

# MY 4-WEEK PROGRAM FOR ACHIEVING HANDSTAND HAPPINESS

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- **Week 1: Balance, Handstand, and Core**
- **Week 2: Walking and Core**
- **Week 3: HSPU, Pressing, and Core**
- **Week 4: Putting it all Together**

For associated videos, go to: [My 4-Week Program for Handstand Happiness YouTube](#)

**Quick test:** what do a successfully built house of cards and a handstand have in common? **More than you think!**

To succeed in both, a stable base is essential. **Each layer then has to successfully stack directly upon the other.** The stronger the base, the more stacked you are, and the more stable the handstand and, for that matter, the house of cards.



## True Confession: I Am a Handstand Junkie

Achieving a stable base for the handstand requires progressive steps in order to learn what works and what will allow a handstand to feel as natural to you as standing on your feet. Over the next four weeks I will be working with you on these steps. **If you follow my workouts, then at the end of month you will have the ability to achieve better handstands, freestanding handstand push ups, press hand stands, and handstand walking.**

Why have I chosen handstands for my session? Well, I am a handstand junkie. **From the time I began my gymnastic training at the age of six, what I loved most was to view the world topsy-turvy.** Growing up, I was constantly told by my parents to stop doing handstands in the kitchen or against the furniture in the family room. I love handstands. This all began at the age of six and continued to when I competed in gymnastics at a Division I university.

Then, I fell in love with the CrossFit methodology in 2010 and most recently I finished eighth in the CrossFit Games in the Masters (40–44) division. This past year, I have also been lucky enough to be part of the CrossFit Gymnastics certification staff with Jeff Tucker, spreading our *gymnasty* love all over the world.

So, enough about me – let’s get back to handstands.

## Learn the Progressions to Learn the Skills

Just as in a house of cards, when executing a handstand, you cannot haphazardly place your body upside down or get inverted. **There are steps, progressions, and specific skills and drills designed to build your confidence, strength, balance, and coordination.** Watch a gymnast kick to a handstand. It’s done with purpose. A gymnast’s legs aren’t thrown wildly in the air. Instead, he or she demonstrates body awareness, control, and aptitude.



Throughout the next four weeks, I will be programming **essential movements** to help with your balance, shoulder and core strength, and coordination – all essential components of handstands, freestanding handstand push ups, press handstands, and handstand walking. You will work mostly strict movement, focusing on fundamental core stability. Scaling is important. If you go into a gymnastics club, you see everyone conditioning or learning skills but there are **various levels and scaling to learn these skills**. This will be essential to your success as well. Learning to be comfortable inverted, especially as an adult, takes time and effort.

I get it. It's hard to love something that isn't easy. **But isn't it easy to love something that you've worked hard to accomplish?** I think, yes!

*So, let's get to work and build some beautiful handstands worthy of selfies and Facebook posts!*

**Focus on these four things when doing handstand work:**

1. Form matters! Pointed toes, tight core, and active shoulders are all important.
2. Keep the majority of your weight mid palm but use your fingers to "grip" the floor to find balance.
3. Gaze your eyes in-between your thumbs (without moving your head too much). This will help you find your balance.
4. Spread your fingers for more surface area.

**\*\*\* Always ask for a spot when needed or scale the movement.**

## **Week One – Balance, Handstand, and Core**

### **Day One**

*Rest as needed between sets.*

**Rx'd work:**

- 10 x 10 second handstand hold (belly to wall)
- 20 tuck up
- 30 deficit hand release push up (set plates for your hands )
- 40 superman pulses

### Scaled work:

- 10 x 10 second handstand holds off box
- 20 tuck up
- 30 hand release push up
- 40 superman pulses



*Superman Position*

## Day Two

*Rest as needed between sets.*

### Rx'd work:

- 5x20sec frog tand holds – try straight arm (working balance on hands)
- accumulate 2 minute handstand hold – belly to wall
- 2x30 shifts from right to left – back to wall\*\*
- 4min – tabata hollow rocks (in straight/hollow body position)

### Scaled work:

- 5x20sec frogstand holds – bent arm (working balance on hands)
- accumulate 2min of handstand hold with one leg on box and one leg in air straight up
- 2x30 shifts from right to left side – legs on box\*\*
- 4min – tabata hollow rocks (in tuck position)

\*\*work slow, making sure you shift weight over the dominant shoulder



*Hollow Position*

## Day Three

### Rx'd work:

5 rounds for quality

- accumulate 1 min of handstand – wall or freestanding
- 10 strict barbell presses @65% bw
- 10 hollow to superman rocks

### Scaled work:

5 rounds for quality

- accumulate 1 min in handstand (off box/one leg up)
- 10 strict barbell presses 50% bw
- 10 hollow to superman rocks







## Week Two – Walking and Core

### Day One

*Rest as needed between sets.*

#### Rx'd work:

- 3x10 wall walks – chest and belly to wall
- 4x20ft walking along wall (moving side to side)
- 5x10 handstand pops with the band

#### Scaled work:

- 3x10 wall walks (maintain hollow position & go 45–65 degrees)
- 4x2 around the worlds off box
- 5x10 handstand band pops (try to stay hollow and reach 45-degree angle)

### Day Two

*Rest as needed between sets.*

#### Rx'd work:

5 rounds – 30 seconds at each station

- Plate walks – back to wall
- GHD situps
- Handstand shoulder taps

#### Scaled work:

5 rounds – 30 seconds at each station

- Plate walks off box
- Abmat situp
- Box shoulder taps

## Day Three

### Rx'd work:

4 rounds for quality

- 5 to 50ft of handstand walk
- 10 strict toes to bar
- 10 plate walks – wall or freestanding

### Scaled work:

4 rounds for quality

- 10 shoulder touches (off box or wall)
- 10 V-ups
- 10 plate walk against wall

## Week Three – HSPU, Pressing, and Core

### Day One

#### Rx'd work:

8 minute AMRAP of

- 4 strict HSPU \*rx+ = do them freestanding!
- 6 strict knees to elbows (get knees to elbows, not armpit)
- 80ft handstand walk

#### Scaled work:

8 minute AMRAP of

- 4 strict HSPU (off box)
- 6 strict knees to elbows (can do laying on floor holding pole)
- 8 plate walks

## Day Two

*Rest as needed between sets.*

### Rx'd work:

- 5x5 deficit HSPU, 12" or more
- 3x10 L-hold to standing press (off parallettes)
- 5 max-effort floor slides in pushed out hollow position (use frisbee to slide)

### Scaled work:

- 5x5 deficit HSPU (off box)
- 3x10 L hold to standing press (off box)
- 5 max effort floor slides in pushed out hollow position (use frisbee to slide)

## Day Three

### Rx'd work and scaled work:

10 min emom

- 8-10 strict HSPU (small deficit for RX+)
- 8-10 strict toes to bar or scaled: hollow ball press

# Week Four – Putting it all Together

## Day One

*Strict Diane with a "rocky" twist*

21-15-9

Deadlift (225/155)

Hollow rocks (tuck position for scaled version)

Strict HSPU

## Day Two

*Rest as needed between sets.*

### **Rx'd work:**

3 rounds for quality

- 20 box shoulder shrugs off rings (keep arms straight)
- 15 HSPU
- 60-second handstand hold

### **Scaled work:**

3 rounds for quality

- 20 box shoulder shrugs off box (keep arms straight)
- 15 HSPU on box
- 60-second handstand hold

## Day Three

Skill: 3 x max-effort handstand hold (against wall or freestanding) rest as needed between sets

Then:

12 minute AMRAP of:

- 10 V-ups
- 12 shoulder touches
- 12 squat to 1/2 jump turn
- 12 inchworm with pushup