

TENSION

A 4 week strength training program that only requires a resistance band.

TENSION

The title says it all, but you probably want a few more details.

Here's the scenario:

You're doing your normal workout thing at the gym.

All of a sudden, a global pandemic breaks out.

Everything closes, including your gym.

You do body weight workouts for the first few weeks, which is fine.

But you want more than fine - you want **AWESOME**.

So you rummage through your things, and find an old resistance band.

(Or maybe you bought one or two before they all went out of stock.)

Now what? How do I use this to its fullest potential?

What a great question!

Here's how:

You try this TENSION program for 4 full weeks.

Even if your gym opens up between now and then, you stick it out.

You're ready to see it through to the end.

You're also ready to get your nutrition on point.

You're officially ready.

Let's get down to business.

("...to defeat... the Huns...")

THE RULES

There are no rules here.

You can use these workouts however you'd like.

But!

Here are a few recommendations for getting the most out of these workouts:

First of all, have fun with them.

Secondly, pay attention to how each movement feels.

Adjust your form to see what helps you feel your working muscles best.

Thirdly, do these workouts as frequently as your schedule/recovery allows.

Don't force anything here, but make sure to challenge yourself!

Lastly, tailor your nutrition to match your goals and your training.

If your goal is fat loss, make sure to focus your attention on your nutrition.

(You can read more about this in the Family article later on.)

Enjoy the workouts, enjoy your results!

GENERAL WORKOUT GUIDELINES

Think of these guidelines as “best practices” tips as you go throughout any workout that you do in this program.

1. **BE SAFE** - Injury is the worst case scenario when it comes to making progress toward your fitness goals. Do not attempt to lift any weights with your ego.
2. **PUSH YOURSELF** - On the flip side, these workouts will only be effective if you truly apply your focus and effort. Try bumping up your weight by one increment. If you are being safe, the worst case scenario is that you simply won't be able to complete all of the prescribed reps. Do not add more reps if a set felt too easy. Add more weight, then add more time.
3. **PUSH YOUR LEGS** - Most people will be able to lift significantly more with their legs than with their arms, so don't be afraid to push some challenging weight! Your legs are strong and are made up of lots of muscle mass. Use it!
4. **CHOOSE YOUR OWN VARIATIONS** - I wrote out and demonstrated most of the exercises using bands because that's what most people have access to. However, as long as you stay within the guidelines of the movement pattern of each exercise, you can add weights or chains, swap out the bands for sandbags, gallons of milk or even change the tempo of the exercises! These are all fringe details, and will not have a significant impact on your progress one way or another.
5. **USE YOUR RESOURCES** - Each exercise title in this workout plan is a hyperlink to a demonstration video. Click on these if you need more concrete directions!
6. **HAVE FUN** - Remember that there is probably not a real rush for you. You may feel in a hurry to reach your goals, but take a little time to “smell the bands” and enjoy the journey!

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

"TENSION"			
Length	Goal	Workouts/Week	Split
4 Weeks	Total Body Strength	3	Upper, Lower/Core

It's no secret that many of us are itching to go back to the gym - to lift some heavy weights, to work up a sweat, and to get our muscles pumping.

If that's not an option for you right now, then you're not alone. You're in great company, but at the same time it's not worth mulling over for too long - if you don't have options, it's worth heading full force into the path that you have before you.

For many of us, that path means using minimal workout equipment for our workouts. If you're reading this here, there's a good chance that you either prepared ahead of time and snagged a set of resistance bands, or perhaps you found a random old band lying around your house. Either way, now is the time to put them into use, and not just as a "better than nothing" approach - you can build some serious strength and muscle mass using bands.

You just need to know how to use them and get the most out of them.

In this TENSION program, we'll work to create tension - go figure! - using your bands to give you a full body challenge! This program is a testament to your results being more dependent on your effort than on your equipment. Enjoy the burn!

Week 1

Directions: Perform given sets and reps/times for each exercise. Use as heavy of a load as you can handle with good form for each exercise. Complete all sets of each letter exercise (i.e. A, B, C, etc.) before moving on to the next letter exercise.

Workout 1 - Upper

					Sets		
	EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	REST	1	2	3
A1)	Overhead Extension	3	10	0 SEC			
A2)	Biceps Curl	3	10	60 SEC			
B1)	Push-Up	3	10	0 SEC			
B2)	Pull-Down -OR- Pull Apart	3	10	60 SEC			
C1)	Overhead Press	3	10	0 SEC			
C2)	Seated Row	3	10	60 SEC			

Workout 2 - Lower & Core

					Sets		
	EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	REST	1	2	3
A1)	Reverse Lunge	3	10	0 SEC			
A2)	Single-Leg Hip Thrust	3	10	60 SEC			
B1)	Side Plank Hip Drop	3	10	0 SEC			
B2)	Front Squat	3	10	60 SEC			
C1)	Romanian Deadlift	3	10	0 SEC			
C2)	Plank March	3	10	60 SEC			

Workout 3 - Upper

					Sets		
	EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	REST	1	2	3
A1)	Overhead Extension	3	10	0 SEC			
A2)	Biceps Curl	3	10	60 SEC			
B1)	Push-Up	3	10	0 SEC			
B2)	Pull-Down -OR- Pull Apart	3	10	60 SEC			
C1)	Overhead Press	3	10	0 SEC			
C2)	Seated Row	3	10	60 SEC			

Week 2

Directions: Perform given sets and reps/times for each exercise. Use as heavy of a load as you can handle with good form for each exercise. Complete all sets of each letter exercise (i.e. A, B, C, etc.) before moving on to the next letter exercise.

Workout 1 - Lower & Core

					Sets		
	EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	REST	1	2	3
A1)	Reverse Lunge	3	10	0 SEC			
A2)	Single-Leg Hip Thrust	3	10	60 SEC			
B1)	Side Plank Hip Drop	3	10	0 SEC			
B2)	Front Squat	3	10	60 SEC			
C1)	Romanian Deadlift	3	10	0 SEC			
C2)	Plank March	3	10	60 SEC			

Workout 2 - Upper

					Sets		
	EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	REST	1	2	3
A1)	Overhead Extension	3	10	0 SEC			
A2)	Biceps Curl	3	10	60 SEC			
B1)	Push-Up	3	10	0 SEC			
B2)	Pull-Down -OR- Pull Apart	3	10	60 SEC			
C1)	Overhead Press	3	10	0 SEC			
C2)	Seated Row	3	10	60 SEC			

Workout 3 - Lower & Core

					Sets		
	EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	REST	1	2	3
A1)	Reverse Lunge	3	10	0 SEC			
A2)	Single-Leg Hip Thrust	3	10	60 SEC			
B1)	Side Plank Hip Drop	3	10	0 SEC			
B2)	Front Squat	3	10	60 SEC			
C1)	Romanian Deadlift	3	10	0 SEC			
C2)	Plank March	3	10	60 SEC			

Week 3

Directions: Perform given sets and reps/times for each exercise. Use as heavy of a load as you can handle with good form for each exercise. Complete all sets of each letter exercise (i.e. A, B, C, etc.) before moving on to the next letter exercise.

Workout 1 - Upper

					Sets		
	EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	REST	1	2	3
A1)	Overhead Extension	3	10	0 SEC			
A2)	Biceps Curl	3	10	60 SEC			
B1)	Push-Up	3	10	0 SEC			
B2)	Pull-Down -OR- Pull Apart	3	10	60 SEC			
C1)	Overhead Press	3	10	0 SEC			
C2)	Seated Row	3	10	60 SEC			

Workout 2 - Lower & Core

					Sets		
	EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	REST	1	2	3
A1)	Reverse Lunge	3	10	0 SEC			
A2)	Single-Leg Hip Thrust	3	10	60 SEC			
B1)	Side Plank Hip Drop	3	10	0 SEC			
B2)	Front Squat	3	10	60 SEC			
C1)	Romanian Deadlift	3	10	0 SEC			
C2)	Plank March	3	10	60 SEC			

Workout 3 - Upper

					Sets		
	EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	REST	1	2	3
A1)	Overhead Extension	3	10	0 SEC			
A2)	Biceps Curl	3	10	60 SEC			
B1)	Push-Up	3	10	0 SEC			
B2)	Pull-Down -OR- Pull Apart	3	10	60 SEC			
C1)	Overhead Press	3	10	0 SEC			
C2)	Seated Row	3	10	60 SEC			

Week 4

Directions: Perform given sets and reps/times for each exercise. Use as heavy of a load as you can handle with good form for each exercise. Complete all sets of each letter exercise (i.e. A, B, C, etc.) before moving on to the next letter exercise.

Workout 1 - Lower & Core					Sets			
	EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	REST	1	2	3	4
A1)	Reverse Lunge	3	10	0 SEC				
A2)	Single-Leg Hip Thrust	3	10	60 SEC				
B1)	Side Plank Hip Drop	3	10	0 SEC				
B2)	Front Squat	3	10	60 SEC				
C1)	Romanian Deadlift	3	10	0 SEC				
C2)	Plank March	3	10	60 SEC				

Workout 2 - Upper					Sets			
	EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	REST	1	2	3	4
A1)	Overhead Extension	3	10	0 SEC				
A2)	Biceps Curl	3	10	60 SEC				
B1)	Push-Up	3	10	0 SEC				
B2)	Pull-Down -OR- Pull Apart	3	10	60 SEC				
C1)	Overhead Press	3	10	0 SEC				
C2)	Seated Row	3	10	60 SEC				

Workout 3 - Lower & Core					Sets			
	EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	REST	1	2	3	4
A1)	Reverse Lunge	3	10	0 SEC				
A2)	Single-Leg Hip Thrust	3	10	60 SEC				
B1)	Side Plank Hip Drop	3	10	0 SEC				
B2)	Front Squat	3	10	60 SEC				
C1)	Romanian Deadlift	3	10	0 SEC				
C2)	Plank March	3	10	60 SEC				

ADVANCED WORKOUT OPTIONS

If you are more experienced or looking for a more advanced challenge, try incorporating some of these techniques into the workouts from this program:

1. **SHORTENED ROM** - The heavy compound lifts at the beginning of each workout already use many different muscle groups all at once. Instead of moving through a full range of motion, make those muscles work even harder by stopping just shy of full extension on each rep. This will create a “pump” sensation caused by metabolic byproducts, which leads to a greater stress response.
2. **SUPPLEMENTAL WORK** - This program does include a few single-joint isolation exercises, but you are welcome to add a few more if your body can handle it! Tack on additional work for your biceps, calves, or lateral delts to these workouts, or try them on a rest day. Use the same rep targets as the rest of the exercises in the workouts.
3. **INCREASED TEMPO** - Speeding up your rep speed can be a great way to create explosive power. Specifically, adding an element of controlled speed to the concentric half of a movement is tough! Try this technique out on the heavy compound lifts. Use in combination with a shortened ROM for a great workout!
4. **DECREASED TEMPO** - On the flip side, slowing down your rep speed creates more time under tension and can make any given weight feel more challenging. This is convenient if you are using the maximum weight that you have access to but it still feels too easy. Slow down the eccentric half of a movement to force muscular control. This also works well for the heavy compound lifts.
5. **FOCUS** - Do not underestimate the power of the mind-muscle connection. This isn't magic of course, but focusing on the muscles that are working to create the movement of each exercise can take your workouts to a new level. Rather than whipping a too-heavy weight/band around without much thought, grab an appropriate weight/band and watch your muscles contract under tension. It's beautiful, too!