

Chapter Six

CHAPTER 6 - Range You Can Control

I've lost count of how many times someone has told me, "*I'm strong all the way through that movement.*"

Then we **slow it down**, let the arms *fully lengthen*, and give the *bottom a moment* instead of rushing past it. That's usually when people realize the position was never **weak** — it just *hadn't been visited*.

This is also where **patterns start to show up**. The same habits people use when they're *rushed, chasing reps, or short on time* don't magically disappear in the warm-up — they show up *everywhere*. *Speed creeps in*. Range gets *trimmed*. The bottom gets *skipped* because it feels like the *fastest way through*.

That's why the examples in this chapter come from **regular movements you already do**. Not to turn them into *workouts*, but because habits don't change based on *context*. The way you move *under pressure* is usually the way you move **everywhere**.

From here on, we're just going to **start noticing them**.

The Quiet Trade: Speed and Numbers vs. Ownership

At some point, the focus quietly **shifts**. Instead of paying attention to *how a position feels*, attention moves to the **number of repetitions** or the *time on the clock*. Depth starts getting *negotiated* — not because anyone is trying to cheat, but because **moving faster and getting more reps feels like progress**, and it's easy to *measure and celebrate*.

What rarely gets noticed is **how well a position is actually owned**.

Here's the part that often gets missed: the body doesn't care what gets *counted*.

It cares what gets **repeated**.

When movements are rushed for time or numbers, the body never learns to *settle* into the places where **structure actually matters**. Tendons don't see the *full shape*. The core never has to stay *available through length*. The scapula never has to *organize under real demand*.

On the outside, it can look **strong**.

Inside, *options are quietly being traded away*.

The body is paying attention the entire time. Positions that never get *visited* stop feeling *available*. Length that never gets *organized* stops feeling *trustworthy*. Joints begin carrying stress that should have **passed through the system instead**.

Nothing dramatic happens *all at once*. Movement just gets *a little stiffer, a little narrower, and a little less forgiving*. Eventually, the body starts **protecting itself** — not because it's *broken*, but because it's learned which positions never proved they were *safe*.

Once that trade is seen — **speed and numbers in exchange for ownership** — it's *hard to unsee it*.

Passing Through vs. Owning the Position

I usually don't have to explain this part.

I just ask someone to **slow down**.

On a pull-up, that means letting the arms *fully lengthen at the bottom* — not dropping, not bouncing, just *being there for a moment* before the next rep. That bottom position is also where the **shoulder blades have to organize themselves**, using the same *quiet movements* introduced earlier, now showing up when *range actually matters*.

On a curl, it means letting the arm *straighten all the way* and feeling the weight at *full length* instead of reversing early.

On a squat or hinge, it means *actually sitting into the bottom* instead of hovering just above it.

Nothing dramatic changes. The movement is the same. The load is the same. What changes is **how long the position is visited** — and whether it's *rushed through* or *actually experienced*.

That's usually when **the story shifts**.

Why the Bottom Changes Everything

When people slow down at the bottom, reps that used to feel *easy* start to feel **honest**. That honesty often shows up first in *connective tissue* — not as pain, but as **fatigue that wasn't there before**. It's the kind of tired you feel when tendons finally get asked to do work that *range has been skipping*.

Strength that once felt "*solid*" starts revealing **weak links**. Fatigue shows up sooner, but in places that make *more sense*.

This is also when people realize the bottom isn't **dangerous**. It was just *unfamiliar*.

That unfamiliarity is where things usually break down. *Right at the bottom* — where the arms are long, the joints are open, and the body actually has to deal with the position it's in — people *rush*. They *bounce out*, *reverse early*, or shave off the last few inches and tell themselves it *doesn't matter*.

Not because they're **lazy**, but because that position doesn't feel *owned yet* with the focus of speed and reps.

And when the body doesn't trust a position, it does the same thing every time: **it gets out of it as fast as possible.**

That's how *strong movements* quietly turn into **partial ones.**

Why Full Range Changes Everything

If you've ever tried to get *full range* in a pull-up, dip, push-up, or handstand push-up and thought, "*My body just won't go there,*" this matters.

That usually isn't a **motivation problem**, and it's rarely a *lack of effort*; it's a **tissue exposure problem.** Your body hasn't been taught that those *long positions* are safe — not just mentally, but **physically.**

Most training only challenges muscles where *leverage feels good. Mid-range. Shortened positions.* The places where reps feel *smooth and controlled.* But muscles don't just create force — they also have to **absorb and manage force**, especially when they're *long.*

When a muscle is allowed to **lengthen fully** and stay *engaged under load*, more muscle fibers are recruited, timing has to be *cleaner*, and the nervous system has to stay *involved instead of checking out.* That's why the bottom of a pull-up or dip feels **brutally honest.** The muscle isn't *weak* — it's just being asked to work in a place it was *never trained to work.*

Over time, that kind of exposure does something **powerful.** Strength stops being limited to *one part of the movement.* It spreads. You don't just get *stronger* — you get **stronger where it actually matters.**



This is also where **tendons** come in.

Tendons don't adapt to *occasional spikes* in stress. They adapt to **repeated, calm exposure at length.** When movements are *shortened*

or *reversed early*, tendons never experience their *full functional range*. Load gets concentrated in the same small window over and over again, and tissues stay *sensitive instead of resilient*.

That's why people who think they're "*protecting the bottom*" often end up getting hurt there later. The tissue never learned how to **manage that position**.

Where Strength, Flexibility, and Joint Health Finally Meet

The same pattern shows up at the *shoulder*.

At the bottom of a pull-up, hang, or press, the **scapula has real work to do**. It has to *rotate, slide*, and stay *connected to the ribcage* so force can move from the arms into the trunk. When that range is *rushed or avoided*, the shoulder joint takes over. *Biceps tendons, the front of the shoulder*, and *deeper joint structures* start absorbing stress they were never meant to handle alone.

That's not *weakness*.

That's **poor organization**.

This is why people can feel *flexible* and still get strained.

Why they can feel *strong* and still feel fragile.

Why pain shows up even when *effort and consistency* are there.

When *full range* is actually **owned** — not *forced*, not *rushed* — something changes. Length stops feeling *threatening*. Tendons start *tolerating load* instead of reacting to it. The scapula begins doing its job, and joints get **quieter instead of busier**.

People are often surprised by *soreness* the first time they slow down and use full range properly. That soreness isn't *damage*. It's **feedback**. It's the body adapting to positions it hasn't been asked to manage before.

This is also why **gymnasts** are so strong without chasing numbers.

Range you can't control
doesn't belong to you yet.

Their training constantly puts muscles, tendons, and ligaments into *long, disadvantageous positions* — **under control**. Not to exhaust them, but to teach the body that it can stay *organized there*. Strength gets built where leverage is *worst*. Flexibility becomes *usable instead of fragile*. The nervous system learns not to *panic under stretch*.

They don't just get *strong*.

They get **strong everywhere**.

This is the part most people were **never taught**.

Flexibility isn't something you maintain by *pulling harder* on a stretch.

It's something the body allows when it feels **supported**.

Full-range strength training doesn't take flexibility away. Done correctly, it **preserves it** and often *increases it*, because the body learns it can stay *engaged while long*. That's the difference between *range you can touch once* — and range you can **actually live in**.

You don't need *more exercises*.

You don't need to *push harder*.

You need your body to finally **learn the whole movement** and once it does, things that used to feel *risky* start to feel **solid** — not because you avoided them, but because you *prepared for them*.

From Here On Out, Start Noticing This

Zoom out for a second.

The **warm-up** is where the day gets set. When the *scapula, core,* and *tendons* get **organized early**, everything that follows tends to feel *cleaner* — not because the workout changes, but because **the system you bring into it does**.

That's the **through-line** of this book.

Now zoom back in.

You don't need *new exercises* to apply what you just learned. You're already visiting these positions **every time you train**. The difference now is *what you notice* while you're there.

Here are a few **common places** this starts to show up.

Notice when...

Pull-Ups, Rows, and Hanging Work

(Weightlifting · Calisthenics · CrossFit · Gymnastics)

Notice when:

You *reverse the rep early* instead of letting the arms fully lengthen

You feel the urge to *bounce out of the bottom*

The shoulders feel *tense, crowded, or "busy"* at full hang

The grip stays tight but the rest of the system feels *disconnected*

What that usually means:

The bottom position isn't *owned yet*. The scapula hasn't learned how to *organize under length*, and the tendons haven't seen this shape often enough to *trust it*.

Pressing Movements *(Bench, Push-Ups, Dips, Handstand*

Push-Ups)

Notice when:

Depth gets *shallower* as fatigue builds

Elbows stop traveling *comfortably* at the bottom

The shoulders feel like they're *taking over* instead of the trunk

You feel *strong* until the very lowest part of the rep

What that usually means:

Force is being produced in the *mid-range*, but the system hasn't learned how to *manage load at full depth*. The scapula and core aren't staying *involved when length shows up*.

Squats, Hinges, and Lower-Body Work

(Barbell · Dumbbell · Bodyweight · At-Home Training)

Notice when:

You *hover just above the bottom* instead of settling into it

You *rush out of depth* as soon as you reach it

The *low back or hips* feel like they're doing more work than expected

The bottom feels "*sketchy*" even with light load

What that usually means:

The tissues responsible for *managing depth* haven't been exposed to it long enough. Strength exists — *ownership does not*.

High-Speed or High-Rep Training

(CrossFit · Circuits · Conditioning)

Notice when:

Speed increases but *range quietly shrinks*

Reps feel *efficient but shallow*

You *protect the bottom* to keep the pace

The movement looks *strong* but feels *less controlled* over time

What that usually means:

Speed and numbers are being prioritized over *position*. The body is learning *what to skip*, not what to *organize*.

At-Home and Minimal-Equipment Training**Notice when:**

You *shorten range* because load feels light

You *rush through reps* because "it's just bodyweight"

Fatigue shows up in *joints instead of muscles*

Movements feel *repetitive but not productive*

What that usually means:

Range is being *passed through*, not *owned*. The opportunity to build *strength and flexibility at the same time* is being missed.

For Coaches and Experienced Athletes**Notice when:**

Athletes look *confident* until the bottom

Breakdowns happen at *full length*, not at the top

Cueing *effort* doesn't fix instability

Pain shows up *away from the movement* being trained

What that usually means:

The system hasn't learned how to stay *organized where leverage is worst*. That's not a discipline issue — it's a *preparation gap*.

The Pattern Under All of This

When a position isn't *trusted*, the body does the same thing every time.

It *rushes, shortens, and escapes*. Not because it's **weak** — but because it hasn't been *taught otherwise*.

From here on out, you don't need to *fix* these things only **notice** them and that awareness is what the *next habit* will build on.

What Counts (And What Doesn't)

From here on out, you don't really get to **lie to yourself anymore**.

Every rep you cut short only counts as *a half*.

So the *30 pull-ups* you thought you did? That's **15**.

And that "*40-second*" set you rushed through was really closer to a **minute and twenty** — you just skipped the *hardest part*.

That isn't **punishment** it is **clarity**.

Nothing about this is meant to *shame you*. It's meant to give you something most people never get: **a way to tell the truth** about what your body is actually doing when *no one's watching closely*.

Because once you see this, **you can't unsee it**.

You start noticing things you used to miss — when you *rush out of the bottom*, when *depth quietly disappears*, when *speed replaces control* without you even realizing it. Movements that once felt *impressive* start to feel *incomplete*, and the patterns behind your *plateaus and aches* stop feeling mysterious.

That's the *uncomfortable part* — and also the **good news**.

It means you don't need a *new program*.

You don't need *more volume*.

You don't need to *work harder* or chase some different exercise.

You just need to start **owning the parts of the movement you've been skipping**.

The habit that follows isn't about *fixing anything* or *adding work* to your day. It's about installing **one small, repeatable reminder** of what *full range actually feels like* — so strength, flexibility, and support can start showing up **together** instead of fighting each other.

From this point forward, the choice is *simple*, you can keep either keep *passing through* movements or you can start **owning them**.

The next page shows you how to begin — *quietly, deliberately*, and **without turning your warm-up into a workout**.

End-of-Chapter-Habit-Building

One-Minute Full-Range Wake-Up

Purpose:

Bring the system online — *scapula, tendons, core, and full range* — before training begins.

This is **not exercise**.

It's a *check-in*.

Set-Up (10 seconds)

Where is your body?

Standing tall.

What's touching the ground?

Both feet, evenly weighted.

What are you holding?

Nothing.

Posture cue:

Hips flat. No piking. No arching. Just **stacked**.

The Movement (45–60 seconds total)

Raise both arms in front of you and begin **slow arm circles**, about the size of a *dinner plate* to start.

With each circle:

Let the arms go *a little wider*

Let the shoulders move *naturally on the ribcage*

Keep the core *lightly engaged* — not braced, just *present*

Breathe normally

Over several circles, gradually expand the range until the arms travel **all the way overhead**, then back down and around.

Do a few circles in one direction.

Then *reverse*.

What to Feel

Scapula sliding and rotating smoothly

Arms reaching *full length* without tension

Core staying *involved as range changes*

No rushing through the top or bottom

Stopping Rule (important)

Stop **before**:

breath *tightens*

shoulders *shrug*

ribs *flare*

you feel the urge to “*muscle through*”

When the movement still feels *calm and organized*, you’re done.

What This Installs (*without saying it out loud*)

Scapula learns to *move through range*

Tendons see *length before load*

Core stays *available without locking down*

Full range feels *familiar, not threatening*

That’s the **power-up**.

This minute isn’t about warming up your arms. It’s about reminding your body how to move before you ask it to perform.

Up Next

Chapter 7 — Rotation & Transfer — *How force moves through the body — and where problems start when it doesn’t*