

Jonathan: Hey, it's Jonathan Bailor. Let's talk about assisted eccentric rows — a very exciting exercise — because our back muscles conventionally are some of the least used muscles ever when it comes to exercise — ever, ever, ever. And what's a shame about that is our back — I'm pretty sure you know what your back is but in case you're unfamiliar, your back is that back part of your body — anyway, your back is your second largest muscle group. So your legs are your largest muscle group, therefore your most important, therefore we want to make sure we're rocking those assisted eccentric squats as well as our smarter interval training. If you want to get great results, focus the vast majority of your efforts on your legs but, second to your legs, is your back, which is really often ignored, and one of the challenges because of that is, it's hard to feel when you're working your back muscles.

If you're doing push-ups, like in our other videos, or if you're doing shoulder presses or you're doing abs, you're pretty familiar with what it feels like to work your chest or your arms or your shoulders or your abs. You know what that feels like. Really working your back muscles is pretty unfamiliar for most people but, again, that's exciting because you have this whole, this second largest muscle group on your entire body, chances are, has really not gotten exercise over the years. So just imagine, that's like untapped earth. There's a goldmine there which you're just ready to expose. You're going to see some great results very quickly. What's key is to understand how to do these movements eccentrically so that we work the most muscle fibers in our back as possible.

Now, if you're advanced, things like pull-ups and chin-ups are going to be your best bet here. And the way you do those eccentrically is incredibly simple. So, a conventional pull-up — you've probably seen it in army movies and everything like that — is, you're hanging from a bar, you're pulling yourself up and down. But that's a very challenging movement so I'm actually not going to cover that here. What I'm going to cover is the basics of how you do that movement eccentrically and I'm going to show you how to do a more basic movement in the comfort of your own home called the row. But if you are able to do pull-ups and chin-ups or are close to being able to do pull-ups and chin-ups, the way you do those eccentrically is very simple — very simple. Instead of [inaudible 02:07] down and pulling yourself up and lowering yourself down, what a lot of people do is just drop themselves down, which is not what you want to do.

Start at the top position. Just get a bench or something at the gym, stand up on it, get in the top position, and then lift your legs up and just try to hold that top position. And if you watched the other videos, you know that the goal isn't to lower yourself really for 10 seconds; the goal is to try to hold that top position. But then gravity starts pulling you down over 10 seconds so you have enough resistance where gravity forces you down over 10 seconds. So when it comes to pull-ups, very simple. You're not really doing a pull-up. You're starting in the top position. Maybe you're even attaching some weight via a weight belt and then you're trying to hold that

position but gravity pulls you down slowly over 10 seconds. If you can't go for 10 seconds, it's too much weight. If you can go longer than 10 seconds, it's not enough weight. But if you're not ready to do pull-ups or chin-ups yet, start with rows.

Now, rows are very easy to do at home. So you can use dumbbells, bar bells, you can use resistance bands, which is my preferred way of adding resistance because it's inexpensive and it's convenient to travel with. Again, you can get great resistance bands at Amazon.com for thirty bucks. The way you're going to do a row — it's a very, very basic movement. I mean, you've already — if you've ever opened a door, that's basically a row. But we're just going to do that with more resistance here. A row isn't a new exercise. What I'm going to do here is, I'm just going to show you how to do it more eccentrically. So if you were to buy resistance bands, they would tell you, "Hey, here's how you can do a row using resistance bands." You stand and you're going to row the weight up.

But now, how can you lower more weight than you raise? So here, let's say this resistance band is 40 pounds. I'm going to raise 20 pounds with either arm, lower 20 pounds with either arm. Now, you might be thinking, Well, the way I'm going to add more resistance when I raise is like I did with the other exercises. Maybe I lift with two hands but lower with one. That's not going to work here because each of our arms are working independently and if you try to transfer the weight over to one hand, it just doesn't work. So what you can do instead is use tempo to your advantage. So, like I say, you always want to lower for 10 seconds. But with this movement, you could imagine — just get the weight up and try to hold it here for 10 seconds.

So it's not perfect in the sense that, in an ideal world, you would literally have more resistance. You would literally be using more resistance on the way down than on the way up but not everything in life is [inaudible 04:35] so if we can't use more resistance on the way down than on the way up, what we can do is really focus on getting that movement — get it up and just try to hold it for 10 seconds. So we're not actually using more resistance but because we're doing it more slowly — take a break at the bottom, really get that up there — it's like using more resistance on the way down.

Now, an alternate way of doing this is — we can get creative. So I have a weight vest, for example. A weight vest is weight you wear when you're doing things like body weight exercises, such as squats, to add resistance but you could also use a weight vest for something like a row. And this just shows, again, get creative. Have some fun with this. It doesn't have to be so, so rigid. Just find a way to have resistance in a safe way and have fun with it.

So we're going to get in our position to do a row and, again, if you're not familiar with how to do a row, there's also some resources to teach you how to do that. Let's talk about how to do it eccentrically here. With this kind of a row, with this kind of resistance here, I am lifting one

source of resistance with both arms. This vest weighs, I think, 50 pounds. So when I lift it up, I'm lifting 25 pounds per arm and I'm lowering 25 pounds per arm. When I used that resistance band, I was having two separate sources of resistance. So for example, here's an easy way to illustrate the point I'm trying to make, which is a shared source of resistance versus separate sources of resistance.

This is separate sources of resistance. Here's an easy way to test. If you let go with one hand, [snaps] that happens. So it's a separate source of resistance, meaning, if one hand releases, it falls; whereas if you have a shared source of resistance, if one hand releases, the other hand is still there. So this means that one source of resistance is evenly distributing its weight across both of your limbs. A squat and a push-up are other examples of this. So any time you have a shared source of resistance, where each arm isn't working independently, you can use the technique we've talked about before, which is, you row the weight up with two arms and then you slowly lower it with one. Now, this, again, isn't an optimal form of resistance because it's hitting the ground so it's lowering — the resistance is less when this is sitting on the ground than when it's fully raised. But you can, again, see the point, the intention, here because that's what's cool. We're using our brains.

We're going to lift 25 pounds per arm and then I'm just going to hold all full 50 pounds and then gravity is going to lower it down. This isn't optimal because I can't get a full range of motion. Maybe I could stand on something so that this didn't hit the ground but again, you can see the power here. The power — that's cool — is, in a conventional world, you'd lift 25 pounds with both arms — 25 pounds — and then you'd stop when you couldn't lift 25 pounds.

But what you'll find — and this is a great way to prove to yourself that you're stronger eccentrically than you are concentrically — is, let's say, for example, you had this weight vest — come over and visit me — you got this weight vest and you try to lift it with one hand doing a row. You might not be able to. If you try to lift it with both hands, you will be able to. And then when you get to the top, you'll see that you can lower it with one hand. How's that possible? How is it that I can lower the weight with one hand but can't lift it with one hand? Remember, lowering it — eccentric contractions — your muscles are up to forty percent stronger. Literally, you will be able to lower forty percent or more than you will be able to lift.

So if you're doing a row, a pull-up, a push-up, a shoulder press, a squat, any exercise in the world, the key is, let's find safe, sustainable, slow ways to add resistance so that we're maximizing the eccentric movement, working the most muscle fibers possible, triggering as many healing hormones as possible, and getting the best results possible. For this and every other exercise, it's six repetitions, each taking 10 seconds, and then you're done for the week.