

Bodybuilding and Powerbuilding Routine

by Emre Kurt

This routine is for athletes who have one of two goals: purely muscle gain for physique purposes or muscle gain for physique purposes with an above bodybuilding-level interest in strength. If you are exclusively a strength athlete, this routine is not for you (if you are a strength athlete, I recommend the Bulgarian Method).

The only difference between athletes who care about strength on this routine and those who don't is that the rep range changes for squats, deadlifts, bench press, barbell rows and shoulder press. If you care about strength, do these core lifts with sets of 5 reps. If you do not care about strength at all, do them with sets of 8-12 reps. Know that this rep range will still yield strength gains, although they will be significantly slower than the 5 rep range.

What separates this routine from a standard bro-split is that this routine occurs on a 5 day cycle, not a 7 day cycle. Training each body part once a week is an arbitrary time period, and the human body can recover much more quickly from each workout. By working each body part every 5 days at least, as opposed to every 7 days, progression and adaption occur much more quickly, which yields faster results. Another routine that does this well is Push/Pull/Legs.

This routine relies on autoregulation. Each time you do a workout, you pick a weight you can properly perform for the given rep range with proper form. If you are looking to put on muscle mass, make sure you are in a caloric surplus, 250-1000 calories above maintenance, depending on how quickly you want to gain weight and how much fat you are willing to gain. More on this in the diet section.

If you are in a caloric surplus, you should be getting stronger slowly and gaining weight. This combination, and only this combination, is the indicator of muscle growth. From week to week you should be adding reps and weight to each exercise. The progress will be very slow on the smaller isolation exercises, but you should still be getting stronger on them, if only a rep or two over two weeks or so. Track your reps and sets precisely.

Regarding the accessory exercise selection, they are simply personal favorites to give you a good basis to start from. Exercises can be replaced later on as experience is gained.

The Workout

Day 1 – Chest and Triceps

Bench Press – 4 sets of 5 or 8-12 reps
Close Grip Bench press – 4 sets of 8-12 reps
Dumbbell Incline Bench press – 4 sets of 8-12 reps
Cable Flyes – 4 sets of 8-12 reps
Cable Tricep Pushdown – 4 sets of 8-12 reps

Day 2 – Back and Biceps

Barbell Row – 4 sets of 5 or 8-12 reps
Lat Pulldowns – 4 sets of 8-12 reps
Cable Rows – 4 sets of 8-12 reps
Dumbbell Rows – 4 sets of 8-12 reps
Barbell Curls or Preacher Curls – 4 sets of 8-12 reps

Day 3 – Legs

Squats – 4 sets of 5 or 8-12 reps
Deadlifts – 3 sets of 5 or 8-12 reps
Leg Press w/ legs on upper portion – 3 sets of 8-12 reps
Leg Press w/ legs on lower portion – 3 sets of 8-12 reps
Front Squats or Leg Extension – 4 sets of 8-12 reps
Romanian Deadlifts or Leg Curls – 4 sets of 8-12 reps

Comments: For people that don't care much about strength or that can't take the intensity, deadlifts can be omitted or alternated with squats. Front squats and Romanian deadlifts are recommended over leg extensions and leg curls, because the latter two are unnatural and bad for the knees, but for people that work with low weights this shouldn't be much of an issue.

Day 4 – Delts and Arms

Barbell Shoulder Press – 4 sets of 5 or 8-12 reps
Side Lateral Raises – 4 sets of 8-12 reps
Rear Delt Flyes – 4 sets of 8-12 reps
Skull Crushers – 4 sets of 8-12 reps
Hammer Curls – 4 sets of 8-12 reps

Day 5 – Rest

Abs and Calves:

You can either train these every day or alternate them. High reps seem to work best for calves, although progressive overload is still necessary for growth. 4 sets of 25 is a good starting point for calves, whereas 4 sets of 15 is good for abs.

The Diet

This routine works equally well for bulking and cutting. While bulking, a caloric surplus is essential for growth and weight gain. A 250 calorie surplus will yield approximately a pound of weight gain every two weeks, which is a good pace for minimal fat gain. For absolute beginners 500 or even 1000 calories above maintenance is appropriate to gain 1-2 pounds a week.

Caloric maintenance can be found by tracking all foods eaten over the course of a week, averaging the calories and looking if any weight was gained or lost. If no weight was gained or lost, the number is maintenance. If weight was gained, take the amount gained, multiply it by 500 calories and this is the amount the daily calories were over maintenance.

Ex: an athlete averaged 2750 calories a day for a week and gained .5 pounds. $.5 \times 500$ is 250, which means maintenance calories for the athlete are $2750 - 250 = 2500$.

For most people macros do not have to be precisely controlled while bulking. Protein should be at least .8 grams per pound of body weight. This level of precision will be sufficient.

For an athlete who is cutting, there are two videos on [Youtube.com/EmreKurtFitness](https://www.youtube.com/EmreKurtFitness) that precisely explain the steps to calculating calories for a cut (The secret to losing weight fast part one and two).

Warm ups and Rest

Warm up sets are the single best way to make sure your muscles are limber and prepared for the work ahead. For this routine, simply do 3 or 4 sets pyramiding up to your first working set. If you bench 225 for 5 reps do something like 45x10, 135x5, 185x2, 205x1. The key to warm up sets is that they should add no stress to your system. They should not fatigue you in the least. A good way to ensure this is not to do more than a single for your last weight, and to make sure that your last warm up weight is less than the weight for your working sets.

For bodybuilding purposes you should rest 45-60 seconds between sets to keep the intensity high. For strength purposes 2-3 minutes are generally necessary (some people go as high as 5 minutes or more).

Disclaimer

I am not a medical professional or a licensed personal trainer or nutritionist. This entire document constitutes advice from one fitness enthusiast to others. Always consult your doctor or other licensed professional before taking any workout advice or implementing any workout plan. The athlete is personally liable for any and all injury that occurs while on this routine or while taking any advice contained in this document. Be safe! Talk to your doctor.