Candito 6 Week Strength Program

Created By Jon Candito

Before I get into the program, I'd like to thank you for supporting Candito Training. Whether it is by donating or simply liking a video, each action helps the mission of advocating strength training without gimmicks possible. Now with that said, let's delve into the methodology of the program.

Basic Weekly Setup

Week 1 - Muscular Conditioning

Week 2 - Hypertrophy

Week 3 - Linear Max OT

Week 4 - Heavy Weight Acclimation/Explosiveness

Week 5 - Intense Strength Training

Week 6 - Deload (optional)

Note - There is an option to max out on the 6th week, which will then call for a 7th week to be added as the deload to end the cycle.

So that is the program broken down into a focus from week to week. This is called periodization. Some people say that periodization is just for advanced lifters, but the truth is that periodization is optimal for beginners as well. The benefit from periodizing rather than just doing straight sets (5x5), is that you prevent weaknesses before they can begin. Plateaus are best handled by preventing them in the first place! Also, the specific weights along with varying rep ranges greatly improve focus for beginners. You won't psyche yourself out by comparing each workout to the last every single week. You will never be unsure of what weights to use, which is often the cause for weeks of no progress. You will be on a long term path for consistent gains. All you have to do is follow the plan as formulated for you, and just lift the weights!

It is also crucial to understand that each phase effects the other. The hypertrophy phase will also make you much stronger. The strength phase is going to build muscle as well. The fact is with natural athletes, strength and muscle mass go hand in hand. If you focus only on low rep strength development, injuries are much more likely to occur. And if you focus only high reps, there will be a great deal of total body stimulation being missed. This program is also built with the bigger picture in mind. So the transition from each phase is taken into consideration.

Setup Within Week - Upper/Lower Split

This is an extremely important aspect of the program. A 5 day bodybuilding split is NOT optimal for natural bodybuilders. And most certainly not optimal for athletes looking to develop strength. Upper/lower splits allow for a greater emphasis on compound movements, which stimulates your body to produce more testosterone than isolation exercises. Also, the quality of each set will be far greater in an upper/lower split. 5 day splits have far too much volume per workout. By the 18th chest set, how strong are you really? Now compare that to an upper/lower

split where you come in fresh, slam 3-4 sets of bench and move on. This helps for injury prevention as well because you will use better form having shorter, more goal oriented workouts. The one advantage the 5 day split would appear to have is volume, but then the upper/lower split allows for 2-3 upper days a week. So the volume ends up being about the same, of much higher quality work.

Upper Vs Lower Frequency

This is an issue you can't solve through research. It only comes through experience. I have found that the upper body can handle a much greater frequency than the lower body. Full body movements like the squat and deadlift can be very taxing, not just on your CNS but also psychologically. I always say there is no such thing as an easy squat. So I'd rather squat with high intensity than underperform while using a high volume. Now compare the feeling after squats to the feeling after training biceps, abs, or calves. The smaller range of motion movements tend to be much easier to recover from. Obviously the bench press is still a compound movement, but it is clear the feeling is entirely different in comparison to a squat/deadlift.

It is vital to keep in mind that the tradeoff between frequency and intensity is always an issue to balance. If you are going to lift upper body 3 times in one week (as the first week requires), then the intensity simply cannot be extremely high every workout. Later on in the training program, the upper days are spaced out and only twice a week. This is because after the base of volume has been built, the high intensity sessions require a decrease in volume (both daily and weekly).

Now some of you may know that many olympic lifters squat everyday. I always keep lower training between 1-2 times a week because the way I train is with extreme intensity, and higher volume per workout (both squats and deadlifts together). I have seen olympic lifters train personally and was a bit surprised at the lack of intensity going into squats. It is just a different mentality. This is largely because the squat is an accessory lift in olympic weightlifting. It is just a tool to develop the clean & jerk and snatch. Also much of the culture of the sport has been influenced by top lifters who train while using performance enhancing drugs. This allows for quicker recovery obviously. Then the last point is that olympic lifters often are willing to put their bodies on the line. My training has not only allowed me to squat 3 times my bodyweight without the use of drugs, but also completely avoid any injuries while doing so.

Setup Within Workout

The upper/lower split allows for a focus on the most effective exercises. There is no point in wasting your time doing exercises which are simply inferior. The problem is people do substitute exercises added on for the sake of volume. If you can squat deep, there is no point in doing a leg press afterwards! The leg press is just useful as a substitute for if you have a bad back for example. However, a proper accessory movement would be incline chest flys. You may think I would think such an exercise is silly since it wont build strength, but it offers something the bench press doesn't. It focuses on the upper chest and takes the triceps out of

the movement. So if a lifter has a lagging upper chest, and perhaps his triceps are overpowering his chest, then this could be a great addition to the end of a workout. It wouldn't be an adequate main accessory however in this program, it would be a possible optional exercise.

Upper Body Main Accessories

You can see on the spreadsheet, the program calls for 3 additional required exercises to the bench press for upper body days. You need to pick an exercise for the upper back, shoulders, and biceps. Some ask why I dont emphasize the triceps if I do so for the biceps. Well the issue is that your triceps simply get worked far greater in pressing movements than your biceps do in pulling movements. If you were to do heavy dumbell rows, your biceps are not going to be very sore. However, if you bench press and then do dumbell overhead press afterwards, additional tricep work will almost always be overkill. Sore triceps can really limit the next workout.

These 3 exercises will be done every single upper body workout. Because of this, these should be exercises which you will be able to progress in over time.

Examples of Upper Accessory Movements

Back:

- 1. Dumbbell Row
- 2. Weighted Pull Ups
- 3. Pulldowns
- 4. Machine Row

Shoulders:

- 1. Seated Dumbbell Overhead Press
- 2. Standing Dumbbell Overhead Press
- 3. Military Press
- 4. Lateral Dumbbell Raises (I suggest this as an optional exercise).

Biceps:

- 1. Dumbbell curl
- 2. Barbell Curl
- 3. Dumbbell Hammer Curl
- 3. EZ Bar Curl
- 4. Exercises involving pulleys/machines (I also suggest this as an optional exercise).

Note - These movements are all listed in order of overall effectiveness. Some exercises are proven to be more effective (i.e. weighted pull ups better than pulldowns), and others are ranked based on what I personally prefer for practical reasons (i.e. dumbbell row being above weighted pull ups). So pick which ones work best for you.

Optional Exercises

The optional exercises are movements which are optional from workout to workout. The only requirement for upper body days is to do the 4 exercises. The optional exercises are 2 spots which you can throw in whatever you just want to add for that particular workout. These should be more geared towards isolation. A great example was the incline chest fly mentioned earlier. These movements aren't necessarily going to need to be improved over time, they are more just for added volume and to make up for some areas which may need emphasis. This would be a section which tricep movements can be added since the intensity is lower and reps are higher. These also may actually reduce soreness acting as a cooldown. It is crucial to remember that you can change these exercises from workout to workout. So you can completely skip these and just do the 4 main movements for your upper days. These are interchangable

Examples of optional exercises:

- 1. Lateral Dumbbell Raise
- 2. Incline Chest Fly
- 3. One Armed Tricep Extension
- 4. Bicep cable/machine movements
- 5. Preacher Curl
- 6. Skullscrushers
- 7. Hammer Curl (if not used as main accessory)

Note - The most important aspect of these lifts is that they are low impact. This means they will not damage recovery when doing lightly in the 8-12 rep range. This is why exercises like incline bench press are not included.

Lower Body Workout Optional Exercises

In this program, there are no main lower body accessories which are to be done each workout. That is simply because the squat and deadlift will develop the entire lower body. Glutes, quads, hamstrings, even calves are all worked. I have developed enormous legs relative to my bodyfat percentage by simply having a minimalist approach to leg day. I did not just assume this to be true either. Believe me, I have tried every possible leg exercise for the sake of volume after squats/deads. And every single time I tried this, I found myself wasting time, and it was effecting my focus going into leg day. It is easy to feel like you succeeded if, despite squatting without hitting the numbers you need, after you work a good amount of volume. This is a lie! If you are not increasing your performance in the gym, you are not getting stronger, and you are not building muscle. Over 90% of my workouts I simple squat, deadlift and leave.

This is the part of the program that allows for the most customization. You can choose between explosive accessories for lower body, or hypertrophy (bodybuilding) movements. Optional Hypertrophy Leg Exercises:

- 1. Calf Raises On Leg Press
- 2. Any other form of calf raise.
- 3. Leg Curl
- 4. Leg Extension (can be useful to relieve knee pain as a cooldown)
- Isolation Glute Exercises
- 6. Single Leg Press
- 7. Single Leg curl

Note - These are all to be done in the 8-12 rep range just like the upper body optional lifts. Also they are not intended to be extremely intense.

Optional Explosive Leg Exercises:

- 1. Box jumps (jumping full intensity, need high box)
- 2. Jump Squats (use low weight, great if done right but if confused, don't do them)
- 3. Powercleans (need decent form, if unsure send me a form check video)
- 4. Deep Squat Jumps (Simply jumping but descending to squat depth before launching)
- 5. Single Leg Box Jumps
- 6. Med Ball Throws
- 7. Explosive Single Leg Press

Note - This is crucial. These exercises are to be done in 4 rep sets. This is to ensure that the exercises are working explosive power, which requires peak performance. Dragging along high reps breaks down form and defeats the entire purpose of these movements.

So Which Exercises Should I Use, Hypertrophy or Explosive?

You have 3 simple options.

- 1. If you are a bodybuilder, simply choose the hypertrophy exercises.
- 2. If you are an looking for general strength, mix and match. You can even time it so that you perform the hypertrophy movements, on the hypertrophy focused week. Then move to explosive accessories on the heavy strength weeks of the program.
- 3. If you are looking to increase your vertical or sprinting speed, simple stick with the explosive movements for the entire program.

What About Pin Squats With Weight Above 1 Rep Max?

There is another type of optional exercise which I didn't mention for the lower body days. It is under its own category called **Supramaximal**. That means you use weight that is above your 1 rep max which you could not handle in a full range of motion squat. If you are a beginner, don't worry about this. This is really one of the few times where I think beginners and advanced lifters should not always do the same exact movements. That is only because handling weight above your max on pin squats can be dangerous if you are not 100% in tuned with what your body can handle/recover from.

Can I Just Skip The Optional Exercises?

Simple answer. If you just don't have the time or desire to motivation for the optional exercises, **only do the required lifts.** That means avoiding all of the optional exercises for both upper and lower days. Trust me, you will be completely fine and gain a ton of strength regardless. To be honest, after lifting for 8 years still stick with just the main 4 exercises for upper and 2 for lower in most of my workouts! The extras are simply to allow for some customization to adjust the program to specific needs.

Can I Change The 3 Main Lifts?

This program is built with the bench, squat, and deadlift in mind as the base for building raw strength, power, and muscle mass. If you are a beginner you absolutely need to have these movements emphasized. Even if you are an advanced lifter, **I highly suggest keeping the max lifts as the foundation of the program.**

However, if you for some reason really do not want to bench or deadlift in the standard form, you can make some adjustments.

Substitutions For the Deadlift:

- 1. You can do a snatch grip deadlift in place of the standard dl.
- 2. You can also replace the standard dl with a deficit deadlift (deficit must be consistent throughout program).
- 3. You can simply ignore the deadlift being a core lift, and only enter the squat max in to formulate the workouts. Then perform the stiff legged deadlift as an optional exercise (note, the stiff legged deadlift cannot be used as an optional exercise if the standard deadlift is also used).

Substitutions For the Bench Press:

- 1. You can use the dumbbell bench press. This can be a great exercise but the issue with it will come the difficulty of handling low reps since starting the movement is always the hardest part with dumbbells.
- 2. You can also use the incline bench press. This will emphasize the upper chest a bit more. I don't suggest doing this to build strength, but if you are a bodybuilder you could cycle this in every now and then.

Substitutions For the Squat:

1. What's wrong with you? Trying to replace the squat? You might as well leave my channel and subscribe to sixpackshortcuts if you are entertaining this thought.

Key To The Program - Psychological Factors

This is one of the biggest reasons this program simply works. It is not just a theoretical concoction created from principles alone. No, it is made with the psychology of the lifter in mind. That is why there is a rep max out day at the end of the first two weeks. Because I know you will

surprise yourself each time after following the higher volume workouts. And the higher volume workouts are intended to be very doable without being too easy. So you will feel confident realizing that you can complete this cycle and dominate in the gym. Rather than coming in trying to increase 5 pounds each workout, struggling to maintain form while being demotivated as each workout seems to get harder.

The mentality is also a huge reason why each workout is shorter than normal. Most of them will only take 45 minutes to an hour. There is debate on whether you see hormonal advantages to shorter workouts, well I say that doesn't even matter! Even though the shorter workouts are better in theory, I advocate for them not even for that reason. Rather, they simply are better for your mentality in the long run. You will not be able to consistently exert effort in a goal-oriented fashion, for hours on end every day. You won't drastically breakdown, or become extremely overtrained. No, the realistic effect is that you will just stop being as ambitious with your lifts. Gradually not reaching for huge gains. Slowly becoming average like everyone else in the gym. Instead, I want you to come in the gym on a mission. Accomplish that goal, feel satisfied knowing you did everything you had to in order to get better, and comeback next workout excited!

What Weights Should I Use For Accessories

This part is up to you. For the 3 required accessories on the upper days, I suggest keeping the intensity fairly high. If the benching is extremely hard, you can go a bit easier on the accessories. However, on most days you should be able to bring the intensity into all 4 lifts. Also, make sure you aren't just using the same weight over the entire 6 weeks. **You should be progressing in all of the required lifts.** You just have more freedom in how you go about doing it. If you want to take the 3rd week easy on the accessories, there is no problem. Just make sure you aren't completely stagnate on these lifts.

As far as the optional exercises, you do not have to have the same mentality. These can be done just as a cooldown as I previously said, or just for some extra volume in certain weak points. That is why the sets are 8-12 reps and should not be at an extremely high intensity. Only the explosive optional exercises for leg day should be done with a high intensity. Other than that, you can take these exercises easy, get your pump on, take some selfies and watch as your biceps become a trending topic on twitter.

Ab Training

You can train abs whenever you want in this program, with one exception. **Do not train abs the day before leg day.** This is crucial because heavy squats and deadlifts require immense core strength, and if your abs are not 100% ready, you will be at risk of injury. The lower back and abdominals work together. If your abs are extremely sore, the workload shifts too heavily upon the lower back during these heavy movements.

How Should I Warm Up?

You warm up for the lifts, by simply doing the lifts with light weight. No need for anything special. Remember, we want to get in, accomplish the goal, and get out. For heavy squats, I suggest doing a 10 rep warm up with extremely light weight, then proceeding in doing 1-4 rep sets to warm up until the working set. The most common mistake is to warm up using extremely high reps, which burn out the lifter and don't acclimate them to heavy weights. The warm up should be the shortest, most efficient route possible to allow you to start the actual workout. The stronger you get, the more warm up sets it typically takes. So for me, I usually warm up for squats with 135 x 10, 225 x 4, 315 x 4, 375 x 3, 405 x 2, 425 x 1, then the workout begins.

For the bench days with higher volume, you only need to do one or two warm up sets as the workout itself gradually increases in intensity. Also, on the accessories there is also no need to do more than one warm up set. It is the days where you have a very intense set as the first working set, where the warm up may need to be a bit extensive.

Nutrition

Last but not least, let's discuss your diet. Believe it or not, this issue is painfully simple despite what many "experts" say. All you have to do is this.

- 1. Track calories (eat more to gain weight, less to lose)
- 2. Track protein intake
- 3. Eat a high amount of protein relative to calories (I suggest eating a gram or more per pound of bodyweight)

The balance of carbs to fats is largely irrelevant. Personally I prefer high protein, high carbs, low fat. I find that this is best for energy and performance in the gym. However, I have noticed that those who are a bit less active tend to gravitate towards fats. Everyone has a preference, but as long as the calories are on point, and the protein is sufficient, the rest will fall into place.

Now you don't even have to go this far. I don't track my calories. But that is also because I have a very good sense of how much I eat along with still checking the calories on the food (just not measuring). If you weigh yourself fairly frequently, you will be able to adjust simply by that measurement.

A couple extra suggestions with nutrition is to drink water frequently, eat high fiber content foods, and if you don't track your protein, simply drink 3 whey protein shakes everyday. Spacing out your protein can be beneficial as some research coming out recently suggests that 4-6 meals is idea to maximize protein synthesis. Dr. Layne Norton conducted those studies. Check him out if you want to know the inner workings of nutrition. I am simply here to tell you the bottom line of what works as far as nutrition goes.

The reason why I suggest eating so much protein is because there are no negative effects from very high protein diets in normal people. However, if you don't eat enough, you will

not be gaining the muscle mass you could. The extra protein your body can't utilize to build muscle, will simply be used for energy or stored as fat depending on if you are in a caloric deficit or surplus.

Also, I want to give a quick word in about the question of bulking or cutting. You don't have to choose. It is a false dichotomy for most. Competing bodybuilders that get down to 3-4% bodyfat literally have to bulk/cut because that is unsustainable and unhealthy. However, if you are like most people, over 15% bodyfat, and don't have a huge amount of muscle mass, then you simply need to focus on body recomposition. Which is gaining muscle while burning fat, and that is achieved by eating enough calories to stay at the same weight while lifting/eating plenty of protein. Your bodyfat% will drop without the scale changing.

If you are looking to get bigger, I suggest slowly eating more calories. You cant build more muscle than your body demands for from protein synthesis caused by lifting heavy, so eating an extremely high calorie surplus will only result in more fat past a certain point. Say you can build 1 pound of lean muscle a month. Such limitations are always dependent on many factors, but let us say that this is what your genetics along with your training allow for. Now why try to gain 10 pounds in a month, as opposed to saturating your body with your protein while eating enough calories to simply gain 1-2 pounds. Doing this will allow you to gain all of the lean muscle you could, gain a pound or two of bodyweight, without an increase in bodyfat percentage.

Now some may say that a higher calorie surplus will raise the ceiling for lean muscle mass, but I have yet to see data suggesting excessive carbs/fats do anything to aid protein synthesis. Then again, there may come in some data later on. I am just telling you what I have done, and that you do not have to bulk/cut. Maybe it will work best for you. I am just sick of hearing people act as if it is utterly impossible to get strong, put on muscle, without putting on fat. I haven't been over 10% bodyfat in years yet have managed to be 179lbs at 5'7", 21 years old naturally. This may not sound very big to some, but to put on quality, lean muscle while being drug free is harder than most perceive. Much of that is due to amount of steroid using lifters lying, claiming to be natural to make a quick buck. But that is an entirely different discussion.

The point is, if you are on this program, just make sure to get enough protein, and ideally be in a slight calorie surplus (gain muscle without fat). You can just be at maintenance (gain muscle and lose fat), but I would not suggest this program for someone who is in a calorie deficit (losing weight).

Supplements

So overall I suggested eating 3 scoops of whey protein added onto your diet if you want an easy way to ensure you are getting enough protein throughout the day. I personally use preworkouts for fun but of course supplements are not necessary by any stretch of the imagination. They can just make lifting more fun/easier to stay on track.

The protein at Walmart by BodyFortress is extremely cheap. I originally was skeptical considering the price is so much lower than the competition, but it does appear that it is a reputable company. I now use this personally as well.

Thank You

That is all. Thank you for downloading this and supporting the channel. I hope this is helpful in your journey to get stronger! And thank you for any donations. Spread the word to your friends if this is effective for you. Hopefully we will see the gimmicks in the fitness industry die out as a real, no nonsense approach takes over! Thanks again.

Update on 5/26/13

Rest Between Sets

This part is crucial. To hit the weights set for you in this program, you will need **full recovery** in between sets. Of course there will be a point at which resting more is not necessarily beneficial as you need to stay warm while not making the workouts too long. Also, full rest varies for different people based on various factors.

Bottom line: 3-8 minutes in between sets will generally be optimal. For bench sets it may be closer to 3. For leg day, it may even be longer than 8. That is fine. All that matters is that each set you are ready to give it your all both physically and mentally.

The one exception to this rule of keeping full rest periods, is for the optional exercises. For the 8-12 rep sets of the optional exercises, **keep the rest lower**. A typical rest period would be 1-2 minutes. Remember, these sets are for getting blood into the muscle, keeping a low impact, and just getting some volume in on a possible weak point you want to bring up. The only optional exercises which require full rest would be the explosive optional accessories (if you chose to use them).

SuperSetting On Upper Day

In order to make the workouts quicker, you can superset on upper days. This simply means doing one set of bench, then once set of your back exercise, the 2nd set of bench, then the 2nd set of your back exercise, ect. So you can group bench and back, then afterwards, do the same grouping shoulders with biceps. You do not have to do this, but it is a solid option to save time in the gym.

Amount Of Sets For Optional Exercises

4 sets need to be done for the optional exercises. Nothing more. This is including the warm up set. Remember these can't negatively affect recovery, so more volume than 4 sets likely would do more harm than good.

Repeating The Program

This program is absolutely designed for repeated use. That is why periodization is so effective. It allows for consistent progress without stagnation. Also, it allows you to stick with the basic proven exercises, rather than having to change exercises in order to break through plateaus. This is extremely important because the most effective exercises will have a great carryover to all other movements. So if you run this program 3 straight cycles, you will always be squatting for leg development, not hit a wall, and you will see every other leg exercise becomes easier. I've been lifting for many years now, getting my strength up where I am handling 3 times my bodyweight, yet have never hit a wall. I haven't changed my basic setup either. Often times you will see other "gurus" in this industry recommend something entirely different from what they do. This program isn't a creation, rather a formal description of how I train. This program's setup is what I've done to get this strong, what I currently still do, and what I will continue to do. The only task I had to do to make this program was to write out and calculate what I already do in order for it to be easy to follow.

Update on 11/18/13

Progression On Accessory Lifts

There are intentionally no percentages given on the accessory lifts to allow for focus on the main lifts. This also allows for you to lift based on how you are feeling on that particular day. Just try to increase the weight gradually over the course of the weeks. The intensity should always be relatively moderate so if you are hitting failure or coming close to it, then you need to lighten the load. This moderate intensity also applies to the deadlift variation which is the only required accessory movement on certain lower body days.

Missing A Lift

If you fail to complete a set as written, drop the max on that lift by 5%. Do not repeat the same workout, just finish what you can and move on with the 5% decrease for the next session. Conversely, if the workouts are far too easy and you're a beginner lifter, **I strongly recommend my linear program**.

Success Stories

I have been hearing incredible feedback from many of you about your progression on this program. I have to admit even some of the numbers surprise myself. But then again sticking the basics, intelligently implementing them, and of course hard work will always result in success. If you want to share your progress on the Candito Training facebook wall, at https://www.facebook.com/CanditoTrainingHq. As of right now I do not answer private messages since I get too many, but if you post on the page's wall I'll look at it and others will be able to see your progression as well. So let me know if you hit some noteworthy personal records!