

## Hybrid Bodyweight Training Equipment. The Total Package?

Article by J.P. Brice. Co-inventor of the War Machine Suspended Pulley Trainer by CrossCore, Inc.

Bodyweight training. It's been around forever. But as the sports of bodybuilding and powerlifting really started to evolve in the 50's and 60's, we became fascinated with big, shiny, "muscle specific" machines and training with massive amounts of weight. Bigger was better, especially in the 80's when I began lifting. Well, I will always have a deep passion for bodybuilding and heavy weights. It's just who I am. But, now that I am almost 40 with three bulging discs caused by all the years of heavy squats and shrugs, I now tend to put longevity first when I train. After all, big muscles are really only temporary, but your tendons, joints and skeletal system are forever and you've got to take care of them.

Nowadays there is a growing focus on getting back to the basics. By basics I mean bodyweight training, tire flipping, kettlebells etc. I personally think the recession the past few years has had a lot to do with this. Lets face it, lifting your own bodyweight is pretty affordable compared to a rack of dumbbells. But at the same time I also think that we are all realizing after sixty years of huge leaps in fitness equipment technology, that good old fashioned basics can often give you the same desired end result, if not better.

Today some of the most popular bodyweight training routines include suspended straps. Some are made from two separate straps and some are joined together in a Y configuration toward the top near the anchor point. There are many great attributes of these straps such as allowing us to workout at many different locations, giving us a wide range of exercises that can isolate each muscle or combine many in the same movement...including the beloved "core" we all hear about these days. Straps give us a variety of multi-planar, compound exercise movements that tend to be much easier on the joints because they compliment the body's natural mechanics. I have to be honest, as a heavy weightlifter of over twenty five years, I first laughed at these straps. I thought, "These don't weigh 500 lbs...what use could I possibly have for them". After I was able to shove my ego to the side I soon realized the benefit bodyweight training could offer even me. I now incorporate bodyweight training into my workouts and all my shoulder pain has gone away and my back is much better than it used to be.

Now that I have covered why I personally think bodyweight training is making a comeback and what it has done for me, let me put a different "spin" on things. Imagine adding a 3<sup>rd</sup> dimension to bodyweight training with suspended straps and even gymnastics rings. An improvement of balance through imbalance. The 3<sup>rd</sup> dimension I speak of is by way of adding a pulley to these straps that now gives your presses, pulls and everything else you did before, "rotational movement"! Because rotational movement now allows you to train one side of the body at a time or both together, any limitations your bodyweight training routine had before are now totally gone. The balance this improvement creates and the mind-muscle awareness you gain in your form and overall functionality is incredible. Rotation is also great for telling your weak side it had better quickly catch up with the dominant side. I know, my fellow weightlifters out there are still skeptical. But hold on, I'm getting to the icing on the cake for you. The implementation of the suspended pulley also allows you to attach counterweights to one side. These counterweights can range from kettlebells to weight plates. I like kettlebells because they balance perfectly when being hoisted on a pulley. The isolation exercise capability via freeweights (curls, tricep extensions, lat rows, etc.) is now just like being at the gym and the single pulley transfers all the actual weight to the handle so not much weight is needed. If that wasn't enough, resistance bands can be used in place of the counterweights to give the user even more resistance versatility, not to mention a whole slew of different cable attachments that can be used.

This new "hybrid" concept in bodyweight training equipment is sure to please the beginner all the way up to the elite athlete and I'm convinced it is the future of many exciting things to come in our industry. Now get out there and do the "iron cross" on those rings...but this time with rotational movement!

J.P. Brice

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