

BODYBUILDING AT HOME

The Ultimate Workout Template

100% bodybuilding, from home, no gym equipment required, evidence based, no accumulation of hundreds of light weight repetitions.

Table of Contents

[THE METHODOLOGY](#)

[THE FUNDAMENTALS](#)

[THE EXERCISES](#)

[MODIFY THE EASIER EXERCISES](#)

[DIET RESOURCES](#)

[SAMPLE PROGRAMS](#)

[PROGRAM MATRIX](#)

[STARTER PROGRAM](#)

[PROGRAM INSTRUCTIONS](#)

[WARM UP](#)

[NOVICE PROGRAM FOR RANK BEGINNERS](#)

[UPPER-LOWER-PULL-PUSH-LEGS PROGRAM](#)

[PULL-PUSH-LEGS PROGRAM](#)

[UPPER-LOWER PROGRAM](#)

[PULL-PUSH PROGRAM](#)

[FULL BODY PROGRAM](#)

[HOW TO PROGRESS](#)

[WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU STALL OR REGRESS](#)

THE METHODOLOGY

We're going to replace the free weights and machine exercises we do in the gym with equivalent exercises everybody can do at home without requiring any gym equipment, while also guaranteeing two crucial components that usually separates proper gym training from homemade fuckery:

1. Intensity (load, tension) in the target muscle AND with proper range of motion for said muscle, which is not the same as the "difficulty" of the exercise.
2. Covering every muscle group. Here you won't be neglecting body parts like calves or hamstrings.

So among the many many exercises in the realm of bodyweight fitness and calisthenics, in this post you will find the chosen ones that are specifically suited for building muscle on a level that's about the same as the exercises in the gym for that purpose. Then you can either take these exercises and use them to replace the ones in your current gym routine so you can keep running it, or you can start using one of the sample programs that will be provided in this post.

But will it work the same? [Here's a short video by Dr. Eric Helms explaining why it will](#)

.

Finally, this post is only going to be focused on training, but to get the best results, then same as in the gym, you're going to benefit from improving your diet. [You can check the list of resources to learn about dieting here.](#)

THE FUNDAMENTALS

Volume, intensity and frequency references:

- [James Krieger - Set Volume for Muscle Size: The Ultimate Evidence Based Bible](#)
- [James Krieger - Training Frequency for Hypertrophy: The Evidence-Based Bible](#)
- [Menno Henselmans - Maximum productive training volume per session](#)
- [Greg Nuckols - The "Hypertrophy Rep Range" – Fact or Fiction?](#)
- [Greg Nuckols - The New Approach to Training Volume](#)

Takeaways:

- Volume drives hypertrophy, intensity just needs to be sufficient.
- Sets of 5 to 30 reps taken close or to failure produce more or less the same hypertrophy. I.e we just need to be able to go close to failure within 5 to 30 reps per set and we're set. This doesn't mean that reps outside the range don't produce gains, it only means that the amount of gains will differ and it will make tracking volume the traditional way a little harder, so don't worry if you get outside of it, you'll still make gains.
- The higher the rep-range, the closer to failure you need to go.
- There's a maximum productive training volume per muscle group per session that ranges from 5 to 10 sets on average.
- The maximum effective volume per per muscle group per session means that if you want to increase the total weekly volume for a muscle, there comes a point beyond which you need to add more sessions instead of continuing to increase the volume of each individual session.
- We're not going to be using fancy models of progression because we don't really need to, instead we're just going to do as many reps as possible (AMRAP) in every set and increase the difficulty when reps get too high by either modifying the exercise or replacing it for a harder one.
- Indirect volume, when the secondary muscles are heavily involved, counts. That means that for example when we do vertical and horizontal presses and pulls we can also count it as biceps, triceps and shoulder volume to some degree (usually, as either a full set or half a set).

Program design references:

- [Eric Helms, Andy Morgan and Andrea Valdez - A 6-Step Guide to Building Training Programs](#)
- [Menno Henselmans - Optimal program design](#)
- [Mike Israetel - The Hypertrophy Training Guide Central Hub](#)
- [Bret Contreras - Load Vector Training \(LVT\)](#)

- [Lyle McDonald - Training the Calves](#)
- [Jeff Nippard - What Are The Best Exercises for Muscle and Strength?](#)
- [Jeff Nippard - Science Explained Series](#)
- [Andy Morgan - How To Adapt Your Training Program For Home as Coronavirus Spreads](#)
[NEW!]
- [Greg Nuckols - How to Make Gains Without a Gym](#)
[NEW!]

Takeaways:

- We're going to use variation to a productive degree (when we don't need to but alternatives are simple, efficient and available, and when we need to because variations in angle and focus are necessary to follow the muscle fibers), but we're not going to introduce a hundred alternatives.
- There's going to be a focus around the six fundamental movement patterns: vertical pull, vertical press, horizontal pull, horizontal press, squats and hip-hinges. The few things these movement patterns don't cover will be addressed individually (like calves) and there are going to be extra isolation options for several muscle groups.
- For obvious reasons almost every movement is going to be bodyweight based, but the movement patterns and loads are going to be the same as with free weights and machines.
- Equipment will be reduced to simple things that can be found in everyone's home. There will only be two optional pieces of equipment to improve the workout: a pull-up bar (by far the most useful one) and resistance bands. However there will be equipment-free exercises for every muscle group.

THE EXERCISES

BACK:

- **[Vertical pull level 1] [Negative pull-ups \(or negative chin-ups\)](#)**
. For when you are not strong enough to do pull-ups or chin-ups yet. You use a chair to put yourself into the starting position of a pull-up, then step away from it and go down trying to make the descent as slow as possible (this is key). Repeat the process for a total of 5 reps per set, if you have to take small breaks to get 5, that's ok. When you see that you can go down really slow, try doing a full chin-up at the beginning of the first set. From the moment you can do one chin-up, try doing as many as you can on every set, filling the rest with just negatives to complete the 5 per set.
- **[Vertical pull level 2] [Chin-ups](#)**
. Use a dead hang technique, going all the way down till full stretch leaving your shoulders rise completely like in the example. Explode up, don't pause at the top, descend with a 2 full seconds negative, pause at full stretch for half a second, begin the next rep.
- **[Vertical pull level 3] [Pull-ups](#)**
. Use a dead hang technique, going all the way down till full stretch leaving your shoulders rise completely like in the example. Explode up, don't pause at the top, descend with a 2 full seconds negative, pause at full stretch for half a second, begin the next rep.
- **[Vertical pull level 4] [Archer pull-ups](#)**
. Notice the pause at the bottom, you don't swing from one side to the other.
- **[Vertical pull level 5] [One arm pull-ups](#)**
. The final boss.
- **[Horizontal pull level 1] [Incline inverted rows](#)**
(1:53). Pause for 1 second at the bottom, getting a full stretch, then explode up, sticking your chest out pulling your shoulders back, get to full contraction pulling your elbows back as far as they go, don't pause and go back down slowly controlling the movement; pull towards your upper abdomen or lower chest.
- **[Horizontal pull level 2] [Inverted rows with bent knees](#)**
. Pause for 1 second at the bottom, getting a full stretch, then explode up, sticking your chest out pulling your shoulders back, get to full contraction pulling your elbows back as far as they go, don't pause and go back down slowly controlling the movement; pull towards your upper abdomen or lower chest. You can use an overhand grip or an underhand grip. You can use a stick and two chairs like in the example, or [a table](#), or [the back of two chairs](#), or [the bedsheet method](#).
- **[Horizontal pull level 3] [Inverted rows with straight legs](#)**
. Pause for 1 second at the bottom, getting a full stretch, then explode up, sticking your chest out pulling your shoulders back, get to full contraction pulling your elbows back as far as they go, don't pause and go back down slowly controlling the

movement; pull towards your upper abdomen or lower chest. You can use an overhand grip or an underhand grip. You can use a table like in the example, or [a stick and two chairs](#)

, or [the back of two chairs](#)

, or [the bedsheet method](#)

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- **[Horizontal pull level 4] [Decline inverted rows](#)**

. The key here is the elevation of the feet. Pause for 1 second at the bottom, getting a full stretch, then explode up, sticking your chest out pulling your shoulders back, get to full contraction pulling your elbows back as far as they go, don't pause and go back down slowly controlling the movement; pull towards your upper abdomen or lower chest. You can use an overhand grip or an underhand grip. You can use a table like in the example, or [a stick and two chairs](#)

, or [the back of two chairs](#)

, or [the bedsheet method](#)

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- **[Horizontal pull level 5] [One arm inverted rows with bent knees](#)**. Basically the same as the [inverted rows with bent knees](#)

except you only use one arm, and you're going to have to separate your feet more to maintain balance (see the [straight legged variation](#) for reference). Avoid rotating the torso [like this](#)

, keep it straight. Finish the set with one arm and then move to the other arm, don't alternate one rep each. Pause for 1 second at the bottom, getting a full stretch, then explode up, sticking your chest out pulling your shoulders back, get to full contraction pulling your elbows back as far as they go, don't pause and go back down slowly controlling the movement; pull towards your upper abdomen or lower chest. You can use an overhand grip or an underhand grip. You can use [a table](#)

, or [a stick and two chairs](#)

, or [the bedsheet method](#)

.

- **[Horizontal pull level 6] [One arm inverted rows with straight legs](#)**

. Notice that you have to separate your legs to maintain balance . Avoid rotating the torso [like this](#)

, keep it straight. Finish the set with one arm and then move to the other arm, don't alternate one rep each. Pause for 1 second at the bottom, getting a full stretch, then explode up, sticking your chest out pulling your shoulders back, get to full contraction pulling your elbows back as far as they go, don't pause and go back down slowly controlling the movement; pull towards your upper abdomen or lower chest. You can use an overhand grip or an underhand grip. You can use [a table](#)

, or [a stick and two chairs](#)

, or [the bedsheet method](#)

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- **[Horizontal pull level 7] [One arm decline inverted rows](#)**. Basically the same as the [decline inverted rows](#)

except you only use one arm, so like the [horizontal variation](#) but with your feet elevated. Avoid rotating the torso [like this](#)

, keep it straight. Finish the set with one arm and then move to the other arm, don't alternate one rep each. Pause for 1 second at the bottom, getting a full stretch, then explode up, sticking your chest out pulling your shoulders back, get to full contraction pulling your elbows back as far as they go, don't pause and go back down slowly controlling the movement; pull towards your upper abdomen or lower chest. You can use an overhand grip or an underhand grip. You can use [a table](#), or [a stick and two chairs](#), or [the bedsheet method](#).

- **[Horizontal pull level 8] [Piked inverted rows](#)**
. At home you do them with [this table variation](#) or [the two chairs and the stick variation](#) (only if you can secure the stick really tight so that it doesn't slide and the chairs so that they don't flip) by just elevating the legs in a pike; you can also use a pull-up bar like in the example.
- **[Isolation] [Sliding pull-overs](#)**
. To increase the resistance you can sustain yourself with your feet instead of your knees, and/or do them with one arm.
- **[Isolation] [Bodyweight chair pull-overs](#)**
. You can do an assisted version against a wall which is easier (0:38).
- **[Isolation] [Shrugs](#)** (holding buckets, kegs, bags, cans, jugs, etc. filled with whatever). 1 full second concentric, hold 1 second at the top, 3-4 seconds eccentric, hold 1 second at the bottom.

Try not to get [this particular type of door pull-up bar](#) because it *will* fall down eventually. Any other type of pull-up bar for the door is fine.

If you don't have any other means, [you can use the door itself to do pull-ups](#)

, but don't send me the bill if it breaks (at the hinges). Be sure to put something under the free edge of the door so that it doesn't move and especially so that the free corner isn't suspended in the air which applies leverage on the hinges.

A couple of good alternatives for the door that are less likely to break it because you use it while closed are [the bed sheet method](#) and making [Doorway Pull-up Handles](#).

CHEST:

- **[Horizontal Press Level 1] [Incline push-ups](#)**
. Maintain a straight spine and legs, don't let your pelvis fall. For this variation, put your hands on a surface as high as a table or a countertop, and when that becomes too easy, just move on to the next level. The weight you're moving here is roughly equivalent to a bench press loaded with 35% of your body weight.
- **[Horizontal Press Level 2] [Knee push-ups](#)**
. The weight you're moving here is roughly equivalent to a bench press loaded with

50% of your body weight. Lay on the floor, choose a comfortable hand placement (choose it at the bottom position, ideally you want a stretch on the pecs while being comfortable at the shoulders and wrists), pull your shoulders back and down, stick your chest out, contract the glutes so that your hips don't shoot up during the movement, contract the abs so that you don't go into spinal hyperextension during the movement, begin the execution: explode up, lock the elbows, maintain a half second contraction while attempting to bring your hands together, descend with a two full seconds tempo, at the bottom completely rest your chest on the floor to the point your arms aren't pushing at all; wait half a second just to avoid rebound, reset, begin the next rep.

- **[Horizontal Press Level 3] [Push-ups](#)**

. The weight you're moving here is roughly equivalent to a bench press loaded with 65% of your body weight. You can increase the load [with bands](#)

. Lay on the floor, choose a comfortable hand placement (choose it at the bottom position, ideally you want a stretch on the pecs while being comfortable at the shoulders and wrists), pull your shoulders back and down, stick your chest out, contract the glutes so that your hips don't shoot up during the movement, contract the abs so that you don't go into spinal hyperextension during the movement, begin the execution: explode up, lock the elbows, maintain a half second contraction while attempting to bring your hands together, descend with a two full seconds tempo, at the bottom completely rest your chest on the floor to the point your arms aren't pushing at all; wait half a second just to avoid rebound, reset, begin the next rep. Also [check out this video](#)

to have Dr. Mike shaming you into proper form.

- **[Horizontal Press Level 4 to ∞] [Dips](#)**

. The weight you're moving here is roughly equivalent to a decline bench press loaded with 100% of your body weight. Follow the instructions in the video. At home you can do them with [the back of two chairs](#)

(you can put some weight on them so that they don't fall back), [the seat of two chairs](#), [a table](#)

, [a countertop a table and some books](#)

, etc. be creative. What the hell does "Level 4 to ∞" mean? Well beyond doing them with just body weight (lvl 4), if you have a dipping belt and some plates, then you have an unlimited level of progression, you just keep adding weight.

- **[Horizontal Press Level 5] [Archer push-ups](#)**

. The weight you're moving here is roughly equivalent to a bench press loaded with 82% of your body weight. Notice the feet separation. What you're doing here is essentially a one arm push-up, but using the arm you keep straight for a little assistance. Complete the set with one arm, then move on to the other arm, don't do one rep each because it alters the path of the working arm shortening the effective range of motion of the pecs. Completely rest the chest on the floor on each rep for half a second, keep the pushing shoulder back and down as during a regular push-up, explode up, lock the elbow, maintain a half second contraction while attempting to bring your working hand closer to the other one, descend with a full 2 seconds tempo. Don't push yourself away from your working hand to the side when you press (making the grip width wider at the top), that way of making up for being too weak to do the

exercise shortens the effective range of motion and removes tension, if you need assistance to do the exercise it's much better to [bend your straight arm a little so that it can assist more](#)

, that way you lose nothing. If you can't complete 5 reps with one arm during a set, either use the assisted method detailed before to complete it, and/or do rest-pause until you do: you stop the set short of 5, rest for 3-5 deep breaths, then continue the set inserting more rest pauses until you get 5 total reps with that arm. You can increase the tension [with bands](#) same as with the regular push-ups.

- **[Horizontal Press Level 6] [Knee one arm push-ups](#)**

. The weight you're moving here is roughly equivalent to a bench press loaded with 100% of your body weight, plus the stability demands. Because you usually can't move straight from the archer push-up to the full one arm push-up because there's a big difference in the resistance, you go through this intermediate variation first. Complete the set with one arm, then move on to the other arm. Key points: your knees have to be quite separated, and your resting hand is placed at the side of your thigh (don't put it behind your back). I recommend you put something cushy below the knee that's opposite to your working hand. Completely rest the chest on the floor on each rep for half a second, explode up, lock the elbow, maintain a half second contraction while attempting to bring your working hand across your body, descend with a full 2 seconds tempo. To achieve balance, DON'T focus on flexing the spinal erectors opposite to your working arm, instead, focus on flexing the obliques (abs) of the same side as your working arm. If you can't complete 5 reps with each arm in one set, continue the set using [Archer push-ups](#) and/or do rest-pause until you do: finish the set with one arm, rest for 3 deep breaths, continue the set inserting more rest pauses until you get 5 total reps with that arm.

- **[Horizontal Press Level 7] [One arm push-ups](#)**

. The weight you're moving here is roughly equivalent to a bench press loaded with 1.3 times your body weight, plus the stability demands. Complete the set with one arm, then move on to the other arm. Completely rest the chest on the floor on each rep for half a second, explode up, lock the elbow, maintain a half second contraction while attempting to bring your working hand across your body, descend with a full 2 seconds tempo. [Don't do funky stuff with your shoulder](#)

(2:23) you will see TONS of people screwing this up out of rushing to be able to do this exercise; know that not only is this bad for the shoulder, it removes both ROM and tension from the chest. DON'T twist your torso at any point; to achieve balance, DON'T focus on flexing the spinal erectors opposite to your working arm, instead, focus on flexing the obliques (abs) of the same side as your working arm. If you can't complete 5 reps with each arm in one set, continue the set with your knees on the floor and/or do rest-pause until you do: finish the set with one arm, rest for 3 deep breaths, continue the set inserting more rest pauses until you get 5 total reps with that arm. To keep increasing the intensity, either use bands or find a way to put weight on your back.

- **[Incline Press Level 1] [Knee pushaways](#)**

(2:36). Notice that this isn't a push-up with your knees on the floor, the movement at

the arms is different: you push yourself horizontally upwards like in the push-up, but you also push yourself away vertically, resisting that motion with your legs, so that when your arms are extended they are above your head, like during an incline press.

- **[Incline Press Level 2] [Hands up pike push-ups](#)**
(2:27-3:27). The main differences between this and a conventional pike push-up (which is a shoulder exercise) are: 1) at the top you don't finish with your arms completely vertical above your head like in the top position of an overhead press, instead they're in the incline bench press position; and 2) at the bottom you go horizontal instead of keeping your hips bent, which increases the range of motion of the chest because it allows your shoulders to travel further back (the incline position is not necessary at the bottom to emphasize the upper chest, only at the top).
- **[Incline Press Level 3] [Decline push-ups](#)**
. The higher the elevation of the feet, the harder the exercise. Use a chair, a table, etc.
- **[Incline Press Level 4] [Decline push-ups on a wall](#)**
(3:08). Having your feet on the wall, along with the leg movement to maintain the constant level of incline of the torso, allows you to add extra resistance to the exercise by pushing harder with your legs on the way up (not on the way down), which counters the force of the arms.
- **[Incline Press Level 5] [Deficit decline push-ups](#)**
. The idea here is to do the Level 4 exercise (against a wall or elevating the feet on any other high surface) but elevating the hands on something, like the seat of two chairs, to allow the torso and your head to travel further down towards the bottom position (in the Level 4, the floor limits your range of motion).
- **[Incline Press Level 6] [Decline archer push-ups](#)**
(4:40-6:16). Follow the same instructions for the Horizontal Press Level 5, the only difference is you elevate your feet on a high surface.
- **[Incline Press Level 7] [Decline one arm push-ups](#)**
. SUPER HARD exercise to do. Basically what you want to do here is to follow the same [instructions for the regular one arm push-up](#), but elevating the feet on a high surface.
- **[Isolation] [Bodyweight chest flyes](#)**
. This exercise can be super heavy (as shown in the video) or lighter [if you put your knees on the floor and/or bend your elbows](#)
. Notice that there's a sliding material between the hands and the floor, on smooth surfaces you can use gloves, or some cloth, paper, cardboard, etc. For a rough surface you can use plastic bottles (flattened), they slide well enough, or use something with wheels like roller skates.

SHOULDERS:

- **[Vertical Press Level 1] [Pike push-ups](#)**
(0:28-1:28). If you're not strong enough to perform this movement for at least 3-5 reps yet, skip the vertical presses and just continue getting stronger with your

horizontal and incline presses, the strength you build there has a carryover effect to this one, so eventually you'll be able to do it.

- **[Vertical Press Level 2+] [Deficit decline pike push-ups](#)**
. Two main changes from the standard pike push-ups: 1) you put your hands on an elevated surface, and that allows you to continue the movement beyond the point on which your head would touch the floor on the regular pike push-up, giving you the full range of motion of an overhead press, and 2) you elevate your feet. Why Level 2 "+"? Because this has multiple levels of progression built in: you start like in the example, and then you increase the resistance by elevating your feet higher and higher, like first elevating them on the seat of a chair, then on a table, then on a countertop, then on a wall.
- **[Vertical press level 3] [Deficit handstand push-up against a wall](#)**
Whoa whoa what? What about all the handstand progressions that come before this one? We're not here to do gymnastics guys, our only objective here is to imitate the overhead press with enough resistance to hit a rep-range, that's it. The previous exercise, the decline deficit pike push-up, already gave us full vertical press range on motion and it progressed by elevating the feet higher and higher, eventually you elevate them so much that you reach a completely vertical position which lands you in this exercise here. Key point: your back must be facing the wall (like in the example) not your chest, because if you do it the other way around you tend to hyperextend your spine.
- **[Vertical press] [Seated band overhead press](#)**
(4:26).
- **[Side delt isolation] [Lateral raises](#)**
: use buckets, kegs, bags, cans, jugs, etc. filled with whatever, or bands. You can do them unilaterally.
- **[Side delt isolation] [Towel slide lateral raises](#)** (8:27)
- **[Facepull variation] [Facepulls with bands](#)** No bands? [More options](#)
- **[Facepull variation] [Bent over W raises](#)**
(2:30-3:14): use buckets, kegs, bags, cans, jugs, etc.

BICEPS:

- **Nothing:** work them indirectly with the pull movements.
- **[Bodyweight bicep curls](#).**
- **Regular curls** using [buckets](#)
, kegs, bags, cans, jugs, etc. filled with whatever, or bands.
- **[Leg-resisted bicep curls](#)**
(1:21). You can also use a rope, chain, cable, etc.
- **[Leg-resisted concentration curls](#)**
(0:51). You can also use a rope, chain, cable, etc.

- [Bilateral Leg-resisted bicep curls](#)
(4:55). Don't round your lower back! get a long enough towel if you need to in order to avoid that. You can also use a rope, chain, cable, etc.

TRICEPS:

- **Nothing:** work them indirectly with the push movements.
- [Close-grip Press Level 1] [Wall diamond push-ups](#)
- [Close-grip Press Level 2] [Incline diamond push-ups](#)
- [Close-grip Press Level 3] [Knee diamond push-ups](#)
- [Close-grip Press Level 4] [Diamond push-ups](#)
- [Close-grip Press Level 5] [Decline diamond push-ups](#)
- [Isolation] [Inverted Skullcrushers](#)
. The more horizontal you are the harder the exercise, and conversely the more vertical you are the easier.

QUADS AND GLUTES:

- [Quad compound level 1] [Air squat](#)
. If you're using it as a starting exercise, just follow the instructions in the video and disregard the following. If you're using it as a light variation, for a super-set or as a finisher, follow these tips: maintain a completely vertical torso by elevating your arms forward during the descend and achieve a full stretch in the quads to the point where the calves and hamstrings are pressing against each other, stand on tiptoe if necessary to achieve that (what? sacrilege! Yeah with a loaded barbell on you back or if you're very weak maybe, here it's not a problem). Begin by isometrically contracting the quads hard, then slow tempo down, pause, explode up, lock the knees, don't pause, don't release the strong quad contraction from the beginning, come back down; it will burn. You can load some extra weight in a backpack, or holding onto something with your hands (making it a goblet squat).
- [Quad compound level 2] [Reverse lunges](#)
- [Quad compound level 2] [Step-ups](#)
. The higher the step the better. Finish the set with one leg, then move on to the other leg.
- [Quad compound level 3] [Bulgarian split squats](#)
. Do a slow controlled descend, go deep, pause for half a second, explode up.
- [Quad compound level 4] [Sissy squats](#)
- [Quad compound level 5] [Friction resisted sissy squats](#)
- [Quad compound level 6] [Pistol squats](#)
. Don't just let yourself drop, use a 2 full seconds negative. Use something like two chairs to hold on to if you find them too difficult or lack balance. To increase the

resistance, besides the natural way of holding something heavy or using bands, you can also load them quite easily by [using friction against a wall](#)

- **[Isolation] [Bodyweight leg extensions](#)**
. The key here is to keep the hips extended (hip to knee portion of the leg in line with the torso) and only flex at the knee level. Do them unilaterally if the rep count get too high. The tension can also be increased [with bands](#)
- **[Isolation] Band leg extensions:** [standing version](#)
, [seated version](#)
, [laying down version](#)

HAMSTRINGS AND GLUTES:

- **[Sliding hamstring curl level 1](#)**
. Notice that there's a sliding material under the feet, can be a piece of cloth, paper, etc.
- **[Sliding hamstring curl level 2](#)**
- **[Sliding hamstring curl level 3](#)**
- **[Sliding hamstring curl level 4](#)**
. Finish the whole set with one leg, then move on to the other leg.
- **[Sliding hamstring curl level 5](#)**
- **[Sliding hamstring curl level 6](#)**
- **[Nordic curls](#)**
This is the heaviest hamstring exercise, but depending on how much assistance you use from the hands, it can also be quite light. You need to ask someone for assistance or find a place to lock your feet, for the latter check out [this awesome post](#) with many options to set it up.
- **[Single-leg romanian deadlift](#)**
Load them holding buckets, kegs, bags, cans, jugs, etc. filled with whatever, or using bands.
- **[Band romanian deadlift](#)**
Some bands give super heavy resistance, maybe you have one, if so you can use it to do the traditional RDLs with both legs.
- **[Band leg curls](#)**
- **[Dumbbell Hamstring Curl](#)**

GLUTES:

- [Hip Thrusts](#)
. The video in the link shows you all the progressions from the easiest variation to the hardest one, alongside technique instructions.

CALVES:

- [Level 1] [Standing calf raises](#)
. Check [this video](#)
to learn the proper form.
- [Level 2] [Unilateral standing calf raises](#)
. Check [this video](#)
to learn the proper form.

ABS:

Because there are fewer considerations for exercise selection while having tons of options, I'm not going to be listing specific ab exercises. Use whichever ones you prefer.

A NOTE ON "MAINTAINING CONSTANT TENSION"

As you may have noticed there's a lot of lockout and pauses indicated in the exercise instructions, so I want to make a note on this. People have a huge tendency to screw up the execution of bodyweight movements in the pursuit of what they incorrectly call "maintaining constant tension". Constant tension (or at least what they mean by that) is bro-science, you don't need it for any exercise, bodyweight or in the gym, and in practice (usually conflated with fast tempo) it does more damage than good by reducing the range of motion and the tension on the muscle. The actual concept of constant tension is taken care of by avoiding cheating (using momentum generated by unrelated body parts) and controlling the eccentric instead of letting go of the weight fast.

Frequently used references for the visual exercise examples:

[Calisthenic movement YouTube channel](#)

[ATHLEAN-X YouTube channel](#)

[Scott Herman's YouTube Channel](#)

MODIFY THE EASIER EXERCISES

The intensity can be manipulated in most of the main exercises pretty much to the point where there's no resistance at all, so we can work around that just fine. I'll give you the general guidelines:

- Vertical pulls: when doing the level 1 (negative pull-ups) is just too hard or even impossible, skip the vertical pull entirely, you'll just work your back with the horizontal pull alone, it will be enough and it will have a carryover effect to your vertical pull capacity because it trains the whole back, so by getting stronger in your horizontal pulls eventually you will be able to do the vertical pull lvl 1. The body weight itself can also be a great impediment to performing the vertical pull, because you're lifting yourself without any leverage whatsoever, so it's the full 100% of your body weight, which can be super hard; because of that, if you're more on the heavier side, as you lose weight, and in concordance to your horizontal pull progress, you will be able to do the vertical lvl 1 sooner. Because you're only going to be doing one of two exercises for the back, do 3 sets of horizontal pulls instead of the 2 that are prescribed in the novice program. After some weeks, you can increase the number of sets to 4.
- Horizontal pull: the way to make the horizontal pulls easier is to have your body in a more incline position (feet lower than the head, not the other way around). The more incline you are, the easier the exercise becomes, and you can continue that trend until your level of incline is so high that you reach the vertical (like, just standing) where there is zero resistance. In that sense, the horizontal pull lvl 1, the [incline inverted row](#), is a true lvl 1 because it allows you to go all the way to the vertical position, so just progress by decreasing the level of incline little by little, getting more and more horizontal.
- Horizontal press: the way to make push-ups easier is the exact same as the horizontal pull, to have your body in a more incline position (feet lower than the head, not the other way around). The more inclined you are, the easier the exercise becomes, and you can continue that trend until your level of incline is so high that you reach the vertical (like, just standing) where there is zero resistance. In that sense, the lowest level of intensity for the push-up is to do it against a wall like [the level 1 of the close grip press exercise category](#). From there, you progress by decreasing the level of incline by putting your hands in progressively lower surfaces, for example starting from the wall, then you progress to the top of a countertop, then to the top of a table, then to the back of a couch, and finally the seat of a chair, from there you move on to the next level.
- Quad compound: the way to make every quad compound easier is to use your hands to support yourself to some degree, and to have an object below you limiting your range of motion. So the lvl 1 of the quad compounds is the [air squat](#). There are two basic setups to make the air squat easier: the [towel-assisted setup](#) and [the chair-assisted setup](#). For the lightest variation, you can combine both, so using the towel while descending to the chair. When you're at that point, only do one of the two quad compound slots in the novice program, so just the first one for 3 sets using the towel and chair combined method. After you get stronger in that movement, you move on to only using one assisted method at a time, so you're going to do 2 exercises in a row: 2 sets with just the chair followed by 2 sets of just the towel. Finally, once you

build enough strength, you move on to the full air squat, and then the first exercise of the session, the "Heavy compound" is going to be that exercise, and the second one, the "Medium/light exercise" is going to be either one of the assisted methods.

- Hamstrings: the easier exercise is the sliding hamstring curl, and the level 1 is accessible for anyone.
- Calves: start with both legs at the same time and no weight. If doing them in a stair to get a stretch in the calves is too much for you, you can do them flat on the floor.

DIET RESOURCES

Videos:

- [The Muscle and Strength Nutritional Pyramid](#)

Online reading material:

- [r/fitness wiki's diet section](#)
(general nutrition for every goal, **you should start here**)
- [r/gainit wiki's diet section](#) (nutrition geared towards gaining weight)
- [r/loseit's compendium](#) (nutrition geared towards losing weight)
- [Should I Bulk vs Cut \(or Recomp\)? The Definitive Guide - Andy Morgan](#)
- [How to bulk - Andy Morgan](#)

Books:

- <https://muscleandstrengthpyramids.com/>
- <https://renaissanceperiodization.com/the-renaissance-diet-v2>
- <https://renaissanceperiodization.com/understanding-healthy-eating>
- <https://rippedbody.com/complete-diet-nutrition-set-up-guide/>
(free e-book)

More advanced reading

- [Nutrition for Muscle Growth - Dr. Brandon Roberts](#)
- [Nutritional Recommendations for Physique Athletes \[Roberts et al., 2020\]](#)
- [Every Stronger By Science article about nutrition](#)

A very quick and almost obscenely short summary to get you started right away:

- Your body weight is governed exclusively by the amount of total calories you consume through food: eat more calories than you burn, you gain weight, eat fewer calories than you burn, you lose weight, that's it. As an easy way to start, below there are going to be some guidelines that are going to take care of this aspect of your nutrition by proxy.
- Protein is essential for building muscle, and it also helps retain that muscle when you lose weight.
- For now don't worry about eating specific amounts of protein, just try to eat at least 2-3 meals containing protein per day, spaced out, try for them to be mainly whole food based, and you can resort to whey protein if you need help with that (1-2 servings at a time, but don't rely solely on it).
- Progressively try to replace some of the most crappy food you eat for healthier alternatives. You don't need to do a complete 180 replacing your whole diet with "healthy foods", instead start incorporating them as *part* of your diet, and just begin to get rid of some of the most unhealthy options little by little.
- Reduce the amount of snacking you do during the day, try to get to the point where you don't eat anything outside of your main meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner, and maybe only 1 short snack time either between lunch and dinner or post dinner).

- If you're looking to lose weight, and you're already eating pretty healthy, intermittent fasting is usually the easiest strategy to achieve it without having to do more complicated stuff. Maybe you've heard about it, it's pretty simple: you divide the day into two parts, in one part you're allowed to eat, in the other part you fast. The standard way to start is to select an 8-hour eating window, so for example, you're only allowed to eat between 2PM and 10 PM, and then from 10PM to 2PM you fast. You can put the eating window at any time you want, and control its size if it becomes too hard or if you don't see the results you want (doesn't need to be 8 hrs, that's just the standard), the only rule is you can't fraction it. The fasting isn't magical, the only point is to reduce the total amount of food you eat without having to manage the food itself.

- Don't do whole days of fasting.

- Don't train fasted.

- Generic supplements that will probably help your diet for general health especially as you start taking care of it: multi-vitamins. Seriously nothing else.

- Supplements that work, but only produce teeny-tiny, minuscule, super small almost imperceptible effects for bodybuilding, so aren't usually worth the money: creatine, pre-workouts, caffeine, casein (compared to whey), citrulline malate.

- Supplements that absolutely don't work for our purposes and in some instances can even lead to problems: fat burners, testosterone boosters, BCAAs (compared to whey), beta-alanine, glutamine, taurine, nitric oxide, diet pills, any type of "cleanse", any type of "blocker", any type of "booster", antioxidants, teas, and a long etc.

- In case the above wasn't clear enough, don't waste money on anything but a multivitamin and whey protein, which themselves aren't even essential but are only there to assist you with your regular diet as you improve it.

- The most useful source of data you have is your body weight. This is how you track it: weigh yourself frequently, ideally once per day, in the morning when you wake up, fasted, after going to the bathroom, in your underwear. Write down the number and forget about it. At the end of the week, use the daily weigh-ins to calculate the average weight of the week (add them all up, divide the result by the amount of weigh-ins, so by 7 if you weighed yourself once per day every day). To analyze how your body weight is moving, you only look at the averages of each week, and completely forget about the daily weigh-ins. The purpose of using the weekly averages to track your body weight is that there's a lot of day-to-day fluctuations depending on many external factors like water retention, bathroom trips, types of meal, stress, etc. that don't reflect changes in your actual tissues, and by using averages you filter out a lot of that noise.

WARM UP

Do this before every session:

Part 1: Elevating your core temperature. Here you can either do 3-5 minutes of LIGHT cardio (brisk walk/bike ride/elliptical), or super light full body exercises like the ones you can see in [this video](#)

. Since the only objective here is elevating your body temperature, you absolutely don't want to get tired, out of breath or sore, just stop when you feel like you're warm enough. Breaking a sweat is ok.

Part 2: Dynamic warm-up. Here you want to move explosively through the ranges of motion you're going to be using in the workout. Follow this protocol:

- 10 [leg swings front to back](#) (explosive).
- 10 [leg swings side to side](#) (explosive).
- 10 [big arm circles forward](#) (explosive).
- 10 [big arm circles backwards](#) (explosive).
- 10 [cross body arm slaps](#) (explosive).
- 5 repetitions (per leg) of a [lunge with torso rotation](#) (only if for you it's a light exercise and doesn't tire you).

After that, the regular training session starts. Then, do the following before every exercise that's going to work a muscle group for the first time in the session (for example if in the same session you have two exercises for the chest, then do the following only before the first one):

Part 3: Sport-Specific Warm Up.

- Do a set of 5 reps from the previous level of the exercise you're about to do. So if you're warming up to do the horizontal press level 3, in this instance do one set of 5 reps of the horizontal press level 2. If you're warming up for a level 1 exercise, and its intensity can be lowered as explained [here](#), do the lower intensity version; and if the intensity can't be lowered, do 5 partial reps: 2 partials from the bottom part of the movement, and 3 partials from the top part of the movement. If you're about to do an exercise without a specific level, use a lighter exercise that targets the same muscle group.
- Rest for a few seconds and then do your working exercise for half of the reps. So if you're warming up to do incline push-ups, and last time you got 12 reps in your first set, then in this instance do one set of incline push-ups for 6 reps.
- Rest for a minute, and start your regular working sets.

SAMPLE PROGRAMS

PROGRAM MATRIX

Because I reached the character limit for the post, the programs were moved to the comment section, you can access them through the following links:

PROGRAM	LEVEL	AVG SETS/MUSCLE/WEEK	FREQUENCY/MUSCLE/WEEK	SESSIONS PER WEEK
Full Body	Beginner to Advanced	9 to 25	3.5x	3 or 4
Pull-Push	Beginner to Advanced	10 to 30	2x or 3x	4 or 6
Upper-Lower	Beginner to Advanced	10 to 30	2x or 3x	4 or 6
Pull-Push-Legs	Intermediate to Advanced	12 to 22	2x	6
Upper-Lower-Pull-Push-Legs	Beginner to Advanced	10 to 20	2x	5
Novice Program	Novice	9	2x	4
Starter Program	Couch potato	4.5	1.5x	3

Expectations: you probably ended up here looking for a way to just maintain your gains, well I'm happy to inform you that even if you look like Arnold, if you practice good form and choose the right exercises and volume, then **you will actually continue to make gains with this**. You can use the programs to continue with your cutting or bulking phases.

STARTER PROGRAM

LEVEL	AVG SETS/MUSCLE/WEEK	FREQUENCY/MUSCLE/WEEK	SESSIONS PER WEEK
Couch potato	4.5	1.5x	3

WHOM IS THIS PROGRAM FOR?

If you're not used to do any type of resistance training (and I specifically mean resistance training, so cardio doesn't count, and neither does playing some sport with the guys on the weekends), either because you have never trained before, or because you trained before but stopped years ago or even several months ago (no matter how advanced you got at the time), then you should start here.

HOW LONG SHOULD YOU RUN IT?

As long as you're making progress. You should consider moving on to the novice program if you see that you're not making progress with most of your movements, or optionally if you're still seeing progress but have accumulated around 3-6 months of training already.

IS DOING THE PROGRAM ALL IT TAKES TO GET IN SHAPE?

Working out is only half of the equation when it comes to improving your physique, the other half is DIET. How important one is vs the other isn't really 50/50 or even a quantifiable thing, because doing a crappy enough job with either one will cancel your progress entirely, and on the other end of the spectrum, both complement each other. If you want good results, you necessarily need to do a decent enough job on both, and if you want any results at all, you at the very least need to avoid completely sucking at both. You also don't need to get your diet completely on point *before* starting to work out, you can (and I recommend you do) start working out right away, and then progressively improve your diet as you learn more about it. Because this post only focuses on training, I'll give you some of the best resources out there for you to learn about nutrition, you can find them in [this comment](#).

PROGRAM INSTRUCTIONS

While each exercise in the sample program has a link that shows a quick gif example, they are explained with much more detail and special indications you should follow to get the most gains out of them in the exercise section in the middle of the main post, you should definitely check that out before starting. If there are some exercises you can't do or don't like, look at the "template" above the program and see what type of exercises can be done in that slot, then go to the list of exercises and find an alternative that fits the slot's description, there are exercises that require zero equipment for every muscle.

The "Sets" column indicates the number of sets to do in the exercise to the left in the same row. A "set" is a group of repetitions you do consecutively without rest. Let's take push-ups as an example, you begin doing the exercise, perform rep after rep, and at some point you stop because you can't continue anymore without your form starting to slack: that's a set, from start to finish. So if you have to do 3 sets of push-ups you go like this:

- Put yourself into position and start: up, down, up, down, ..., up, down, then you stop because you're too tired to push yourself up again with good form. That's the first set.
- You rest for a while.
- Put yourself into position again and start: up, down, up, down, ..., up, down, then you stop because you're too tired to push yourself up again with good form. That's the second set.
- You rest for a while.
- Put yourself into position again and start: up, down, up, down, ..., up, down, then you stop because you're too tired to push yourself up again with good form. That's the third set.

The average amount of rest between sets and between exercises is 1-3 minutes. You definitely don't want to go below 1 minute, but you can stretch it for up to 5 minutes (try not to get beyond 5 though).

As for the number of repetitions per set, you do as many reps as possible (AMRAP) on every set, and ideally you want to be able to reach failure (when you're too tired to do another rep with good form) within the 8 to 18 rep-range, meaning ideally you want to at least be able to do 8 repetitions on a given set, and to be able to reach failure before you get to 18 reps. That's the rep-range I found works best for people who are just starting out, and by "works best" I mean the one that allows them to progress (get more reps on subsequent sessions) more efficiently and the one that allows for the best technique. However, the most efficient rep-range for muscle growth for all levels is bigger than that, around 5 to 30 reps per set, so if by necessity you get outside of the 8-18 rep-range, but land within 5-30, don't worry, you're fine; and if you're more comfortable or feel a better work somewhere else inside that bigger range, feel free to work like that permanently. So how do you control the reps? Well if the rep count gets too high, you replace the exercise for a harder variation of the same type from the exercise list in the main post. So for example if for the "horizontal press" slot in the template you're doing the horizontal press level 1 from the exercise list (incline push-ups) and you want to work in the 8 to 18 rep-range, then when you get to 18 reps, next time you replace that exercise for the horizontal press level 2 (knee push-ups).

If you need in-depth guidance about how to progress, check [this comment](#). The TL;DR version is: track your progress by looking at the number of repetitions you get during the first set of an exercise and comparing it with the first set of that same exercise from last session. A good progression is to be able to do one more repetition compared to last time, but you may be able to do more; however, 1 more is quite good, so no need to push it. If you can't beat the previous session's numbers, you want to at least be able to get the same ones. During the second and third sets of a given exercise you're usually going to get either the same or a lower number of reps compared to the first set, that's normal and it's due to accumulated fatigue; if you were to beat the reps from the first set with subsequent sets, that's a sign you didn't push yourself hard enough on the first set.

Frequently you're going to have to make adjustments on your technique to improve it as you learn and practice, which will result in you either getting more reps or fewer reps, that's absolutely fine and an expected part of the process.

If at some point you stall or regress, [this comment talks about what to do](#). You should only be concerned with that if you can't progress for two whole weeks.

WARM UP

[Perform this warm up before every session.](#)

STARTER TEMPLATE

Workout A	Sets A	Workout B	Sets B
Horizontal press	3	Horizontal pull	3
Hamstring exercise	3	Quad compound	3
Abs	2	Calves	3

STARTER SAMPLE PROGRAM

Workout A	Sets A	Workout B	Sets B
Incline push-ups	3	Incline inverted rows	3
Sliding hamstring curls lvl 1	3	Air squat	3
Abs	2	Standing calf raises	3

3 sessions per week:

Week 1:

- Day 1: Workout A.
- Day 2: Rest.
- Day 3: Workout B.
- Day 4: Rest.
- Day 5: Workout A.
- Day 6: Rest.
- Day 7: Rest.

Week 2:

- Day 1: Workout B.
- Day 2: Rest.
- Day 3: Workout A.
- Day 4: Rest.
- Day 5: Workout B.
- Day 6: Rest.
- Day 7: Rest.

Week 3: Repeat week 1 and so on.

Or alternatively, every other day (3-4 sessions per week):

Week 1:

- Day 1: Workout A.
- Day 2: Rest.
- Day 3: Workout B.
- Day 4: Rest.
- Day 5: Workout A.
- Day 6: Rest.
- Day 7: Workout B.

Week 2:

- Day 1: Rest.
- Day 2: Workout A.
- Day 3: Rest.
- Day 4: Workout B.
- Day 5: Rest.
- Day 6: Workout A.
- Day 7: Rest.

...And you continue repeating the A-rest-B-Rest cycles like that.

IMPLEMENTATION

- The first two weeks only do 1 set per exercise.
- On weeks 3 and 4, do 2 sets per exercise.
- From week 5 and beyond, do the full amount of sets in the table.

Please follow this recommendation. I know it's tempting to just start it as is, but by implementing this type of acclimation phase you will see more gains from the program. As someone who is just starting out, 1 set is enough to make you grow, but you're not fatigue-resistant at all, so doing more work from the get-go will produce fewer gains, much more soreness and a higher potential to tweak something in your body.

Muscles being worked with each exercise:

- Horizontal press: chest, shoulders and triceps.
- Horizontal pull: back, biceps, shoulders and forearms.
- Quad compound: quadriceps, glutes.
- Hamstring exercise: hamstrings, glutes.
- Calves: calves.

If the Level 1 of an exercise in the exercise list is still too

NOVICE PROGRAM FOR RANK BEGINNERS

LEVEL	AVG SETS/MUSCLE/WEEK	FREQUENCY/MUSCLE/WEEK	SESSIONS PER WEEK
Novice	9	2x	4

WHOM IS THIS PROGRAM FOR?

- Someone graduating from the Starter Program.
- Someone with between 0 to 2 years of consistent resistance training (in the gym or calisthenics).
- Someone used to frequently doing physical activity (besides general cardio), but who hasn't trained for physique purposes.
- A trained physique athlete from any level coming from a break can use this program as an acclimation phase.

HOW LONG SHOULD YOU RUN IT?

As long as you're making progress (which could be months or even years), or optionally you can move on to one of the regular programs after 2-6 months if you're still progressing but got bored or want something more challenging (lower end if you're a higher level trained individual coming from a break, higher end if it's the natural progression for you).

IS DOING THE PROGRAM ALL IT TAKES TO GET RESULTS?

Working out is only half of the equation when it comes to improving your physique, the other half is DIET. How important one is vs the other isn't really 50/50 or even a quantifiable thing, because doing a crappy enough job with either one will cancel your progress entirely, and on the other end of the spectrum, both complement each other. If you want good results, you necessarily need to do a decent enough job on both, and if you want any results at all, you at the very least need to avoid completely sucking at both. You also don't need to get your diet completely on point *before* starting to work out, you can (and I recommend you do) start working out right away, and then progressively improve your diet as you learn more about it. Because this post only focuses on training, I'll give you some of the best resources out there for you to learn about nutrition, you can find them in [this comment](#).

PROGRAM INSTRUCTIONS

If you came to this section directly, while each exercise has a link that shows a quick example, they are explained with more detail and special indications you should follow to get the most gains out of them in the exercise section in the middle of the main post, as well as ways to make them harder and easier. If there are some exercises you can't do or don't like, look at the "template" above the program and see what type of exercises can be done in that slot, then go to the list of exercises and find an alternative that fits the slot's description, there are exercises that require zero equipment for every muscle. If you can only make one exercise work for a given muscle, it's ok to just repeat that exercise in every slot that targets that muscle.

The "Sets" column indicates the number of sets to do in the exercise to the left in the same row. A "set" is a group of repetitions you do consecutively without rest. Let's take push-ups as an example, you begin doing the exercise, perform rep after rep, and at some point you stop because you can't continue anymore: that's a set, from start to finish. So if you have to do 3 sets of push-ups you go like this:

- Put yourself into position and start: up, down, up, down, ..., up, down, then you stop because you're too tired to push yourself up again. That's the first set.
- You rest for a while.
- Put yourself into position again and start: up, down, up, down, ..., up, down, then you stop because you're too tired to push yourself up again. That's the second set.
- You rest for a while.
- Put yourself into position again and start: up, down, up, down, ..., up, down, then you stop because you're too tired to push yourself up again. That's the third set.

The amount of rest between sets and between exercises is 1-3 minutes. For more information on rest times check [this video](#)

.

As for the number of repetitions per set, you do as many reps as possible (AMRAP) on every set, and ideally you want to be able to reach failure (when you're too tired to do another rep) within the 5-30 rep-range, meaning you want to at least be able to do 5 repetitions in a given set, and to be able to reach failure before you get to 30 reps. If the rep count gets too low or too high you can replace the exercise for an easier or harder variation from the exercise list in the main post, to do that, look at the first table titled "Template", see the description of the exercise that goes into that slot and look for that type of exercise in the main list under the muscle group it details. As a starting point, try to pick exercises which allow you to do around 10 repetitions in your first set.\

If you need in depth guidance about how to progress, check [this comment](#). The TL;DR version is: track your progress by looking at the number of repetitions you get during the first set of an exercise and comparing it with the first set of that same exercise from last session. A good progression is to be able to do one more repetition compared to last time, but you may be able to do more; however, 1 more is quite good, so no need to push it. If you can't beat the previous session's numbers, you want to at least be able to get the same ones. During the second and third sets of a given exercise you're usually going to get either the same or a lower number of reps compared to the first set, that's normal and it's due to accumulated fatigue; if you were to beat the reps from the first set with subsequent sets, that's a sign you didn't push yourself hard enough on the first set.

Frequently you're going to have to make adjustments on your technique to improve it as you learn and practice, which will result in you either getting more reps or fewer reps, that's absolutely fine and an expected part of the process.

If at some point you stall or regress, [this comment talks about what to do](#). You should only be concerned with that if you can't progress for two whole weeks.

WARM UP

[Perform this warm up before every session.](#)

NOVICE TEMPLATE (Updated)

Upper	Sets Upper	Lower	Sets Lower
Vertical pull (back)	3	Heavy compound for the quadriceps (to get 5-10 reps per leg per set)	3
Horizontal press (chest)	3	Medium/light exercise for the quadriceps (to get 10-20 reps per leg per set)	2
Horizontal pull (back)	2	Hamstring exercise	3
Close-grip Press (triceps)	2	Calf exercise	4
Biceps isolation	2	Abs	3

NOVICE SAMPLE PROGRAM (Updated)

Upper	Sets Upper	Lower	Sets Lower
Negative pull-ups or chin-ups	3	Reverse lunges	3
Push-ups	3	Step-ups	2
Inverted rows	2	Sliding hamstring curls	3
Diamond push-ups on knees	2	Standing calf raises	4
Leg-resisted bicep curls	2	Abs	3

Four sessions per week: Upper->Lower->Rest->Upper->Lower->Rest->Rest.

The muscle between the "()" in the template is the main mover of the exercise, and in the exercise list in the main post you can find the type of movement under that muscle. However, they're not the only muscles that are worked with those exercises to a significant degree: the vertical pull also works the biceps and the forearms, the horizontal press also works the triceps and the shoulders, the horizontal pull also works the biceps, spinal erectors, shoulders and forearms, the close-grip press also works the chest and the shoulders, and both the quadriceps and hamstring exercises also work the glutes. Finally, almost all of them work the abs.

You can replace the exercises for harder/easier variations of the same type according to the template, choosing from the post's exercise list.

UPPER-LOWER-PULL-PUSH-LEGS PROGRAM

LEVEL	AVG SETS/MUSCLE/WEEK	FREQUENCY/MUSCLE/WEEK	SESSIONS PER WEEK
Beginner to Advanced	10 to 20	2x	5

PROGRAM INSTRUCTIONS

If you came to this section directly, while each exercise has a link that shows a quick example, they are explained with more detail and special indications you should follow to get the most gains out of them in the exercise section in the middle of the main post, as well as ways to make them harder and easier. If there are some exercises you can't do or don't like, look at the "template" above the program and see what type of exercises can be done in that slot, then go to the list of exercises and find an alternative that fits the slot's description, there are exercises that require zero equipment for every muscle. If you can only make one exercise work for a given muscle, it's ok to just repeat that exercise in every slot that targets that muscle.

The "Sets" column indicates the number of sets to do in the exercise to the left in the same row, it's not the rep-range. There's a broad range you can choose from when it comes to number of sets per exercise, that's because the whole range works, it depends on your level (lower end for beginners, higher end for more advanced), disposition, schedule and number of days per week you're going to be training. I recommend that if you're intermediate or advanced, that you start with the lower end of the set range and the recommended frequency for each program, and from there use wave set progression, increasing the number of sets per muscle group per week (not per exercise or session) by 1-2 each week, and deload when fatigue gets too high; run that cycle a couple of times and that should tell you what the most effective volume is for you, or you could just keep running that cycle, maybe starting higher or lower.

Rest time between sets is the same one you were using in the gym, 1-3 minutes.

As for the number of reps, you do as many reps as possible (AMRAP) on every set, and ideally you want to be able to reach failure (or get close to it) within the 5-30 rep-range. If the rep count gets too high you can increase the difficulty of the exercise or replace it for a harder variation from the exercise list in the middle of the main post. If you only can or want to go above 30 reps, don't worry, you'll still make gains. It will just be a little more difficult to track volume.

In the templates there are 3 intensity distinctions used as a criteria for exercise selection: heavy, medium and light. Ideally they would represent the 5-10, 10-15 and 15+ rep-ranges respectively, so you should select exercises where you get those rep-ranges when you go close to failure, but whatever rep-ranges you can do with the exercises you have available for a given muscle, just order

the exercises by intensity, divide the resulting list in 3 and assign the corresponding label to each sub-list; so for example you may only be able to do exercises for quads that you can do for 10-20, 20-30 and 30+ reps per set, and in that case, "heavy" would be the 10-20 rep-range, "medium" the 20-30 and "light" the 30+.

For rep-ranges below 15-20, it's best to leave one or two reps in the tank. For rep-ranges above 15-20, it's best to go to failure.

If you need guidance about how to progress using just reps, check [this comment which tells you how to progress](#) and [this comment which talks about what to do when you stall or regress](#).

What about super-sets, giant-sets and circuit training? Explained in [this comment](#).

WARM UP

[Perform this warm up before every session.](#)

UL-PPL TEMPLATE

Upper	Sets Upper	Lower	Sets Lower	Pull	Sets Pull	Push	Sets Push	Legs	Sets Legs
Heavy vertical pull	2-5	Heavy quad compound	2-4	Medium intensity vertical pull	2-4	Medium intensity incline press	2-4	Heavy quad compound	2-4
Heavy horizontal press	4-6	Heavy hamstring exercise	2-4	Medium intensity horizontal pull	2-4	Medium intensity horizontal press	2-4	Medium intensity quad exercise B	2-4
Heavy horizontal pull	2-5	Medium intensity quad exercise A	2-4	Back isolation	2-4	Chest isolation OR light horizontal press	2-4	Light intensity quad exercise	2-4
Heavy vertical press	3-5	Medium intensity hamstring exercise	2-4	Facepull variation	2-5	Triceps isolation	2-5	Medium intensity hamstring exercise	3-5

Biceps isolation	2-5	Straight legged calf exercise	4-8	Biceps isolation	2-5	Side delt isolation	3-5	Light intensity hamstring exercise	3-5
Triceps isolation	2-5	Abs	3-5					Straight legged calf exercise	4-8
								Abs	3-5

UL-PPL SAMPLE PROGRAM

Upper	Sets Upper	Lower	Sets Lower	Pull	Sets Pull	Push	Sets Push	Legs	Sets Legs
Pull-ups	2-5	Pistol squats	2-4	Chin-ups	2-4	Decline push-ups	2-4	Pistol squats	2-4
Archer push-ups	4-6	Nordic curls	2-4	Inverted rows	2-4	Dips	2-4	Bulgarian split squats	2-4
One arm inverted rows	2-5	Sissy squats	2-4	Sliding pullovers	2-4	Bodyweight chest flyes	2-4	Bodyweight leg extensions	2-4
Deficit pike push-ups	3-5	Single leg romanian deadlifts	2-4	Band facepulls	2-5	Inverted skullcrushers	2-5	Single leg romanian deadlifts	3-5
Bodyweight bicep curls	2-5	Unilateral standing	4-8	Bodyweight bicep curls	2-5	Lateral raises	3-5	Sliding hamstring curls	3-5

		g calf raises							
Inverted skullcrushes	2-5	Abs	3					Unilateral standing calf raises	4-8
								Abs	3-5

5 sessions per week: Upper->Lower->Rest->Pull->Push->Legs->Rest. The rest day between Lower day and Pull day isn't optional, it's important.

This program isn't just the Upper-Lower program and the Pull-Push-Legs program mashed together, each component is slightly different to be optimized within this plan.

The UL days are lower volume higher intensity, and the PPL days are higher volume lower intensity. For this purpose, the intensity is taken care of by exercise selection (which also indirectly involves rep-ranges) so don't worry about it; and when it comes to volume, pick a number of sets so that you do slightly fewer total sets per session for the big muscle groups (chest, back, quadriceps, hamstrings) on UL days compared to PPL days, aim for a 4/6 ratio, and for every other muscle group do around the same total number of sets across sessions. For example, if you're going to do 12 total weekly sets of chest, don't do 6 sets on Upper day and 6 sets on Push day, instead do something like 5 sets on Upper day and 7 sets on Push day. On the other hand, if you're going to do 6 total weekly sets for biceps, don't do 2 sets on Upper day and 4 sets on Pull day, do 3 sets on both.

PULL-PUSH-LEGS PROGRAM

LEVEL	AVG SETS/MUSCLE/WEEK	FREQUENCY/MUSCLE/WEEK	SESSIONS PER WEEK
Intermediate to Advanced	12 to 22	2x	6

PROGRAM INSTRUCTIONS

If you came to this section directly, while each exercise has a link that shows a quick example, they are explained with more detail and special indications you should follow to get the most gains out of them in the exercise section in the middle of the main post, as well as ways to make them harder and easier. If there are some exercises you can't do or don't like, look at the "template" above the program and see what type of exercises can be done in that slot, then go to the list of exercises and find an alternative that fits the slot's description, there are exercises that require zero equipment for every muscle. If you can only make one exercise work for a given muscle, it's ok to just repeat that exercise in every slot that targets that muscle.

The "Sets" column indicates the number of sets to do in the exercise to the left in the same row, it's not the rep-range. There's a broad range you can choose from when it comes to number of sets per exercise, that's because the whole range works, it depends on your level (lower end for early intermediates, higher end for more advanced), disposition, schedule and number of days per week you're going to be training. I recommend that if you're intermediate or advanced, that you start with the lower end of the set range and the recommended frequency for each program, and from there use wave set progression, increasing the number of sets per muscle group per week (not per exercise or session) by 1-2 each week, and deload when fatigue gets too high; run that cycle a couple of times and that should tell you what the most effective volume is for you, or you could just keep running that cycle, maybe starting higher or lower.

Rest time between sets is the same one you were using in the gym, 1-3 minutes.

As for the number of reps, you do as many reps as possible (AMRAP) on every set, and ideally you want to be able to reach failure (or get close to it) within the 5-30 rep-range. If the rep count gets too high you can increase the difficulty of the exercise or replace it for a harder variation from the exercise list in the middle of the main post. If you only can or want to go above 30 reps, don't worry, you'll still make gains it will just be a little more difficult to track volume.

In the templates there are 3 intensity distinctions used as a criteria for exercise selection: heavy, medium and light. Ideally they would represent the 5-10, 10-15 and 15+ rep-ranges respectively, so you should select exercises where you get those rep-ranges when you go close to failure, but

whatever rep-ranges you can do with the exercises you have available for a given muscle, just order the exercises by intensity, divide the resulting list in 3 and assign the corresponding label to each sub-list; so for example you may only be able to do exercises for quads that you can do for 10-20, 20-30 and 30+ reps per set, and in that case, "heavy" would be the 10-20 rep-range, "medium" the 20-30 and "light" the 30+.

For rep-ranges below 15-20, it's best to leave one or two reps in the tank. For rep-ranges above 15-20, it's best to go to failure.

If you need guidance about how to progress using just reps, check [this comment which tells you how to progress](#) and [this comment which talks about what to do when you stall or regress](#).

What about super-sets, giant-sets and circuit training? Explained in [this comment](#).

WARM UP

[Perform this warm up before every session.](#)

PULL-PUSH-LEGS TEMPLATE

Pull	Sets Pull	Push	Sets Push	Legs	Sets Legs
Heavy vertical pull	2-4	Heavy horizontal press	2-4	Heavy quad compound	2-4
Medium intensity horizontal pull	2-4	Medium intensity incline press	2-4	Medium intensity quad compound	2-4
Back isolation	2-4	Heavy/Medium intensity vertical press	2-4	Light intensity quad exercise	2-4
Facepull variation	3-5	Medium/light intensity chest exercise	2-4	Heavy hamstring exercise	3-5
Biceps isolation	3-5	Side delt isolation	3-5	Medium intensity hamstring exercise	3-5
Abs	3	Triceps isolation	3-5	Straight legged calf exercise	4-8
				Abs	3

PULL-PUSH-LEGS SAMPLE PROGRAM

Pull	Sets Pull	Push	Sets Push	Legs	Sets Legs
Pull-ups	2-4	Archer push-ups	2-4	Pistol squats	2-4
inverted rows	2-4	Decline push-ups	2-4	Bulgarian split squats	2-4
Sliding pullovers	2-4	Deficit pike push-ups	2-4	Bodyweight leg extensions	2-4
Band facepulls	3-5	Bodyweight chest flyes	2-4	Nordic curls	3-5
Bodyweight bicep curls	3-5	Lateral raises	3-5	Single leg romanian deadlifts	3-5
Abs	3	Inverted skullcrushers	3-5	Unilateral standing calf raises	4-8
				Abs	3

One day pull, another day push, another day legs. 6 training sessions per week (P-P-L-P-P-L-Rest).

UPPER-LOWER PROGRAM

LEVEL	AVG SETS/MUSCLE/WEEK	FREQUENCY/MUSCLE/WEEK	SESSIONS PER WEEK
Beginner to Advanced	10 to 30	2x or 3x	4 or 6

PROGRAM INSTRUCTIONS

If you came to this section directly, while each exercise has a link that shows a quick example, they are explained with more detail and special indications you should follow to get the most gains out of them in the exercise section in the middle of the main post, as well as ways to make them harder and easier. If there are some exercises you can't do or don't like, look at the "template" above the program and see what type of exercises can be done in that slot, then go to the list of exercises and find an alternative that fits the slot's description, there are exercises that require zero equipment for every muscle. If you can only make one exercise work for a given muscle, it's ok to just repeat that exercise in every slot that targets that muscle.

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Rest time between sets is the same one you were using in the gym, 1-3 minutes.

As for the number of reps, you do as many reps as possible (AMRAP) on every set, and ideally you want to be able to reach failure (or get close to it) within the 5-30 rep-range. If the rep count gets too high you can increase the difficulty of the exercise or replace it for a harder variation from the exercise list in the middle of the main post. If you only can or want to go above 30 reps, don't worry, you'll still make gains it will just be a little more difficult to track volume.

In the templates there are 3 intensity distinctions used as a criteria for exercise selection: heavy, medium and light. Ideally they would represent the 5-10, 10-15 and 15+ rep-ranges respectively, so you should select exercises where you get those rep-ranges when you go close to failure, but

whatever rep-ranges you can do with the exercises you have available for a given muscle, just order the exercises by intensity, divide the resulting list in 3 and assign the corresponding label to each sub-list; so for example you may only be able to do exercises for quads that you can do for 10-20, 20-30 and 30+ reps per set, and in that case, "heavy" would be the 10-20 rep-range, "medium" the 20-30 and "light" the 30+.

For rep-ranges bellow 15-20, it's best to leave one or two reps in the tank. For rep-ranges above 15-20, it's best to go to failure.

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What about super-sets, giant-sets and circuit training? Explained in [this comment](#).

WARM UP

[Perform this warm up before every session.](#)

UPPER-LOWER TEMPLATE

Upper	Sets Upper	Lower	Sets Lower
Heavy vertical pull	2-5	Heavy quad compound	2-4
Heavy horizontal press	2-5	Medium intensity quad compound	1-3
Medium intensity horizontal pull	2-5	Light intensity quad exercise	1-3
Medium intensity incline press	2-5	Heavy hamstring exercise	2-5
Biceps isolation	2-5	Medium intensity hamstring exercise	1-5
Triceps isolation	2-5	Straight legged calf exercise	3-8
Side delt isolation	2-8	Abs	3
Abs	3		

UPPER-LOWER SAMPLE PROGRAM

Upper	Sets Upper	Lower	Sets Lower
Chin-ups	2-5	Pistol squats	2-4
Archer push-ups	2-5	Bulgarian split squats	1-3
inverted rows	2-5	ATG paused air squat	1-3
Decline push-ups	2-5	Nordic curls	2-5
Bodyweight bicep curls	2-5	Single leg romanian deadlifts	1-5
Inverted skullcrushers	2-5	Unilateral standing calf raises	3-8
Lateral raises	2-8	Abs	3
Abs	3		

One day upper one day lower. 4 sessions per week (upper-lower-rest-upper-lower-rest-rest) or 6 sessions per week (U-L-U-L-U-L-Rest). Keep in mind that the lower end of the set prescription is for the 6 day split, for the 4 day split add 1 set to the minimum for everything except abs and the heavy quad compound. The higher end of the sets is the same for both frequencies.

PULL-PUSH PROGRAM

LEVEL	AVG SETS/MUSCLE/WEEK	FREQUENCY/MUSCLE/WEEK	SESSIONS PER WEEK
Beginner to Advanced	10 to 30	2x or 3x	4 or 6

PROGRAM INSTRUCTIONS

If you came to this section directly, while each exercise has a link that shows a quick example, they are explained with more detail and special indications you should follow to get the most gains out of them in the exercise section in the middle of the main post, as well as ways to make them harder and easier. If there are some exercises you can't do or don't like, look at the "template" above the program and see what type of exercises can be done in that slot, then go to the list of exercises and find an alternative that fits the slot's description, there are exercises that require zero equipment for every muscle. If you can only make one exercise work for a given muscle, it's ok to just repeat that exercise in every slot that targets that muscle.

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Rest time between sets is the same one you were using in the gym, 1-3 minutes.

As for the number of reps, you do as many reps as possible (AMRAP) on every set, and ideally you want to be able to reach failure (or get close to it) within the 5-30 rep-range. If the rep count gets too high you can increase the difficulty of the exercise or replace it for a harder variation from the exercise list in the middle of the main post. If you only can or want to go above 30 reps, don't worry, you'll still make gains it will just be a little more difficult to track volume.

In the templates there are 3 intensity distinctions used as a criteria for exercise selection: heavy, medium and light. Ideally they would represent the 5-10, 10-15 and 15+ rep-ranges respectively, so you should select exercises where you get those rep-ranges when you go close to failure, but

whatever rep-ranges you can do with the exercises you have available for a given muscle, just order the exercises by intensity, divide the resulting list in 3 and assign the corresponding label to each sub-list; so for example you may only be able to do exercises for quads that you can do for 10-20, 20-30 and 30+ reps per set, and in that case, "heavy" would be the 10-20 rep-range, "medium" the 20-30 and "light" the 30+.

For rep-ranges bellow 15-20, it's best to leave one or two reps in the tank. For rep-ranges above 15-20, it's best to go to failure.

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What about super-sets, giant-sets and circuit training? Explained in [this comment](#).

WARM UP

[Perform this warm up before every session.](#)

PULL-PUSH TEMPLATE

Pull	Sets Pull	Push	Sets Push
Heavy vertical pull	2-5	Heavy horizontal press	2-5
Medium intensity horizontal pull	2-5	Medium intensity incline press	2-5
Biceps isolation	2-5	Triceps isolation	2-5
Side delt isolation	2-8	Heavy quad compound	2-5
Heavy hamstring exercise	2-5	Medium intensity quad compound	2-5
Medium intensity hamstring exercise	1-5	Straight legged calf exercise	3-8
Abs	3		

PULL-PUSH SAMPLE PROGRAM

Pull	Sets Pull	Push	Sets Push
Chin-ups	2-5	Archer push-ups	2-5

inverted rows	2-5	Decline push-ups	2-5
Bodyweight bicep curls	2-5	Inverted skullcrushers	2-5
Lateral raises	2-8	Pistol squats	2-5
Nordic curls	2-5	Bulgarian split squats	2-5
Single leg romanian deadlifts	1-5	Unilateral standing calf raises	3-8
Abs	3		

This is the middle of the road between full body and splits. One day Pull one day Push. 4 sessions per week (Pull-Push-Rest-Pull-Push-Rest-Rest) or 6 sessions per week (P-P-P-P-P-P-Rest). Keep in mind that the lower end of the set prescription is for the 6 day split, for the 4 day split add 1 set to the minimum for everything except abs. The higher end of the sets is the same for both frequencies.

FULL BODY PROGRAM

LEVEL	AVG SETS/MUSCLE/WEEK	FREQUENCY/MUSCLE/WEEK	SESSIONS PER WEEK
Beginner to Advanced	9 to 25	3.5x	3 or 4

PROGRAM INSTRUCTIONS

If you came to this section directly, while each exercise has a link that shows a quick example, they are explained with more detail and special indications you should follow to get the most gains out of them in the exercise section in the middle of the main post, as well as ways to make them harder and easier. If there are some exercises you can't do or don't like, look at the "template" above the program and see what type of exercises can be done in that slot, then go to the list of exercises and find an alternative that fits the slot's description, there are exercises that require zero equipment for every muscle. If you can only make one exercise work for a given muscle, it's ok to just repeat that exercise in every slot that targets that muscle.

The "Sets" column indicates the number of sets to do in the exercise to the left in the same row, it's not the rep-range. There's a broad range you can choose from when it comes to the number of sets per exercise, that's because the whole range works, it depends on your level (lower end for beginners, higher end for more advanced), disposition, schedule and number of days per week you're going to be training. I recommend that if you're intermediate or advanced, that you start with the lower end of the set range and the recommended frequency for each program, and from there use wave set progression, increasing the number of sets per muscle group per week (not per exercise or session) by 1-2 each week, and deload when fatigue gets too high; run that cycle a couple of times and that should tell you what the most effective volume is for you, or you could just keep running that cycle, maybe starting higher or lower.

Rest time between sets is the same one you were using in the gym, 1-3 minutes.

As for the number of reps, you do as many reps as possible (AMRAP) on every set, and ideally you want to be able to reach failure (or get close to it) within the 5-30 rep-range. If the rep count gets too high you can increase the difficulty of the exercise or replace it for a harder variation from the exercise list in the middle of the main post. If you only can or want to go above 30 reps, don't worry, you'll still make gains. It will just be a little more difficult to track volume.

In the templates there are 3 intensity distinctions used as a criteria for exercise selection: heavy, medium and light. Ideally they would represent the 5-10, 10-15 and 15+ rep-ranges respectively, so you should select exercises where you get those rep-ranges when you go close to failure, but whatever rep-ranges you can do with the exercises you have available for a given muscle, just order

the exercises by intensity, divide the resulting list in 3 and assign the corresponding label to each sub-list; so for example you may only be able to do exercises for quads that you can do for 10-20, 20-30 and 30+ reps per set, and in that case, "heavy" would be the 10-20 rep-range, "medium" the 20-30 and "light" the 30+.

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WARM UP

[Perform this warm up before every session.](#)

FULL BODY TEMPLATE (LONG VERSION)

Workout A	Sets A	Workout B	Sets B
Heavy vertical pull	2-5	Heavy quad compound	3-8
Heavy horizontal press	2-5	Heavy hamstring exercise	3-8
Medium intensity horizontal pull	2-5	Straight legged calf exercise	3-8
Medium intensity incline press	2-5	Heavy vertical press	3-8
Side delt isolation	3-8	Medium intensity pull (vertical OR horizontal)	3-8
Medium intensity quad compound	3-8	Medium/Light intensity chest exercise	3-8
Medium intensity hamstring exercise	3-8	Biceps isolation	3-5
Straight legged calf exercise	3-8	Triceps isolation	3-5
Abs	3	Abs	3

FULL BODY SAMPLE PROGRAM (LONG VERSION)

Workout A	Sets A	Workout B	Sets B
Pull-ups	2-5	Pistol squats	3-8
Archer push-ups	2-5	Nordic curls	3-8
inverted rows	2-5	Unilateral standing calf raises	3-8
Decline push-ups	2-5	Deficit pike push-ups	3-8
Lateral raises	3-8	Chin-ups	3-8
Bulgarian split squats	3-8	Push-ups	3-8
Single leg romanian deadlifts	3-8	Bodyweight bicep curls	3-5
Unilateral standing calf raises	3-8	Inverted Skullcrushers	3-5
Abs	3	Abs	3

One workout per day, alternating the workouts. The standard frequency and what I recommend for a program like this is every other day (Workout A->Rest->Workout B->Rest->Workout A->...) which is 3-4 sessions per week.

FULL BODY TEMPLATE (SHORT VERSION)

Workout A	Sets A	Workout B	Sets B
Heavy horizontal press	3-5	Heavy quad compound	3-5
Heavy supine or neutral-grip vertical pull	3-5	Heavy hamstring exercise	3-5
Heavy/Medium intensity vertical press	3-5	Straight legged calf exercise	3-5

Medium intensity quad compound	3-5	Medium intensity supine-grip horizontal pull	3-5
Medium intensity hamstring exercise	3-5	Medium intensity close-grip incline press	3-5
Straight legged calf exercise	3-5	Weak point shoulder/arm slot	3-5

FULL BODY SAMPLE PROGRAM (SHORT VERSION)

Workout A	Sets A	Workout B	Sets B
Archer push-ups	3-5	Pistol squats	3-5
Weighted Chin-ups	3-5	Nordic curls	3-5
Deficit pike push-ups	3-5	Unilateral standing calf raises	3-5
Bulgarian split squats	3-5	Underhand Inverted rows	3-5
Single leg romanian deadlifts	3-5	Decline push-ups	3-5
Unilateral standing calf raises	3-5	Lateral raises	3-5

One workout per day, alternating the workouts. The standard frequency and what I recommend for a program like this is every other day (Workout A->Rest->Workout B->Rest->Workout A->...) which is 3-4 sessions per week.

In the "Weak point shoulder/arm slot" you do exactly that: if you have a weak point in your shoulders or arms you want to address, or if you just want to give them extra focus, choose an *isolation* exercise and do it in this slot. You can also select exercises for more than one muscle group and do them in that slot, you only have to follow these 3 rules:

1. Only select isolation exercises for the side delt, rear delt, biceps or triceps.
2. Only one exercise per muscle group.
3. You do everything in a circuit.

In the example program I selected lateral raises since I imagined someone with side delts as a weakness. If you don't have a weakness, you can just leave it empty and do nothing for that slot.

HOW TO PROGRESS

Yeah I get it now and I'm familiar with it because there's another common problem that's quite similar, which is when someone is having trouble gauging proximity to failure. Both things are fixed in the same way.

Here's what you do:

You always start with a baseline you need to reach. Your first baseline is the amount of reps you did the previous session in the first set. So if you're doing push-ups and the previous session you got 10 reps in the first set, then your first goal in your current session is to match those 10 reps with your first set, that goal you should really try to reach no matter what. Your second goal is to do even more reps than that (in that same set), but this one is more optional and it depends on how you feel. So you start the set and you grind it until you get the 10 reps, at that moment you try to continue for as long as possible, and here doing even one more rep is good enough, so getting an 11 is a great outcome, but sometimes you're just going to reach your limit by only matching the reps from the previous session, and that's fine as well. So first baseline: match your first set from your previous session, and when you get there see if you can do more.

Your second baseline applies to your second set and every other one that comes after, and it's matching your previous set. Here you forget about the previous session. For each subsequent set you just try to get the same number of reps as your previous set, you don't try to exceed it anymore so if you match it you just stop the set. And more often than not, you're going to fail, that's normal, with the accumulation of fatigue across sets it's almost impossible to match the performance across all sets, the norm is to get 0-3 fewer reps in subsequent sets, you just try to minimize the amount of reps lost.

So here's how both guidelines come together:

Let's say in one session you have to do push-up for 3 sets, and you get 10-9-7. The next session you start by trying to get the same 10 reps in the first set, you begin, get to 10, assess and realize that you have enough gas for one more and finally you get 11 reps in your first set. You rest for 2 minutes and begin your second set, trying to get to the same 11 reps as the previous set, but you only get 10. You rest for 2 minutes and begin your 3rd set, trying to get the same 10 reps as the previous set but you only get 9. Final result: 11-10-9.

The next session after that you start by trying to get the same 11 reps in the first set as last time, you begin, get to 11, try to do more but just can't, so you get a total of 11 reps in your first set. You rest for 2 minutes and begin your second set, trying to get to the same 11 reps as the previous set, you do get the 11 reps and stop. You rest for 2 minutes and begin your 3rd set, trying to get the same 11 reps as the previous set but you only get 9. Final result: 11-11-9.

Ideally you want the number of reps in the first set to go up week to week.

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU STALL OR REGRESS

Bodyweight vs the gym aren't really that different especially if you apply the concepts in this post. Now if you look at what most people usually do when they turn to bodyweight stuff, sticking with a single exercise like regular push-ups and accumulating hundreds of light repetitions instead of moving on to a more challenging one, or using complicated exercises that are complicated for other factors that don't influence hypertrophy, then yeah it's different.

PS: One thing I forgot to mention in my previous comment is what to do when you can't match the number of reps from the previous session's first set, and when you consistently can't improve upon it.

When you can't match the number of reps from the previous session's first set:

Stop the exercise right there in that session, without continuing with the following sets, and if later in the session you have to do another exercise that targets the same muscle groups as the one you failed, in that exercise you do half of the reps you got in every set the previous session, and even if the sets are light you should continue to use the same rest time between sets. For example, let's say you're running the upper-lower sample program and you have to do the Upper session today: the first 3 exercises are chin-ups first, then archer push-ups, then inverted rows, and let's say your previous session looked like this:

Previous session:

- Chin-ups 10-8-7.
- Archer push-ups: 10-10-9.
- Inverted rows: 12-11-9.

So you begin the session doing chin-ups trying to match the 10 reps from your previous session, but can only get 9 (and here you need to be honest and avoid doing things like getting 9, resting for 3-5 seconds and grinding 1 more rep, that *doesn't count as 10 for tracking purposes*). Since you couldn't match the performance from your previous session with your first set, you're done with chin-ups for today and move on to the archer push-ups, you get 11-10-9, all good, and move on to the inverted rows. Now since you failed the chin-ups and the inverted rows work the same muscles (back and biceps) you do half of the reps you got across sets the previous session, which means you do 6-5-4.

The point of this protocol is that the only reason you fail to match the performance from previous sessions (if you didn't take extra breaks from training) is that you're not recovered yet. This protocol aids recovery and it's very likely that the next session your performance is going to be able to match or even surpass the first previous session. If you have to implement this protocol too frequently, it's a sign that something needs fixing, probably one or more of these: too much volume (too many sets per muscle group per session), too much frequency (too many sessions for the same muscle group in a week), poor diet (not enough calories, not enough of some macro nutrient), poor sleep (less than 7 hrs, or an erratic sleep schedule, or intermittent sleep), too much stress.

When you *can* match the performance from the previous session, but can't surpass it for 2 sessions:

This can happen for 4 reasons:

1. You were eating too little.
2. The exercise isn't really good for you.

3. You didn't recover enough from your previous sessions (same as the previous case, but here you do have just enough recovery to match the performance).
4. You weren't doing enough volume (sets per muscle group) to provide the necessary stimulus to signal the muscle to grow.

You need to discard them in that order.

First you assess if you were eating too little.

You don't necessarily need to be bulking to improve your performance, and you can even improve it in a caloric deficit if you're not too lean. To identify if this is a problem, *you don't look at your diet, you look at your body weight*. Ideally you should be tracking your body weight because it is a super helpful tool, and just in case, the correct way to do it is you weigh yourself frequently on the same conditions (ideally once every day, when you wake up, after going to the bathroom, in your underwear) then at the end of the week you calculate the average weight for the week, and you track your weight by only comparing those averages.

Ok so you were tracking your body weight and so you go and look at the data. You were eating too little to improve performance if:

- You're very lean (visible veins in places other than your arms, visible striations on your shoulders) and you were losing weight.
- You're quite lean (visible veins in arms but not in the torso and legs, visible abs without flexing), and you were consistently losing more than 0.5% of body weight per week.
- You're somewhat lean and you were consistently losing more than 1% of body weight per week.

If you're unintentionally in any of these situations, then you just begin eating more. If you're not, then we move on to the other causes.

Finding out if the exercise is not the best for you.

If you do an exercise and you can't feel your target muscle working, or getting a pump or soreness in that muscle at all after, or if you struggle too much with the technique, or if it's too demanding on a cardiovascular level, or if other muscle fatigues too fast and it causes you to stop the set while the target muscle is still far away from failure, etc. then perhaps you would benefit from changing the exercise. For example with pull-ups, it's quite common to not feel the lats at all during the movement, and instead feeling that the smaller muscles in the upper back and your arms are getting all of the work, or to realize that you're actually not strong enough to get your chin above the bar on every rep, meaning you were doing partials. In this case you may benefit from doing chin-ups instead, or to change the grip width on your pull-ups. If this is not the case tho and you feel the target muscle working just fine, then we move on.

Finding out if recovery is the issue.

For this you use the half of the reps scheme from the previous protocol. So, same situation from the previous example, you have to do the Upper session, and we take the first 3 exercises:

Session 1:

- Chin-ups 10-8-7.
- Archer push-ups: 10-10-9.
- Inverted rows: 12-11-9.

Session 2:

- Chin-ups 10-7-7.
- Archer push-ups: 11-9-9.
- Inverted rows: 13-11-10.

Session 3:

- Chin-ups 10-3-3.
- Archer push-ups: 12-10-9.
- Inverted rows: 6-5-5.

So for chin-ups, here you have 2 session where you did match the performance from the previous session, but failed to improve upon it. This situation is established after the first set of session 3, so here you implement the half reps protocol and this time continue with the exercise but doing half of the reps you got in the previous session, and you also do the same thing for the following exercises that target the same muscle groups *even if they did improve* (as shown in the example, the row did improve, but you still cut the reps). If you have more sessions that week (for example if session 3 was on a monday and you have another Upper session on thursday) you can repeat this protocol again on those days if you still can't improve in your first set. However if in the first session of the next week you still can't improve your performance, then you can discard recovery as a problem, and we move on to the next cause.

You weren't doing enough volume.

If you eliminated the other causes, then this is more likely the one. The way to fix this is quite simple: add 2-4 total sets *per week* (no more, no less) *to the exercise you were stalling in*. So continuing with the upper-lower program and stalling with chin-ups as an example, if you were doing 2 Upper sessions per week and on each one you were doing 3 sets of chin-ups, then you start doing 4 or 5 sets instead on each session.

Credits and thanks to:

https://www.reddit.com/r/naturalbodybuilding/comments/fivvhv/the_quarantine_workout_template/