

Setup, Safety, and Success



NXT GEN TRAINER

Setting up the Suspension Trainer properly results in effective exercises. The system must also be secured appropriately to avoid injury. As with any exercise program, consultation with a health care provider is recommended, especially for those who have had muscle or joint injuries. Although Suspension Training exercises involve the use of body weight, due to the intensity generated when muscles are under tension for extended periods, as well as the instability of the primary platform, Suspension Training exercises can increase stress on joints and ligaments.

Suspension Trainer Anatomy

A general understanding of the anatomy of the Suspension Trainer is helpful. Figure 3.1 identifies the parts.

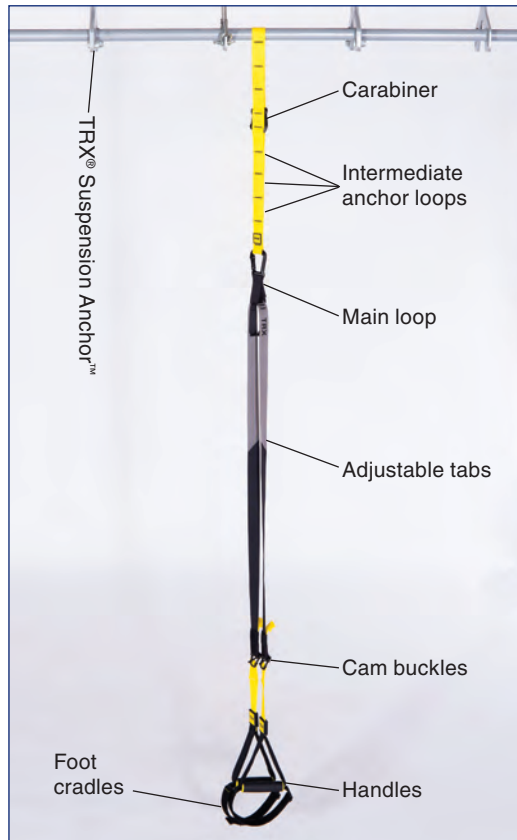


FIGURE 3.1 Parts of a Suspension Trainer.

Anchoring the Suspension Training System

Anchoring the Suspension Trainer requires a sturdy structure that can support the user's weight, such as a beam, bar, or tree limb. The area around it must be free of debris to provide enough space to perform the exercises safely. A door can be used as long as the Suspension Trainer has a door anchor attachment.

Hang the Suspension Trainer by wrapping the anchor strap around the structure (see figure 3.2a); then, secure it by fastening the carabiner to the appropriate loop (see figure 3.2b) so that it hangs straight (see figure 3.2c). Be sure to test the weight before using it by pulling firmly on the straps and then gradually shifting weight to the Suspension Trainer.

If using a door, be sure to clip the strap into the loop of the door anchor (see figure 3.3a). Place the door anchor over the top of the door (see figure 3.3b); then close the door securely (see figure 3.3c). Note that the door should open away from the user, allowing the doorjamb to provide extra support during the exercises.

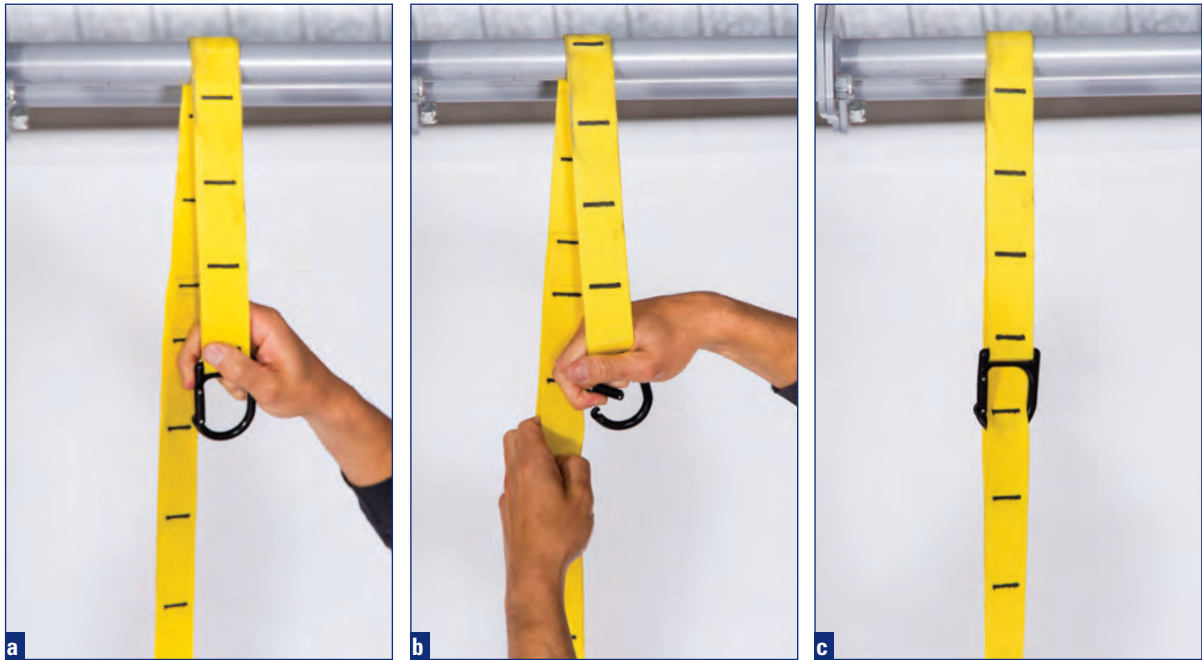


FIGURE 3.2 Anchoring a Suspension Trainer around a beam.



FIGURE 3.3 Anchoring a Suspension Trainer around a door.

Adjusting the Suspension Trainer Length

Adjusting the Suspension Trainer to the appropriate length before each exercise is important to ensure an appropriate training load. The following are typical lengths and positions:

- *Fully shortened*—Adjust the tabs so that they are at the highest point; that is, closest to the anchor (see figure 3.4a). This position is primarily used for exercises involving the back, such as row exercises.
- *Mid-length*—Adjust the tabs so that they are approximately at the midpoint of the straps (see figure 3.4b). This position is primarily used for exercises involving standing such as the biceps and triceps press.
- *Mid-calf*—Adjust the tabs so that the foot cradles are even with the middle of the user's shin or calf, which is approximately 12 inches (30 cm) off the ground (see figure 3.4c). This position is primarily used for exercises involving prone and plank positions.
- *Fully lengthened*—Adjust the tabs so that the bottom of the handles are approximately 3 inches (8 cm) off the ground (see figure 3.4d). This position is primarily used for all chest press exercises.

Gripping the Suspension Trainer

There are several ways to grasp the handles during Suspension Training exercises. Some require a specific grip, whereas others use a variety of grips to increase difficulty. The following are the three basic grips:

- *Supinated*—Palms facing up. This grip places a greater demand on the biceps and wrist flexors.
- *Pronated*—Palms facing down. This grip places a greater demand on the rhomboids and wrist extensors.
- *Neutral*—Thumbs facing up or palms facing inward. This grip reduces stress to the shoulder joint and can be used as a modification in any exercise.

Practicing Suspension Training Safely

When using a Suspension Trainer, check and recheck the anchor system prior to use to ensure that it can support weight. Generally, the issue is not related to the system itself (it is designed to support weight); rather, the issue is often related to what the system is anchored to. For instance, when anchoring the Suspension Trainer to a door, a heavy exterior door is much safer than a hollow door usually found between rooms. Use a deadbolt when anchoring to an external door to reduce the risk of the door opening during an exercise. Also, if using the Suspension Trainer in the single-handle configuration, check and recheck the handles to be sure they are secured together prior to use.

The location around the Suspension Trainer should be clear of debris, and the ground should be level and dry. If using the system outside, clear the training

area of any loose debris. Do not use electrical poles for anchor attachment, and ensure that there are no electrical wires near the anchor system.

The following are other important guidelines to follow to ensure safe training:

- Never stand in the handles or foot cradles.
- Do not use the Suspension Trainer as a swing.
- Wipe any sweat off the ground, handles, and foot cradles to avoid slipping.

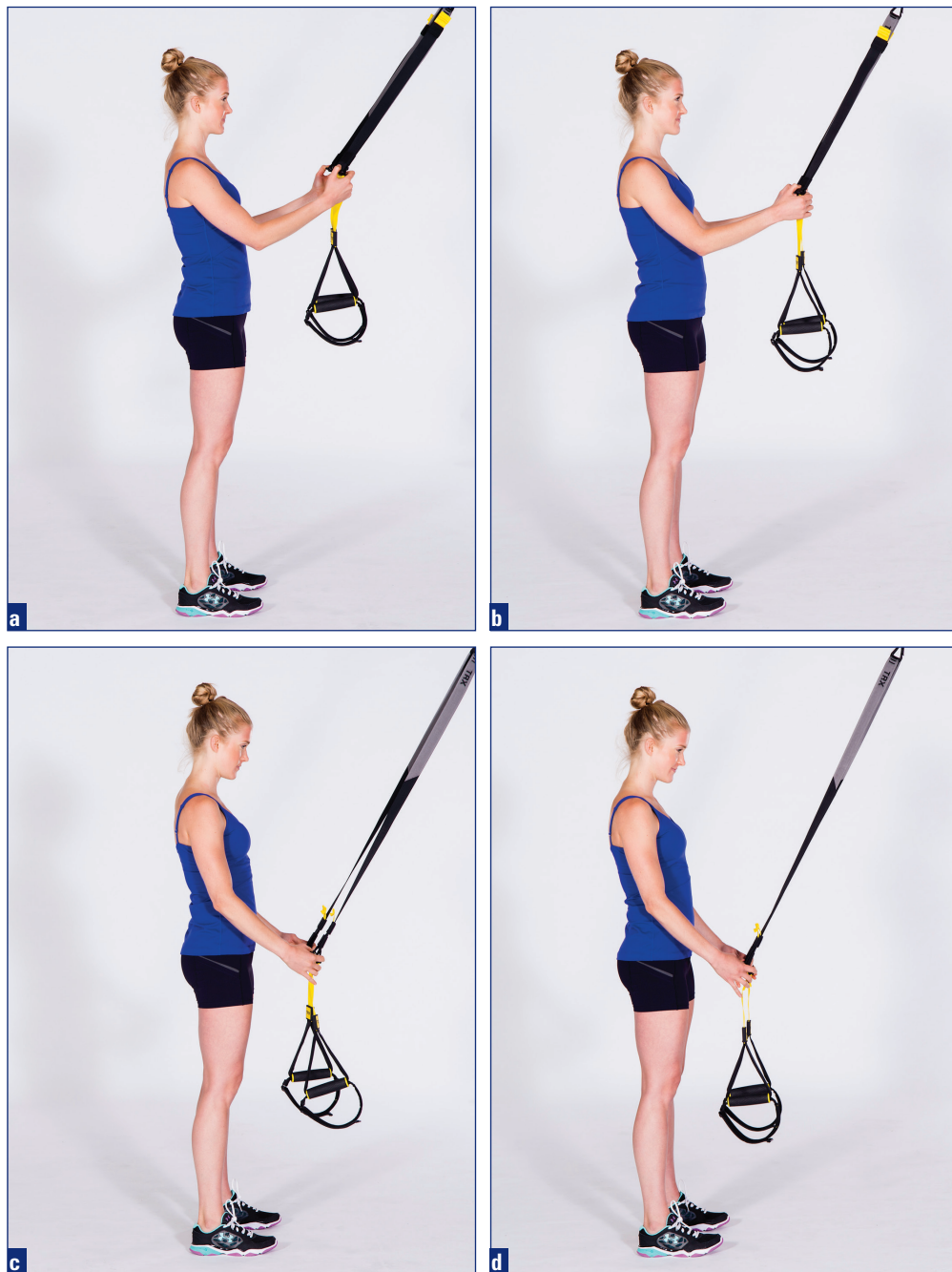


FIGURE 3.4 Suspension Trainer strap lengths: (a) fully-shortened, (b) mid-length, (c) mid-calf, (d) fully lengthened.

- Periodically spray the straps, handles, and foot cradles with an antibacterial spray to reduce the risk of transmitting illnesses or disease (such as MRSA), especially if used in a group setting.
- Be cautious about using hand lotion prior to training because it can increase the risk of slipping off the handles.
- Perform all exercises on resilient flooring with a nonslip surface to reduce the risk of slips and falls and to reduce joint stress.
- Make sure the Suspension Trainer is not rubbing against any skin during use to avoid skin abrasions.
- Wear lightweight and nonrestrictive clothing designed for exercise; other types may restrict or hinder movement.
- Perform exercises in an open area free of debris and sharp objects.
- Avoid exercises that may aggravate current or previous injuries.
- Be familiar with, and practice and master, basic exercises prior to performing more advanced variations.
- Perform Suspension Training exercises with caution if you have major orthopedic limitations or are morbidly obese. Do not perform exercise variations that require greater balance challenges (e.g., single-leg variations), at least in the initial stages of training, if you have these conditions.
- Perform a 5- to 10-minute general warm-up prior to training.

When setting up and using a Suspension Trainer, safety is paramount. Following the general guidelines in this chapter will help ensure safe and effective Suspension Training. However, it is the user's responsibility to be aware of the surroundings and make any appropriate adjustments to maximize safety.