

Overview

Returning to the gym after a long break or starting strength training for the first time?

Use this guide as a blue print for beginning your strength training journey by applying the six core movement patterns of the human body:

1. SQUAT
2. HINGE
3. LUNGE
4. CARRY
5. PUSH
6. PULL



This approach is designed to **train movements instead of muscles**, which teaches our bodies to move in a useful and functional way while adding strength in the process. Once you establish a good foundation of strength and movement with this approach, you can move on to more challenging exercises and complex movements.

There are lots of different options of exercises within these six movements that you can choose from to keep your routine fresh and challenging (or less challenging) as you gain strength over time. For examples of exercises for each movement, view our previous blog [here](#). If you are finding one variation of the movement is too challenging, then we recommend regressing to an easier exercise for a few weeks before progressing again.

This is not a program designed for an individual, it is simply meant to give you ideas on where to start. If you are interested in a more detailed exercise program catered to your personal needs, book an appointment with our sports chiropractor [here](#).

Weeks 1-2: Foundation Building

Start with lighter weights and gradually increase the intensity as you progress. Perform each exercise with proper form and control to minimize the risk of injury.

Day 1: Full Body

- Kettlebell (KB) Deadlift - 3 sets of 6-8 reps
- Bodyweight (BW) Box Squat - 3 sets of 8-10 reps
- Push-Up - 3 sets of 8-10 reps
- TRX Rows - 3 sets of 6-8 reps
- Farmers Carry - 2 rounds for distance (walk until you need a break)

Day 2: Rest or Active Recovery

Day 3: Full Body

- Goblet Squat - 3 sets of 6-8 reps
- BW Split Squat - 3 sets of 8-10 reps (each leg)
- Dumbbell (DB) Bench Press - 3 sets of 6-8 reps
- Lat Pull Down - 3 sets of 6-8 reps
- Suitcase Carry - 2 rounds for distance

Day 4: Rest or Active Recovery

Day 5: Full Body

- DB Romanian Deadlift (RDL) - 3 sets of 5-6 reps
- BW Forward Lunge - 3 sets of 5-6 reps (each side)
- Single-arm Overhead Press - 3 sets of 5-6 reps (each side)
- Bent Over Row - 3 sets of 5-6 reps (each side)
- Rack Carry - 2 rounds for distance

Day 6-7: Rest or Active Recovery

Weeks 3-4: Progressive Overload

Continue training the same movements from Weeks 1-2, but aim to increase the weight or intensity slightly for each exercise. You can also increase the number of sets or reps if you're feeling comfortable with the current workload. Aim for small, gradual progressions.

Day 1: Full Body

- Single-arm KB Deadlift - 3 sets of 4-5 reps (each side)
- Single-arm KB Front Squat - 3 sets of 4-5 reps (each side)
- Push-Up - 3 sets of 10-15 reps
- Pull-Up Ladder - 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 reps (Assisted if needed)
- Farmers Carry - 3 rounds for distance

Day 2: Rest or Active Recovery

Day 3: Full Body

- Split Stance RDL - 3 sets of 6-8 reps (each leg)
- DB Split Squat - 3 sets of 6-8 reps (each leg)
- Military Press - 3 sets of 8-10 reps
- Bent Over Row - 3 sets of 8-10 reps
- Suitcase Carry - 3 rounds for distance

Day 4: Rest or Active Recovery

Day 5: Full Body

- Barbell Squat - 3 sets of 5-6 reps
- DB Reverse Lunge - 3 sets of 5-6 reps (each side)
- Single-arm Overhead Press - 3 sets of 5-6 reps (each side)
- Lat Pulldown - 3 sets of 8-10 reps
- Rack Carry - 3 rounds for distance

Day 6-7: Rest or Active Recovery

Weeks 5-6: Strength Building

Introduce more challenging variations of exercises or increase the weight further to continue challenging your muscles. As always, quality over quantity. Feel free to substitute KB or DB for different exercises.

Day 1: Full Body

- Barbell Deadlift - 3 sets of 8-10 reps
- Barbell Squat - 3 sets of 8-10 reps
- DB Bench Press - 3 sets of 8-10 reps
- Seated Cable Rows - 3 sets of 8-10 reps
- Farmers Carry - 3 rounds for distance

Day 2: Rest or Active Recovery

Day 3: Full Body

- KB Romanian Deadlift (RDL) - 3 sets of 5-6 reps
- DB Forward Lunge - 3 sets of 5-6 reps (each side)
- Single-arm Overhead Press - 3 sets of 5-6 reps (each side)
- Bent Over Row - 3 sets of 5-6 reps (each side)
- Rack Carry - 3 rounds for distance

Day 4: Rest or Active Recovery

Day 5: Full Body

- Double KB Front Squat - 3 sets of 8-10 reps
- KB Split Squat - 3 sets of 4-5 reps (each leg)
- DB Bench Press - 3 sets of 8-10 reps
- Lat Pull Down - 3 sets of 8-10 reps
- Overhead Carry - 3 rounds for distance

Day 6-7: Rest or Active Recovery

Tips For Success

Rest & Recovery

For beginners, 2-3 days of exercise per week with 1-2 days rest between is recommended. As a general rule, we recommend a maximum of 2 days off between sessions to keep you on track and continue making progress. For more detailed guidelines for rest and recovery, please refer to our [Exercise Recovery Companion](#) for tips on how to evaluate and manage pain when exercising.

Training Variability

We recommend using an approach where you have a hard, medium, and light training day. Since we're training the whole body, this allows our muscles adequate time to recover and helps us continue making strength gains while decreasing risk of over-training and injury. For example:

- Monday - hard day - 85-95% effort
- Wednesday - light day - 65 - 75% effort
- Friday - medium day - 75 - 85% effort

Modify intensity by changing the resistance, sets, and/or reps of exercises.

How hard should I be working?

Quality > Quantity. The first couple weeks of starting this routine will be spent finding the right weights and resistance that work best for you. For each exercise, use a weight that allows you to maintain good technique through all of your reps and sets. We want the last couple reps each set to be tough but doable.

When should I increase the weight?

2-for-2 rule: if you can perform two or more repetitions over the repetition goal for a given exercise in the last set in two consecutive workouts, weight should be added to that exercise for the next training session. For beginners:

- 1-2 kg (2.5-5 lbs) for upper body exercises
- 2-4 kg (5-10 lbs) for lower body exercises