SOFTWARE & TECH

Overcoming Gravity 2 Steven Low

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Introduction

For anyone serious about bodyweight strength training, **Overcoming Gravity 2 Steven Low** stands as a definitive reference. Written by Dr. Steven Low, a physical therapist and gymnastics coach, this book is far more than a routine collection; it is a comprehensive guide to programming, injury prevention, and skill progression in calisthenics and gymnastics-based conditioning. Whether you are a beginner looking to perform your first pull-up or an advanced athlete aiming to master the planche, **Overcoming Gravity 2**provides the scientific and practical framework to achieve those goals safely and effectively. In this article, we will explore the core concepts of the book, its unique approach to training, and why it remains an indispensable resource in the world of bodyweight fitness.

Who Is Steven Low?

Steven Low is not just an author; he is a practicing physical therapist, a competitive gymnast, and a former coach. His background in biomechanics and rehabilitation gives him a rare perspective on strength training. Unlike many fitness books written by coaches who focus solely on performance, Low integrates injury risk management, recovery, and long-term joint health into every training principle he presents. **Overcoming Gravity 2**is the updated and expanded version of his original work, incorporating years of additional research, community feedback, and practical experience. Low's writing is evidence-based yet accessible, making complex topics like periodization and exercise selection understandable for the average reader.

What Makes Overcoming Gravity 2 Unique?

While many calisthenics resources offer generic routines, **Overcoming Gravity 2 Steven Low**teaches you how to design your own program. The book is built on the premise that every individual has unique strengths, weaknesses, and goals, and that a one-size-fits-all approach is suboptimal. Instead, Low provides a systematic method for assessing your current abilities, selecting appropriate exercises, and structuring your training over weeks, months, and years. This meta-approach empowers you to become your own coach.

Key Features of the Book

- Exercise Progressions: Detailed progressions for over 100 bodyweight exercises, from basic push-ups to advanced levers and handstands.
- Programming Frameworks: Clear guidelines on sets, reps, frequency, and rest periods tailored to different goals (strength, hypertrophy, endurance).
- Periodization Models: How to cycle your training to avoid plateaus and reduce injury risk, including linear periodization, DUP (daily undulating periodization), and block periodization.
- Injury Prevention and Rehab: A full chapter dedicated to common overuse injuries in calisthenics, along with prehab and rehab strategies.
- Nutrition and Recovery: Practical advice on fueling bodyweight training, sleep, and stress management.

Core Principles of Overcoming Gravity 2

Progressive Overload Beyond Adding Weight

In traditional weightlifting, adding weight to the bar is the primary overload mechanism. In bodyweight training, progression is trickier. **Overcoming Gravity 2**teaches you to manipulate leverage, time under tension, range of motion, and exercise complexity. For example, to progress a push-up, you might elevate your feet, move to a pseudo-planche push-up, or eventually work toward a one-arm push-up. Low provides a clear continuum of difficulty for each movement, making it easy to see what to attempt next.

Exercise Selection Based on Your Weak Points

One common mistake in calisthenics is ignoring imbalances. Low emphasizes the importance of pushing and pulling exercises in equal measure, as well as including elements like compression work, scapular control, and wrist preparation. He advises using a "push-pull-legs-core" template but with the flexibility to prioritize lagging areas. For instance, if your front lever is weak, you might increase its frequency and volume relative to your planche work.

Periodization for Long-Term Progress

Many bodyweight athletes train the same routines for months without progress. Low argues that this leads to overuse injuries and stagnation. He explains how to use linear periodization (gradually increasing intensity) and undulating periodization (varying intensity within a week) to keep the body adapting. He also introduces the concept of "deload weeks" and how to structure them into a mesocycle. These periodization models are presented with concrete examples, such as a 12-week cycle for the pull-up or the handstand push-up.

Injury Prevention as a Training Priority

A standout section of **Overcoming Gravity 2 Steven Low**is its focus on common calisthenics injuries: golfer's elbow, biceps tendonitis, rotator cuff issues, and wrist pain. Low explains the biomechanical causes and offers specific prehab exercises (e.g., rice bucket work for wrists, eccentric stretches for elbows). He also provides guidelines on how to modify exercises when an injury is present without stopping training entirely. This injury-centered approach is rare in fitness literature and makes the book valuable for both beginners and experienced athletes.

Sample Routine Structure from the Book

While the book is not a "do this routine" manual, Low does provide sample templates to illustrate his principles. A typical strength-focused routine might look like this:

1. Skill Work (10–15 minutes): Handstand practice, L-sit holds, or mobility drills.
2. Main Strength Work (30–40 minutes): 3–4 compound exercises (e.g., weighted pull-up, dips, ring rows, pistol squats) performed with 3–5 sets of 5–8 reps.
3. Accessory Work (10–15 minutes): Isolation exercises for weak points (e.g., face pulls, tricep extensions, glute bridges).
4. Core and Compression (5–10 minutes): Planks, hollow body holds, leg raises.
5. Cool-down and Stretching: Targeted flexibility for shoulders, hips, and wrists.

The book teaches you how to adjust these parameters based on your recovery capacity and goals, not just copy a template without understanding the "why."

Benefits of Bodyweight Training According to Overcoming Gravity 2

- Joint-Friendly: With proper progressions, bodyweight exercises are often easier on the joints than heavy barbell lifts.

- Cost-Effective: No gym membership required; all you need is a pull-up bar and a floor.
- Functional Strength: Many calisthenics movements mimic real-world actions like climbing, lifting, and balancing.
- Scalability: From absolute beginner to elite gymnast, the progressions accommodate all levels.
- Core and Stability Integration: Bodyweight exercises often require full-body tension, improving core strength and proprioception.

How Overcoming Gravity 2 Differs from Other Calisthenics Resources

Popular YouTube channels and books often focus on one or two "magic" exercises or routines. In contrast, **Overcoming Gravity 2 Steven Low**is comprehensive and systematic. It does not promise instant results; instead, it provides the tools to achieve sustainable progress over years. Another key difference is its emphasis on injury prevention. Many calisthenics enthusiasts develop chronic elbow or shoulder pain due to poor programming. Low's book is perhaps the best resource for understanding why these injuries occur and how to avoid them. Additionally, the book includes a significant amount of sports science research, which gives its recommendations credibility beyond anecdotal evidence.

Reviews and Impact

Since its publication, **Overcoming Gravity 2**has been praised by physical therapists, gymnastics coaches, and thousands of calisthenics practitioners. On platforms like Reddit and fitness forums, it is frequently recommended as the "bible" of bodyweight training. Users appreciate its dense but organized content. Some have noted that the book can be overwhelming at first due to its depth, but they also mention that it rewards repeated readings. The accompanying online community (including the subreddit r/overcominggravity) provides additional support, where Low himself occasionally answers questions.

Who Should Read Overcoming Gravity 2?

- Intermediate to Advanced Calisthenics Athletes: If you have been training for a year and want to break through plateaus, this book will give you the blueprint.
- Coaches and Personal Trainers: The programming knowledge is directly applicable to coaching clients in bodyweight or hybrid settings.
- Physical Therapy Students or Professionals: The injury prevention and rehab chapters offer valuable insights into exercise prescription.
- Beginners Willing to Learn Long-Term: While the book is detailed, a motivated beginner can use it to build a solid foundation and avoid common beginner mistakes.

Conclusion

Overcoming Gravity 2 Steven Lowis more than a book; it is a comprehensive education in bodyweight strength training. By combining anatomical knowledge, sports science, and practical coaching experience, Steven Low has created a resource that can serve you for years. Whether your goal is to perform a single muscle-up or to compete in a calisthenics competition, the principles outlined in this book will help you train smarter, avoid injury, and progress consistently. Its emphasis on individualization and long-term programming sets it apart from the countless fitness fads that promise quick fixes. If you are serious about mastering your own body weight, this book deserves a place on your shelf—and in your training routine.

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