER TUCK
DIPS
INVERTED ROWS WITH RINGS
Hanging from the rings, bring your knees in towards your chin. With your back rounded and legs tucked, keep your back parallel to the floor. Hold this position.
Hanging from the rings, tuck your legs ad round your back. Flip back so that your chest is parallel the floor and your arms are extended behind you. Hold this position.
From a straight-armed position, tuck your knees behind you. Bend your elbows to lower yourself toward the floor until your elbows reach ninety degrees. Press yourself back up into the starting position (add weight if necessary).
INVERTED ROWS WITH RINGS

With your feet braced against a wall or heavy object, start with your back on the floor and the rings in each hand. Squeeze your shoulder blades and pull the rings towards your chest. Lower back down.
PHASE 1

DAY 2

MUSCLE-UP (NEGATIVE)
SUPINE DECLINE PUSHUPS
HANGING LEG RAISE TO PARALLEL
L-SIT TUCK
From on top of the rings, bend your elbows to lower yourself toward the ground. Engaging your lats, lower yourself slowly into the hanging position with straight arms.
Put your feet on a box or bench and get into the pushup starting position. Rotate your hands outwards so your fingers are facing back, and your biceps forward. Perform a pushup.
Hanging from the rings with enough space for your feet to be off the ground, straighten your legs, and bring them up so that they are parallel the floor.
L-SIT TUCK

From on top of the rings, bring your knees out in front of you so that your femur is parallel the floor. Tuck your knees so they form a right angle.
PHASE 1

DAY 3

WALL HANDSTAND
FROG BALANCE
CHIN-UPS
RING SUPPORT POSITION
Place your hands at shoulder width about a foot and a half away from a wall. Kick your legs up until both feet are touching the wall, and you are in a handstand position.
Put your hands on the floor at slightly less than shoulder width. Put the creases of your knees on the outside of your elbows and lean forward until your feet leave the floor.
Hanging from the rings, pull yourself up towards the ceiling. Rotate your arms through the motion so your palms end up facing your body.
From on top of the rings, keep your arms as straight as possible. Rotate your hands until your palms are forward. Squeeze your shoulder blades and press down into the rings.
PHASE 2

DAY 1

BACK LEVER FLAT TUCK
FRONT LEVER FLAT TUCK
INVERTED ROW ON BAR (SINGLE ARM)
DIPS
This is the same as the back lever tuck, except your lower back will be straight, not rounded. Your spine should form a straight line parallel to the floor.
This is the same as the front lever tuck, except your lower back will be straight, not rounded. Your spine should form a straight line parallel to the floor.
Set the pins on a power rack at about hip height and place an empty barbell on them. With your feet braced against the bottom of the rack, the wall, or something heavy, lay with your back on the floor. Grab the bar with one arm (overhand grip), and cross the other over your torso. Brace your core, and pull the bar into your chest, resisting rotation as much as possible.
From a straight-armed position, tuck your knees behind you. Bend your elbows to lower yourself toward the floor until your elbows reach ninety degrees. Press yourself back up into the starting position (add weight if necessary).
PHASE 2

D A Y  2

MUSCLE UP WITH JUMP
L-SIT LOW
HANGING LEG RAISES (FULL NEGATIVE)
STATIC FRONT RAISE HOLD
Place a box or bench under a chin-up bar so you can reach it with your knees slightly bent. With a false grip (thumbs over), pull the bar downwards and towards you while jumping to give yourself extra momentum. Rotate your hands so that your wrists are perpendicular to the floor. Once over the bar, press up until your arms are straight.
From on top of the rings in a straight arm position, raise your legs out in front of you until they reach just below parallel to the floor. Point your toes.
Hang from a pull-up bar with an overhand grip. Tuck your legs and raise your feet up to the bar. Lower them down to the ground with your legs straight.
Static Front Raise Hold

Grab a barbell and lift it up in front of you until your arms are parallel to the floor. Hold this position, and add weight if necessary.
PHASE 2

DAY 3

PLANCHE TUCK
FROG BALANCE TO WALL HANDSTAND
CHIN-UPS
WHEEL ROLLOUTS FROM KNEES
From on top of the rings, tuck your knees into your chest. Lean forward until you are facing the floor. Keep your arms straight and outside your knees.
Begin in the frog balance position described earlier, this time with your head facing a wall about a foot away. Tilt forward, and drive your legs up into the air while pressing into the ground with your shoulders. Straighten out until you have reached handstand position.
CHIN-UPS

Perform chin-ups (palms facing your face). Add weight as necessary using a belt.
Using an ab wheel or a loaded barbell, kneel and grab the bar with your arms straight and perpendicular to the floor. Lean forwards until your torso and hips form a straight line. Contract your abs, and pull the bar towards your knees to get back to the starting position.
PHASE 3

DAY 1

FRONT LEVER STRADDLE
BACK LEVER STRADDLE
INVERTED ROW ON BAR (SINGLE ARM)
LOW L-SIT DIPS
Front Lever Straddle

Begin in the front lever flat tuck position. Spread and straighten your legs. Drive your hips forward so that your whole body is parallel to the floor. Point your toes.
BACK LEVER STRADDLE

Begin in the back lever flat tuck position. Spread and straighten your legs out behind you. Keeping your arms active, bring your hips forward so that your whole body is parallel to the floor. Look at the floor and point your toes.
Set the pins on a power rack at about hip height and place an empty barbell on them. With your feet braced against the bottom of the rack, the wall, or something heavy, lay with your back on the floor. Grab the bar with one arm (overhand grip), and cross the other over your torso. Brace your core, and pull the bar into your chest, resisting rotation as much as possible. Repeat for the other side.
Assume the low l-sit position described in phase 2 day 2. Keeping your legs straight out in front of you, lower yourself until your upper arms are parallel to the floor. Press back up until your arms are straight.
PHASE 3

DAY 2

STRAIGHT BAR MUSCLE UP
L-SIT STRADDLE
HANGING LEG RAISES
SUPINE DECLINE PUSHUPS
Straight Bar Muscle Up

Hang from a pull-up bar with a false grip. Pull the bar downward and into your chest. When the bar reaches your sternum, rotate your grip so that your forearms are perpendicular to the ground. Once you are over the bar, press up until your arms are straight.
From on top of the rings, spread and straighten your legs. Contract your abs and raise your legs up until they are parallel to the floor. Your hands should be near your inner thigh. Point your toes.
HANGING LEG RAISES

Hang from a pull-up bar with an overhand grip. Keep your legs straight and using your core. Raise them up until your feet touch the bar.
SUPINE DECLINE PUSHUPS

Put your feet on a box or bench and get into the pushup starting position. Rotate your hands outwards so your fingers are facing back, and your biceps forward. Perform a pushup.
PHASE 3

DAY 3

PLANCHE TUCK
FROG BALANCE TO WALL HANDSTAND
L-SIT PULL-UPS
ROLLOUTS FROM KNEES
From on top of the rings, tuck your knees into your chest. Lean forward until you are facing the floor. Keep your arms straight and outside your knees.
Begin in the frog balance position described earlier, this time with your head facing a wall about a foot away. Tilt forward, and drive your legs up into the air while pressing into the ground with your shoulders. Straighten out until you have reached handstand position.
L-SIT PULL-UPS

Hang from a pull-up bar with an overhand grip. Lift your legs out in front of you until they are parallel to the ground. Engage your lats and pull until your chin is over the bar. Keep your legs straight and your toes pointed throughout, even when lowering.
Using an ab wheel or a loaded barbell, kneel and grab the bar with your arms straight and perpendicular to the floor. Lean forwards until your torso and hips form a straight line. Contract your abs, and pull the bar towards your knees to get back to the starting position.
PHASE 4

DAY 1

FRONT LEVER
BACK LEVER
INVERTED ROWS WITH RINGS (ALTERNATING SIDES)
LOW L-SIT DIPS
Assume the front lever straddle position described in phase 3 day 1. Bring your legs together and brace your entire body so that it forms a line parallel to the ground. Point your toes.
Assume the back lever straddle position described in phase 3 day 1. Bring your legs together and brace your entire body so that it forms a line parallel to the ground. Point your toes, and keep your arms active.
INVERTED ROWS WITH RINGS (ALTERNATING SIDES)

Hang the rings at about hip height. Lay with your back on the floor, and your feet braced against something. Grab the rings with one arm, and cross the other over your chest. Keeping your whole body straight, pull the ring into your chest, and resist rotation as much as possible. Repeat on the other side.
L-SIT DIPS

1. Assume the l-sit position (legs fully parallel to the floor). Keeping your legs straight out in front of you, lower yourself until your upper arms are parallel to the floor. Press back up until your arms are straight.

2.

3.

4.

5.
PHASE 4

DAY 2

RING MUSCLE-UP
L-SIT (ADVANCED):
  V-UP
STATIC FRONT RAISE HOLD
Hang from the rings with a false grip. Pull the rings downward and into your chest. Rotate your wrists to neutral. When the rings reach your sternum, rotate your hands so that your forearms are perpendicular to the ground. Once you are over the bar, press up until your arms are straight. It is okay to kip with your legs until you master getting over the rings. Try to be as controlled and slow as possible.
L-SIT (ADVANCED)

From on top of the rings raise your legs until they are parallel to the ground (this is the standard l-sit position). From here, bring your hands back towards your rear, open your chest forward, and raise your legs to slightly above parallel. This will make the position substantially harder. Point your toes.
Lay down flat on your back with your arms extended overhead. Simultaneously lift your legs and arms to meet at a point in the air over your hips. Be as slow and controlled as possible.
STATIC FRONT RAISE HOLD

Grab a barbell and lift it up in front of you until your arms are parallel to the floor. Hold this position, and add weight if necessary.
PHASE 4

DAY 3

PLANCHE TUCK
FROG BALANCE TO FREE HANDSTAND
RING L-SIT PULL-UPS
FULL ROLLOUTS (NEGATIVE)
From on top of the rings, tuck your knees into your chest. Lean forward until you are facing the floor. Keep your arms straight and outside your knees.
Begin in the frog balance position described earlier, this time with your head facing a wall about a foot away. Tilt forward, and drive your legs up into the air while pressing into the ground with your shoulders. Straighten out until you have reached handstand position.
RING L-SIT PULL-UPS

Hanging from the rings, raise your legs out in front of you until they’re parallel to the floor. Pull yourself up until your chin is over the bar. Keep your legs straight and your toes pointed throughout.
Using an ab wheel or a loaded barbell, kneel and grab the bar with your arms straight and perpendicular to the floor. Straighten your legs so you are in a plank position. Lean forwards until your whole body forms a straight line, resisting collapse the whole time. When you reach the floor, put your knees down and get back into the starting position.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Should I do these exercises to failure?

A: Movements should not be done to failure, as this will only encourage poor form and injury. This is why each movement progresses up to a certain amount of reps or time (10 reps or 10 seconds).

It allows you to stop before you fail. This way you can safely work up to new levels. Static positions, however, should be held to failure until the goal of a ten second hold is reached.

Q: Why isn’t there an iron cross progression in this program?

A: The cross is such a complex and difficult movement that it would have to be the subject of its own e-book.

Q: Why aren’t there any lower body exercises?

A: This program is designed to make you proficient at basic gymnastic rings and floor movements, which do not involve lower body strength directly. Although there are some very good gymnastic leg movements, it is my opinion that exercises like squats, deadlifts, jump variations, and lunges are the most effective for training the lower body.

Q: How fast should I do these exercises?

A: While most other sports are based on speed and power, the gymnastics rings are all about control and stillness. You should do all of the non-static exercises as slow and controlled as possible, to create maximal tension and therefore, strength.

Q: My whole body shakes when I get up on the rings. What gives?

A: If you are new to the rings, your nervous system is just not used to all of the stabilization
required just to hold the basic support position. Remember the first time you tried to bench press? The weight was probably difficult to stabilize, as well, but the more you did it the stronger your stabilizers became. Same thing here.

Just be patient, and keep practicing.

**Q: Can I do this program if I am carrying some extra body fat?**

**A:** By definition, any extra weight you carry will make all bodyweight movements harder. However, if you are making concerted fat loss efforts in addition to using this program, your decreasing bodyweight and increased strength will allow you to make excellent progress.

**Q: I’m a big guy. Can I benefit from gymnastics training?**

**A:** Absolutely. Gymnastics is all about developing high levels of strength relative to your size. Large people with good relative strength are known as “ridiculously strong”

**Q: How long should I rest between sets?**

**A:** These are not conditioning or bodybuilding workouts. Each set is about matching or improving your performance from the last set. Rest as long as you need to recover.
These exercises will help you in your quest to grow stronger. Through this program you will develop new levels of upper body strength and stability that will carry over to other areas like grip, grappling, climbing and other strength sports.

However, there is one catch: **you must be patient.**

This is not a quick results program, and attempts to progress faster than you body can handle will probably result in an injury.

If you take your time and progress only when you are ready, you will develop a very solid foundation of gymnastic strength that will serve you well in the weight room and in life.
Points to Remember

• There is no set time for how long a phase should or will take. Move to the next phase only after all of the movements in the current one have been mastered.

• Progress is measured in time for static positions, and reps in dynamic ones.

• A movement is mastered when a minimum of 10 seconds is achieved for a static position, and a minimum of 10 reps is achieved for a dynamic one.

• You may find that you are able to perform 10 reps of some of the accessory movements on the first try. Again, do not move on to the next phase until all movements have been mastered.

• 4 sets per exercise

• Rest between sets until you are fully recovered. (The goal is to perform as well or better on the next set)

• Use this program as an addition to your current program at the beginning of a workout or as a replacement for the gymnastics component of the original Grow Stronger Method.

As Elliott says, GROW STRONGER!