

Machine Rows

Types (progression): This exercise can also be done with elbows at side and at 90 degrees of arm abduction. **Form:** See Details [here](#), but key points. Always breathe. Keep neutral spine alignment (especially lower back) throughout. Brace your abdomen with 20% isometric contraction - this helps stabilize the spine ([bracing](#)). Keep upper body upright. Make sure when you are pulling in that you feel the muscles between your shoulder blades being engaged. Pull all the way in.

Avoid Outward elbows when using lower grip. Avoid shrugged shoulders. When you pull the weight, keep your shoulders back and down. Shrugging your shoulders toward your ears will place too much focus on the traps. Avoid rounded back. Always maintain a neutral back. To prevent rounding or arching, engage your abdominals and focus on keeping your spine straight.

[SEE DETAILS ON HOW TO DO A MACHINE ROW.](#)



There are a wide variety of ways to do resistance rows (banded, cable, machine, or free weight). I highly recommend the banded row. As mentioned in a previous “Do it Right” article, banded rows are an excellent exercise in developing scapular stability. You can also employ a variety of angles to target different muscles of the back, especially the smaller stabilizing muscles, when doing a band row motion. **Machines rows work somewhat similar to the banded row, but typically work to a greater degree the larger muscles of the back (latissimus dorsi and rhomboids), while working the smaller stabilizing muscles less. It is a great exercise for body building. The nice thing about most machine exercises they are easy to understand, set up, and perform. You can also overload the muscle with less chance of injury compared to the free weights. As mentioned strengthening mid back and scapular stabilizers I feel is essential for good upper body health. Rows are a primary motion ([primary motions](#)). As with other primary motions performing them may help reduce muscle imbalances and helps with posture.** Many people neglect training the mid back and scapular stabilizing muscles by not working them at all, over emphasizing the chest (push ups and chest presses), or not doing enough of them. I go by the Ace Fitness program suggestion of doing 2 to 3 row type exercises for every push motion (chest press, push ups). So if you do 3 sets of chest press do 2 different row exercises for 3 sets. **I also suggest a 1:1 ratio when it comes to rows and putdowns/pull ups. I highly suggest doing both the lat putdowns and seated row machine and banded rows since they have different effects on the back musculature.** A study found that the seated row while recruiting the latissimus dorsi and biceps brachii equally effectively as the lat pulldown also recruits the middle trapezius/rhomboid muscle group to a greater extent ([Study](#)). If you had to choose on over the other I would choose the row. Another study comparing a variety of back exercises found that there isn’t one specific exercise that best activates all the five back muscles tested to the greatest degree ([Study](#)). Based on this it would be prudent to have a variety of back exercises in your program.