

A FREE 8-WEEK GYM PROGRAM

The Beginner's Blueprint.

Your first eight weeks in the gym. Three workouts a week, exactly what to do on each one, and a simple way to get stronger every single week.

3 days a week • Upper • Lower • Full body

45-60 minutes • full gym • no experience needed

Write it down • watch the numbers climb

How this works.

- 01 **Three workouts a week.** Upper body, lower body, full body. Do them on any three days you like — Monday, Wednesday, Friday works well — with a rest day between when you can.
- 02 **Each workout is five movements plus a core exercise.** About 45–60 minutes including your warm-up. Do them in the order listed.
- 03 **The exercises stay the same for three weeks at a time.** That's on purpose. Repeating them is how you learn the movement and add weight with confidence.
- 04 **Write down the weight you use, every set.** There are boxes for it. Watching those numbers go up is the entire point — it's how you know it's working.
- 05 **Rest at least one full day between workouts.** You don't get stronger in the gym — you get stronger recovering from it. Two rest days a week, minimum.
- 06 **If a movement is new to you, look up a quick form video first.** Good form with a light weight always beats heavy and sloppy.

THE WHOLE PLAN IN ONE LINE

Show up three times a week, do the six movements, and add a little each time. That's it. Everything else in here just helps you do that well.

How you get stronger.

Your muscles grow when you ask them to do a little more than last time. That's called **progressive overload**, and it's the only rule that really matters. Here's how to do it without overthinking.

PICKING YOUR FIRST WEIGHT

Choose a weight you could lift for about **two more reps** than the target. If the target is 8 and you could grind out 10, that's the right weight. Too easy — go up. Can't hit the reps with good form — go down. The first week is just finding your numbers.

LEAVE TWO IN THE TANK

Every set, stop when you have about **two clean reps left** in you. As a beginner you never need to train to failure — it just wears you out and wrecks your form.

WHEN TO ADD WEIGHT

If you hit **all your sets and reps** with good form and two left in the tank, go up next time: about **5 lb (2.5 kg)** on upper-body lifts, **10 lb (5 kg)** on lower-body lifts. Small jumps.

IF YOU MISS THE REPS

Stay at the same weight until you get them. No rush, no shame — that's the plan working. Then move up.

WHY SMALL JUMPS WIN

Adding 5 lb a week is over 40 lb in two months. Slow is fast.

Warm up. Move well.

YOUR 5-10 MINUTE WARM-UP

- 3–4 minutes of easy cardio — bike, row, or a brisk walk — just enough to break a light sweat.
- Then 1–2 light sets of your **first exercise** before you load your working weight.
- That's it. You don't need 20 minutes of stretching to start.

READING YOUR LOG

3 × 8 means 3 sets of 8 reps. Write the weight you used for the week in the box. **/leg** or **/arm** means that many on each side. **Superset** means do the two exercises back-to-back.

FOUR HABITS THAT KEEP YOU SAFE

- **Control the weight down** — about two seconds — then lift with intent.
- **Full range of motion** beats heavy and short every time.
- **Breathe** — out as you lift, in as you lower. Don't hold your breath.
- **Joint pain is a stop sign.** Muscle burn is fine; sharp joint pain means swap the movement or drop the weight.

REST BETWEEN SETS

About 90 seconds on the big lifts, 60 on the smaller ones. Long enough to recover, short enough to stay warm.

Upper Body

WARM UP FIRST 3-4 min easy cardio, then 1-2 light sets of your first lift. Write the weight you use each week in the boxes — aim to beat it.

EXERCISE	SETS × REPS	WK 1	WK 2	WK 3
Dumbbell bench press HORIZONTAL PUSH <i>Lower the dumbbells to mid-chest, elbows about 45°, press up and together.</i>	3 × 8			
Lat pulldown VERTICAL PULL <i>Pull the bar to your collarbone, drive your elbows down, control it back up.</i>	3 × 10			
Seated cable row HORIZONTAL PULL <i>Sit tall, pull the handle to your belly button, squeeze your shoulder blades.</i>	3 × 10			
Dumbbell shoulder press VERTICAL PUSH <i>Press overhead without arching your back; stop just short of locking out.</i>	3 × 8			
Biceps curl + triceps pushdown ARMS • SUPERSET <i>Two exercises back-to-back. Slow on the way down, no swinging.</i>	3 × 12			
Plank CORE <i>Straight line from head to heels; squeeze your glutes and abs the whole time.</i>	3 × 30 sec			

Lower Body

WARM UP FIRST 3-4 min easy cardio, then 1-2 light sets of your first lift. Write the weight you use each week in the boxes — aim to beat it.

EXERCISE	SETS × REPS	WK 1	WK 2	WK 3
Goblet squat SQUAT <i>Hold a dumbbell at your chest, sit straight down between your knees, heels flat.</i>	3 × 8			
Dumbbell Romanian deadlift HINGE <i>Push your hips back, soft knees, feel your hamstrings, keep a flat back.</i>	3 × 8			
Leg press SQUAT • ACCESSORY <i>Feet shoulder-width, lower under control, don't slam the knees straight.</i>	3 × 10			
Seated leg curl HAMSTRINGS <i>Curl down with control, slow on the way back up.</i>	3 × 12			
Hip thrust GLUTES <i>Shoulders on a bench, drive through your heels, squeeze your glutes hard at the top.</i>	3 × 10			
Dead bug CORE <i>Lower back glued to the floor; extend opposite arm and leg slowly.</i>	3 × 10/side			

Full Body

WARM UP FIRST 3-4 min easy cardio, then 1-2 light sets of your first lift. Write the weight you use each week in the boxes — aim to beat it.

EXERCISE	SETS × REPS	WK 1	WK 2	WK 3
Deadlift HINGE <i>Bar over mid-foot, flat back, push the floor away and stand tall — hips and chest rise together.</i>	3 × 6			
Incline dumbbell press PUSH <i>Bench at 45°, press up and slightly together, control the descent.</i>	3 × 10			
Chest-supported row PULL <i>Chest on the pad, row the weight to your ribs, squeeze.</i>	3 × 10			
Dumbbell walking lunge SINGLE-LEG <i>Long step forward, drop the back knee toward the floor, stay tall.</i>	3 × 10/leg			
Hanging knee raise CORE <i>Curl your knees up toward your chest, control them down, no swinging.</i>	3 × 12			

Upper Body

WARM UP FIRST 3-4 min easy cardio, then 1-2 light sets of your first lift. Write the weight you use each week in the boxes — aim to beat it.

EXERCISE	SETS × REPS	WK 4	WK 5	WK 6
Barbell bench press HORIZONTAL PUSH <i>Lower the bar to mid-chest, elbows tucked about 45°, drive it back up.</i>	3 × 8			
Assisted pull-up VERTICAL PULL <i>Pull your chest toward the bar, lower all the way down with control.</i>	3 × 8			
One-arm dumbbell row HORIZONTAL PULL <i>Hand and knee on the bench, row to your hip, don't twist your torso.</i>	3 × 10/arm			
Seated dumbbell shoulder press VERTICAL PUSH <i>Press overhead, keep your ribs down, controlled both ways.</i>	3 × 8			
Cable curl + overhead triceps extension ARMS • SUPERSET <i>Full range, no momentum, control the stretch.</i>	3 × 12			
Cable crunch CORE <i>Crunch with your abs, not your arms; round your spine down.</i>	3 × 12			

Lower Body

WARM UP FIRST 3-4 min easy cardio, then 1-2 light sets of your first lift. Write the weight you use each week in the boxes — aim to beat it.

EXERCISE	SETS × REPS	WK 4	WK 5	WK 6
Back squat SQUAT <i>Bar on your upper back, sit down and slightly back, knees track over your toes.</i>	3 × 8			
Deadlift HINGE <i>Bar over mid-foot, flat back, drive through the floor, stand tall, then lower under control.</i>	3 × 6			
Dumbbell walking lunge SINGLE-LEG <i>Long step, drop the back knee, push through the front heel.</i>	3 × 10/leg			
Hip thrust GLUTES <i>Shoulders on the bench, drive through your heels, squeeze at the top.</i>	3 × 10			
Leg extension QUADS <i>Straighten your legs under control, squeeze at the top, lower slowly.</i>	3 × 12			
Hanging knee raise CORE <i>Knees up toward your chest, control down, no swinging.</i>	3 × 12			

Full Body

WARM UP FIRST 3-4 min easy cardio, then 1-2 light sets of your first lift. Write the weight you use each week in the boxes — aim to beat it.

EXERCISE	SETS × REPS	WK 4	WK 5	WK 6
Front squat SQUAT <i>Elbows high, torso upright, sit straight down.</i>	3 × 8			
Romanian deadlift HINGE <i>Hips back, load the hamstrings, flat back, stand tall.</i>	3 × 8			
Standing overhead press PUSH <i>Press the bar overhead, squeeze your glutes, don't lean back.</i>	3 × 8			
Chest-supported row PULL <i>Chest on the pad, row to your ribs, squeeze the shoulder blades.</i>	3 × 10			
Plank CORE <i>Straight line, hips level, brace your abs hard.</i>	3 × 40 sec			

Upper Body

WARM UP FIRST 3-4 min easy cardio, then 1-2 light sets of your first lift. Write the weight you use each week in the boxes — aim to beat it.

EXERCISE	SETS × REPS	WK 7	WK 8
Incline dumbbell press PUSH 45° bench, press up and together, control down.	3 × 8		
Lat pulldown • neutral grip VERTICAL PULL Palms facing, pull to your collarbone, elbows down and back.	3 × 10		
Chest-supported row HORIZONTAL PULL Row to your ribs, pause, squeeze the shoulder blades.	3 × 10		
Dumbbell shoulder press VERTICAL PUSH Press overhead, ribs down, no arch in your back.	3 × 8		
EZ-bar curl + rope pushdown ARMS • SUPERSET Controlled, full range, no swinging.	3 × 12		
Hanging knee raise CORE Knees up, slow on the way down.	3 × 15		

Lower Body

WARM UP FIRST 3-4 min easy cardio, then 1-2 light sets of your first lift. Write the weight you use each week in the boxes — aim to beat it.

EXERCISE	SETS × REPS	WK 7	WK 8
Back squat SQUAT <i>A little heavier now. Sit down and back, brace hard, only as deep as you control.</i>	3 × 6		
Romanian deadlift HINGE <i>Hips back, hamstrings load, flat back.</i>	3 × 8		
Bulgarian split squat SINGLE-LEG <i>Back foot on the bench, drop straight down, push through the front heel.</i>	3 × 8/leg		
Seated leg curl HAMSTRINGS <i>Curl down, control up.</i>	3 × 12		
Back extension POSTERIOR CHAIN <i>Hinge at the hips, squeeze your glutes to rise to a straight line — don't overarch.</i>	3 × 12		
Cable crunch CORE <i>Abs, not arms; round down.</i>	3 × 12		

Full Body

WARM UP FIRST 3-4 min easy cardio, then 1-2 light sets of your first lift. Write the weight you use each week in the boxes — aim to beat it.

EXERCISE	SETS × REPS	WK 7	WK 8
Deadlift HINGE <i>Bar over mid-foot, flat back, push the floor away, stand tall, control it down.</i>	3 × 6		
Dumbbell bench press PUSH <i>To mid-chest, press up and together.</i>	3 × 8		
One-arm dumbbell row PULL <i>Row to the hip, no twisting.</i>	3 × 10/arm		
Goblet squat SQUAT <i>Dumbbell at chest, sit between the knees, heels flat.</i>	3 × 10		
Plank CORE <i>Straight line, brace, keep breathing.</i>	3 × 45 sec		

AFTER EIGHT WEEKS

Look back at your numbers.

Flip through your log. The weights went up, the movements got smoother, and showing up got easier. That's not luck — that's you, doing the work, three times a week.

KEEP IT GOING

Run it again, heavier. Start the whole plan over from Week 1 — but begin with the weights you finished on. You'll fly through the early weeks.

Or step up. When three days feels easy and your numbers stall for a couple of weeks, you're ready for a four-day plan.

THE REAL WIN

Strength is a skill you keep for life. The habit you just built — same days, honest effort, a little more each time — is the whole thing. Everything fancy comes later. This is the foundation.

IronShift

Strength + Conditioning, built around your life.