



THE ONLY SUPPLEMENTS YOU NEED TO GET THE BODY YOU WANT.

# THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO STRENGTH TRAINING: HOW TO GET STRONG...FAST



There are three primary ways to stimulate muscle growth:

- ✓ Progressive tension overload
- ✓ Muscle damage
- ✓ Cellular fatigue

Progressive tension overload is the most important of the three. It refers to progressively increasing tension levels in the muscle fibers, and the most effective way to do this is to add weight to the bar over time.

If you're used to high-rep, high-volume bodybuilding workouts, the transition to strength training is going to be a bit jarring at first.

- ✓ You're going to press, pull, and squat some intimidatingly heavy weights.
- ✓ Depending on the program you follow, you're probably going to train certain body parts more or less frequently.
- ✓ Your workouts may, on the whole, feel less draining.
- ✓ You're going to be resting a lot more in between sets.
- ✓ Your workouts are probably going to be shorter.

Remember...your number one goal in your strength training workouts is to *get stronger*, not maximize caloric burn or muscle pump or sweatiness.

## Calculating How Much Weight You Can Lift

If you're going to do a strength training program, you're going to need to get comfortable working with various numbers and percentages. As you'll see, most programs revolve around your 5-rep max, or the amount of weight that you can get 5 clean reps with (and not more or less).

## THE BEST STRENGTH TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR NEWBIES

### Starting Strength

Starting Strength is one of the most popular weightlifting programs out there, and for good reason.

The reason Starting Strength is so attractive to so many people—and especially to people new to weightlifting—is it's simple, effective, and suited to a wide variety of goals: getting strong, adding muscle and improving athleticism.

You alternate between two workouts. Rest 2 to 5 minutes in between sets. You do 3 workouts per week. You start each exercise in your workout with a warm-up.

#### WORKOUT A

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS
Squat	3	5
Overhead Barbell Press	3	5
Deadlift	1	5

#### WORKOUT B

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS
Squat	3	5
Bench Press	3	5
Deadlift	1	5

If you successfully perform your 3 sets of 5 reps in a workout, you add 5 pounds to the weight the next time you do that exercise.

If you're not able to get your sets—if you get, let's say, 5, 4, and 3 reps—then you stick with that current weight until you can get 5,5,5. If you can get 5 reps on your first set but can only get 2 or 3 reps on your second and third sets, the weight is too high.

When you reach a point where you haven't been able to increase weight for two workouts in a row, it's time to reset on both workouts.

5x5

### MONDAY (HEAVY)

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS
Power Clean	5	5
Bench Press	5	5
Bench Press	1	10
Squat	5	5
Squat	1	10

### WEDNESDAY (LIGHT)

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS
Power Clean	5	5
Incline Bench Press	5	5
Incline Bench Press	1	10
Squat	5	5

### FRIDAY (MEDIUM)

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS
Power Clean	5	5
Overhead Press	5	5
Overhead Press	1	10
Squat	5	5

Like Starting Strength, rest 2 to 5 minutes in between sets.

With each exercise in each workout, your sets start light and get progressively heavier and the amount of weight you lift varies from day to day. It is recommended that you increase your 5-rep-maxes on each exercise by 2.5% each week.

If you fail to get your reps on a given exercise, Starr recommends resetting or deloading. Resetting consists of lowering the weights to what you were doing 4 weeks ago.

## Stronglifts 5x5

You alternate between two workouts. Rest 2 to 5 minutes in between each set.

### WORKOUT A

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS
Squat	5	5
Bench Press	5	5
Barbell Row	5	5

### WORKOUT B

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS
Squat	5	5
Overhead Press	5	5
Deadlift	1	5

You train three times per week, with at least one day of rest in between workouts. Week 1 is A, B, A, week 2 is B, A, B, week 3 is the same as week 1, week 4 is the same as week 2, and so forth.

Progression is simple and linear: you add 5 pounds to each exercise each time you do it. It is recommended that you deload if you stall.

## THE BEST STRENGTH TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR INTERMEDIATE LIFTERS

If you've been following a strength training program or have been doing heavy barbell training (like one of my programs) for at least a year, then you'll do best on one of the following programs.

## Texas Method

You do 3 workouts per week. Mondays are for volume, Wednesdays are light, and Fridays are very heavy (where you go for PRs). Like Starting Strength, rest 2 to 5 minutes in between sets.

### Week A

#### MONDAY (VOLUME)

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	% OF 5RM
Squat	5	5	90
Bench Press	5	5	90
Deadlift	1	5	90

#### WEDNESDAY (LIGHT)

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	% OF 5RM
Squat	2	5	70
Overhead Press	3	5	70
Chin-Up	3	Fail	Bodyweight
Hyperextension	5	10	N/A

#### FRIDAY (INTENSITY)

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	% OF 5RM
Squat	1	5	PR
Bench Press	1	5	PR
Deadlift	1	5	PR

## Week B

### MONDAY (VOLUME)

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	% OF 5RM
Squat	5	5	90
Overhead Press	5	5	90
Deadlift	1	5	90

### WEDNESDAY (LIGHT)

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	% OF 5RM
Squat	2	5	70
Bench Press	3	5	70
Chin-Up	3	Fail	Bodyweight
Hyperextension	5	10	N/A

### FRIDAY (INTENSITY)

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	% OF 5RM
Squat	1	5	PR
Overhead Press	1	5	PR
Deadlift	1	5	PR

Specifically, you start each exercise with a warmup routine and then do your one 5-rep PR set, which should be 5 to 10 pounds heavier than your previous 5 rep max.

The goal with the Texas Method isn't workout-to-workout progress—it's weekly progress. And progression is very simple: you add 5 pounds to each Friday's single 5-rep set.

If you're unable to get through Monday's workout (you can't get all of your reps with good form), it's recommended that you cut down the volume on your Mondays. If you can get through Monday's workout but can't hit your PRs on Friday, it's recommended that you change your Monday workout by increasing volume or intensity.

## Wendler's 5/3/1

This program is one of the most popular strength programs out there because it's easy to understand, it gets results, it doesn't require any special equipment, and the workouts are relatively short.

You do 3 to 4 workouts per week. Rest 2 to 5 minutes in between sets.

<b>DAY 1</b>	<b>DAY 2</b>
Warm-Up	Warm-Up
Overhead Press	Deadlift
Assistance Work	Assistance Work

  

<b>DAY 3</b>	<b>DAY 4</b>
Warm-Up	Warm-Up
Bench Press	Squat
Assistance Work	Assistance Work

You perform each of these workouts once to complete what is called a "wave." Each "mesocycle" (a fancy term for a training phase that lasts 2 to 6 weeks) consists of four waves. That is, you will do each of the workouts 4 times to complete a mesocycle, at which point you start over again from the beginning.

Note that 5/3/1 works with a percentage of 90% of your one-rep max, not a percentage of your 5-rep max like other strength programs. Also, the sets with + sign indicate that you should get as many reps as you can.

If you train 4 times per week, each mesocycle will last 4 weeks. If you train 3 times per week, they will last 5 weeks and 1 day because you still have to do all 16 workouts to complete the mesocycle and you can't double up exercises on a training day.



**WAVE 1**

SET	% OF 90% OF 1RM	REPS
1	65%	5
2	75%	5
3	85%	5+

**WAVE 2**

SET	% OF 90% OF 1RM	REPS
1	70%	3
2	80%	3
3	90%	3+

**WAVE 3**

SET	% OF 90% OF 1RM	REPS
1	75%	5
2	85%	3
3	95%	1+

**WAVE 4**

SET	% OF 90% OF 1RM	REPS
1	40%	5
2	50%	5
3	60%	5

Your goal isn't just to break your on-rep PRs—it's to hit multiple PRs along the way by lifting more in each workout than your previous mesocycle. So, once you've completed a mesocycle, you should add 5 pounds to your one-rep max for your bench and overhead press and 10 pounds to your squat and deadlift and recalculate your training weights. If you get stuck or even lose strength on an exercise or exercises, finish your mesocycle and then reduce your current 1RMs by 10% and start again.

"Assistance work" refers to exercises done other than the four the program is built around. How much assistance work you do is up to you, but it's done for one or more of the following reasons:

- ✓ Strengthen weak parts of the body
- ✓ Help increase the four core lifts
- ✓ Ensure your body develops in a balanced and symmetrical fashion
- ✓ Build more muscle

If you're familiar with my Bigger Leaner Stronger program, you'll feel right at home with almost every assistance exercise recommended:

- |                              |                           |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| ✓ Dips, weighted if possible | ✓ Dumbbell Bench Press    |
| ✓ Chin-ups or pull-ups       | ✓ Dumbbell Military Press |
| ✓ Dumbbell Rows              | ✓ Lunge                   |
| ✓ Barbell Rows               | ✓ Leg Press               |
| ✓ Barbell Shrugs             |                           |

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