

“Most champions are built by punch the clock workouts rather than extraordinary efforts.” Dan John

PROGRAM GUIDELINES



You will have three programs to choose from based on your goals. I have designed each program to make it easy to transition from one to the other based on your short-term goals, or as a means of breaking up the monotony of training. Boredom is the enemy of progress. When we start losing enthusiasm for training, we should switch things up. Find a way to make training fun again.

The Cutting Program is designed for those looking to rev-up their metabolism while building a strong foundation of strength and general fitness. This program is designed to accelerate your progress, but diet will ultimately determine your rate of weight loss. You will train each muscle group twice a week in an Upper Body - Lower Body training split. The program incorporates strength training circuits and cardio accelerations to improve your general fitness and turbocharge your metabolism. It is a great boredom buster workout.

The Maintenance Program is designed to help you maintain a lean physique while slowly adding quality muscle. Each muscle group is hit once a week. You will use staggered sets to target neglected muscle groups during the rest periods between the big lifts. Cardio accelerations are optional. Bulking and cutting can take a toll on us both mentally and physically. This program will allow you to consolidate your gains and prepare for the next push. You will hit each muscle group once a week, in a Push-Pull-Leg training split. This is a great program for staying fit year-round.

The Lean Bulking Program is designed to help you put on muscle mass. If you aren't gaining weight, you will need to increase your caloric intake. You cannot build a house without raw building materials, even if you have the best plans and the most skilled workers. Likewise, you cannot build muscle without consuming a surplus of calories. The program is designed to increase training volume through higher training frequency. You will train on a Push-Pull-Leg training split.

I have designed each training program to support different goals, but you could use any of them to gain muscle or lose fat. Diet is a bigger factor. I have developed downloadable training logs for each of these programs that you can print out and take to the gym. You don't have to use them, but you should be tracking your personal records. Most people don't use a training log because they aren't training. They are exercising. You'll do better if you create a system of tracking personal records. Peter Drucker liked to tell business leaders, "If you want it, measure it. If you can't measure it, forget it." What is true in business is true in life. Do you want to make progress? If you do, I suggest you measure it. The difference between training and exercise is their focus. Training focuses on producing better performance - exercise focuses on producing exhaustion.

WORKOUT GUIDELINES

START SLOW, LIFE IS A MARATHON

You should consult a doctor if you have any underlying health issues, or you have not worked out in a long time. If you need to start on a reduced workout schedule, please do so. Take 3 to 5 minute breaks during your workout sessions to drink some water and catch your breath when needed. If you are not comfortable using free weights, start with machine exercises. Pace yourself. It took time to get out of shape; it will take time to get back into shape. The great news is that the body responds quickly to regular exercise, so stay positive.

ALWAYS WARM-UP

If you do not have time to warm-up, you do not have time to work out. Nothing will set your progress back more than an injury. Always begin your workout with a 5-minute warm-up. Warming up the muscles and tendons, making them more flexible and less likely to tear. Your muscles and tendons are like rubber bands. If you place a rubber band in warm water, it becomes more pliable. If you put it in cold water, it becomes brittle and more likely to snap when stretched. You always want to begin your workout with warm muscles. When I am training upper body muscles, my preferred warm-up is rowing. Cycling works well for leg training. If you are working out at home, you can perform some jumping jacks, jog in place, climb stairs, shadow box, or do a combination of these for 5 minutes to get warmed up. Always perform one or two low-intensity warm-up sets for the first compound exercise for each body part. I recommend you start with 50% of your working weight for the first set, and 70% for your second. Keep the repetitions in the same range as your working sets. These sets should be easy efforts, priming the muscles, not taxing them.

ALTERNATIVE EXERCISES

I left a blank space for Remarks in the workout program for alternative exercises. I realize not everyone will have access to the same equipment, and some people have injuries that preclude certain exercises. Whenever possible, stay with the recommended exercises. If you must substitute, ensure you do it correctly. For example, leg extensions are not an appropriate substitute for squats, because leg extensions are an isolation movement, and squats are a compound movement. Compound movements, like the bench press, work several muscles at a time and allow you to lift heavier weights than isolation movements, like the fly, which only targets one muscle, the chest.

WORKOUT CIRCUITS

Some workouts consist of strength circuits. These exercises are performed back to back with one minutes rest in between. I recommend using a sports watch with a countdown timer, like the Timex Ironman. Performing exercises for independent muscle groups in a circuit allows you to perform more sets during a workout without shortening rest intervals, which would degrade performance. It also improves cardiorespiratory fitness, keeps the muscles warm, and burns more calories. Make sure that you catch your breath before each set, so your performance does not suffer. I know this type of training can be a challenge in a crowded gym, but it is possible, especially if you are using primarily free weights. You will have to be a little assertive and ask strangers, "Can I work in?" I typically explain to them that I am working a few exercises in a circuit, so I will not be back for about 3 or 4 minutes. I have never had anyone refuse to let me work in. After all, it is as much your gym as theirs.

OPTIONAL EXERCISES

The optional exercises are there for those that want to burn additional calories and improve their cardiovascular fitness. If you feel that they are too taxing and degrade your performance on the other exercises, omit them from your workout.

KEEP 1 OR 2 REPS IN THE TANK

Stop most sets one or two repetitions shy of failure. Going to failure on your first set will cause a decline in performance. We want to maximize our performance during each workout. We do this by stopping short of failure on all but the last set of each exercise. Your maximum effort should be given to the last set of the last exercise for a muscle group. Our goal is to lift as much as possible during each workout. And to increase that overload from week to week, month to month. You accomplish this by keeping a repetition or two in the tank, until the very end of your workout. As soon as you take a set to failure, your performance on succeeding sets will degrade substantially. For example, if you went to failure on pull-ups using your 10-repetition maximum. You might only get 7 repetitions on your next set and 5 or 6 on your third set. Your total number of repetitions with that weight would have been 22 or 23. Had you stopped a couple of repetitions shy of failure on your first and second set, you would have been able to perform at least eight repetitions on all three sets for a total of 24. We want to lift heavy, but stay fresh as long as possible during our workouts.

If you took your last set to failure, you might achieved a total of 25 or 26 repetitions. Your workout volume, in either case, would be higher than if you had taken the first set to failure. Taking sets to failure should be used as a means of creating progressive overload and evaluating your strength. It shouldn't be a goal in and of itself. Progressive overload produces muscular growth. Training to failure is a method of producing progressive overload, not a trigger in and of itself. Scientific studies and meta-analyses have demonstrated the superiority of performing three sets of an exercise vs. one set. One set to failure will stimulate growth, but it is a minimum effective dose. If you do not want to invest too much time in the gym, one set will produce results, but they will be suboptimal.

CARDIO TRAINING

Your strength training workouts are going to burn calories and improve heart health, so do not overdo the cardio. A good rule of thumb for body transformation is to spend twice as much time strength training as cardio training. Cardio training, by its very nature, is antagonistic to muscle and strength gains and can cause overuse injuries. **Cardio is excellent for our overall mental and physical health, but it isn't the primary driver of weight loss. I recommend you limit your HIIT style cardio to 60 minutes a week. If you perform steady-state cardio, or a combination of steady-state and HIIT, cap your weekly volume at 2-hours.** The training program in this book makes strength training the number one exercise priority. You can perform 10 to 20 minute cardio sessions after your strength training or 10 to 30 minute cardio sessions, separate from your strength training. I prefer doing cardio in the morning and lifting during lunch. When I cannot get to the gym during lunch, I will either do an abbreviated workout in the morning or immediately after I get home from work.

EXTRA CARDIO:

If you are motivated to do more cardio, you can. I suggest you do it in the form of active recovery - low-intensity cardio, like walking. Your intensity should not exceed 60% of your maximum training heart rate (MTR). Besides burning additional calories, active recovery exercise will reduce muscle soreness and promote quicker recovery. It removes the metabolic byproduct of intense exercise, lactic acid, and shuttles nutrients, like oxygen and glucose to the muscle. I recommend listening to audiobooks while performing this additional exercise to make it more enjoyable.

5 REASONS TO KEEP A TRAINING LOG

“If you want it, measure it. If you can't measure it, forget it.” Peter Drucker

If you want to improve your performance, you **MUST** track it. This sounds like common sense because it is, but how many people do you see in the gym keeping a training log? Do you keep a training log? The difference between exercising and training is a log.

Here are the 5 Reasons You Should Keep a Training Log:

- 1) It is what athletes do.
- 2) It allows you to measure the effectiveness of your program.
- 3) It will cause you to consistently train harder.
- 4) Recording small wins helps to sustain motivation.
- 5) It is your best tool for overcoming training plateaus.

#1 It is what athletes do.

If you don't keep a log, I would suggest you aren't training; you are exercising. There is nothing wrong with exercising. You are still lapping everyone who's sitting on the couch watching Netflix, but if you want to make progress, I suggest you train like an athlete. A large part of CrossFit's effectiveness can be attributed to the tracking of personal records (PRs). When you are working out to improve performance by setting new PRs, you are training like an athlete. Athletes set performance goals, and so should you. Instead of going to the gym with the vague goal of getting stronger and fitter, set

quantifiable goals. For example, run a 7-minute mile or a five-pound increase in your five-rep maximum deadlift by the end of the month.

Fractional plates allow you to break down your strength training goals even further. You can use $\frac{1}{2}$ pound fractional plates to add 1-pound to the bar at a time. So instead of trying to increase your deadlift by five pounds all at once, you can attempt to increase it by two or three pounds each week. Most gyms do not have fractional plates, but my gym does. That is because I purchased them. I did not want to carry the plates to and from the gym, so I decided to risk the 33 dollars I paid for the plates and left them at the gym. You can also break down your monthly cardio goals into smaller weekly goals. For example, you can increase your treadmill speed as little as $\frac{1}{10}$ mile per hour (MPH) each week to reach your monthly goal. Small incremental improvements are easier to achieve and sustain. Progress by the yard is hard, but by the inch is a cinch.

Elite athletes are meticulous trackers. They track their training, their nutrition, and their sleep at a minimum. Some will track other metrics like their waking heart rate because a spike of 5 to 10 beats per minute, could be an indicator of overtraining or illness. Elite athletes track everything because they are serious about performance. If you want to improve your performance, keep a log.

#2 It allows you to measure the effectiveness of your program.

Maintaining a training log allows you to gauge the effectiveness of your program by measuring your progress. Without a training log, you are flying blind. Your training log will provide you with valuable insights. The more information you register in your log, the better. At a minimum, we should record:

- workout volume and intensity
- quantity and quality of our sleep (poor sleep can be a sign of overtraining)
- calories and grams of protein consumed
- weekly bodyweight average

You will learn from your log, how much training volume you can effectively recover from. You will learn what training frequency yields the most progress. You will learn how long you can maintain a high level of effort before you need a de-load week. A de-load is when you intentionally train at a lower intensity to promote recovery. You cannot maintain a peak level of training indefinitely. I suggest a de-load week every 6 to 8 weeks, depending on your ability to recover. If you don't feel beat-up, you don't have to take a deload. Listen to your body. You might need to take a deload sooner or later than I recommend. During a deload, don't perform any HIIT workouts and cut your lifting volume in half, and keep four repetitions in reserve (RIR). Everyone makes great progress when they first begin to train hard. I would not use your initial training program as a gauge for what works. The programs you follow after your first nine months of training are a much better indicator of what works and what doesn't. If you are making progress on your current workout routine, then it is effective. I wouldn't change things very much until your progress halts.

#3 It will cause you to consistently train harder.

When we keep a log, we naturally train harder. We'll look at what we did last week, and we will challenge ourselves to do better. Maintaining a log helps to foster healthy competition with ourselves. We naturally push harder when we track our performance.

Not only will we push harder, but we will also be more consistent. Recording an activity modifies our behavior. Recording our workouts will make us more consistent. A log doesn't lie. If we have been missing workouts or skipping leg days, the log will make it obvious.

#4 Recording small wins help to sustain motivation.

Natural bodybuilders and powerlifters go to the gym to set new PRs. They want to perform a goal number of repetitions on each set successfully. They want to accumulate small wins. These small wins keep them motivated. After all, our goal is to get bigger and stronger, not failure. Powerlifters cycle their weights over a couple of months to set a new PR. Let's say you can perform three sets of three-repetitions on the bench press with 205 pounds. You could begin your cycle with 175 pounds. Each week you would perform three sets of three repetitions, increasing the weight 5 pounds. Your goal would be to finish the cycle, completing three sets of three repetitions with 215 pounds. This is a very effective way of building muscle and strength. The first few weeks will feel easy, but remember we are training, not exercising. Muscular failure and exhaustion aren't our goals. These easier sessions will allow you to slowly ramp-up intensity so you can break through a plateau. You cannot train at maximum intensity all the time. Training takes a systematic approach to performance improvement. If you completed four successful cycles like this in a year, you would increase your three repetition max from 215 pounds to 235 pounds. This would add an appreciable amount of muscle to your chest, shoulders, and triceps.

#5 It is your best tool for overcoming training plateaus.

When we fail to make progress, the three areas to examine are our DIET, our TRAINING, and our RECOVERY. All of this information is contained in our training log. Without a log, we are relying on our memory. Not the most objective source of information. "The palest ink is better than the best memory." Chinese Proverb

If our goal is to gain muscle mass, and we have stopped making progress, we would examine our log and determine if we were:

- eating enough calories and protein
- getting enough sleep
- training too much or too little
- getting stronger
- overtrained or overreaching

As we gain muscle, we will need to continually increase the number of calories we consume to continue gaining weight. The reverse is generally true for weight loss. We might initially lose weight consuming 1,900 calories a day, but eventually, as our bodyweight decreases and approaches 170 pounds, we might need to consume fewer calories. I provide these numbers as an example. Everyone's metabolism varies. Use the MyFitnessPal to determine how many calories you need to consume to gain or lose weight. Your training log is your best tool for determining what you need to do to break through a training plateau. Without a training log, you are simply guessing.