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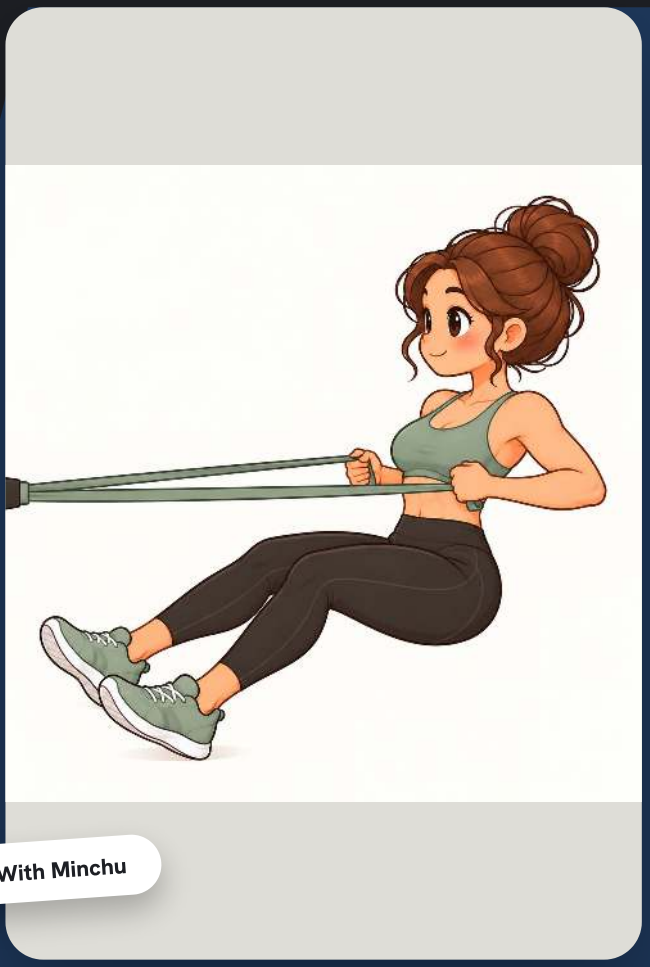
TRAINING COLLECTION

FREE SAMPLE · TRAINING GUIDE · HOME AND GYM

UPPER BODY WITH MINCHU

Your guide to back, chest, shoulders and arms, from beginner to advanced: posture, technique, routines by level and habits.

Free sample | Full Day 1 | 3 levels



INSIDE

1 The test to find your level

2 The warm-up and the final stretch

3 Day 1 at home for all 3 levels

4 The technique for every exercise of the day

5 The words in the guide, explained

6 How to get the full guide

Your team in this guide

You don't train alone. Each character joins you in one part of the guide and leaves you a tip.



Canela

The golden pup in the pink dress. She leads the team.

WELCOME, FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS, BEFORE YOU START: YOUR HEALTH FIRST



Bella

The black dog with curly fur. The strong one of the group.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR MUSCLES, MYTHS THAT HOLD YOU BACK, WHAT YOU NEED



Minchu

The tabby cat. Curious, always asking why.

WILL I GET TOO BULKY?, HOME PLAN, GYM PLAN



Oliver

The gray cat who likes to lie down. Pure calm.

TECHNIQUE THAT CHANGES EVERYTHING, HABITS THAT SUPPORT YOUR UPPER BODY



Thunderbolt

The turtle. Slow, but never stops.

CHOOSE YOUR LEVEL AND PROGRESS



Wilson

The white and orange cat, always up and on the move.

WARM-UP, CARDIO AND STRETCHING



Technique
before weight

Consistency
before intensity

Rest
as part of the plan



Canela says start here: how the guide works and how to get the most out of it.

Welcome

This guide takes you from beginner to advanced in back, chest, shoulder and arm training, with one plan for home and another for the gym. You train 3 days a week, on the days you choose, always with a rest day in between: for example Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.

A strong upper body isn't just about looking good in a T-shirt: it helps you carry the groceries, pick up a child, push open a heavy door and spend hours at the computer without ending the day with your shoulders hunched forward.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

1. Read the chapters on muscles, technique and “Will I get too bulky?” first. They're short and help you avoid mistakes.
2. Take the level test and start at the level you get.
3. Choose your plan: home or gym.
4. Warm up before every workout; stretch when you finish.
5. Level up when the guide tells you to, not before.

Three rules: technique before weight, consistency before intensity and rest as part of the plan.

Already training legs or glutes? Alternate the days: for example, legs or glutes on Monday, Wednesday and Friday; upper body on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. Leave at least one full rest day a week.

> **A word you don't understand?** At the end you'll find “Words you'll see”, with every word in the guide explained simply: **p. 12**. And each day of the plan comes with its own “How to read this day”.

1 · Test
take the level test

2 · Choose
home or gym

3 · Progress
level up when it's time



Thunderbolt moves slowly but never stops. Start where you are, not where you'd like to be.

Choose your level and progress

Take this test before you start, resting 2 minutes between each part. Your level is the highest row you fully meet. If you're torn between two, start with the easier one.

TEST	BEGINNER	INTERMEDIATE	ADVANCED
Push-ups on the floor, with good technique	Fewer than 5	5 to 15	More than 15
High plank, with your arms straight	Less than 30 s	30 to 60 s	More than 60 s
Superman held at the top	Less than 20 s	20 to 40 s	More than 40 s

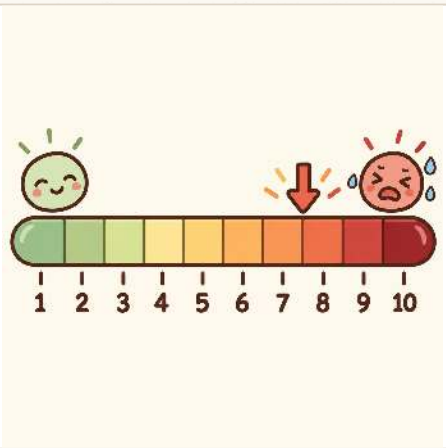
TEST	BEGINNER	INTERMEDIATE	ADVANCED
Do you currently train your upper body?	No, or not for more than 3 months	Once a week	Twice a week or more

WHAT CHANGES BETWEEN LEVELS

	BEGINNER	INTERMEDIATE	ADVANCED
Sets per exercise	2	3	4
Reps	10 to 12	10 to 15	8 to 12
Rest between sets	60 s	60 to 90 s	90 s
Weight	Light band or bottles	Stronger band or light dumbbells	Heavier dumbbells or harder variations
Exercises	With support: wall, knees or chair	Without support and with pauses	Single-arm, feet elevated or hanging from your own body weight

How much weight should I use? The effort scale: after each set, ask yourself how many more reps you could do with good technique. That answer tells you whether the weight is right.

EFFORT	HOW IT FEELS	WHEN TO USE IT
5 to 6 out of 10	You have 4 or more reps left.	Warm-up, first week and deload week.
7 to 8 out of 10	You have 2 or 3 reps left.	Most of your sets.
9 out of 10	You have 1 rep left.	Only the last set of an exercise, now and then, at intermediate and advanced.
10 out of 10	You can't do a single one more.	Optional, intermediate and advanced only: the last set of a machine or single-muscle exercise.



If you have more than 4 reps left, go up in weight. If you can't reach the bottom of the range, go down.

What about going to failure? What helps muscle grow most is ending your sets **close** to failure, with 1 to 3 reps in reserve. Going to failure (when you can't do a single one more) doesn't build more muscle than stopping 1 or 2 reps short, but it's much more tiring and makes it harder to recover for your next session. You don't need it to get stronger either: stopping 2 or 3 reps short with a challenging weight is enough. That's why in this guide:

- **Most of your sets:** 7 to 8 out of 10 (2 or 3 reps left).
- **The last set of an exercise:** you can go up to 9 out of 10 (1 rep left).
- **Failure (10 out of 10), only if you want and only at intermediate and advanced:** on the last set of machine or single-muscle exercises, like biceps curls, triceps extensions or kickbacks, lateral raises and reverse flys. With perfect technique to the very last rep.
- **Never to failure:** on barbell chest presses, military presses or barbell rows, if you're a beginner, or if you train without anyone to help you with a barbell over you.

When to level up: when you complete all the sets and reps for your level with good technique for 2 weeks in a row.

When to step down: if you feel pain in your shoulder, elbow or wrist, or if you can't keep your technique on the last reps.

Your block plan (12 weeks): the plan moves forward in 3 blocks of 4 weeks. In each block you push a little more and finish with an easy week so your body recovers and you come back stronger.

WEEK	WHAT YOU DO	EFFORT
1	Learn or review the technique and find your weight. Write it down.	6 to 7 out of 10
2	Add reps within the range.	7 to 8 out of 10
3	Add a set or a little weight.	7 to 8 out of 10
4 · Deload	Half the sets, with your week 1 weight.	5 to 6 out of 10
5 to 8	Repeat the block, starting from what you reached in week 3.	Same as above
9 to 12	Repeat once more. In week 12, retake the level test.	Same as above

IF YOU MISS SESSIONS OR TAKE A BREAK

- **You missed a day:** carry on with the day that was next. Don't do two sessions on the same day to catch up.
- **You stopped for 1 or 2 weeks:** come back with one fewer set per exercise and a bit less weight. In a week or two you'll be back where you were.
- **You stopped for a month or more:** retake the level test and start at the level you get.
- **You got sick:** with a fever, aches all over or a chesty cough, don't train. With a mild cold and no fever, you can walk or do an easy session.

OTHER WAYS TO MAKE IT HARDER WITHOUT CHANGING LEVEL

- Add weight (a stronger band, a dumbbell or a fuller bottle).
- Do more reps within the range.

- Lower more slowly (3 to 4 seconds).
- Pause for 2 seconds at the hardest point.
- Switch to the single-arm version.

Your log: write down each exercise with the weight and reps of every set. If you go up a little each week, you're on the right track.

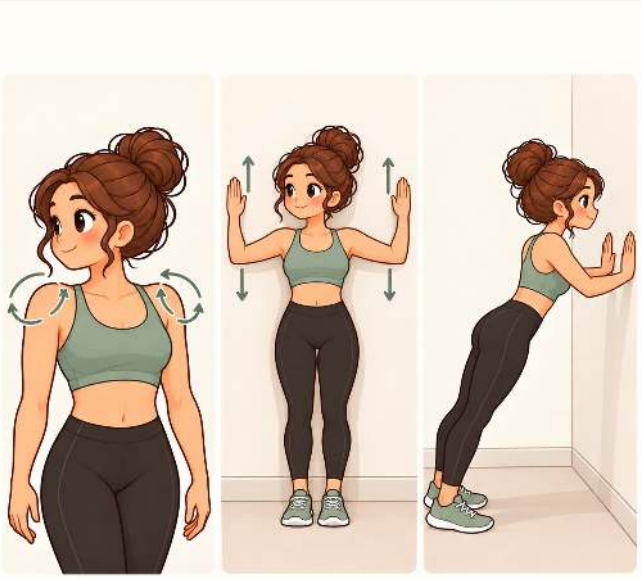
EXERCISE	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3
Example: single-arm dumbbell row	8 kg (18 lb) · 12, 12, 11	8 kg (18 lb) · 13, 12, 12	10 kg (22 lb) · 12, 11, 11

Read it like this: "8 kg (18 lb) · 12, 12, 11" is the weight you used and the reps you did in each set.

Wilson never starts cold and never leaves without stretching.

Warm-up, cardio and stretching

Warm-up (8 to 10 min, all levels)



1 MOBILITY — 3 min



Neck circles 30 s

Standing, drop your chin to your chest and roll your head slowly from one shoulder to the other in a half circle. Don't take it backward.



Shoulder and arm circles 1 min

30 s forward and 30 s backward, starting small and finishing with your arms straight.



Quadruped trunk rotation 1 min

On all fours, put one hand behind your head and turn your elbow up to the ceiling and then down to the floor. 30 s per side.



Wrist circles 30 s

With your fingers interlaced, make gentle circles in both directions.

2 BACK AND SHOULDER ACTIVATION — 4 min



Band pull-apart 1 min
Arms straight out in front, pull the band apart toward your chest, squeezing your shoulder blades together.



Band external rotation 1 min
Elbow tucked into your waist and bent at 90°. Move your hand outward without letting your elbow leave your side. 30 s per arm.



Wall angels 1 min
Back and arms against the wall, in a W shape. Slide your arms up as far as they stay in contact, and lower.



Light band row 1 min
Band anchored in front of you. Drive your elbows back and return slowly.

3 GET READY TO PUSH — 2 to 3 min



Wall push-up 1 min
Hands on the wall at chest height, body straight. Lower and push.



High plank 30 s
Hands under your shoulders, body straight from head to heels.

3

Test set 1 min
A short set of the day's first exercise, with half the weight.

Your warm-up is done when your shoulders feel loose, your back feels “awake” and your arms feel warm.

• Final stretch (5 min)



1 **Chest stretch in a doorway**
rest your forearm on a door frame, elbow at shoulder height, and turn your body the other way. 30 s per side.



2 **Supported lat stretch**
hands on a table or the back of a chair, push your hips back and let your chest drop. 30 s.



3 **Cross-body shoulder**
bring one straight arm across your chest and hold it with the other, without lifting your shoulder. 30 s per side.



4 **Overhead triceps**
raise one arm, bend the elbow and push it gently with your other hand. 30 s per side.



5 **Child's pose**
kneeling, sit back on your heels and stretch your arms forward. 30 s.

Wilson's tip: the doorway chest stretch is key if you spend a lot of time at the computer. A tight chest pulls your shoulders forward.

Minchu trains 3 days a week, on the days you choose, with a rest day in between.

Home plan

You train 3 days a week, with a rest day in between. Day 1 is for pulling, Day 2 for pushing and Day 3 mixes both with core work.



HOW EACH DAY WORKS

1. Warm up for 10 minutes.
2. Do the first exercise on its own: all its sets before moving on.
3. Do exercises 2 and 3 as a superset: one right after the other, then rest.
4. Do exercises 4 and 5 as a superset.
5. Do the cardio for your level and stretch for 5 minutes.

LEVEL	SETS	REPS	REST BETWEEN SETS	APPROX. TIME
BEGINNER	2	10 to 12	60 s	40 min with cardio
INTERMEDIATE	3	10 to 15	60 to 90 s	50 min with cardio
ADVANCED	4	8 to 12	90 s	60 min with cardio

In single-arm exercises, the reps are per arm. In push-ups, do as many as you can with good technique up to the top of the range. In isometric exercises, you hold for the time shown.

Sample week: Tuesday Day 1, Thursday Day 2, Saturday Day 3. Don't train your upper body two days in a row.

WHAT YOUR WEEK LOOKS LIKE

	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
EXAMPLE 1	Day 1	Rest	Day 2	Rest	Day 3	Rest	Rest
EXAMPLE 2	Rest	Day 1	Rest	Day 2	Rest	Day 3	Rest

Pick the 3 days that suit you best, always with a rest day between them.

DAY 1

Back and biceps pull

Pull: bringing the weight toward your body, as in a row or a pulldown.

Biceps: the front of the arm; it bends the elbow.

How to read this day: find the column for your level. Do the exercises in order, from top to bottom, and finish all the sets of one before moving on to the next. At the top of each column you'll find your sets, reps, rest and what weight to use. “3 × 12 to 15” means 3 sets of 12 to 15 reps. How to do each exercise, step by step, is in the catalog: the page number is next to each one. A word you don't know? Look it up in “Words you'll see”, **p. 12**.

BEGINNER

2 sets × 10 to 12 reps · rest 60 s
Weight: Light band or bottles



1. **Seated band row** — TECHNIQUE P. 10



2. **Band pulldown** — TECHNIQUE P. 11



3. **Band pull-apart** — TECHNIQUE P. 11



4. **Band biceps curl**



5. **Hammer curl with bottles** — TECHNIQUE P. 11

INTERMEDIATE

3 sets × 10 to 15 reps · rest 60 to 90 s
Weight: Stronger band or light dumbbells



1. **Single-arm dumbbell row** — TECHNIQUE P. 10



2. **Dumbbell pullover** — TECHNIQUE P. 11



3. **Band face pull** — TECHNIQUE P. 11



4. **Biceps curl with dumbbells**



5. **Hammer curl** — TECHNIQUE P. 11

ADVANCED

4 sets × 8 to 12 reps · rest 90 s
Weight: Heavier dumbbells or harder variations



1. **Inverted row under a table** — TECHNIQUE P. 10



2. **Band-assisted pull-up** — TECHNIQUE P. 11



3. **Dumbbell reverse fly** — TECHNIQUE P. 11



4. **Concentration curl** — TECHNIQUE P. 11



5. **Hammer curl with pause** — TECHNIQUE P. 11

Tip: in the row, finish each rep with your shoulder blades squeezed together for 1 second. If you can't, the band or the weight is too heavy.

To switch things up each week

After 2 or 3 weeks on the plan, you can swap these exercises for their variation. They work the same muscles and give them a new challenge.

EXERCISE	SWAP IT FOR
Push-up	Diamond push-up
Incline push-up	Wide push-up
Biceps curl with dumbbells	21s curl
Single-arm overhead extension	Two-hand overhead extension
Floor press	Dumbbell floor fly

Short on time? Work in blocks, like in the trainer's program. Beginners do only exercise 1 and the superset of 2 and 3; intermediate adds the superset of 4 and 5; advanced does everything plus one extra round of the last superset.

Minchu shows every exercise with its illustration, how to do it and the most common mistake.

Exercise catalog

Each exercise explains how to do it and the most common mistake.

Home



Seated band row

On the floor with your legs straight, loop the band around the soles of your feet. Drive your elbows back, close to your body, and squeeze your shoulder blades. Return slowly.

Common mistake: Leaning your torso back to pull.



Single-arm dumbbell row

One hand and one knee on a chair or bench, back straight. Lift the dumbbell, driving your elbow toward your hip.

Common mistake: Twisting your torso to lift higher.



Inverted row under a table

Lying on your back under a sturdy table, grab the edge with your hands shoulder-width apart. With your body straight, pull your chest up toward the table and lower slowly. Easier: knees bent.

Common mistake: Using a table that moves or letting your hips sag.



Band pulldown

Band anchored at the top of a door. Kneeling or sitting on a chair, pull toward your chest, driving your elbows down and back.

Common mistake: Shrugging your shoulders up to your ears.



Dumbbell pullover

On your back on the floor or a bench, hold a dumbbell with both hands over your chest. Take it back behind your head with your elbows slightly bent, as far as is comfortable, and return.

Common mistake: Arching your lower back as the weight goes back.



Band-assisted pull-up

Loop a band over the bar and put one foot or knee in it. From straight arms, pull up until your chin clears the bar and lower slowly.

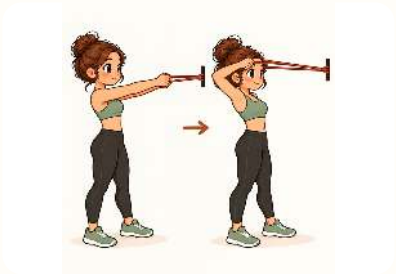
Common mistake: Swinging or dropping down fast.



Band pull-apart

Standing, arms straight out in front with the band in your hands. Open your arms until the band touches your chest, squeezing your shoulder blades.

Common mistake: Bending your elbows or shrugging your shoulders.



Band face pull

Band anchored at face height. Pull toward your forehead, separating your hands and taking your elbows out and up.

Common mistake: Arching your back or pulling with your neck.



Dumbbell reverse fly

On the edge of a chair, lean your chest toward your knees. Open your arms out to the sides with your elbows slightly bent.

Common mistake: Using too much weight and swinging it up.



Concentration curl

On a bench or chair, rest your elbow on the inside of your thigh. Curl the dumbbell toward your shoulder and lower slowly.

Common mistake: Moving your shoulder instead of your elbow.



Hammer curl

Like the biceps curl, but with your palms facing each other.

Common mistake: Twisting your wrist or moving your elbows.



Canela says your health always comes first.

Before you start: your health first

This guide is for healthy people who want to train on their own; it doesn't replace an assessment by a doctor or a trainer. Check with a professional before you start if:

- You're pregnant or gave birth less than 6 months ago.
- You have shoulder, neck, elbow or wrist pain, or tingling in your arms.
- You've had a recent injury, dislocation or surgery on your shoulder, elbow, wrist or back.
- You have high blood pressure or a heart condition, or you haven't exercised in a long time.

Stop right away if you feel dizzy or have chest pain, shortness of breath that doesn't go away, sharp pain in a joint or the feeling that your shoulder is slipping out. Muscle soreness in the following days is normal; stabbing pain is not.



Minchu explains every unusual word in the guide.

Words you'll see

If a word in the guide isn't clear, look it up here.

WORD	WHAT IT MEANS
Rep	Doing the movement once, all the way, for example going down and up in a squat.
Set	A group of reps done in a row, without stopping. “3 × 12” means 3 sets of 12 reps.
Range	The numbers you work between. “10 to 12” means at least 10 and at most 12.
Rest between sets	The time you wait between one set and the next of the same exercise.
Effort 8 out of 10	How hard the set was. At 8 out of 10 you have about 2 more reps left with good technique.
Failure	When you can't do a single more rep with good technique. Getting close to failure helps you grow; reaching failure doesn't build more muscle and is more tiring. In this guide it's optional and only for machine or single-muscle exercises.
Main exercise	The heaviest exercise of the day at the gym. It goes first, when you have the most energy, and gets more rest.
Accessory exercises	The ones that complete the day after the main exercise, with less weight and more reps.
Warm-up sets	Short sets with light weight before the main exercise, to get your technique ready. They don't count as your sets.
Superset	Two exercises back to back, with no rest between them. You rest after finishing both.
Isometric	You hold still in one position and the muscle works without moving, like in a plank.

WORD	WHAT IT MEANS
Pause	Holding still for 1 or 2 seconds at the hardest point of the movement.
Single leg or single arm	The exercise is done one side at a time. The reps are per side.
Hip hinge	Bending from the hips, pushing your butt back with a straight back, like in the Romanian deadlift.
Core	Your abs, waist and lower back: the area that keeps your torso firm.
Progressive overload	Gradually adding reps, sets or weight so your body keeps improving.
Deload week	An easy week every 4, with fewer sets and less weight, to recover.
Talk test	A way to tell if your cardio is moderate: you can say short sentences, but you can't sing.
Superset pair	Two exercises back to back, with no rest between them, that work different muscles. You rest after finishing both.

Canela: this is a sample. The full guide takes you through 12 weeks, step by step.

Did you like Day 1? Get the full guide

Upper body with Minchu includes the 3 home days and the 3 gym days for all 3 levels, the test to find your level, how to level up, the 12-week plan, the technique for every exercise with its illustration, habits, frequently asked questions and your printable log.

7 USD at **canelith.com/en/shop** → Training · or all 6 guides in the **Training pack**.

Want a routine built just for you? Book your **initial assessment** with our coach at **canelith.com/en**, Training section.



"Your body doesn't change in a day. It changes with every day you choose to come back."

Come back to this guide every time you level up. And if you want a plan made just for you, ask for **personal training** at **canelith.com/en**.

Canelith · Done well. Explained clearly.

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This guide is for information only and doesn't replace an assessment by a doctor, physical therapist or trainer.