

Body Tension

Tension is a dial, not a switch.

Too much tension and you waste energy, restrict movement, and make holds feel harder than they actually are.

The goal isn't to be as tight as possible. It's to use **exactly as much tension as the movement requires**.

WHAT EVEN IS 'BODY TENSION' IN CLIMBING?

Tension in climbing refers to how tense our bodies are when on the wall. The tenser we are, the stiffer we look. Less tense, and we start swinging about. Ideally, we are able to control this feeling in our bodies to move with maximum efficiency on a given climb.

THE DRILL: TENSION DIAL

Pick 2–3 climbs well below your limit and climb each one three times.

1

ROUND 1 Turn It Up

Climb the problem while deliberately using more tension than necessary. Notice how your movement feels and where you start wasting energy.

2

ROUND 2 Turn It Down

Climb the same problem while intentionally relaxing everything you can. Keep your grip, core, and legs as relaxed as possible while maintaining control.

3

ROUND 3 Find the Dial

Climb it again and find the sweet spot: enough tension to stay connected to the wall, but no more than you need.

RULES

- Pay attention to your hands, shoulders, core, and legs
- Look for places where you're creating tension unnecessarily
- Don't confuse *relaxed* with *loose*—you still need control
- Try to carry the feeling of the third round into harder climbing

WHY THIS WORKS

Climbing efficiently isn't about eliminating tension. It's about learning to **regulate** it. When you can increase tension for a powerful move, decrease it during an easy section, and adjust it as your body position changes, you stop spending energy everywhere and start spending it where it actually matters.

The strongest climbers aren't necessarily the ones who create the most tension. They're the ones who know **when to turn it up—and when to turn it down**.