BRO SPLIT WORKOUT

Early disclaimer: this workout was created with lads in mind. Of course, girls can use this workout split too, but most of the attainment goals reflected in this workout are aimed at men.

This is simply the most fun split for training, simple to keep track of and easy to overload the muscles on the respective days. Not to mention that this is the unofficial pump-chasers workout, purely for the one-muscle-group per day and the freedom that provides to pile on one muscle and push your pump to the extreme. Pump-chasing has a bad reputation in the fitness bubble, but there are far worse ways to train, and you will thoroughly enjoy your split, as well as making very decent gains. If you take PEDs, you can pretty much use bro split for your entire lifting career and make insane gains, whereas for natural lifters the PPL (x6) is the most optimal way of simultaneously resting and working muscles. I built my base using a bro split between the ages of 16 and 21, it served me very well in building that initial foundation of muscle that you keep for the rest of your life.

Another thing to note is that bro split is perfect for lads who do not care about their legs. We all have that friend who does not care about their legs. Take out legs and add another arms day if you wish, fitness is about what you enjoy doing as well as gains. Bro split is brilliant for building back and shoulders I have found, those two muscle groups respond well to a day of their own training. Something to mind when doing the bro split is that weak muscle-groups need more work that once-a-week. My arms are my weakest body part in terms of how easily they build size, and they were noticeably lagging behind my shoulders/chest i.e., the body parts that respond well to the once-a-week format.

For this workout you will need:

* **Dumbbells**. Click here for the best dumbbells of 2021 or click here to jump to my favourite one.

Other useful pieces of equipment:

* **Yoga Mat** for a comfortable place to exercise.

and

* **Barbell** to add variety to the workout.

If you do not have any of the equipment check out my Awesome no equipment workout plan

BRO SPLIT WORKOUT (One muscle-group per day)

5 DAY SPLIT (e.g., Weekdays on, weekends off)

The workout will go as follows.

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| --- | --- |
| Day 1 - ARMS | Biceps, Triceps, Forearms |
| Day 2 - CHEST | Pectorals, Front Delts, Triceps |
| Day 3 - LEGS | Quadriceps, Hamstrings, Calves |
| Day 4 - SHOULDERS | Front Delts, Side Delts, Rear Delts |
| Day 5 - BACK | Trapezius, Lower Back, Lats |

DAY 1 – ARMS

* Bicep Curls – 4x10
* Triceps Overhead Press – 4x10
* Hammer Curls – 4x10
* Triceps Kickback – 4x10
* Dips – 3xMax

DAY 2 – CHEST

* Dumbbell Bench Press – 4x10
* Dumbbell Flyes – 4x10
* Press Ups – 4x10
* Plate Pinch – 3x10/Max
* Single-Arm Hammer Fly – 3x8

DAY 3 – LEGS

* Dumbbell Squats – 4x10
* Dumbbell Lunges – 4x10
* Dumbbell Calf-Raises – 4x10
* Prone Leg Raise – 4x10
* Dumbbell Box-Squat – 3xMax

DAY 4 – SHOULDERS

* Front Raises – 4x10
* Side Raises – Gauntlet Set
* Rear Delt Flyes – 4x10

DAY 5 – BACK

* Dumbbell Rows 4x10
* Pullovers – 4x10
* Shrugs – 4x10
* Pull Ups – 3xMax
* Inverted Dumbbell Row – 4x10

DAY 1 - ARMS

Bicep Curl 4x10

Staple one of the workout world, except maybe bench press. However, as I have elaborated on in a previous article, the hype around the bicep curl is more than the reality. A bicep curl is to isolate the biceps from the rest of your working muscles, it is excellent for this. I also mentioned previously that biceps only make up one third of the upper arm mass, with the other two thirds coming from triceps, which you also get to train today, so do not skip on them. For this exercise you will need your arms by your sides and pull upwards towards your body whilst holding the weight. People with high bicep insertions stop at 90 degrees, low/medium bicep insertions can go higher. High bicep insertions will develop strangely if you do not keep track of this.

*Pro Tip: Flare your wrists at the end of the movement slightly to work the outer bicep head more and focus on the separation.*

Overhead Triceps Press 4x10

Here we are adding to the bicep pump to fill your arm with blood. Triceps get work on chest days, but absolutely need their own accessory work, whether for strength training for aesthetics. Your arm should be positioned above your head and the weight should be lowered just behind your head and then back up.

*Pro Tip: Use your free arm to hold your working-arm’s elbow in place. This increases the isometric contraction and also reduces the pressure on your shoulder joint. This is especially important for people with a history of shoulder issues like me (I dislocated my shoulder in a bike accident).*

Hammer Curls 4x10

The thickening exercise for biceps. Your standard curl provides more shape to your bicep, more peak. The hammer curl is mostly just thickness, shape comes second. The starting position as normal curls, just the wrist is not flared, your palms are facing inwards and pull the weight up towards you. Again, I will mention that people with high bicep insertions should stop at 90 degrees, and as usual, people with low/medium insertions can go higher with little impact.

*Pro Tip: Keep your back straight or you will start to move your shoulders forward and they will start supplementing the lift.*

Triceps Kickback 4x10

Another triceps exercise to make it two for two with biceps and triceps now. You should lean forward on something (e.g., a bench) and use your free hand to support you. Kick back the arm holding the weight behind you. Do not go too heavy, gravity helps with this movement. Again, I feel the need to say that your shoulders are under a lot of pressure in this movement so do not overextend at the top.

*Pro Tip: Try and keep your back straight or you will be seriously risking injury. Keep the movement small and focused.*

Dips 3xMax

This is the perfect finisher, the pump after these is insane. You set up in a reverse press up position over a bench and put your feet up if you only have a bench. If you have a convenient dip station, then by all means use that but most people will not have a convenient dip station. I had one in my family home between the kitchen worktops, they were just far apart enough for me to use them for dips. Lower yourself down and then push back up, simple right?

*Pro Tip: If your shoulders are hurting, you are suspended too low down for a successful movement.*

DAY 2 - CHEST

Dumbbell Bench Press 4x10

This is as good as it gets in terms of replicating barbell bench press for a home workout. It is easier on your shoulders for one, and a great exercise for people with a strength imbalance in their chest/shoulders. I have seen some awful bench press form in my time, both arms have to extend at the same time, not one followed by the other for Arnold’s sake. If you do this, switch to dumbbells until both sides are a similar strength, because no one is impressed by your wonky bench press form, no matter how much is on the bar. For this exercise, you lie flat and push up.

*Pro Tip: Do not bend your wrists on the push, this will damage and hurt them.*

Dumbbell Flyes 4x10

The best isolation exercise for chest, no matter if you have dumbbells or cables, or are inside a gym or outside a gym, this is the best… well outside the gym will be colder… I could not resist. Okay, back to the description… YOU DO NOT NEED TO TOUCH THE WEIGHTS TOGETHER AT THE TOP OF THE MOVEMENT. This is noisy and pointless. The exercise if functionally most effective if you have a bench or you are suspended above the ground slightly as this will allow for greater range of movement, you will then pull your arms towards the middle of your body in a smooth fashion.

*Pro Tip: The best way is to stop the movement before they touch and immediately start the next rep.*

*Keep your core tight to avoid arching your back which will damage your lower back.*

Press Ups 4x10

The king of bodyweight exercises. The press up is perfect for general fitness and as part of an intense program alike. Some people prefer to keep the press ups for the end of the workout to use as a burnout or finisher exercise. Feet shoulder-width apart, arms on the floor. Lower yourself towards the ground and push back up. Remember to keep your backside in-line with the rest of your body and not to bounce between press ups, otherwise they do not count.

*Pro Tips: Make sure to keep your head in a neutral position and your core tight to avoid strain on your neck and back.*

*It is okay to go on your knees if your chest gets too tired to do a press up in the normal position. It will help you get a few more reps in. Remember to keep your back straight.*

*To increase difficulty, put your feet on a raised surface.*

Plate Pinch 3x10/Max

The plate pinch is very much about the contraction on the repetition as a means to tire the muscle out. Lying with your back flat, squash a plate/weighted object between your hands and push upwards, keeping the squeeze. This is very intense, and some people prefer to keep it for a finisher, but every exercise cannot be a finisher.

*Pro Tip: The range of motion of this movement will be very small, so do not worry if it feels small, it only needs a small RoM.*

Single-Arm Hammer Fly 3x5/8

This is a more broken-down and intense movement than the dumbbell fly we have already done. These are one arm, so they target one pectoral at a time, they are also done in the plane of movement of the bench press in terms of hand position. An overhand grip, but the movement is classic fly, out to the side and back to the middle, it is just done in a hammer grip.

*Pro Tip: Do not go too heavy in weight or your shoulder will start to ache because the strain is too much, like the last exercise this is about contracting the pectoral more than the weight you are lifting.*

DAY 3 – LEGS

Dumbbell Squats 4x10

Squats are famously the most reliable leg day movement. They are so intense as a compound exercise that they actually raise your testosterone levels if done regularly. Legs should be shoulder-width apart and you should lower yourself towards the ground, stopping when you are parallel to the ground. Remember to hold dumbbells in each hand.

*Pro Tip: Keep your back straight and core tight to avoid any lower back pain.*

Dumbbell Lunges 4x10

This is the most humbling exercise in terms of, you can never get as low as doing dumbbell lunges until you cry and then your housemate brings their attractive course mate over just in time to see you in a puddle of your own tears and shame…. Moving on from how suspiciously specific that was to tell you not to dip too far below parallel.

*Pro Tip: Keep your back straight and lean into the movement, it should be smooth.*

Dumbbell Calf-Raises 4x10

This is the easiest exercise to do ever besides no exercise. You use your calves every day to move anywhere, so they are good at movements. You simply stand and extend your legs up to your tip toes, then back down. Here is where I have to acknowledge that some people struggle to grow their calves and are cursed to have small calves. I must confess that I have always been blessed with big calves, however, do not worry, having big calves is not everything everybody says it is… It is everything they say it is and more!

*Pro Tip: Lean on something with your back (e.g., a smooth surface)*

Prone Leg-Raise 4x10

This one is straight out of the bums n tums guidebook. An exercise that looks more comfortable in a yoga retreat than in a gym, but it is legitimate. You lie face down on a mat and raise your legs in an alternating fashion up and out behind you. This is a glute and hamstring exercise, and it is very tough.

*Pro Tip: Do not lift your head up when doing this exercise, this puts unnecessary strain on your spine.*

Box Squat 4x10

This exercise probably needs to be weightless, because by this point if you can hold weights and still make your sets of 10 comfortably then you are a beast. The exercise is how it sounds, you put a box down and squat until your bottom touches the box and then rise back up. A rest on the box is sometimes needed. Do not injure yourself with too much overload, if you reach this point and your legs are not stable, then just stop. DON’T INJURE YOURSELF FOR EGO.

*Pro Tip: Do not pick a tiny box/object, try and have it so it is roughly equivalent to parallel in a normal squat.*

DAY 4 – SHOULDERS

Front Raise 4x10

A classic shoulder exercise, so naturally it makes the cut. I see so many people overtraining their front delts compared to their side/rear delts to the point where it looks silly, because there is only front delt to be seen. This exercise is done with a dumbbell either side of your head in a seated or standing position, then push them both up and lower them down keeping the stop point at your ear height.

*Pro Tip: Do not touch the weights at the top… Please?*

Side Raise 3x10 or Gauntlet Set.

The sickest exercise for adding width to your shoulders, side delts should dominate your shoulder days, not front delt work. This is my favourite thing to train, and the gauntlet set is my baby that I created with my friend Leon around 2015. You start with two 10kg dumbbells for example and do max reps, then drop the weight to 8kg and do max reps, then drop the weight to 4kg and do max reps, the second half of the gauntlet would include doing 8kg and 10kg respectively for max reps, ending the set on 10kg for max. You can stop halfway if this is too much initially.

*Pro Tip: If your side delts are very tired at the end of one of the sets and you know you will not be able to complete the exercise, then you can substitute in flapping your arms in the correct plane of movement to achieve sufficient burnout.*

Rear Delt Flyes 4x10

Your rear delts get some decent work on back day, as you are pulling everything towards you. Therefore, they are one of the most used muscles in the body. They also tend to be one of the most imbalanced muscle groups because of the tendency to overtrain front delt.

*Pro Tip: Keep the range of motion very small and focus on the contraction.*

Those of you concerned about the lower volume on shoulder day should not be, the gauntlet set will be enough to fatigue you sufficiently, I promise.

DAY 5 – BACK

Dumbbell Rows 4x10

Make sure to lean to one side, left or right of the bench and pull the weight up to your side, just under your working lat. Do not overload the weight as this exercise is best performed as a squeeze on the pull, rather than a jerk towards you.

*Pro Tip: Keep your core tight to avoid strain on your lower back.*

*Avoid rounding your back*.

Pullovers 4x10

The exercise that first and foremost makes me think of Arnold. Some of you will be wondering how this is a back exercise, but I assure you it is. You lie flat backed on a bench and hold the weight above you before lowering it behind your head to about parallel and then bringing it back to centre.

*Pro Tip: Keep a slight arch in your back, but do not overextend.*

Inverted Dumbbell Row 4x10

This exercise is very similar to the dumbbell rows, but this is an altered version. Both arms have a dumbbell, but it is important that you supinate your wrist inwards, sort of like a bicep curl. This is an underhand grip and will force a lower part of the lat to engage in the movement.

*Pro Tip: Keep your back straight and in-line with the rest if your body for stability.*

Shrugs 4x10

The trapezius muscles on the upper back do a lot for the size of your upper back. Especially for thickness and aesthetics. As we have discussed previously, traps are also one of the most used muscles in compound lifts like deadlift and clean & jerk, so they are beneficial to train. Shrugs are best done with a slow raise up and a drop down and catch as the second part of the movement.

*Pro Tip: Lean forwards slightly whilst keeping your back straight.*

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