

Phase 1 – Seasonal Transition

Duration: 3 – 6 weeks

Overview: This phase is all about taking a mental and physical break for performance climbing and serious training. If you have any nagging injuries from the past season, this is your opportunity to rest and rehab so that you can return to training healthy and pain free.

Healthy/uninjured climbers should limit the total break from climbing to just two or three weeks so as not to lose too much climbing-specific fitness. For northern hemisphere climbers, the end-of-year holiday season (and onset of winter weather) is the perfect time to begin this phase. You can also use this seasonal transition to dabble in other sports and to engage in generalized strength training.

Training Intensity and Volume: Low to medium intensity and volume.

Frequency: 2 to 4 days per week with workout duration of 30 minute to 90 minutes.

Workout details: After a two-week break from climbing (longer, if rehabbing an injury), you can return to the climbing gym for twice-per-week recreational climbing. Keep the sessions fun, social, and relaxed—avoid being drawn into working maximum boulder problems or routes. This is a great time to engage in a generalized strength-training program or even try out a few CrossFit workouts. In addition to a focus on developing more strength in the pull muscles, you should do several exercises to strengthen your pushing muscles, rotator cuff, and posterior chain (yes, you can do some squats and/or Olympic lifts). The goal here is to build base strength that will help stabilize your joints, increase full-body power, and lower injury risk going forward.

Coach Hörst's Tip: Take enough time off from climbing to get healthy and renew motivation.

I love the coach's name!

Phase 2 – Local Endurance, Technique, and Movement

Duration: 4 – 6 weeks

Overview: This phase marks your return to a climbing-specific program. Unfortunately, this endurance phase is the most overlooked among climbers, and therefore it's commonly a rich area to trigger physiological adaptations that will make a big difference on the rock. The goal is to train your climbing muscles—the forearm flexors, biceps, lats, core, and such—at the right intensity level to improve the aerobic energy system rather than the anaerobic (lactic) system. While the term “aerobic energy system” might conjure up thoughts of long-distance running, the aerobic energy pathway is in fact the primary source of energy for any sustained climbing that lasts longer than two or three minutes. Explaining the science of local endurance is beyond the scope of this article, so you'll just have to trust me that training the aerobic energy pathway of your climbing muscles will empower you on steep, pumpy climbs. This base phase is also an excellent time to refine movement skills and improve climbing economy—the real secret to climbing your best. While it's difficult to train movement and economy while thrashing up a max boulder problem, this high-volume endurance phase is the perfect time to also focus on improving technique. Training Intensity and Volume: High-volume climbing at a relatively moderate intensity. Getting any more than a light pump is a sign your climbing has become too intense (anaerobic). On a perceived exertion scale of 1 to 10, your endurance climbing intensity should be between 4 and 7. Frequency: 3 to 5 days per week of medium-intensity climbing.

Workout details: Your goal is an aggregate climbing time of 20 to 60 minutes. You can achieve this a few different ways: Do two to four 10- to 15-minute traverses or find a partner and do six to twelve top rope climbs lasting approximately 3 to 5 minutes each. Select routes a few number grades below your limit, either smallish-hold vertical routes with good feet or gently overhanging routes with larger holds. Remember: NO projecting, NO max climbing, and NO deep pump—do any of these and you lose the desired training effect.

Coach Hörst's Tip: If you are concerned about losing strength and power during this phase, you can replace one of your endurance workouts with a bouldering/power workout (see below).

good (3)

this is key
hee - listen to body to
determine whether you are
training the correct energy system.

Phase 3 – Maximum Strength and Power

Duration: 3 weeks

Overview: If you enjoy indoor bouldering, then this phase is in your wheelhouse. The goal here is to increase maximum strength/power and your hard-move capability.

Training Intensity and Volume: Climbing volume is low, but intensity is high/maximal (i.e. perceived exertion of 9 or 10 out of 10). Out of a two-hour bouldering session you may only climb a total of 8 to 12 minutes.

Frequency: 2 or 3 sessions per week, with an optional low-intensity “recovery” workout (i.e. an easy endurance workout, per above).

Workout details: Begin with a gradual warm up via large-hold boulder problems that eventually lead you into near-maximal bouldering about 45 minutes into the session. Spend the next 45 to 60 minutes engaging in near-limit bouldering. Rest enough between attempts/sends so that you feel near 100% for each climb. As a guide, rest for 3 to 5 minutes between each successful send. Brief attempts, lasting only a few moves, require just 1 to 3 minutes rest in between. You may conclude these workouts with a few exercises that target climbing-specific strength and power. A few sets of campus laddering, weighted fingerboard hangs, and weighted pull-ups (add enough weight to limit repetitions to around 5) will serve as a perfect complement. Initially, perform two sets of each, and build up to four or five sets of each over the course of three weeks. Do no more than five sets—there will be little added benefit, while digging a deeper hole to recover from.

Coach Hörst's Tip: Make these workouts about quality bouldering and strength training—rest between sets more than you think you need to and end your session long before reaching complete exhaustion.

↑
good advice - rest is as important as doing sets as you want to ↑ strength/power, not muscular endurance.

Program taken from micros.com

Phase 4 – Anaerobic Endurance

Duration: 2 weeks

Overview: If you frequently climb routes to the point of a deep pump and forearm muscle failure, then you are familiar with the anaerobic energy pathway. Since massively pumped forearms often seem to be the cause of failure on steep roped climbs, many climbers make training the anaerobic system the primary focus of their training program. Interestingly, research has shown that muscle cells have a limited tolerance for this type of training—do too much of it and your climbing power-endurance will actually get worse! (Sound familiar?) These are the most physically and mentally grueling workouts, and you will get the best results by way of only a brief phase of anaerobic endurance training every couple months.

Training Intensity and Volume: Climbing intensity is moderately high with a perceived exertion of 7 to 9 (out of 10). Training volume is medium—a two-hour climbing session will involve about 20 to 30 minutes of actual climbing time with a work-to-rest ratio of between 1:3 and 1:5

Frequency: Two or three workouts evenly spaced throughout the week is ideal, although an optional “recovery” workout (i.e. an easy endurance workout, per above) is beneficial as long as the intensity is mild.

Workout details: Use an interval training strategy, with 90 seconds to 3 minutes of pump climbing followed by 5 to 10 minutes of rest. Each climbing interval should elicit a significant forearm pump, while each recovery interval should allow about 50 percent recovery. Execute between 5 and 10 of these intervals—doing any more may have a negative training effect.

Coach Hörst’s Tip: Bookend your interval session with some easy warm-up and cool-down climbing.

and recovery time needs to be increased.



where to - about here!



agility is your program!

key here - less is more!

Phase 5 – Rest & Active Recovery

Duration: 4 – 7 days

Overview: This phase is simply a multiday break from serious training. Ideally you’ll have a roadtrip to cast off on or a project route to complete. After three or four days of rest, you should be fully recovered and ready to climb your best! If you want to resume training, you can return to phase 2 and repeat the cycle.

Coach Hörst’s Tip: Do no climbing-specific training for at least four days. You can engage in “active recovery” by way of light aerobic activities, yoga, hiking and such.

good - rest from workouts as well here - take a week to recover

Taper when reading in a textbook.