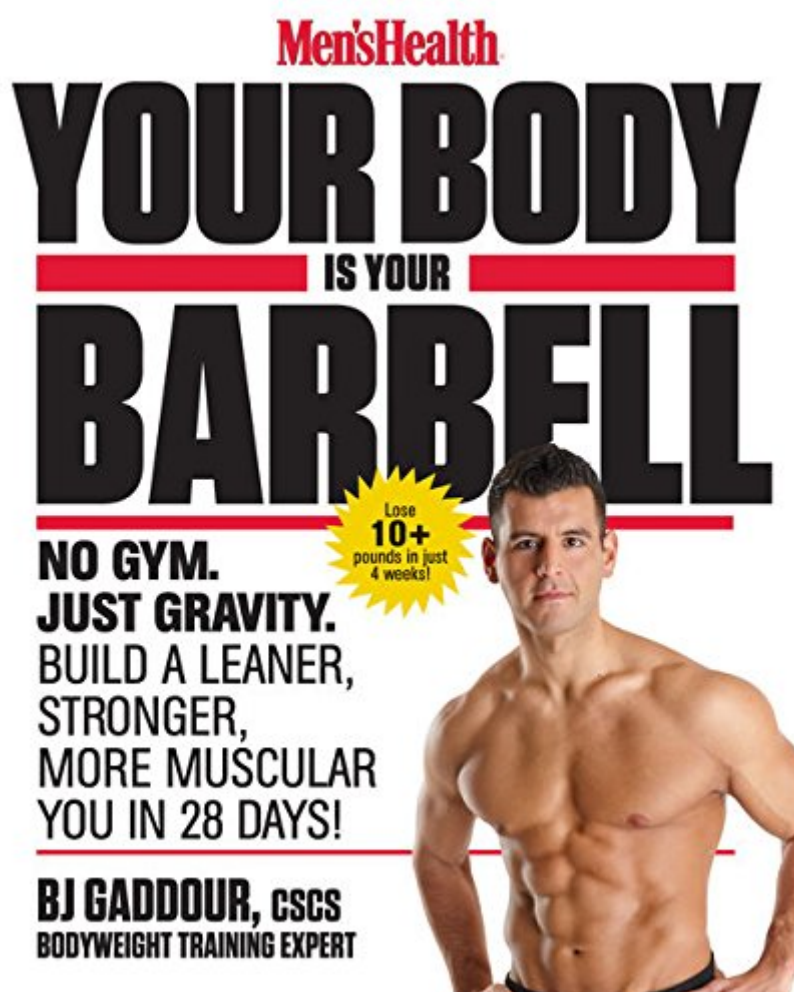


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# Men's Health Your Body Is Your Barbell: No Gym. Just Gravity. Build A Leaner, Stronger, More Muscular You In 28 Days!



## Synopsis

With *Men's Health Your Body Is Your Barbell*, a reader will have no excuse not to get into the best shape of his or her life...simply, easily, and in just 6 weeks in the convenience of his or her own home. Metabolic training expert BJ Gaddour, CSCS, whom *Men's Health* magazine calls one of the 100 fittest men of all time, has created a remarkably efficient and effective body-transforming workout and nutrition program based on just a handful of simple moves, the Bodyweight Eight. These no-equipment-required exercises are all one needs to build a strikingly symmetrical, perfectly proportioned, and classically beautiful physique, just like BJ's. Once readers master each legendary fitness feat with perfect form, they will use BJ's scalable, step-by-step progressions to go from ground zero to superhero. From these exercise variations, readers can construct hundreds of personalized workouts. Dozens of sample routines are already demonstrated through big, bold how-to photographs within the book and organized by goal, duration, intensity, and targeted body zone. This is the only book a man or woman needs to achieve the body he or she has always wanted anywhere... and without gear.

## Book Information

File Size: 9317 KB

Print Length: 288 pages

Publisher: Rodale; 1 edition (May 13, 2014)

Publication Date: May 13, 2014

Sold by: Amazon Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00FWT9I1Y

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Not Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #64,831 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #45

in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Exercise & Fitness > Weight

Training #70 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Nonfiction > Sports > Training #114

in Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Exercise & Fitness > Weight Training

## Customer Reviews

I have tried taking up bodyweight exercise for a long time and read most of the well-known books on the subject, but I never seem to get past week 1 or 2. "Convict Conditioning" convinced me that bodyweight exercise is the way to go, but the writing was over the top and the progressions were simultaneously too slow (one month of wall pushups) and too extreme (I will never be able to do a one-handed handstand pushup). Al Kavadlo's books are beautifully photographed and seem to have good progressions, but they lack schedules and routines that novices like me need. Besides, I want to buy one book on this topic, not 3 or 4. "You are Your Own Gym" is a nicely-polished 'cookbook' of bodyweight exercises, and is very popular but it was actually my least favorite of the group. I had never heard of BJ Gaddour, but he sure knows his stuff. While the writing could be a bit more polished, this book is absolutely my favorite of the bunch. His approach, including the pairing of pushing and pulling exercises, makes a lot of sense to me. The book is centered on 8 main bodyweight exercises with 5 levels or progressions in each. I am starting on level 1 of all 8 (see the Table of Contents for specifics), and I think they are good exercises for a relative newcomer like me. The progressions seem logical and each main exercise includes 3 subtle regressions and 1 progression to make the exercises slightly easier or harder. His explanations on how to position your body are excellent, probably the best of any fitness book that I have ever read. They might be a bit too detailed for someone who is more experienced with bodyweight exercises, but I found them very helpful. There are a couple chapters on other bodyweight exercises (including an entire chapter on burpees) that I will probably reread in a month or two, but I am going to focus on the 8 main exercises for now. I would have loved a few pages on cooling down/stretching after the workouts, but that's not the purpose of this book. I like the formatting on the Kindle version quite a bit. Everything is linked, including the index.

This book is amazing! For most of my life I have been working out with weights, but I recently moved overseas (first to Korea, and then to China), and I was confronted with the fact that gyms over here don't have big weights. I began doing bodyweight exercises, but I was just piecing together random videos that I happened to find on the internet. I happened to come across BJ's Facebook page, which lead me to this book. I am so glad that I found it, as it's fitness program PERFECTLY fits my life, and it has been giving me great workouts. I'm super excited!

Great approach to a forgotten method of exercising. Easy to understand and follow along with the

illustrations and explanations. Very complete and should be in the hands of anyone who leads an active lifestyle and wants to be leaner and meaner. Great job, BJ. I have recommended it to countless people already and am wowing the regulars (trainers included) at the gym with the variation and difficulty of my "weight free" routines. Next step is to start putting that gym membership fee towards something useful!

I own Bodyweight Strength Training Anatomy by Bret Contreras, You are Your Own Gym by Mark Lauren, and Your Body is Your Barbell by BJ Gaddour. This review refers to the Kindle versions of each book. I would recommend buying either the Contreras or Gaddour book; however, I feel the Lauren book is not worth buying unless you are collecting books on the subject. I would actually recommend buying both the Contreras and Gaddour books as they complement each other well. Neither book is perfect, but together they cover the topic very thoroughly. This review covers the following elements:

- Exercises:** Number and variety of exercises.
- Programming:** The sample routines given in the book as well as basic templates for building your own programs.
- Progressions:** Making a particular exercise easier or more difficult so a person of any level can benefit from the exercise as well as allowing progression in strength and ability.
- Educational value:** How well the book teaches the reader to understand how the body works and how the exercises work each part of your body.
- User friendliness:** How easy it is to use the Kindle book.

**Exercises:** All three books provide a large variety of exercises, however Contreras is the best here. My problem with the Lauren book is that it is not much more than an encyclopedia of exercises and doesn't do a good job of explaining why you should be doing any particular exercise. Also, he gives many of the exercises goofy, unwieldy names that sometimes don't help you understand what the move actually is. Gaddour only provides major compound movements and skips the core and isolation exercises. On the other hand, Contreras covers exercises for the arms, core, glutes and even the neck. Gaddour and Contreras both cover metabolic training and full-body exercises. Gaddour gets extra credit for an excellent chapter devoted to burpee variations, culminating in the Rolling Pistol Squat (a backward, one-leg burpee). In my opinion, this chapter is worth the price of the book (yes, I like burpees).

**Programming:** The Contreras book is the best in terms of programming. He gives you workout templates and suggestions for what exercises to use. The explanations of each exercise in the book will help you decide what exercises to select. He also provides sample "metabolic" (HIIT and MRT) workouts. The Gaddour and Lauren books only give you set routines to follow without much flexibility. However, the Gaddour book is better because he presents you with various styles of routines, such as for maximum fat loss,

maximum strength, and so on. The Lauren book has little variety in the routines.

**Progressions:** Gaddour is definitely the big winner here. In fact, I think this is the biggest strength of his book. He gives you eight basic types of exercises. With each exercise, he gives you five levels of difficulty. Within each level he provides three “microregressions” and three “microprogressions” that allow you to fine tune the exercise as appropriate for your skill level. Anyone who’s ever engaged in strength training knows how helpful it is to progress in small increments. Contreras also gives examples of progressions and regression, but not with the detail found in the Gaddour book. Lauren is weakest here. To be fair, he does give ideas on how to make an exercise more difficult, just not as well as the other two.

**Educational value:** The only area where the Contreras book is lacking in educational value compared to the others is regarding nutrition. Lauren and Gaddour both cover nutrition to some extent, whereas Contreras doesn’t mention it. The Gaddour and Lauren books both have chapters devoted to exercise nutrition, the former written by a PhD from Pennsylvania State University.

**Contreras’ muscle diagrams** are outstanding and they really allow the reader to understand how the body works and how the muscles are being used. He breaks it down by primary and secondary muscles worked. I was surprised to learn how many upper-body movements involve the trapezius, for example. Contreras also does a good job explaining training variables such as intensity, density, and periodization. Lauren discusses these topics to a lesser extent.

**User friendliness:** Lauren is last in this category. The book is laid out poorly. Although the exercises are organized by body part, the Kindle book does not provide links to the separate sections, as in the Gaddour and Contreras books. Lauren has an alphabetic index at the end but, particularly with the odd names he gives the exercises, it’s difficult to find exercises for specific body parts. For example, if you want to find three exercises to work your thighs, you will have to go to the non-indexed Exercises section and flip through the pages until you get to what you want. This is a major headache on a Kindle. Contreras and Gaddour both provide extensive hyperlinking to get to where you need to go in the book. Contreras provides links organized by body part and specific exercises so he does the best job here.

**Contreras strengths:** Muscle diagrams Isolation exercises (especially glutes) Customizable routines Most user-friendly Kindle version

**Contreras weaknesses:** No discussion of nutrition

**Gaddour strengths:** Progressions Burpees chapter Nutrition chapter

**Gaddour weaknesses:** No specific core exercises No isolation exercises

**Lauren strengths:** Chapter on using household items to workout can be useful

**Lauren weaknesses:** Poor Kindle formatting No full-body or metabolic training exercises No discussion of body mechanics

If I had to recommend only one of these books,

Contreras would win by a nose, with Gaddour a close second. This was a tough choice as they are both excellent books, but going by the “teach a man to fish” concept I think Contreras does a better job of explaining things such that you can design your own workout programs rather than merely following what someone else has shown you. That said, I highly recommend buying both of these books as each complements the other quite well. Combined, they’re nearly perfect.

Great workouts in this book. I have been working out for 32 years and this book taught me something. I have cut down my use of free weights considerably and feel great when I use BJ’s workout plans. You do not need much space to do these either nor equipment (hence the title). I would recommend a pullup bar (if possible) and TRX straps (not needed) to further enhance these body weight routines. The author really knows his stuff.

This is a really good book for anyone that really wants to get in shape in a more healthy way. I put together workouts from this book and am able to do them within 30 minutes and I feel really worked. I have been doing these workouts for the past month and I am definitely seeing results. My abs and other muscles are definitely getting stronger and much more toned. I love this book!

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