

# Calisthenics — Workbook

This workbook accompanies the Calisthenics course and gives you the exercises, worksheets, and tracking tools to move from passive learning into active practice. Complete each section in order as you work through the corresponding course module. Bring honest self-assessment — the numbers you record here will drive your program design.

## Movement Patterns and the Regression Ladder

Assess your baseline on all five movement patterns and identify the mobility restrictions that currently cap your progress.

### Exercise: Five-Pattern Baseline Self-Test

Perform this test at least 48 hours after your last workout. Work through each pattern in order. Record your result honestly — this is your starting point, not a judgement.

• **Push:** Attempt full push-ups. How many clean reps before form breaks? If fewer than 5, drop to incline. Record variation and rep count.

• **Pull:** Hang from a bar or doorframe. How many seconds can you hold a dead hang? Can you complete 1 negative chin-up (jump to bar, lower in 5 s)?

• **Squat:** Perform 10 bodyweight squats to parallel. Note any of: heels rise, knees cave inward, torso pitches forward more than 45 degrees, depth is above parallel.

• **Core:** Hold a hollow body position (lower back flat, both legs at 45 degrees, arms overhead). Record seconds before lower back lifts from the floor.

### Worksheet: Baseline Assessment Record

Fill in your results from the five-pattern self-test and the three mobility assessments (knee-to-wall, Thomas test, thoracic extension). Use this as your Week 0 benchmark.

Push — variation used (wall / incline / knee / full):

Push — clean reps achieved:

Pull — dead hang time (seconds):

Pull — negative chin-ups completed:

Squat — faults observed (heel rise / knee cave / forward lean / depth limited / none):

Hinge — single-leg RDL: can maintain balance and hip-hinge form? (yes / no / partial):

Core — hollow body hold time (seconds):

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Ankle dorsiflexion — knee-to-wall distance (cm, each side):

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Hip flexor — Thomas test result (thigh rises / knee bends / clear, each side):

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Thoracic extension — stiffness noted at foam roller? (yes / no / segment):

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My three priority restrictions to address first:

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### Checklist: Pre-Training Mobility Prep Checklist

- Complete banded or towel ankle rocks: 2 x 15 each side before every session
- Complete half-kneeling hip flexor stretch: 60 s each side before lower-body sessions
- Complete thoracic foam-roller extension: 10 slow reps over 3 segments before upper-body sessions
- Complete scapular shrugs in dead hang: 10 reps before any pull work
- Re-test the knee-to-wall distance every 4 weeks and record the number

## Push and Pull Tracks

Log your push and pull training sessions, identify form faults as they arise, and track progression steps on both tracks.

### Exercise: Push-Up Technique Drill — Slow Eccentric Practice

Choose the push variation at the top of your current ability (where you can do at least 5 but not yet 3 x 10). Perform 3 x 5 at a 4-1-1 tempo (4 s down, 1 s pause at bottom, 1 s up). Focus on one cue per set.

- Set 1 cue — Elbow angle: Are your elbows at 30–45 degrees from your torso, or flaring wider? Describe what you feel and adjust.
- Set 2 cue — Chest contact: Does your chest actually reach the floor or mat? If not, how far short are you and why (shoulder, chest, elbow angle)?
- Set 3 cue — Scapular protraction: At the top of the rep, do you push an extra centimetre through the floor and feel your shoulder blades spread apart? Yes / No — what changed?

### Worksheet: Push and Pull Session Log (4-Week Block)

Record each push and pull session for your first 4-week training block. Enter the variation, sets, reps, and a brief note on quality or any pain.

Week 1 — Day A (Push session): Push variation | Sets x Reps | Notes

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Week 1 — Day B (Pull session): Pull variation | Dead hang time | Negatives completed | Notes

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Week 2 — Day A (Push session): Push variation | Sets x Reps | Notes

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Week 2 — Day B (Pull session): Pull variation | Dead hang time | Negatives completed | Notes

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Week 3 — Day A (Push session): Push variation | Sets x Reps | Notes

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Week 3 — Day B (Pull session): Pull variation | Dead hang time | Negatives completed | Notes

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Week 4 — Day A (Push session): Push variation | Sets x Reps | Notes

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Week 4 — Day B (Pull session): Pull variation | Dead hang time | Negatives completed | Notes

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End of 4 weeks — Push advancement: same variation or moved up? What changed?

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End of 4 weeks — Pull advancement: same variation or moved up? What changed?

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### Checklist: Pull-Up Foundation Milestones

- Can hold a dead hang for 45 unbroken seconds with bare hands
- Can complete 3 x 8 scapular pull-ups with visible 2–3 cm rise and controlled return
- Can complete 3 x 5 negative chin-ups each with a minimum 5-second lowering phase
- Can complete 5 assisted pull-ups using a light resistance band under one foot
- Can complete 1 full overhand pull-up from dead hang to chin over bar without kipping

### Exercise: Pike Push-Up Range-of-Motion Check

Set up a wide-stance pike position. Photograph or film yourself from the side, or have a partner observe. Work through the four check points below and note honestly what you find.

- Hip angle: Can you get your hips above your shoulders? If not, what limits you — hamstring tightness, thoracic stiffness, or balance?
- Head position: Is the crown of your head aimed at the floor, or are you leading with your forehead? Adjust and note the difference in shoulder load.
- Elbow path at the bottom: Do your elbows track at 45 degrees or do they flare wide? What change do you feel when you consciously pull them in?

## Squat, Hinge, and Core Tracks

Assess your lower-body movement quality, apply the hinge pattern from scratch, and build the core stability baseline needed to support all calisthenics skills.

### Exercise: Hip Hinge Pattern Drill With Dowel or Wall

Use a broomstick, towel rod, or any straight object approximately 1.2 m long. Stand 30 cm from a wall. Place the stick along your spine (three contact points: back of head, between shoulder blades, sacrum). Push your hips backward to touch the wall while maintaining all three contact points. Perform 10 reps. This is your baseline hinge pattern check.

- Which contact point broke first — head, mid-back, or sacrum? What does this tell you about where you are rounding or overextending?
- Could you touch the wall while keeping your knees slightly bent (soft, not squatting)? If not, what stopped you — hamstring tightness, balance, or confusion about the movement?
- After 10 reps, did the pattern improve or stay the same? What single cue helped most?

### Worksheet: Lower Body and Core Session Log (4-Week Block)

Track your squat, hinge, and core training for your first 4 weeks. Record the variation, sets, reps or hold time, and a brief quality note.

Week 1 — Day C (Squat + Core): Squat variation | Sets x Reps | Core exercise | Hold time | Notes

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Week 1 — Day B (Hinge): Hinge variation | Sets x Reps | Nordic negatives | Notes

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Week 2 — Day C: Squat variation | Sets x Reps | Core exercise | Hold time | Notes

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Week 2 — Day B: Hinge variation | Sets x Reps | Nordic negatives | Notes

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Week 3 — Day C: Squat variation | Sets x Reps | Core exercise | Hold time | Notes

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Week 3 — Day B: Hinge variation | Sets x Reps | Nordic negatives | Notes

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Week 4 — Day C: Squat variation | Sets x Reps | Core exercise | Hold time | Notes

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Week 4 — Day B: Hinge variation | Sets x Reps | Nordic negatives | Notes

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Squat faults resolved at end of block (list any that persist):

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Hollow body hold duration at end of Week 4:

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### Checklist: Lower Body and Core Advancement Checklist

- Bodyweight squat to parallel with flat heels and neutral spine for 3 x 15 — clean
- Bulgarian split squat 3 x 8 each leg with a controlled 2-second descent
- Single-leg Romanian deadlift: maintain balance and hip-hinge form for 3 x 8 each side
- Nordic curl negative performed with minimum 5 s lowering phase for 3 x 3
- Dead bug: 3 x 8 each side with lower back pressed flat throughout the entire rep
- Full hollow body hold: 30 s with legs at 45 degrees and arms overhead — no lumbar lift
- Side plank: 30 s each side with hips stacked and in full extension

## Programming, Recovery, and Progress Tracking

Build your personal 3-day program, set up your training log, and map your path to beginner-to-intermediate graduation standards.

### Exercise: Design Your Personal 3-Day Program

Using your baseline assessment results from Section 1, fill in the exercise selection for your personalised 3-day program. Choose the variation on each skill track where you can currently do at least 5 but not yet 3 x 10 reps (or 30 s for holds).

• Day A (Push + Core): Which push variation is your entry point? Which vertical push variation (pike family)? Which core exercises — hollow body hold progression or dead bug? Write out your complete Day A: exercise, sets, reps/time, rest.

• Day B (Pull + Hinge): Which pull variation (dead hang / scapular pull-up / negative)? Which hinge variation (glute bridge / single-leg RDL / Nordic negative)? Write out your complete Day B.

• Day C (Squat + Core): Which squat variation? Which secondary lower-body exercise (split squat or pause squat)? Which anti-rotation or lateral core exercise? Write out your complete Day C.

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- Weekly schedule: which days will you train A, B, and C? Do any two training days fall back-to-back? If yes, revise the schedule now.

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## Worksheet: 12-Week Progress Tracker

Record your key metrics at the end of each 4-week block. Weeks 4, 8, and 12 are assessment weeks — reduce volume by 50% and re-test baseline metrics.

Week 4 Assessment — Push: variation | clean reps set 1 | clean reps set 3

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Week 4 Assessment — Pull: dead hang time | negatives completed

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Week 4 Assessment — Squat: variation | reps set 1 | any faults persisting

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Week 4 Assessment — Core: hollow body hold time (seconds)

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Week 4 Assessment — Hinge: Nordic negative lowering time achieved

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Week 8 Assessment — Push: variation | clean reps set 1 | clean reps set 3

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Week 8 Assessment — Pull: dead hang time | negatives completed | first full pull-up? (yes / no)

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Week 8 Assessment — Squat: variation | reps | faults resolved

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Week 8 Assessment — Core: hollow body hold time (seconds)

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Week 8 Assessment — Hinge: Nordic negative lowering time achieved

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Week 12 Assessment — Push: variation | clean reps — graduation standard met? (3 x 10 full push-up)

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Week 12 Assessment — Pull: full pull-ups — graduation standard met? (3 x 5)

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Week 12 Assessment — Squat: Bulgarian split squat 3 x 10 each leg — met? (yes / no)

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Week 12 Assessment — Core: 30 s hollow body hold — met? (yes / no)

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Week 12 Assessment — Hinge: 3 x 5 Nordic negatives at 5+ s — met? (yes / no)

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Overall: which graduation standard is furthest from completion and what is the plan?

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## Checklist: Intermediate Graduation Standards Checklist

- 3 x 10 full push-ups — chest to floor, full lockout, controlled tempo
- 3 x 5 full overhand pull-ups from dead hang — no kipping
- 3 x 10 Bulgarian split squats each leg — controlled descent
- 3 x 5 Nordic curl negatives — minimum 5 s lowering phase
- 30 s full hollow body hold — both legs extended, arms overhead, lower back flat
- Completed at least 2 deload weeks across the 12-week program
- Training log completed for all 12 weeks with at least one metric improving every 2 weeks
- Can name the next progression step in all five skill tracks beyond current level

## Your Action Plan

1. Complete the five-pattern baseline self-test (Section 1 exercise) before your first training session and record all results in the baseline worksheet
2. Complete all three mobility assessments (knee-to-wall, Thomas test, thoracic extension) and add the two most restricted areas to your daily prep routine
3. Set your training days in your calendar for the next 4 weeks — confirm no two days fall back-to-back
4. Fill in your personalised Day A, B, and C program in the Section 4 exercise using your baseline assessment entry points
5. Perform the first full training week at the entry-point variations with conservative volume (2 x 8 rather than 3 x 10) to assess response before loading fully
6. Open the Training Log template (Excel) and log every session: date, day type, exercise, sets x reps, RPE, and a one-line quality note
7. At the end of Week 4, re-test all five patterns during an assessment week with 50% normal volume, record results in the 12-week tracker
8. Apply a deload (50% volume, same exercises) in Week 4 and again in Week 8 regardless of how good you feel
9. At Week 8, determine if any graduation standard is already met — if so, begin introducing the next variation in that track
10. At Week 12, complete the full five-standard graduation assessment and mark the ones achieved — carry forward unmet standards into your intermediate program











