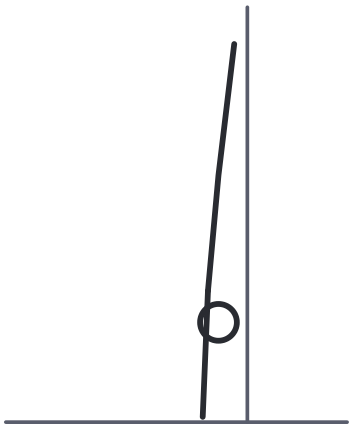
FREE PLAN · ENGLISH · 4 WEEKS

Chest-to-Wall Handstand: My 4-Week Plan

From your first wall walk to a straight 60-second wall hold, and then your first freestanding seconds.

> I come from gymnastics, where the handstand is part of the foundation. Today I train gymnastics and road cycling side by side, not in separate seasons. My freestanding handstand is 1:08, filmed with the clock running.
>
> This is the plan I would give you if you came to me with no handstand at all: three short sessions a week, at a wall, next to whatever else you train.



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1 · BEFORE YOU START

Who this plan is for

You train already, in a gym, with calisthenics, on the bike or anywhere else, and you want a handstand that you can actually hold. You can kick up against a wall now and then, or you have never been upside down since school. Either way, you want a clear path instead of random attempts at the end of a workout.

The goal after 4 weeks: a straight chest-to-wall handstand for 60 seconds, toe and heel pulls off the wall, a kick-up you control, a safe way out in both directions, and your first freestanding seconds.

What you need: a solid, clear wall with about 2 m of free floor in front of it, a non-slip floor (no rug under your hands), a timer, and your phone to take a side photo of your line once a week. A thin mat beside the wall helps for bail practice.

Readiness tests

Do these once before week 1. Pass all six and start the plan. If you miss one, do the prep routine and the matching fix three times a week for two weeks, then test again.

TEST	HOW	PASS	IF YOU MISS IT
Straight-arm plank	Push-up top position, hands under shoulders, body straight.	45 s, no sagging hips	3 × 20–30 s planks
Wrist lean	Kneel, palms flat, fingers forward. Slowly shift your shoulders in front of your wrists.	30 s, no pain, heels of the hands stay down	Prep routine daily
Overhead reach	Stand with your back, head and hips against a wall. Raise straight arms overhead.	Thumbs touch the wall without your lower back leaving it	Wall slides and puppy pose daily
Pike hold	Hands on the floor, hips high, legs straight or slightly bent, head between the arms.	30 s, arms straight, push the floor away	3 × 20 s pike holds
Hollow hold	On your back, lower back pressed down, arms and legs lifted (see drill 1).	20 s, lower back stays down	Tuck hollow, 3 × 20 s
Push-ups	Full range, chest close to the floor.	8 in a row	Incline push-ups, 3 × 8

How it fits next to your other training

Three sessions a week, 30 to 40 minutes each, with at least one day between them. Handstand work needs fresh shoulders and wrists, so I put it first: before upper-body strength, or on a day with an easy ride or run. Avoid the day after a heavy pressing session, and skip the drills (keep only the prep routine) on the day before a race, a hard interval session or a max-strength day. If you already lift three times a week, start those sessions with this plan and shorten your pressing warm-up.

2 · WRIST AND SHOULDER PREP

8 minutes, every session, no exceptions

Your wrists carry your whole body in a handstand, at an angle they rarely see in daily life. Your shoulders need to open fully overhead and push upward. This routine prepares both. Do it before every session in this plan, and on rest days if your wrists feel stiff.

EXERCISE	DOSE	CUE
Wrist circles	10 each way	Fingers interlaced, slow and big circles.
Fingers-forward rocks	10 slow	On hands and knees, palms flat. Rock your shoulders in front of your wrists and back. Keep the heels of your hands down.
Fingers-back rocks	10 slow	Turn your hands so the fingers point at your knees. Sit back gently until you feel the forearms stretch.
Back-of-hand stretch	2 × 10 s	Backs of the hands on the floor, fingers toward the knees. Lean back only a little.
Palm lifts	10	Fingers forward, lift the heels of your hands so only the fingers and knuckles carry you. Lower slowly.
Plank shoulder shrugs	10	In a straight-arm plank, let your chest sink between your shoulder blades, then push the floor away and round your upper back. Arms stay straight.
Wall slides	10	Back against the wall, arms in a W, slide up to a straight overhead Y. Lower back stays on the wall.
Puppy pose	30–45 s	Kneel, walk your hands forward, chest toward the floor, arms straight. Breathe into the stretch under your armpits.
Pike shrugs	10	In the pike hold from the readiness test, shrug your shoulders up toward your ears by pushing the floor away, then relax. This is the handstand shoulder.

Steering with your hands

A freestanding handstand is balanced through your hands, not your hips. Learn this now; every wall drill trains it.

Falling over (feet go too far, toward your back): press your fingertips into the floor, like gripping it. The pressure pushes your body back over your hands.

Falling back (feet drop toward where you came from): push through the heels of your hands and push your shoulders a little further over your hands.

Spread your fingers wide, middle fingers pointing forward or slightly out, and keep the whole hand on the floor.

Six drills, each with one job

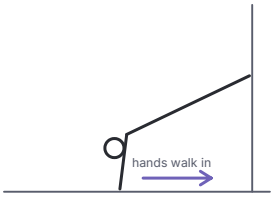
1. Hollow body hold



The body shape of a good handstand, practised lying down.

- Lie on your back, press your lower back into the floor. You should not be able to slide a hand under it.
- Lift your shoulders and legs a little off the floor, arms straight by your ears, legs together, toes pointed.
- Squeeze your glutes and thighs. Breathe short and keep the lower back down.
- Too hard? Bend your knees (tuck hollow) or bring your arms to your sides. Make it harder later by lowering the legs.

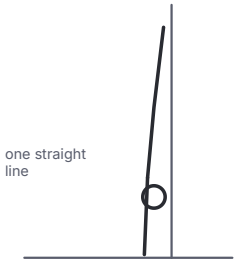
2. Wall walk



Gets you upside down with no kick and no fear, and builds the strength to stay there.

- Start in a push-up position with your feet against the wall.
- Walk your feet up the wall while your hands walk back toward it, small steps.
- Stop as high as you are comfortable. Arms straight, push the floor away, head between the arms.
- Walk back down the same way, slowly. Never drop down from the top.

3. Chest-to-wall hold



The main drill. It trains the straight line your freestanding handstand will use.

- Walk up as in drill 2 until your hands are about one hand-length from the wall, belly facing the wall.
- Wrists, shoulders, hips and ankles in one straight line. Only your toes touch the wall.
- Push tall: shoulders up to your ears, arms covering your ears.
- Ribs in, glutes and legs squeezed, toes pointed. Look at the floor between your hands.
- End each hold while the shape is still good. A long hold with a banana back trains the wrong line.

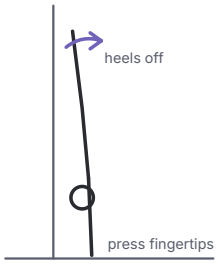
4. Shoulder taps (chest to wall)

Teaches you to shift weight between your hands without losing the line, and strengthens the shoulders for longer holds.

- From a good chest-to-wall hold, shift your weight slightly onto one hand.
- Lift the other hand and tap the opposite shoulder, then place it back exactly where it was.
- Your hips should not swing and your feet should not slide. If they do, take a wider hand position or move your hands a little further from the wall.
- Count one tap per hand as one rep.

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5. Toe pulls and heel pulls



Your first balancing. The wall stays behind you as a safety net while your hands do the steering.

Toe pulls (chest to wall): in a straight chest-to-wall hold, push through the heels of your hands and stretch tall until your toes float a few centimetres off the wall. Hold, then let them touch again. This is the falling-back correction.

Heel pulls (back to wall): kick up with your back to the wall (drill 6) so your heels rest on it, hands about one hand-length away. Press your fingertips into the floor until your heels leave the wall. Hold as long as you can, then touch back. This is the falling-over correction, the one you will use most.

- Body stays one rigid piece. Steer with the hands, not by bending at the hips.
- Start with 1–3 seconds off the wall. Seconds add up fast once the fingers learn the job.

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6. Kick-up and bail practice

Freestanding work only starts when you can get up with control and get down safely in either direction.

Bail (cartwheel exit), learn it first: from a crouch, place your hands and hop your feet up a little. Lift one hand, turn your hips toward that side and step down with your feet beside your hands, like a lazy cartwheel. Practise to both sides until it is automatic, then do it from higher hops, then from a deliberate overkick next to the wall. In weeks 3 and 4, every fall over the top ends this way.

Kick-up:

- Stand in a lunge, arms straight overhead. Choose your strong leg in front; always kick with the same setup.
- Reach forward and down as one long lever. Hands land flat, shoulder-width, about one step in front of your front foot.
- Swing the straight back leg up while the front leg pushes off. Both legs straight.
- Meet the legs at the top. Kick with the minimum force that gets you there; aim to arrive slowly, not to hit the wall.
- Practise against the wall (back to wall) first, so the heels touch softly. Then kick in open space, beside the wall, ready to bail.

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4 · THE PLAN

The 4 weeks, session by session

Three sessions a week (for example Monday, Wednesday, Friday). Every session starts with the 8-minute prep. Do the drills in the listed order. "3 × 20 s" means 3 sets of 20 seconds. Stop a set early rather than lose the shape.

Week 1 · Learn the line

~30 min

DRILL	SETS × REPS OR HOLD	REST	NOTES
Hollow body hold	3 × 20 s	45 s	Tuck version if the back lifts
Wall walk	3 reps, hold 10 s at the top	90 s	Stop as high as feels safe
Chest-to-wall hold	4 × 20 s	90 s	Hands 2 hand-lengths out is fine
Bail from small hops	2 × 5 per side	as needed	Feet only a little off the floor

Week 2 · Get closer, get stronger

~35 min

DRILL	SETS × REPS OR HOLD	REST	NOTES
Hollow body hold	3 × 30 s	45 s	
Wall walk	2 reps, as close as you can	90 s	Nose close to the wall at the top
Chest-to-wall hold	4 × 30 s	90 s	Hands 1 hand-length from the wall
Shoulder taps	3 × 6 (3 per hand)	90 s	Hips still
Kick-up, back to wall	2 × 5	60 s	Heels touch softly
Bail from higher hops	2 × 5 per side	as needed	

Week 3 · First balance

~40 min

DRILL	SETS × REPS OR HOLD	REST	NOTES
Hollow body hold	3 × 40 s	45 s	Lower the legs a little
Chest-to-wall hold	3 × 45 s	90 s	
Shoulder taps	3 × 10 (5 per hand)	90 s	
Toe pulls	5 × 3–5 s off the wall	60 s	In a wall hold or as separate sets
Kick-up, back to wall	2 × 5	60 s	Same lunge every time
Heel pulls	5 × 1–3 s off the wall	60 s	Fingertips do the work
Bail from an overkick	4 per side	as needed	Next to the wall, on purpose

Week 4 · Away from the wall

~40 min

DRILL	SETS × REPS OR HOLD	REST	NOTES
Hollow body hold	3 × 45 s	45 s	
Chest-to-wall hold	2 × 60 s	2 min	Photo from the side in session 1
Toe pulls	4 × 5 s	60 s	
Heel pulls	6 × max, up to 10 s	60 s	
Freestanding kick-ups	10–15 attempts	30–60 s	In open space; bail when it goes over

Session 3 of week 4 is the final test (next page) instead of the normal session. Wrists sore the next morning? Repeat the current week instead of moving on.

5 · WEEKLY TESTS AND YOUR LOG

Move on when you pass, not when the week ends

Test at the start of the last session of each week, after the prep. Pass everything and go to the next week. Miss one item, and repeat the week; that is normal and still progress.

END OF	PASS CRITERIA
Week 1	3 wall walks to within 2 hand-lengths of the wall, controlled down. Chest-to-wall hold 30 s. Hollow hold 30 s. Bail to both sides from small hops without thinking about the side.
Week 2	Chest-to-wall hold 45 s with hands 1 hand-length from the wall. 10 shoulder taps (5 per hand) with no foot sliding. 5 of 5 back-to-wall kick-ups arrive softly. Hollow hold 40 s.
Week 3	Chest-to-wall hold 60 s. Toe pulls: 3 × 3 s off the wall. Heel pulls: 3 × 2 s off the wall. 3 deliberate overkicks per side, each ending in a clean bail.
Week 4 (final)	Chest-to-wall 60 s in a straight line (check your side photo: wrists, shoulders, hips and ankles stacked). Heel pull 5 s. **Freestanding: 3 kick-ups held for 2 seconds or more**, counted out loud or on a timer.

Your log

WEEK	C2W HOLD (BEST)	TOE / HEEL PULL	FREESTANDING (BEST)	PASSED?
Start				☐
1				☐
2				☐
3				☐
4				☐

The weekly side photo. Once a week, have someone take a photo from the side in your chest-to-wall hold, or prop up your phone. Draw a line from your wrist to your ankle. Everything that is off that line (hips sticking out, an arched lower back, the head poking out) is your focus for the next week.

6 · COMMON MISTAKES

The mistakes that cost the most time, and the fix

MISTAKE	WHY IT MATTERS	FIX
Banana back (arched lower back, ribs out)	Loads the lower back and makes balance much harder away from the wall.	Ribs in, glutes squeezed, more hollow holds. Hands closer to the wall.
Sunken shoulders	You hang on your joints instead of pushing; holds feel heavy and short.	Push tall, shoulders to the ears. Pike shrugs in every prep.
Bent elbows	Turns a balance into a strength fight.	Lock the elbows before you go up; shorter holds until it is automatic.
Hands too far from the wall	Creates the banana by force.	One hand-length; walk in until only the toes touch.
Head poking out (looking far forward)	Pulls the shoulders closed and arches the back.	Look at the floor between your hands, ears between the arms.
Narrow, loose fingers	No steering and more wrist strain.	Fingers spread wide, the whole palm flat, grip the floor.
Kicking too hard	You slam the wall or go over, and learn nothing about arriving.	Use the smallest kick that gets you up; arrive slowly.
Bent or split legs on the kick	Shifts weight late and makes every arrival different.	Straight swing leg, same lunge every rep.
Holding your breath	Holds end early and the body stiffens in the wrong places.	Short, calm breaths into the belly while staying tight.
Skipping bail practice	Fear of falling stops you from ever leaving the wall.	Bail drills every session until week 4, both sides.
Training to failure, tired	Sloppy reps teach sloppy lines, and wrists get sore.	Stop each set while the shape is clean; train before other work, not after.
Rushing the weeks	Wrists and shoulders adapt slower than motivation.	Move on only when you pass the weekly test.

7 · SAFETY NOTES AND DISCLAIMER

Train upside down safely

- **Space:** a solid wall without shelves, pictures or radiators, at least 2 m of clear floor in front of it, and nothing sharp at the sides where you bail.
- **Surface:** hands on a non-slip floor. No rugs, yoga blocks or soft mats under the hands; they wobble. A thin mat beside your bail area is useful.
- **Pain:** stiffness and muscle fatigue are normal. Sharp or pinching pain in the wrists, elbows or shoulders is a stop signal for that session. Pain that lasts into the next day means repeat the week at lower volume; if it continues, see a professional.
- **Head pressure:** come down if you get dizzy, see spots or feel strong pressure in the head. Stand up slowly after each hold.
- **Coming down:** walk down from wall walks and chest-to-wall holds. In open space, bail with the cartwheel exit and never try to save a fall over by arching into a bridge unless you have trained that.
- **Fresh, not wrecked:** do this plan before other training or on easy days, never after a session that left your shoulders shaking.
- **Talk to a doctor first** if you have high blood pressure, glaucoma or other eye pressure issues, a heart condition, are pregnant, or have a recent or ongoing injury to the head, neck, back, shoulders, elbows or wrists.

Disclaimer. This plan is general training information, not medical advice, diagnosis or a personalised training programme. It cannot take your health, history or injuries into account. Check with a doctor before starting if you are unsure whether inverted exercises are right for you. You train at your own risk and are responsible for a safe environment. Stop any exercise that causes pain. Progress times are goals, not promises; people adapt at different speeds.

What comes after the wall

Four weeks gets you your first freestanding seconds. Turning seconds into a calm 30 or 60 seconds is mostly hours of balance practice with the right corrections at the right time: hand pressure, line, kick-up consistency, and strength around the shoulders. That is where outside eyes help most, because from inside a handstand you cannot see your own line.

NEXT STEP

From the wall to the middle of the room, with me

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