# 8/5/3

# A Simple Strength Training Solution

Version: 1.0

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#### **Preface**

I want this program to be the worlds first open-source strength training template. My background is in engineering and software development, that's where I got this idea from. There are many people out there smarter than me. If you think there's a tweak to be made in the program or a new way to structure the template, you can create a branch from my GitHub and then create a pull request. Additionally, I'm building a full stack self improvement site called self++ (programmers will get the little joke in there). Feel free to contribute to that site as well if you feel so inclined.

The 8/5/3 progression system was **NOT** invented by me. Let me repeat that again, **I DID NOT** invent the 8/5/3 progression system. I was first exposed to this method from my friend Bryden. After some more digging online the trainer Faz Lifts as well as the YouTube channel Stand Strength also recommended the 8/5/3 progression scheme for lifters. I am stupid. But I'm smart enough to list to strong, big, and yoked lifters. I'd rather listen to a jacked Chad about how to get yoked than a skinny little twink or fat fuck giving me their opinion about what's "Biomechanically Optimal" or how eating red meat is going to give me cancer. Don't take advice about health and fitness from people who aren't healthy and don't exercise. Measure a lifter's worth by his performance, his size, and his strength.

# **Programming Philosophy**

The main driver of progression is the revolving rep range of 8/5/3. There are two methods to the progression. One is faster and best for bulking lifts. The other is slower and best implemented for those aiming to lose weight.

For someone who is bulking, gaining weight, a quicker version of the progressive overload is implemented. Each session in the gym your strength work will focus around three sets of eight, five or three reps. Pushing for a new PR on each rep range. Either buy doing more sets at a certain weight or hitting a new top set. For example, this is what progression may look like for the bench press:

- Session 1 Top Sets: 175x8, 175x8, and 170x8
- Session 2 Top Sets: 190x5, 185x5, and 180x5
- Session 3 Top Sets: 205x3, 205x2, and 195x3
- Session 3 Top Sets: 175x8, 175x8, and 175x8
- Session 4 Top Sets: 190x5, 190x5, and 180x5
- Session 5 Top Sets: 205x3, 205x3, and 200x3
- Session 6 Top Sets: 180x8, 180x8, and 170x8
- Session 7 Top Sets: 195x5, 175x5, and 170x5
- Session 8 Top Sets: 210x3, 210x2, and 200x3
- Session 9 Top Sets: 185x8, 185x8, and 185x8
- Session 10 Top Sets: 205x5, 190x5, and 190x5
- Session 11 Top Sets: 215x3, 210x3, and 200x3

For someone who is cutting, losing weight, a slower version of this progressive overload is implemented. You do a block of 8s then a block of 5s and finally a block of 3s. You progress on that rep range until you cannot hit a new top set in that rep range. For example, once again looking at bench press:

- Session 1 Top Sets: 175x8, 175x8, and 175x8
- Session 2 Top Sets: 180x8, and 180x8
- Session 3 Top Sets: 185x8Session 3 Top Sets: 190x7

- Session 4 Top Sets: 190x5, 190x5, and 190x5

- Session 5 Top Sets: 195x5 and 195x5

- Session 6 Top Sets: 200x4

- Session 7 Top Sets: 200x3 and 200x3

- Session 8 Top Sets: 205x3

- Session 9 Top Sets: 210x2, deload and/or, restart back at 175 for sets of 8

If Progression falters, address your diet, sleep or fatigue, it could be time for a deload. Do your strength work with 50% of your last top set for a week. Then go back 9-12 weeks and start on a working weight you feel is appropriate. Progression doesn't always mean hitting a new PR on your top set. Progression can also be hitting your previous topset across all three sets or hitting the same weight again with better form completing the reps easier. Additionally, I find high rep deadlifts are extremely taxing on my low back. You know yourself better than I do so you can stick with the 8/5/3 or do 5/3/1 on deadlifts.

# Mobility and Stretching

Tight hips, ankles, lower back stiffness, and shoulder impingements have all reared their ugly head at one time or another. The shoulder impingements from BJJ and then lower back pain from sitting programming.

#### Nutrition

Diet is case specific. Different styles of eating suit different people. Some people feel great being vegan other people feel awful. Going vegan has been shown to help lower high cholesterol. The carnivore diet has helped people resolve auto immune disorders like arthritis. Fasting 16 hours a day was shown to increase the life span of mammals. All diets have their place. Just because you're on a diet it doesn't mean your healthy and going to lose weight. If I'm vegan but stuff my face with French fries and Oreos, that's not exactly healthy. Be honest with your eating habits as ultimately what matters total caloric intake and if you can stick with it.

If you eat more calories than you burn you will gain weight. If you want to lose weight you, need to track calories. If you want to gain weight healthy, you need to track calories. You need to understand how much food your body needs. Not stuffing yourself and overeating. I also recommend weighing yourself every day at the same time and taking the average of the week to assess how you're progressing. In term of macro nutrients, you generally want to aim for 0.8 to 1.5 grams of protein per pound of body weight. It's a range, some days you're going to eat more some days you'll eat less. The rest can be carbs or fats.

# Supplementation

All you really need is creatine and some powder to make getting adequate protein easier. If you don't want to take creatine that's fine but it will increase your performance. Use protein powder as a tool to hit your protein goals. I take Vitamin D, magnesium, and fish oil as additionally supplements.

# **Programs**

The best program is one you enjoy and can stick too. There are a variety of templates available for 8/5/3. Below, the structure of each template us laid out as well as a sample week with exercises

chosen. SS1 and SS2 refer to a super set for a body part. You can see a list of examples in the super set chapter of this section. Based on your goals or weaknesses select a superset to fit.

#### Full Body

The full body template is ideally done 2-3 times a week. The core of the template is structured around three movement patterns, pushing, pulling, and lower body movement. That is then followed by a super set and any additional volume. Out of the core pushing pulling and lower body movements. Choose one for strength work and super set the other two for hypertrophy.

Full Body Template:

Movement Pattern	Exercise	Sets x Reps
Strength Work – Push	Compound like Bench Press, Dips,	8/5/3 progression scheme.
	OHP, Incline Bench Press	Optional: two backoff sets
Super Set:		
Pulling Movement	Sample pulling exercises include barbell rows, dumbbell rows, inverted rows, pull ups, and many more	3-5 sets of 8-12
Lower Body Movement	Squats, deadlifts, unilateral leg work	3 x 8-15
Volume:		
SS1	Pick a superset from the superset section to address your weaknesses	3 sets of 8-12
Optional:		
SS2 – See Below	Arms, Back, Chest, Shoulders, Legs	3 x 8-15

#### Sample Week of Training with 2 Days, Squat and Dips as the main exercise:

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Strength		Lower	-	-	Pushing		-
Work		Body			Movement		
		Movement			- Dips		
		- Squat			_		
Super Set: R	Remaining two	of the three c	ore movemen	t patterns			
Remainder		Push:			Lower		
1		Incline			Body:		
		Bench or			Romanian		
		Push Ups			Deadlift or		
					Goblet		
					Squats		
Remainder		Pull: Pull			Pull: Pull		
2		Ups or			Ups or		
		Row			Row		
SS1:		Arms			Leg		
Optional SS	2 or additiona	ıl volume:					
		Optional			Optional		

#### Sample Week of Training with 3 Days, Squat Bench and Deadlift as the main exercises:

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Duj I	Duy Z	Duje	Duj .	Duje	Duy 0	Duj.

Strength	Lower	Pushing	Lower	
Work	Body	Movement	Body	
	Movement	- Dips	Movement	
	- Squat		– Deadlift	
Super Set: Re	maining two of the three core mov	vement patterns		
Remainder	Push:	Lower	Push:	
1	Incline	Body:	Incline	
	Bench or	Romanian	Bench or	
	Push Ups	Deadlift or	Push Ups	
		Goblet		
		Squats		
Remainder	Pull: Pull	Pull: Pull	Pull: Pull	
2	Ups or	Ups or	Ups or	
	Row	Row	Row	
SS1:	Arms	Leg	Chest n	
			Back	
<b>Optional SS2</b>	or additional volume:			
	Optional	Optional	Optional	·

#### **Upper Lower**

Upper Lower is my favourite lifting template. I find that 4 days a week gives me plenty of recovery and enough flexibility in terms of my schedule. Additionally on non lifting days I can choose to focus on other athletic endeavors like Brazilian Ju-jitsu, Maui Thai or Running. In the sample below detail the structure. Generally, for upper lower programs there are two main upper body movements and two main lower body movements. However, you will progress slower across all 4 lifts. Alternative you can pick one main upper lift and one main lower lift. A sample of each is provided below.

#### Upper template:

<b>Movement Pattern</b>	Exercise	Sets x Reps
Main Exercise	Press	8/5/3 plus two backoff sets
Antagonist Exercise	Pull	3-5 sets of 8-12
SS1 – See Below	Arms, Back, Chest, Shoulders	3 x 8-15
Optional: Any additional volume		
SS2 – See Below	Arms, Back, Chest, Shoulders	3 x 8-15

#### Lower template:

Movement Pattern	Exercise	Sets x Reps
Main Exercise	Squat or Deadlift	8/5/3 plus two backoff sets
Antagonist Exercise	Romanian Deadlift, Front Squat,	3-5 sets of 8-12
	Box Squat	
SS1 – See Below	Legs	3 x 8-15
Optional: Any additional volume		
SS2 – See Below	Legs	3 x 8-15

#### Sample Week of Training with 2 main upper and lower exercises:

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Upper or	Upper	Lower			Upper	Lower	
Lower							

Main	Bench	Squat			OHP	Deadlift	
(Strength							
Work)							
Antagonist	Barbell	RDL			Pull Ups	Goblet	
	Row					Squats	
SS1	Arms	Legs			Chest and	Legs	
					Back		
Optional: SS2 or any additional volume							
SS2	Shoulders				Arms		

#### Sample Week of Training with 1 main upper and lower exercises:

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Day	Upper	Lower			Upper	Lower	
Main (Strength Work)	Bench	Squat			Bench	Squat	
Antagonist	Barbell Row	RDL, Front Squats, Leg Press			Pull Ups	Goblet Squats, RDL, Rack Pulls	
SS1	Arms	Legs			Chest and Back	Legs	
<b>Optional:</b> SS2	or any addition	onal volume					
SS2	Shoulders				Arms		

## Push Pull Legs

For the push pull legs program I generally like focusing on only two compound lifts for a time being. For example, bench and squat, deadlift and dips, front squat and overhead press. This allows you to one just two lifts and work harder. I personally had a lot of success doing this focus on JUST squat and bench press. Additionally, I like to switch the days depending on my focus. If I care about my bench more than my squat, I would do Push Legs Pull and the rest. If I wanted a bigger squat or deadlift instead of a bigger bench or squat, I would do Legs, Push, Pull. I generally put pull on the last day as I don't want to fatigue my back for benching, deadlifting, or squatting.

#### Legs Template:

Legs Template:					
<b>Movement Pattern</b>	Exercise	Sets x Reps			
Strength Movement	Squat or Deadlift	Strength work 8/5/3 plus two back			
		off sets			
Antagonist Movement	RDL or Front Squat	3-5 sets of 8-12			
Volume Work					
<b>Movement Pair One:</b>					
Hamstring/Quad/Glute Movement	Goblet squat, hamstring curl, leg	3 sets of 8-12			
	extension, glute thrust				
Calf, Abs or Back Extension	Calf Raise, Crunch, Back Extension	3 sets of 8-12			
Optional Movement Pair Two:					
Hamstring/Quad/Glute Movement	Goblet squat, hamstring curl, leg	3 sets of 8-12			
	extension, glute thrust				
Calf, Abs or Back Extension	Calf Raise, Crunch, Back Extension	3 sets of 8-12			
Note instead of movement pair One and Two you can do the Legs Giant set listed below or the Legs drop set					
followed by one movement pair					

# Push Template:

<b>Movement Pattern</b>	Exercise	Sets x Reps
Strength Movement	Bench or OHP	Strength work 8/5/3 plus two back off sets
Volume Work:		011 3013
Chest Acc	Incline Press	4 sets of 8-12 reps
Chest Acc	Chest Fly	4 sets of 8-12 reps
Triceps	Skull Crushers	4 sets of 8-12 reps
Triceps	Triceps Extensions	4 sets of 8-12 reps
Front Delt	Front Raises, Plate Raises	4 sets of 8-12 reps

# Pull Template:

<b>Movement Pattern</b>	Exercise	Sets x Reps
Strength Work	Pull Ups or Pendley Row	Strength work 8/5/3 plus two back
		off sets
Volume Work:		
Pull	Barbell Row, Dumbbell Row,	4 sets of 8-12 reps
	Cable Row, Meadows Row, Lat	
	Pulldown, DB Pullover	
Pull	Barbell Row, Dumbbell Row,	4 sets of 8-12 reps
	Cable Row, Meadows Row, Lat	
	Pulldown, DB Pullover	
Curl	Barbell Curl, Cable Curl	4 sets of 8-12 reps
Curl	Barbell Curl, Cable Curl	4 sets of 8-12 reps
Lateral Raise	Lateral Raise, Machine Lateral	4 sets of 8-12 reps
	Raise	_
Rear Delt	Rear Delt Fly	4 sets of 8-12 reps

# Sample Week of Training Push Pull Legs

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8
Day	Legs	Push	Pull	REST	Legs	Push	Pull	Rest
Strength Movement	Squat	Bench	Row		Squat	Bench	Row	
Antagonist	RDL				RDL			
Volume:								
	Movement pair 1	Chest Volume	Back Volume		Movement pair 1	Chest Volume	Back Volume	
	Movement pair 2	Triceps Volume	Biceps Volume		Movement pair 2	Triceps Volume	Biceps Volume	
		Anterior Delt	Rear and Lateral Delt			Anterior Delt	Rear and Lateral Delt	

#### **Arnold Split**

Small arms? What to focus on building your arms and shoulders? This is the split for you. After doing 5x5 for 6 months and turning into a torso dominate monster with tiny arms. I turned to this template for a solution. Also, an arm and shoulder day is so much fun. Similar to the Push Pull Legs template, pick one lower and one upper compound movement and move the days around to bring focus to whichever you care about more. For a lower compound focused program, it would be Legs, Chest and Back, then Arms and Shoulders. For an upper compound focused program Chest and Back, Arms and Shoulders, Legs.

#### Legs Template:

Movement Pattern	Exercise	Sets x Reps		
Strength Movement	Squat or Deadlift	Strength work 8/5/3 plus two back off sets		
Antagonist Lift	RDL or Front Squat	3-5 sets of 8-12 reps		
<b>Movement Pair One:</b>				
Quad Exercise, Hamstring Exercise, Glute Exercise	Leg Extension, Lunges, Hamstring Curl, Glute Thrusts	3 sets of 8-12 reps		
Calf Exercise or Abs/Back	Crunches, Back Extensions, Planks,	3 sets of 8-12 reps		
Extensions	Calf Raises			
Optional Movement Pair Two:				
Quad Exercise or Hamstring	Leg Extension, Lunges, Hamstring Curl, Glute Thrusts	3 sets of 8-12 reps		
Quad Exercise, Hamstring Exercise, Glute Exercise	Crunches, Back Extensions, Planks, Calf Raises	3 sets of 8-12 reps		
<b>Note</b> instead of movement pair one and two you can do the legs giant set listed below or the Legs drop set followed by one movement pair				

#### Chest and Back Template:

Movement Pattern	Exercise	Sets x Reps
Strength Movement	Bench, Incline Press, OHP, Barbell	Strength work 8/5/3 plus two
	Row, Pendley Row	backoff sets
<b>Movement Pair One:</b>		
Horizontal Pull	Barbell Row, Dumbbell Row,	4 sets 8-12
	Inverted Row, Meadows Row	
Horizontal Press	Push ups, Incline Press, Chest Fly's	4 sets 8-12
<b>Movement Pair Two:</b>		
Horizontal Pull	Barbell Row, Dumbbell Row,	4 sets 8-12
	Inverted Row, Meadows Row	
Horizontal Press	Push ups, Incline Press, Chest Fly's	4 sets 8-12
<b>Movement Pair Two:</b>		
Horizontal Pull or Back movement	Dumbbell Pull Overs or Cable Pull	3 sets 8-12
	Overs	
Horizontal Upper Back or Neck	Shrugs or Neck Work	3 sets 8-12
work		

#### Arms and Shoulders Template:

	I	
<b>Movement Pattern</b>	Exercise	Sets x Reps
Compound Bicep Exercise	Pull Ups or Chin Ups	8/5/3 or 3x5
Compound Triceps Exercise	Dips or Close Grip Bench Press	8/5/3 or 3x5

Shoulder Super Set (View Super Set Section Shoulders):					
Main Shoulder Exercise	DB OHP or Upright Row	4 x 8-12			
Lateral Delt Exercise	Lateral Raises or Lateral Raise	4 x 8-12			
	Machine				
Rear Delt Exercise	Rear Delt Fly's	4 x 8-12			
Arm Super Set (View Super Set Se	ction Arms):				
Triceps Exercise	French Press, Skull Crusher,	3 x 8-12			
	Triceps Extension				
Bicep Exercise	Curl, Hammer curl, cable curl,	3 x 8-12			
	barbell curls				
Forearm and Grip Work	Wrist curl, plate pinches	3 x 8-12			

Sample Week of Training Arnold Split

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8
Day	Legs	Chest n Back	Arms n Shoulders	REST	Legs	Chest n Back	Arms n Shoulders	Rest
Strength Movement	Squat	Bench	Chins and Dips		Squat	Bench	Chins and Dips	
Antagonist	RDL				RDL			
Volume:								
	Movement pair 1	Movement pair 1	Shoulder SS		Movement pair 1	Movement pair 1	Shoulder SS	
	Movement pair 2	Movement pair 2	Arm SS		Movement pair 2	Movement pair 2	Arm SS	
		Movement pair 3				Movement pair 3		

#### Body Weight or Minimal Equipment

When starting to strength train the limiting factor can often be getting into the gym. I am a big fan of home gyms which make training much more accessible. However, they are expensive so starting small purchasing equipment slowly is a great way to start. For this program we don't immediately implement the 8/5/3 progressing scheme. You instead move through the variations until you can do the most difficult. Certain bodyweight exercises lend themselves better to 8/5/3 like dips and pull ups. While others should be done with a rep goal (achieve a set number of reps in a workout) like body weight squats. The equipment required at minimum is a table, or something to do inverted rows on. From there get a pull up bar, gymnastic rings, and then dumbbells.

The general structure of the template is:

<b>Movement Pattern</b>	Exercises	Rep Goal
Push	- Knee Push Ups - Push Ups	<ul> <li>50 – 100 Reps,</li> <li>Once you advance to dips implement 8/5/3 followed</li> </ul>
	- Dips	by 2-3 backoff sets

Pull	<ul> <li>Dumbbell Row (if you have dumbbell and can't do inverted rows)</li> <li>Inverted Row</li> <li>Pull Ups</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>50 – 100 Reps,</li> <li>Once you advance to pull ups implement 8/5/3 followed by 2-3 backoff sets</li> </ul>
Legs	<ul> <li>Body Weight Squat</li> <li>Pistol Squat</li> <li>Goblet Squats</li> <li>Unilateral Leg work</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>50 – 100 Reps,</li> <li>Once you advance to pistol squats look into getting a weighted vest.</li> <li>Alternatively, you can do a mix of goblet and Bulgarian split squats.</li> </ul>
Core	<ul> <li>Hollow Body/Superman</li> <li>Knee Raises or Crunch</li> <li>L-Sit</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>50 – 100 Reps if you choose knee raises of crunches</li> <li>2 – 3 minutes of holds, look to increase total time, or hit total time within fewer sets</li> </ul>
Optional:		
SS1 or any additional Volume		

#### Sample Week of Training Body Weight

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Push	Push Ups		Push Ups		Push Ups		
Pull	Inverted		Inverted		Inverted		
	Row		Row		Row		
Legs	Body		Body		Body		
	Weight		Weight		Weight		
	Squats		Squats		Squats		
Core	Crunches		Crunches		Crunches		
Optional: SS1 or any additional volume							
SS1	Shoulders		Back or		Arms or		
	or arms		legs		legs		

### The Murph

This is a fun goal. If you can do a set of 10 pull ups, you can complete a Murph. The program is as follows:

- o Run 1 Mile
- o 100 Pull Ups
- o 200 Push Ups
- o 300 Bodyweight Squats
- o Run 1 Mile

Instead, you can do 20 sets of 5 pull ups, 10 push ups, and 15 bodyweight squats. Like I said if you can do 10 pull ups you can complete this workout. It's a mental test more than a physical one. If its easy for you wear a weighted vest.

#### **Super Sets**

In the template of some programs a super set was denoted as SS1 or SS2. Depending on your weak point or a particular muscle group you are trying to bring up select super sets to fit your goals. For a super set you do all the exercises listed, then you take a break. For example, triceps exercise, followed by biceps exercise, followed by grip/forearm work, then rest. Do three rounds of eight to fifteen reps.

#### **Chest:**

- Chest Movement 1
- Chest Movement 2
- Additional Accessory Triceps Exercise, Bicep Exercise, Ab Exercise, Back Exercise
- <u>Sample:</u>
  - Incline Press
  - o Chest Fly
  - o Bicep Curls

#### Back:

- Horizontal Pull Movement
- Vertical Pull or Pullover
- Additional Accessory Shrugs/Trap Exercise, Rear Delt Fly's, Neck Exercise
- <u>Sample:</u>
  - o Dumbbell Row
  - o Lat Pull Down
  - o Shrugs

#### Chest and Back:

- Push Movement
- Pull Movement
- Additional Accessory Triceps Exercise, Biceps Exercise, Neck Work, Abs
- Sample:
  - o Push-Ups
  - o Barbell Row
  - o Plank

#### **Shoulders:**

- Compound Shoulder Exercise
- Rear Delt Exercise
- Additional Accessory Lateral Raise or Neck/ Trap Exercise
- Sample:
  - o Upright Row
  - o Rear Delt Fly's
  - Neck Extension

#### Arms:

- Triceps Exercise
- Bicep Exercise
- Additional Accessory Forearm/Wrist Curls or Grip Strength Training

- <u>Sample:</u>
  - Cable Triceps Extension
  - o Barbell Curls
  - Plate Pinches

#### Legs:

- Unilateral Leg work, Hamstring Exercise, Quad Exercise
- Additional Accessory Calf's, Abs, Back Extensions, Neck Work
- Additional Accessory Calf's, Abs, Back Extensions, Neck Work
- Sample:
  - o Lunges
  - Crunches
  - Calf Raises

#### **Leg Press or Hack Squat Drop Set:**

- Workup to a top set of 10-15 on leg press or hack squat machine
- From top set, strip plates until leg press in empty or 1 plate.
- EG Top set of 4 plates, then 3 plates, 2 plates 1 plate, take each set to failure 30 seconds rest while training partner strips weight.

#### **Leg Giant Set:**

- Quad or Hamstring or Unilateral Leg Exercise
- Abs
- Calf
- Neck or Back Extensions
- Sample:
  - o Bulgarian Split Squat
  - Crunches
  - o Back Extensions
  - o Calf Raises

#### **Neglected Parts:**

- Three exercises to target lacking muscle groups
- Sample:
  - o Lunges
  - Neck Work
  - o Abs

#### Goals

Short term and log term goals are important. Achieving short term goals provides motivation allowing you to reach your long-term goals. These are random goals I think are great for the long term. Depending on your current condition and physical abilities some long-term goals I listed may be achieved and some short-term goals may take you longer to achieve. The point is making a list of goals will give you a finish line, a target to shoot for.

#### Short Term Goals:

- New top set on an exercise for 8s 5s or 3s
- Lose 2 pounds this month
- 3 seconds fast on a mile time
- Set of 10 pull ups
- Set of 20 push ups

#### Long Term Goals:

- 135lbs OHP
- 225lbs Bench
- 315lbs Squat
- 405lbs Deadlift
- 1000lbs total (Total of your 1 rep max on Squat Bench and Deadlift)
- Sub 6-minute mile
- 60s Dead Hand
- Bodyweight farmers walk for 100m, ie. If 200lbs, 100 in each hand

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