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FITNESS WRITINGS

2023

**More than 2 dozen workout ideas,
mainly focused on a minimalist approach to building
Athletically Functional Strength and Muscle Mass**

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Athletically Functional Strength and Muscle Mass

by Omar Cabaleiro 2023.Jul.23

Here is one approach which I recommend toward this end...

Train every other day, doing only one exercise per training session (rotate the following, keeping them in order):

1. Front Squat*
2. Dip^~
3. Pull Up*~
4. Hook-Grip Deadlift^
5. Press*
6. Hang Power Clean^

* With **Front Squat, Press, and Pull Up**, use Paul Carter's 3-50 Method:

- Start with your 18-22 [20] rep max
- Do 50 total reps within 3 sets

(No specific rest time between sets is given, but I recommend 30 seconds, or 1 minute)

(If you can do all 50 reps within the 3 sets, increase weight next time around)

^ With **Hook-Grip Deadlift, Dip, and Hang Power Clean**, use the following method by Chad Waterbury:

- Do 25 total reps with your 7 rep max
- As many sets as it takes
- Rest only 30 seconds between sets

(If you can do all 25 reps, with at least 7 of them in the first set, increase weight next time around)

~ **Dip and Pull Up** are the only bodyweight exercises in this list. If you need to, add resistance (weight belt/ vest, etc). If you can't do enough reps with either of these 2 exercises to follow the given protocols above, use some sort of regression.

One method I recommend, until you can do enough reps, is EMOM (Every Minute on the Minute). If you can only do about 1 or 2 reps and need more rest time between sets, try E2MOM (Every 2 Minutes on the Minute).

If you can't do any reps, here are alternative exercises for each, listed in descending order of preference:

- Pull Up
 1. (Kneeling) Lat Pull Down
 2. (Standing) Pull Over (such as with kettlebell or clubbell)
 3. Bent Over/ Inverted Row
- Dip
 1. Bench Dip
 2. Bench Press
 3. Push Up

Daily Strength Training: Maxing and Sub-Max Options

by Omar Cabaleiro 2023.Jul.24

This work assumes you have enough training experience and strength that linear progression isn't really a thing for you anymore, and also that you've trained with high absolute intensity before.

You could begin with the daily maxing approach and then, if it begins to feel like too big of a neuroendocrine load, switch over to daily sub-maximal singles. Or you could start with the sub-maximal approach and feel things out from there.

Daily Maxing

[You're not trying to hit a new PR every day here. Though your daily 1RM should definitely feel like work, it should not be a grind to get up. It definitely should not compromise your ability to keep good form.]

This method is based on an article by Jon Chambers:

1. Work up to a 1 rep max for the day (in nice weight jumps; not too many sets).
2. Then, do one of the following (alternate them from 1 day to the next):
 - 5 doubles with 90% of the day's 1RM
 - 5 triples with 85% of the day's 1RM

It's recommended that you don't take more than 1 day off per week, if even that.

Daily Sub-Maximal Singles

This is Steve Justa's Singles Workout Strategy #1, from his book Rock Iron Steel: The Book of Strength:

- Start each month by testing your 1RM (using ramp-up sets). That will be your workout for the first day.
- Your first week you will be using 70% of your 1RM, and increase the weight by 5-10lbs each week.
- The first day of each week you will do 3 singles, then add 2 singles each day, so that by the seventh and final day of each week, you will be doing 15 singles.
- Rest 1-to-2 minutes between singles.

This is literally every day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year.

Transitioning Between the Two Approaches

If you're switching directly from daily maxing to daily sub-maximal singles, then just take whatever your highest daily max was and start your first week with 70% of that (if you're doing the exact same exercise).

One Final Recommendation

As you intuitively transition between the two methods above, and for however long you do, try it with this as your only exercise:

the Snatch.

It would make for an excellent minimalist approach which combines strength, mobility, and explosiveness.

Resistance Training across Energy Systems

by Omar Cabaleiro 2023.Jul.27

Every now and then I return to doing my resistance training using the basic CrossFit scheduling template.

Schedule

It involves training 3 days on, 1 day off:

- Day 1: Train (1 exercise, performed as EMOM)
- Day 2: Train (2 exercises, performed as couplet)
- Day 3: Train (3 exercises, performed as triplet)
- Day 4: Rest
- Repeat, with no regard for what day of the week it is.

Individual Training Days

1. On the first of 3 consecutive training days, train for strength. Don't chase fatigue, and don't come too close to failure. Do a 5-to-20-round EMOM (every minute on the minute), 1-to-5 reps per round.
2. On the second consecutive training day, do a 3-to-5-round couplet. The reps should generally be in the range of 10-to-25. Adjust resistance so that local muscular fatigue is the limiting factor. It should really take no more than 5 minutes. Otherwise, the resistance is likely too high.
3. On the third and final consecutive training day, do a 10-to-20-minute triplet- trying to do as many rounds as possible (AMRAP). Adjust the resistance and reps so that cardio-respiratory fatigue is the limiting factor. If local muscular fatigue begins to feel like the limiting factor, the resistance is likely too high.

Progress

- **EMOM**
You can work from 5 rounds up to 20, from 1 rep per round up to 5, gradually increase the resistance you use, or- more likely, some combination of these.
- **Couplet**
 1. Push toward performing all rounds unbroken (without stopping to rest between reps/ exercises/ rounds).
 2. Increase reps up toward 20-to-25.
 3. Increase resistance.

If you need to rest, then rest, but don't worry about increasing resistance or reps if you can't go unbroken.

- **Triplet**
You can work up from 10 minutes to 20 minutes; also increase resistance and/ or reps. Like with couplets, prioritize going unbroken over increasing resistance or reps.

Exercise Selection and Rotation

Personally, with my resistance training I generally use a list of movement patterns I got from Dan John's work: loaded carry, squat, hinge, pull, push.

With these 5 I feel like I'm "covering all the bases" (satisfactorily enough).

If you use a different set, that's fine.

One thing though- rotate which exercises you do on different days so that, over time, you train each of the different movement patterns you use with each of these 3 different workout types: EMOM, couplet, triplet.

Pressing, Posterior Chain, Squat ROM

by Omar Cabaleiro 2023.Aug.1

A minimalist approach to increasing athletically functional strength and muscle mass; this is my primary interest as a person who is perpetually learning about, and experimenting with, different training methods. The following workout is in line with this.

Daily Portion of Program

(literally daily- 7 days per week)

Perform these 2 exercises as a sort of no-rush superset. Don't try to speed through, but also don't be too leisurely with it. Get it done efficiently.

1. 1-Arm Dumbbell Press (With unilateral exercises, I like to alternate which side I do first, from 1 session to the next): Test your 1rm at the start of the month, and train doing singles with 70%+, using double progression. This is the essence of Steve Justa's Singles Workout Strategy #1. (... Use Steve Justa's Singles Workout Strategy #1)
(You don't need to go unilateral with this. You can use 2 dumbbells or, the default implement for the press- a barbell)
2. Duck Walk for ~20 feet between singles, instead of passively resting for 1-to-2 minutes. Here you're getting a little bit of deep-squat-position mobility work in, without the wear and tear of full squat reps. In this program, the active lower body strength training comes primarily via the hinge movement pattern.

With the Press, particularly if you use a barbell and no rack, you'll get in some (incidental) decent-ROM, weighted squat work by needing to do a Power Clean prior to each Press.

Every-Other-Day Portion of Program

Every other day, end the workout by doing one of the following (alternate between the 2):

- Romanian Deadlift (or the Good Morning): Perform this using 1 of my favorite Chad Waterbury protocols- 25 total reps with your 7rm, taking 30 seconds rest between sets- however many sets it takes.
- Yates Row (or you could do more of a 90-degree Bent Over Row): With this exercise, use Paul Carter's 3-50 Method, resting 30 seconds (or 1 minute) between sets.

This portion of the workout focuses on the posterior chain. The first exercise emphasizes higher intensity, and the second one emphasizes higher volume.

Deadlifting, Pressing, Looking Yoked

by Omar Cabaleiro 2023.Aug.4

Here is another minimalist approach to building athletically functional strength and muscle mass. It involves training with only 3 exercises:

1. Hook-Grip Deadlift
2. Press
3. Hang Power Clean

The Deadlift and the Press were both mentioned by name in the title. The “Looking Yoked” part was in reference to the Power Clean. From my experience, the best approach I’ve encountered so far for adding rugged mass to the traps, is repping out with heavy Hang Power Cleans.

Daily Portion of Program

Hook-Grip Deadlift, using Steve Justa’s Singles Workout Strategy #1:

1. Start the month by working up to, and testing, your 1rm. This will be your workout for the day.
2. You will use 70% of this during your first week, and add 5-to-10lb each week.
3. The first day of each week you will do 3 singles, adding 2 singles each day so that you’re doing 15 total on the seventh and final day of each week.
4. Rest 1-to-2 minutes between singles.

Every-Other-Day Portion of Program

Every other day, do one of the following after your Deadlifting (alternate between the 2):

- Press, using Paul Carter’s 3-50 Method:
 1. Take your 20rm, and try to do 50 total reps with it within 3 sets.
 2. Rest 30 seconds (or 1 minute) between sets.
 3. If you can complete all 50 reps within 3 sets, increase resistance next time.
- Hang Power Clean, using one of Chad Waterbury’s protocols:
 1. Do 25 total reps with your 7rm; however many sets it takes.
 2. Rest 30 seconds between sets.
 3. If you can complete all 25 reps, with at least 7 of them in the first set, increase resistance next time.

Daily Minimalist Calisthenics

by Omar Cabaleiro 2023.Aug.9

The approach I'm about to cover here basically consists of sticking with just 3 exercises, each of a different movement pattern; essentially- squat, push, and pull.

Exercise Selection

Here are 2 specific exercise combinations I recommend you choose from; also some alternatives for each of the 3 different movement patterns:

- **Hindu Squat, Hindu Push Up, Back Bridge.** Matt Furey, in his book Combat Conditioning, refers to this trio as the Royal Court.
- **Pull Up, Push Up, Jumping Squat.** Jorge Masvidal, speaking on the JRE podcast, mentioned this combination of exercises with regard to Yoel Romero's physical conditioning.
- Here are some alternative exercise options:
 1. **Squat:** Air Squat, Hindu Jumper, ATG Split Squat, Cosack Squat, Hunter Squat, Jumping Lunge, Duck Walk (for distance), Horse Stance (hold for time), Lateral Jump Over
 2. **Push:** Incline/ Decline Push Up, (Wall) Hand Stand Push Up, Dip, Bench Dip
 3. **Pull:** Chin Up, Neutral Grip Pull Up, Kipping Pull Up, Butterfly Pull Up, (Horizontal/ Incline/ Decline) Inverted Row, Dead/ Flexed-Arm Hang (for time)

Execution

Now that you've chosen 1 exercise for each of the 3 movement patterns:

1. Do only 1 exercise per day (rotate them).
2. For each exercise, figure out a rep count which is challenging, but also definitely doable.
3. Do 1 set at that chosen rep count several times throughout the day- hourly, every half hour, every 2 hours, whatever interval works best for you. Also, figure out how much of your day you're willing to have this span- from first set through last set.

An Alternative Approach

Multiple mini training sessions per day may very well not be feasible for you. If that's the case, consider doing all 3 exercises every day; just 1 set each (to failure), and all within a single session.

This alternative approach could work particularly well if you have several exercise combinations (all with different exercises for each movement pattern), and rotate through those different trios, doing a different one each day.

Minimalist Strength Training

by Omar Cabaleiro 2023.Aug.9

For each exercise, as long as linear progression works for you, just stick to that straightforward approach. Once you hit the wall with that though, you can start trying stuff like double progression, etc.

The Program

Train every other day, doing only 1 exercise per day (rotate them):

- **Farmer's Walk**

Here are parameters you can modulate for the sake of progression: resistance, distance, time/speed.

- **Overhead Squat**

For this exercise, I'm going to give a more specific recommendation: focus on increasing your 15 rep max. Whenever training this exercise, I recommend keeping as your metaphorical north star a standard that was put out there by Dan John: 15 reps with body weight (1 set of 15 overhead squats while holding the equivalent of your own body weight overhead).

(If you're new to the Overhead Squat, even the empty bar could be too heavy, not just for 15 reps, but for a single rep. You may need to slowly work your way up in reps with the minimum of resistance. Something like double progression could potentially be necessary even right out the gate with this exercise.)

Minimalist Strength Training 2

by Omar Cabaleiro 2023.Aug.16

This program involves training every day (7 days per week), doing singles for each of these 3 exercises (perform them in this same order):

1. Snatch
2. Press (or Power Clean + Press, if you're not using any sort of rack)
3. Snatch-Grip High Pull

I recommend using Steve Justa's Singles Workout Strategy #3, from his book Rock Iron Steel: The Book of Strength. Here is essentially what you'd be doing:

- Once every 3 weeks work up to, and test, your 1 rep max in all 3 lifts. This will be your workout for that day.
- The following day you will use 70% of your 1rm for each exercise.
- Do 4 singles per exercise per day. Complete all singles for 1 exercise before quickly moving on to the next.
- Rest 1-to-2 minutes between singles.
- Figure out what works best for you with each individual exercise: Every 3-to-4 days, increase resistance by 5-to-10lbs.

Powerfully Athletic Physique

by Omar Cabaleiro 2023.Aug.16

This program involves training every day (7 days per week).

Warm Up

If you follow my recommendation to perform this part of the workout with clubbells, it could serve a dual purpose: general warm up/ mobilization, and grip training.

Start each session doing 1 of the following (alternate between the 2 from 1 day to the next):

- Clubbell Alternating Circles
- Clubbell Pullover

1-hand or 2-hand; I'll leave that up to you.

(Limit) Strength

This portion of the training session involves 2 exercises (perform in order listed here):

1. Hook-Grip Deadlift
2. Press

Perform these 2 exercises with a modified version of Steve Justa's Singles Workout Strategy #3:

- Work up to, and test, 1 rep max for both exercises once every 3 weeks. This will be your workout for that day.
- The next day do singles for both exercises using 70% of 1rm for each. Complete all singles for the Deadlift before quickly moving on to the Press.
- Do 6 total singles per exercise per day.
- Rest 1-to-2 minutes between singles.
- Every 4 days increase Deadlift by 10lbs. Every 3 days increase Press by 5lbs.

Hypertrophy/ Conditioning

End each workout by doing only 1 of the following (rotate them):

- Attempt new Yates Row 25 rep max (or Inverted Row to failure)
- Dip (or Hindu Push Up) to failure
- Hindu Squat (or Lateral Jump Over) to failure

Sustainability

If you feel like you're hitting a wall, but want to try to keep going longer with this program, here are some ideas that might help you with that.

Which approach(es) to backing off you do first, or at all, will depend on what you believe will serve you and your progress best.

- Maybe the high reps are wearing on you. If so, you can switch to doing the hypertrophy section every other day instead of daily, and then every 3 days if you need to back off further; eventually, maybe even omit this section altogether (at least temporarily).
- If the strength section is beginning to feel like too much of a "neuro-grind," you can switch to exercises which are less systemically taxing. For example, from the Hook-Grip Deadlift, you can switch to the Romanian Deadlift; and from the Press to the 1-Arm Dumbbell Press.
- Another idea for the hypertrophy section; you can alternate the exercise you do for pull, push, squat. For a simple example, let's assume you're still doing the hypertrophy section daily:
 - End day 1 with Yates Row, day 2 with Dip, day 3 with Hindu Squat, then day 4 with Inverted Row, day 5 with Hindu Push Up, and day 6 with Lateral Jump Over. When you get to day 7, cycle back to Yates Row, etc.

Powerfully Athletic Physique 2

by Omar Cabaleiro 2023.Aug.17

Each of these programs has 2 parts.

Option A

1. Train the Snatch-Grip High Pull every day (7 days per week). Do sub-maximal ($\geq 70\%$ of 1 rep max) singles, using double progression.
2. Every other day, end your workout with 1 set of Dips to failure.

Option B

1. Train the 1-Arm Dumbbell Press using the same protocol as the High Pull in Option A (Steve Justa's Singles Workout Strategy #1. Yes, I'm a huge fan of this method; my go-to for training limit strength).
2. Every other day, or once every 3 days, or on 2 fixed days per week (i.e. Monday and Friday), end your workout by doing 75 total Kettlebell Swings (I got the idea for this from Tim Ferriss' work). When you can do all 75 reps in a single set, increase weight by a bit ($\leq 10\text{lbs}$ or $\sim 5\text{lbs}$, if possible).

Powerfully Athletic Physique 3

by Omar Cabaleiro 2023.Aug.17

Option A

Train every other day, or once every three days. Each session, do only 1 work set of 1 of the following (alternate):

- Attempt new Hang Power Clean 20 rep max
- Dip to failure

Option B

Train every other day, or once every three days. Each session, do only 1 work set of 1 of the following (alternate):

- Attempt new Press 25 rep max
- Lateral Jump Over to failure

Powerfully Athletic Physique 4

by Omar Cabaleiro 2023.Aug.18

For each of the 2 program options below, you can train every other day, or once every 3 days, or on 2 fixed days per week (i.e. Monday and Friday).

Option A

- Workout 1

Do only 1 work set for each:

1. Attempt new Thruster 25 rep max
2. Dip to failure

- Workout 2

Do only 1 work set for each:

1. Attempt new Hang Hook-Grip High Pull 20 rep max
2. Pull Up to failure

Option B

- Workout 1

Do only 1 work set for each:

1. Attempt new Front Squat 25 rep max
2. Push Up to failure

- Workout 2

Do only 1 work set for each:

1. Attempt new Hang Power Clean 20 rep max
2. Inverted Row to failure

Athletically Functional Strength and Muscle Mass 2

by Omar Cabaleiro 2023.Aug.19

Option A

Train every other day. Each session do only 1 work set of 1 of the following (rotate them, keeping them in the order presented here):

1. Attempt new Front Squat 25 rep max
2. Attempt new (Weighted) Dip 10 rep max
3. Attempt new (Weighted) Pull Up 25 rep max
4. Attempt new Hook-Grip Deadlift 10 rep max
5. Attempt new Press 25 rep max
6. Attempt new Hang Power Clean 10 rep max

Option B

1. Every day (7 days per week), train all 3 of the following exercises, using Steve Justa's Singles Workout Strategy #3:
 - Hook-Grip Deadlift
 - Weighted Dip
 - Power Clean
2. Every other day, finish off your training session by attempting a new 25 rep max in only 1 of the following (rotate them, in the order presented here):
 - Front Squat
 - Press
 - (Weighted) Pull Up

Minimalist Strength Training 3

by Omar Cabaleiro 2023.Aug.22

As linear progression becomes less feasible, you can move on to double progression, and triple progression, etc.

The Program

Train every other day. Each session do only 1 of the following exercises (alternate):

- Hex Bar Deadlift
EMOM is one way I recommend training this exercise if you're gonna give this program a go. For progression, you can manipulate resistance, number of rounds (i.e. 5-to-20), number of reps per round (i.e. 1-5). Or, you can forgo EMOM and attempt something like total reps for time (I believe it was in a Dan John article where I read about a challenge involving total 225lb Deadlift reps within 1 hour).
- Waiter Walk
(Like with the Suitcase Carry and the Goblet Squat, as well as complexes, I discovered this exercise via Dan John's work.)
For progression, you can manipulate resistance, distance, number of rounds, even time (per round, or for total distance covered), etc.
(With unilateral loaded carries, I like to switch sides only once- at the halfway point.)

Though there are many different approaches you can take toward training these exercises for strength, the specific combination of exercises is my main focus here.

Powerfully Athletic Physique 5

by Omar Cabaleiro 2023.Aug.22

Option A

1. Train the Snatch-Grip High pull every day (7 days per week), working up to a daily max each time- "... the heaviest weight that you can do without struggling or breaking form at all." The approach used here for this exercise is from an article by Jon Chambers (as is the quote). Don't drag out the process of working up to it via ramp-up sets too much. Follow your daily max with 1 of these approaches to back-off sets (alternate from 1 day to the next):
 - 5 doubles with 90%
 - 5 triples with 85%
2. Every 2 or 3 days, finish off your workout by doing 1 set to failure of the Dip.

Option B

1. Train the Power Snatch using the exact same protocol used for the High Pull in Option A.
2. Every 2 or 3 days, finish off your workout by doing 1 set to failure of the Jumping Lunge.

Option C

Train every other day, or once every 3 days, or on 2 fixed days per week (i.e. Monday and Friday). Each workout, do only 1 work set for each of the following (in the order presented here):

1. Attempt new Romanian Deadlift 10 rep max
2. Attempt new Goblet Squat 25 rep max
3. Attempt new Yates Row 25 rep max
4. Dip to failure

Minimalist Strength Training 4

by Omar Cabaleiro 2023.Sep.5

Each of the below options involves training 7 days per week.

Option A

- Snatch, using Steve Justa's Singles Workout Strategy #1.

Option B

Pick one of these exercise combinations, and perform it as if it were a single exercise, using Steve Justa's Singles Workout Strategy #1:

- Clean + Push Press
- Power Clean + Thruster

Both versions train the hinge, pull, squat, and push movement patterns.

The first one allows for a more seamless transition between the 2 exercises.

The second better lends itself to performing the negative portion of the squat in a more deliberate manner.

Option C

Perform these 3 exercises using Steve Justa's Singles Workout Strategy #3:

1. Snatch
2. Press (or Power Clean + Press, if you're not using any sort of rack)
3. Snatch-Grip High Pull

Option D

Perform these 2 exercises using a modified version of Steve Justa's Singles Workout Strategy #3:

1. Snatch-Grip High Pull
2. Weighted Dip

Here are the modifications (all other parameters same as default):

1. (Since, in this version, it's) 2 exercises instead of 3,
2. 6 singles for each exercise per session, instead of 4

Powerfully Athletic Physique 6

by Omar Cabaleiro 2023.Sep.5

For this program, you will be training either 3 or 2 days per week. Each session, you'll be doing 2 exercises. I've been growing fonder and fonder of this combo lately:

1. Hang Snatch-Grip High Pull
2. Dip

You'll be using a different approach for each exercise:

1. **Hang Snatch-Grip High Pull.** I got the idea for this method from an article on the Cult of Strength website:
 - Starting weight: your 5 rep max minus 90lbs.
 - Perform 1 set of 20 reps each workout, adding 5lbs each workout.

Essentially, you'd be working toward turning your 5 rep max into your 20 rep max.

If you train 3 days per week, go for 6 weeks.

If you train 2 days per week, go for 9 weeks.

2. **Dip.** After you complete your pulling, do 1 set to failure of the Dip.

Movement Pattern Rotation

by Omar Cabaleiro 2023.Sep.11

Here are some methods I like for structuring my training.

They could be particularly useful if you're new and at a loss for how to set up your regimen.

Alternatively, maybe you want to change things up and you're looking for some ideas that may not necessarily occur to you unprompted, based on your own personal combination of experience and preferences.

Movement Pattern Selection

- This is one my favorites, which I picked up from Dan John's work:
 1. Loaded Carry
 2. Squat
 3. Hinge
 4. Pull
 5. Push
- If you take the above grouping and only keep the ones you can "do reps of":
 1. Squat
 2. Hinge
 3. Pull
 4. Push
- Narrow it down even further:
 1. Squat
 2. Push
 3. Pull
- Another set of movement patterns I picked up from Dan John, even more minimalist:
 1. Put weights overhead
 2. Pick weights off the floor
 3. Carry weights
- Here's one particularly suited to calisthenics:
 1. Squat
 2. Push
 3. Pull
 4. Bridge (Back Bend)
 5. Abs (Forward Bend)

- I've come across Percy Cerutti and his methods mentioned here-and-there over the years. I recently revisited 1 particular article ("The Gable Method") by Dan John where he mentioned he'd been a fan of Cerutti for years. I've since been trying to find more on him, and I'm especially interested in reading his actual writings. This is the set of movement patterns Dan John attributed to him in the above-mentioned article:
 1. A Deadlift
 2. A form of Pressing (Bench Press*)
 3. An explosive full-body movement (Heavy Dumbbell Swing*)
 4. A form of Pulling (Pull Up, and Cheat Curl*)
 5. An ab exercise(* These were mentioned as the specific exercises which Cerutti preferred for those movement patterns.)
- There's also the group of movement patterns Paul Wade focused on in his book on progressive calisthenics training for strength, *Convict Conditioning*:
 1. Push Up
 2. Squat
 3. Pull Up
 4. Leg Raise
 5. Bridge
 6. Handstand Push Up(Even though I listed specific exercises here, I referred to them more generally as "movement patterns" because the program involves several regressions and also progressions (easier and also more difficult versions of the named exercises).)

Rotation Scheduling

- **One Exercise per Session**

This is exactly what it sounds like.

As you cycle through whatever set of movement patterns you've selected, only train 1 exercise per workout.

You can train daily, every other day, once every 3 days, etc; even multiple times per day.

Some sets of movement patterns may lend themselves to less frequent sessions better than others. Here are 2 specific factors that come to mind right away which would make it more suited to less frequent training (not that you should necessarily train less frequently because of this):

1. Patterns/ exercises which involve a greater portion of your overall anatomy/ musculature, thus being more systemically taxing
2. Fewer individual movement patterns, making for a smaller rotation

- **Two Exercises per Session**

Generally, with all other parameters being the same, 2 exercises per session is better suited to less frequent training than 1 exercise per session.

Using the first movement pattern grouping as an example (Carry, Squat, Hinge, Pull, Push), and assuming that you'd be training every other day, this is what it might look like:

Sunday: Carry + Squat
Monday: rest
Tuesday: Hinge + Pull
Wednesday: rest
Thursday: Push + Carry
Friday: rest
Saturday: Squat + Hinge

Sunday: rest
Monday: Pull + Push
Tuesday: rest
Wednesday: Carry + Squat
Thursday: rest
Friday: Hinge + Pull
Saturday: rest

- **Primary CrossFit Template**

I covered this approach in a previous post (“Resistance Training across Energy Systems”).

In CrossFit’s actual Level 1 Trainer Manual (still currently available as a free PDF download from the site, with no registration required), it is exercise modalities which are cycled through:

1. Monostructural Metabolic Conditioning (“cardio”-type activities)
2. Gymnastics (calisthenics or body-weight exercises/ elements)
3. Weightlifting (weight training basics)

For the purposes of this particular writing, I’m assuming that this scheduling system is being used specifically for resistance training and, rather than exercise modalities, what are being cycled through are movement patterns.

This template involves training 3 days on, 1 day off:

1. Train 1 exercise/ pattern (I recommend to do it as EMOM- challenging strength but without nearing failure; don’t chase fatigue)
2. Train 2 exercises/ patterns (I recommend to do it as couplet- challenging mostly local muscular endurance)
3. Train 3 exercises/ patterns (I recommend to do it as triplet- challenging mostly cardio-respiratory endurance)
4. Rest

(Repeat, with no regard for what day of the week it is)

Make sure to rotate movement patterns so that you’re training them on different days (EMOM, couplet, triplet).

6 movement patterns example (Squat, Push Up, Pull Up, Bridge, Handstand Push Up, Leg Raise):

- | | |
|---|---|
| • Sunday: Squat | • Sunday: rest |
| • Monday: Push Up + Pull Up | • Monday: Pull Up |
| • Tuesday: Bridge + Handstand Push Up + Leg Raise | • Tuesday: Bridge + Handstand Push Up |
| • Wednesday: rest | • Wednesday: Leg Raise + Squat + Push Up |
| • Thursday: Push Up | • Thursday: rest |
| • Friday: Pull Up + Bridge | • Friday: Bridge |
| • Saturday: Handstand Push Up + Leg Raise + Squat | • Saturday: Handstand Push Up + Leg Raise |

5 movement patterns example (Carry, Squat, Hinge, Push, Pull):

- Sunday: Carry
- Monday: Squat + Hinge
- Tuesday: Push + Pull + Carry
- Wednesday: rest
- Thursday: Squat
- Friday: Hinge + Push
- Saturday: Pull + Carry + Squat

- **Secondary CrossFit Template**

Scheduling your training with no regard for what day of the week it is may not be feasible for you. This version was created with the conventional 5-day workweek in mind (again, this has been modified from the original for the purposes of this writing):

- Sunday: rest
- Monday: 1 exercise (EMOM)
- Tuesday: 2 exercises (couplet)
- Wednesday: 3 exercises (triplet)
- Thursday: 2 exercises (couplet)
- Friday: 1 exercise (EMOM)
- Saturday: rest

6 movement patterns example (Squat, Push Up, Pull Up, Bridge, Handstand Push Up, Leg Raise):

- | | |
|---|---|
| • Sunday: rest | • Sunday: rest |
| • Monday: Squat | • Monday: Pull Up |
| • Tuesday: Push Up + Pull Up | • Tuesday: Bridge + Handstand Push Up |
| • Wednesday: Bridge + Handstand Push Up + Leg Raise | • Wednesday: Leg Raise + Squat + Push Up |
| • Thursday: Pull Up + Bridge | • Thursday: Handstand Push Up + Leg Raise |
| • Friday: Push Up | • Friday: Bridge |
| • Saturday: rest | • Saturday: rest |

5 movement patterns example (Carry, Squat, Hinge, Push, Pull):

- Sunday: rest
- Monday: Carry
- Tuesday: Squat + Hinge
- Wednesday: Push + Pull + Carry
- Thursday: Hinge + Push
- Friday: Squat
- Saturday: rest

Barbell, Kettlebell, Clubbell, Bodyweight

by Omar Cabaleiro 2023.Oct.12

This program involves 4 exercises:

1. Clubbell 1-Hand Alternating Circles
2. Duck Walk
3. Hook-Grip Romanian Deadlift
4. Kettlebell 1-Arm Press

Keep them in this same order if you train them all in the same session, or if you decide to only do 1 exercise per day. Alternatively, you could split them into pairs, as follows:

1. CB 1H Alternating Circles + Duck Walk
2. HG RDL + KB 1A Press

Phase 1

- Each time you do each exercise, do only 1 work set, attempting a new 20 rep max. (Exception: The Duck Walk is just for some light squat ROM mobility work. Only do 1 ~20-foot “rep.”)
For the CB Alt Circles, 20 reps means 20 reps in each direction (contralateral and ipsilateral) with each arm; with the KB 1A Press, it means 20 reps with each arm.
- If you decide to train all 4 exercises each workout, I recommend you train every other day.
- If you train only 1 exercise per day, I recommend you train every day. In this case, the Duck Walk would basically function as an active rest day and should barely be a “blip” on the “radar” of your recovery ability.
- If you train 2 exercises per workout, I recommend you try training daily as well. You can lessen the frequency as you go if need be.

Phase 2

For each exercise independently, once you fail to progress with your 20 rep max, begin just doing 10 reps. It may not feel like much of a challenge for a few workouts after making this adjustment, but just consider it a deload phase for that particular movement pattern.

Continue increasing resistance by 5-to-10lbs (from where you left off with the 20 rep max attempts) each time you complete the 10 reps and, eventually, you’ll get back to struggling for progress with that exercise; attempting a new 10 rep max each session.

Phase 3

Once you start failing with your 10 rep max attempts, switch to training all 4 exercises using EMOM and triple progression (resistance level, reps per round, number of rounds).

This can get pretty lengthy, so I recommend you only train 1 exercise per day. Try it out and see what works best for you though.

For each exercise (except Duck Walk, for which you will continue to just do 1 ~20-foot “rep”):

- Starting weight will be your 10 rep max, doing 3 reps per round.
- Keep reps per round to 1-to-5 and, from 1 workout to the next, increase by 1-to-3.
(With KBs and CBs, you may not have access to small enough resistance increases so, as a guide for improvisation in such a case: with your ~15 rep max, start off with 5 reps per round instead of 3, and with your ~5 rep max, start off with 1 rep per round.)
- Keep total rounds per exercise to 5-to-20.
(Again, with the KBs and especially CBs, you may need to improvise due to too big of a resistance level jump. In which case, you could go as low as 1 round to start.)
- When you get to 5 reps per round, for however many rounds within the given range you decide to top out at (I recommend 10-to-20), increase the resistance and drop the reps per round and total number of rounds down to whatever minimums within the given range you decide to use.

Powerfully Athletic Physique 7

by Omar Cabaleiro 2023.Oct.12

Option A

Train daily, doing only 1 of the following (alternate):

1. Hang Snatch-Grip High Pull*, using Tabata protocol
2. (Weighted) Dip, using Tabata protocol

I recommend you use your 20 rep max as the starting weight.

Alternatively, you can train both exercises each session. In this case, you should train every other day. If you go this route, perform the High Pull first, and the Dip second. (Exception: If you can't perform 20 bodyweight-only Dips unbroken (and with no particular time limit), do the Dips first.)

You can gradually decrease frequency, as your recovery ability may dictate.

(* You can either keep the bar above the knees, or go slightly below with each rep. If you keep it above, the shorter range of motion, combined with the greater speed/ momentum maintained throughout the set, should help you use more resistance. On the other hand, if you choose to go below the knees for each rep, using more deliberate form, the fuller range of motion should work your glutes and hamstrings more pronouncedly.)

Option B

This workout is inspired by an old Dan John article that I recently revisited, in which he references the Southwood program.

You'll be training every other day, doing a kettlebell complex.

The first round is 8 reps per exercise, the second is 6, and the third is 4. Do these rep counts for each side, if unilateral.

You can do this with either 1 or 2 kettlebell(s).

This is the complex:

1. Press
2. Hang Power Snatch
3. Hang Power Clean
4. Front Squat (2 KB)/ Goblet Squat (1 KB)
5. Swing (With this exercise, even if you use 1 kettlebell, do it 2-handed rather than unilaterally.)

You can gradually decrease frequency, as your recovery ability may dictate.

2 Exercises per Day, 3 Days per Week

by Omar Cabaleiro 2023.Nov.16

Though this program is meant to involve 2 training sessions per day, with 1 exercise per session, it's understandable if that is not particularly feasible for everyone. In that case, just combine that day's 2 workouts into a single session.

Monday

- WORKOUT 1

(I got the idea for this workout from K Black's book, TACTICAL BARBELL Physical Preparation for Law Enforcement.)

Train the (Strict, Dead Hang) Pull Up as a 5-to-20-minute AMRAP.

You'll be trying to increase your total reps per workout, and also the number you can do on your first set.

If you can do 5-to-10 solid reps unbroken, you could try going for as low as 5 minutes.

If you can barely do 1, 2, or even 3 solid reps, go for at least 10 minutes.

- WORKOUT 2

Train the Dip, using the same protocol used for the Pull Up.

Wednesday

- WORKOUT 1

Attempt a new (Ass-to-Grass) Back Squat 20 rep max.

- WORKOUT 2

Attempt a new Loaded Carry 300-foot max, using whatever combination of implement and carry method you prefer (or have access to).

If you're doing a unilateral carry, switch sides at the halfway mark.

(Additional recommendation: With unilateral carries, switch which side you carry the weight on first, from session to session. Also, turn in the direction of the side that you started carrying the weight on. This so that you don't fall into the habit of always turning around to the same side.)

Friday

(With unilateral exercises, or unilateral versions of exercises, the rep counts given are for each side.)

- WORKOUT 1

Attempt a new (Single or Double) Kettlebell Hang Power Snatch 20 rep max.

- WORKOUT 2

Attempt a new (Single or Double) Kettlebell Hang Power Clean 20 rep max.

Kettlebell Snatches and Cleans

by Omar Cabaleiro 2023.Nov.16

I'm almost 100% certain that my first time ever encountering the concept of cluster sets was via Charles Poliquin's work. If not, then it was via Christian Thibaudeau's (in an article where he recounts the time when, while attending a seminar, Charles Poliquin told him about cluster sets).

However, I got the idea for this particular take on cluster sets from *The Saga of the Tijuana Barbell Club*, a book by Josh Bryant and Adam benShea.

The Program

Train once every 2 or 3 days.

Do only 1 of the following each workout (alternate):

1. (Single or Double) Kettlebell Hang Power Snatch
2. (Single or Double) Kettlebell Hang Power Clean

For each, use the following protocol:

- Starting weight: your 10-to-15 rep max.
- For 5 minutes, do clusters of 5 reps.
- Rest 15 seconds between clusters.
- If fatigue demands, in order to keep working 'till the 5 minutes is up, you can do fewer reps per cluster and/ or rest a bit more between clusters.
- If you can do clusters of 5 reps with 15 seconds of rest between clusters for the full 5 minutes, increase resistance by 5-to-10lbs next time around.

(If you're using a single kettlebell, do the 5 reps for 1 side, immediately followed by 5 reps for the other side, then rest 15 seconds. Repeat.)

Additionally, after your kettlebell work each session, do a 20-foot Duck Walk.

This will mainly serve as a bit of mobility work at the flexed end of your Squat ROM.

The kettlebell exercises in this program, via the triple extension, will ballistically work the extended end of the Squat pattern, along with the Hinge pattern.

Push/ Pull Categorization Models

by Omar Cabaleiro 2023.Nov.22

This is not meant to be an exhaustive list, nor do I mean to say that any model is necessarily more or less useful than any other. I've used all 3 listed here, and don't see why I wouldn't continue to do so, depending on the context.

1. **Popular Model**

PUSHING

- **Horizontal**
(e.g. Push Up and Bench Press)
- **Vertical**
(e.g. overhead lifts)

PULLING

- **Horizontal**
(e.g. Row variations)
- **Vertical**
(e.g. Pull Up variations)

2. **An Alternative Model** (more precise than the 1st)

I've seen this used at least once before, many years ago. I don't remember where.

In this context, I'm using "Superior" and "Inferior" strictly as directional terms; meaning "above" and "below," respectively.

"Superior" denotes hands above the shoulders, and "Inferior" denotes hands below the shoulders, essentially.

PUSHING

- **Superior**
(e.g. overhead lifts)
- **Horizontal**
(e.g. Push Up and Bench Press)
- **Inferior**
(e.g. Dip variations)

PULLING

- **Superior**
(e.g. Pull Up variations)
- **Horizontal**
(e.g. Row variations)
- **Inferior**
(e.g. Clean and High Pull variations)

3. **Another Alternative Model** (the most elegant of the 3, in my opinion)

PUSHING

- **Chest-Dominant**
(e.g. horizontal pushing, as well as Dip variations)
- **Shoulder-Dominant**
(e.g. overhead lifts)

PULLING

- **Lat-Dominant**
(e.g. horizontal pulling, as well as Pull Up variations)
- **Trap-Dominant**
(e.g. Clean and High Pull variations)