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9 Common Exercises That Could Be Bad for You

Trainers wouldn't be caught dead performing these moves—so why are you? Use their suggestions to upgrade to a safer, more efficient workout

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Kipping Pull-Up



A CrossFit staple and go-to for those who can't yet bust out regular pull-ups, the kipping version incorporates power, momentum, and strength all in one. But if you lack the necessary coordination as well

as strength, stability, mobility, and flexibility in the upper and lower body to perform it, skip it, recommends Elizabeth Kovar, master trainer for BOSU and the American Council on Exercise. "The rapid pull places significant stress on the shoulders, which are highly mobile and vulnerable joints," she says. "Power exercises such as this are most suitable only for elite athletes and highly trained individuals."

Upgrade to: Standing cable lat-pulldowns (shown above) give you all the benefits of pull-ups—in a standing position. Use them as a precursor to bodyweight pull-ups to help you develop the overall back and arm strength and stability needed to eventually progress to more challenging exercises.

How to: Adjust a cable machine so handles are above shoulders. Stand in a split stance with right foot in front of left and grasp handles, keeping a soft bend in arms. On exhale, draw arms toward torso using back muscles, creating a "W" shape with arms. With control, slowly extend arms back to start position. Do 10 to 12 reps.