Angel Coaching Training Blueprint

Science-Based, Busy-Adult-Friendly Strength & Muscle Guide

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This guide teaches you how to train in a way that is:

- **Efficient** – built for busy adults
- **Science-based** – using what research shows about muscle and strength.
- **Practical** – clear plans and rules you can actually follow.

You'll learn how to:

- Choose a schedule (3–6 days/week) that fits your life.
- Hit each muscle enough times per week to grow.
- Use **reps in reserve (RIR)** to train hard, not stupid.
- Make steady progress without constantly changing programs.

HOW TO USE THIS

How to Use This Blueprint

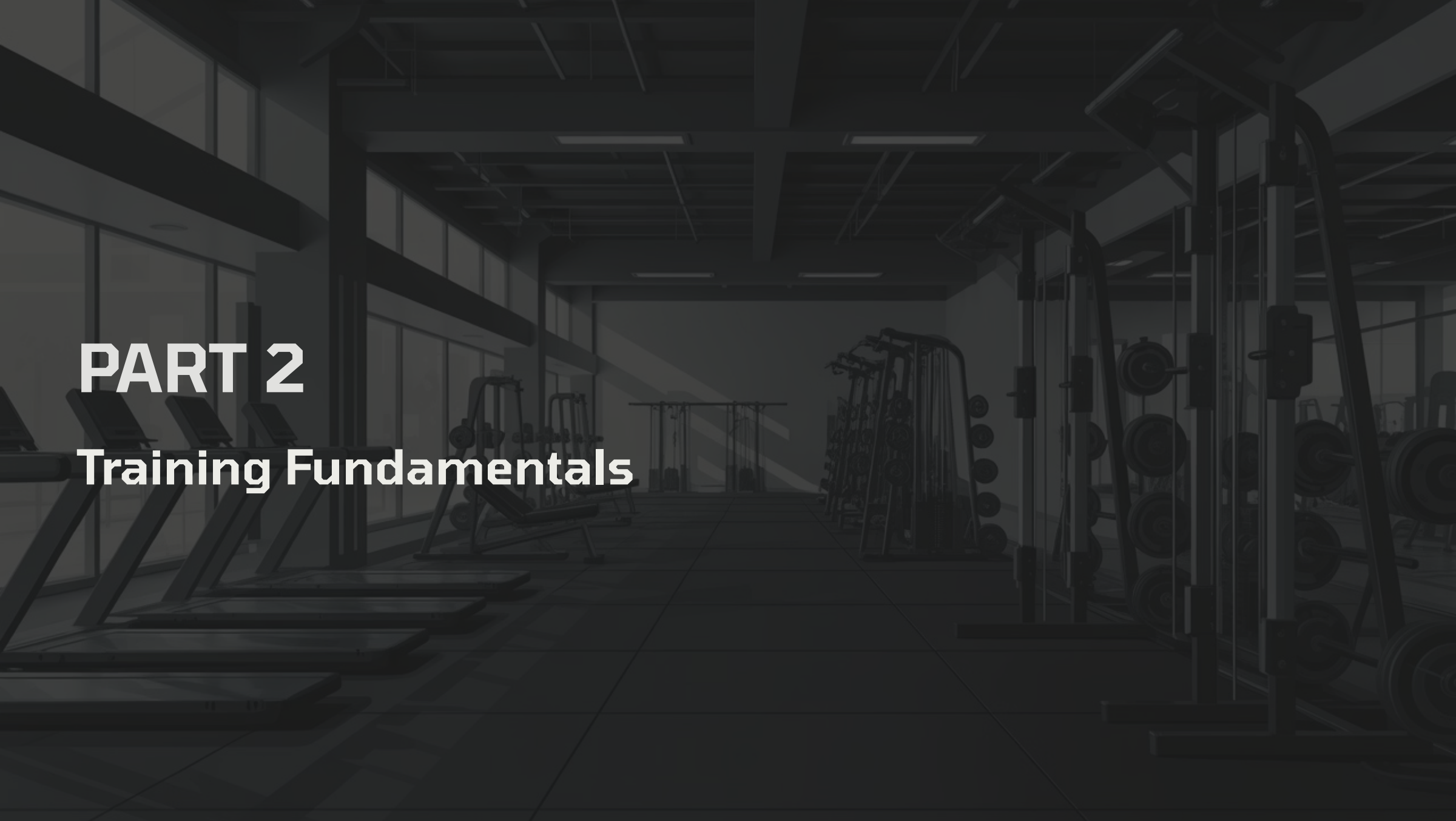
Simple Rules So You Don't Get Overwhelmed

Getting Started

1. **Start from your schedule.** Pick how many days you can **actually** train most weeks (3–6).
2. **Pick a split that fits that schedule.** This blueprint gives you options (full-body, Upper/Lower, PPL, Arnold-style).

Core Principles

1. **Follow the core rules.**
   - Each muscle ≈ **6–10 hard sets/week** as a starting point.
   - Train most sets at **1–3 RIR** (you could do 1–3 more good reps).
   - Progress using **double progression**: fill the rep range, then add weight.
2. **Review weekly.** Look at performance, fatigue, and how you feel. Adjust **volume or frequency slowly**, not randomly.



PART 2

Training Fundamentals

TRAINING FUNDAMENTALS

What Makes Muscle Grow?

Stimulus → Recovery → Adaptation

Muscle doesn't grow because you "destroy" it in the gym.

Instead, training creates **tension and stress** on muscle fibers. That tension is a **signal**.

When that signal is strong enough, and recovery is good (nutrition, sleep, reasonable stress), the body responds over time by:

- Increasing **muscle protein synthesis** (building more proteins inside the muscle).
- Improving how many muscle fibers you can recruit.

Training gives the stimulus. Recovery lets your body **adapt**.

TRAINING FUNDAMENTALS

Progressive Overload

Doing a Little More Over Time

The Idea:

Muscles grow when the **overall training stress gradually increases** over weeks and months.

This does **not** mean maxing out every session. It means adding **small amounts** of:

- Reps
- Weight
- Sets
- Or work done in the same time (density)

Double Progression:

We'll mostly use **double progression**:

1. Pick a rep range (e.g., 6–10).
2. Each week, try to get more reps **inside that range** with good form.
3. When you can hit the **top of the range** for all sets, add a small weight jump.

This keeps progress simple and measurable.

TRAINING FUNDAMENTALS

Effective Reps & RIR

Why You Don't Need to Max Out

Effective Reps (Simple):

The reps that matter most for growth are the **hard reps near the end of a set**, when:

- The weight is moving slower.
- You have to focus more.

You don't need every set to be an all-out grinder. Being within a few reps of failure is enough to send a strong signal.

RIR (Reps in Reserve):

RIR = how many more clean reps you could have done at the end of a set.

- 1–2 RIR on **most compound lifts** = hard, but controlled.
- 0–2 RIR on **safe isolation lifts** (curls, lateral raises, etc.).

This lets you train **hard enough to grow**, without constantly risking form breakdown or injury.

TRAINING FUNDAMENTALS

Rep Ranges

How Many Reps Should You Do?

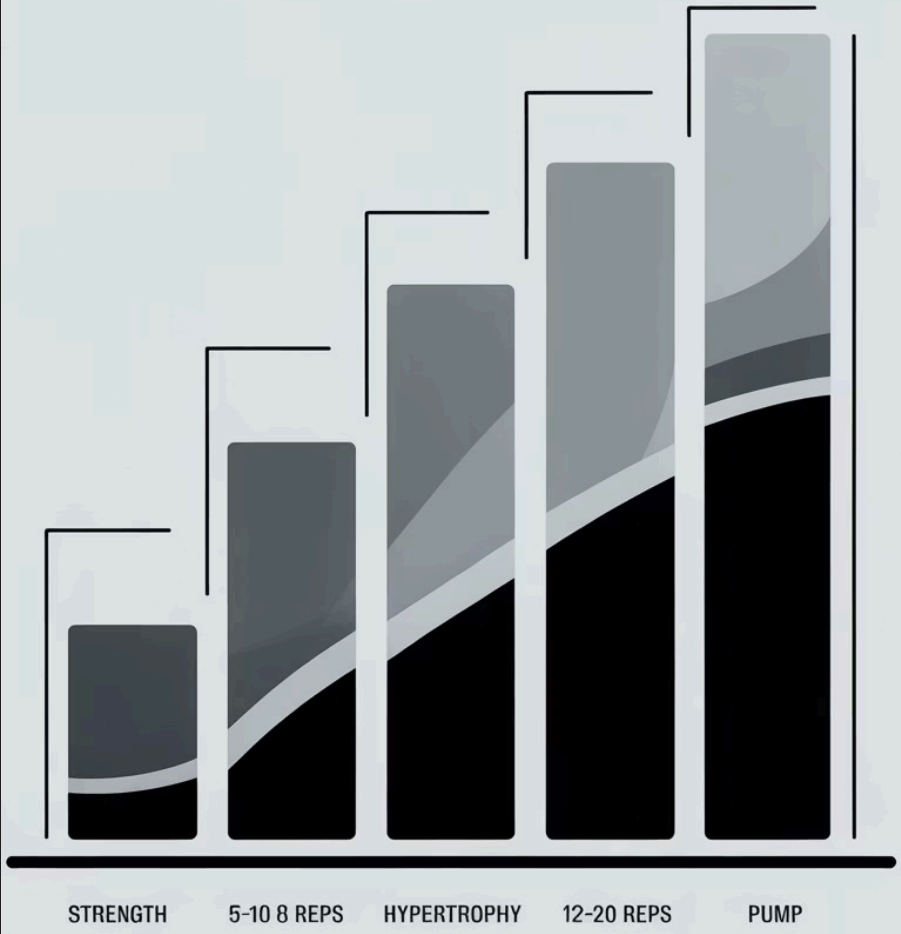
The Science (Simple):

Research shows muscle can grow well across **roughly 5–30 reps per set**, as long as:

- Sets are taken close enough to failure.
- Total weekly volume is appropriate.

How We Use Rep Ranges:

- **5–10 reps:** The most optimal range. Start with 5-6 reps at a certain weight, then keep doing that weight until you get to 8-10 reps, then increase weight and repeat.
- **10–20+ reps:** Can sometimes be better if you have injuries or joint/tendon pain.



TRAINING FUNDAMENTALS

Range of Motion & Tempo

Controlling the Weight, Not Letting It Control You

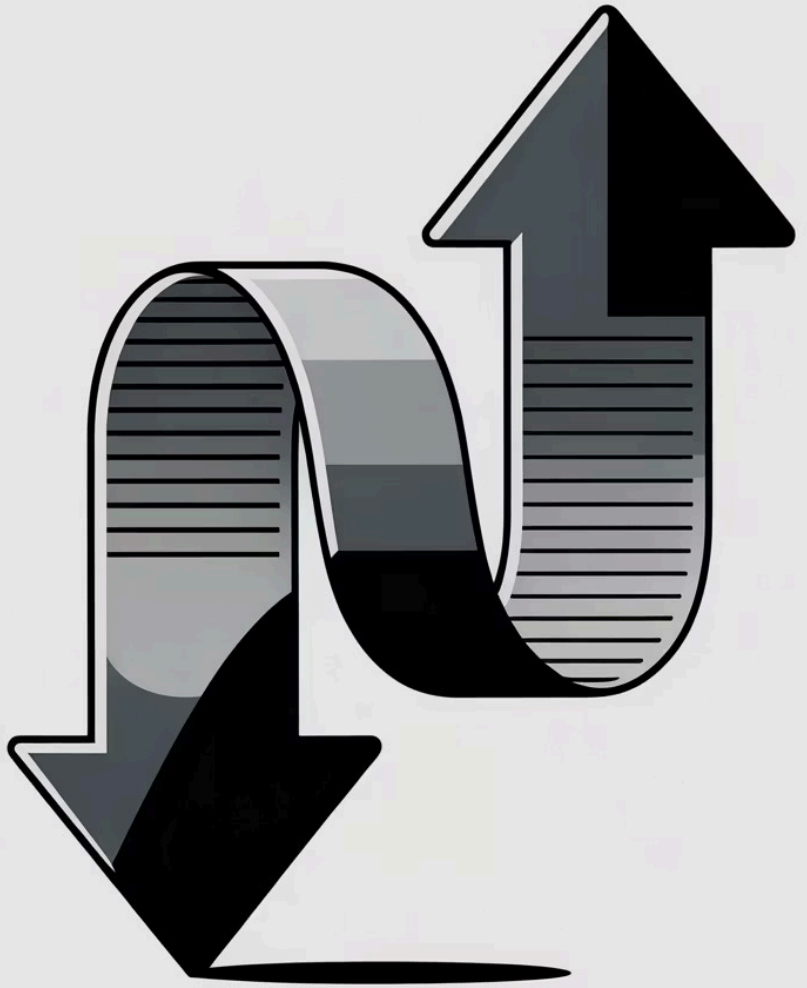
Range of Motion (ROM):

- Use a **full, comfortable ROM** where you can keep control.
- You should feel the target muscle doing the work, not your joints.

Tempo:

- Use a **controlled lowering** (eccentric) of ~2–3 seconds.
- Avoid bouncing or rushing the bottom of the lift.
- The goal is not to move slowly forever, but to stay controlled enough that you can repeat the same movement each week.

Stable setups + controlled ROM = you can load the exercise safely and send a consistent growth signal.



PART 3

Volume & Frequency

VOLUME & FREQUENCY

How Much Is Enough?

Weekly Sets per Muscle

For busy adults, we care about the minimum effective dose: the smallest amount of work that still produces solid results.

As a default guideline:

- 6–10 hard sets per muscle per week is the sweet spot for almost everyone.

Certain muscle groups can usually handle slightly more or less work. Bigger muscles like the back, glutes, and quads may tolerate the higher end of the range, while smaller or more joint-sensitive areas (arms, shoulders, elbows) may do better toward the lower end. But for most people, you should stay in the 6–10 set range per muscle per week.

Frequency matters too:

- If you train a muscle on more days per week (e.g., 3×/week), you can often stick closer to 6 total weekly sets.
- If you train a muscle less often (e.g., once per week), you may need closer to 10 weekly sets to get enough stimulus.

Start at the low end, earn the right to add more by showing that:

- Performance is stable or improving.
- Fatigue and joint stress are manageable.

VOLUME & FREQUENCY

Training Frequency

Why 2–3×/Week Beats 1×/Week

The Physiology:

After you train a muscle, **muscle protein synthesis** (the "building" side) is elevated for about **24–72 hours**, depending on training status and dose.

After that, the signal fades. Training that muscle again reignites the process.

Practical Takeaways:

- Hitting a muscle only **once per week** leaves a lot of downtime with no extra stimulus.
- Hitting each muscle **2–3× per week** tends to:
  - Spread volume more evenly.
  - Allow better technique (fewer marathon sessions).
  - Align better with how long the growth signal lasts.

For a priority muscle (e.g., delts), 3 touches per week can be especially useful.

VOLUME & FREQUENCY

How Many Sets in One Session?

Avoid Junk Volume

Instead of smashing a muscle with 10-12 sets in one day, it's usually better to:

- Aim for **3–5 hard sets per muscle per session**.
- Spread weekly volume across **2–3 sessions**.

Too many sets in a single workout can:

- Make later sets lower quality.
- Increase fatigue without adding much extra growth.

Fewer, higher-quality sets beaten consistently will outperform marathon chest days that destroy you but go nowhere.

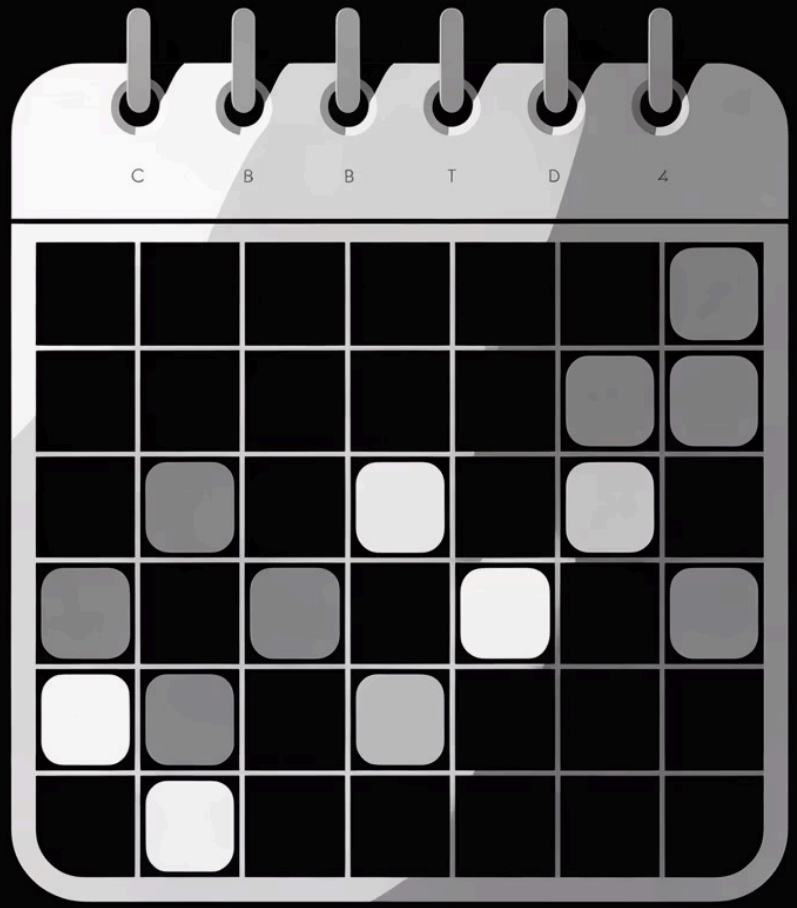
The Science Behind Set Limits:

Studies show that the first set of a muscle in a session provides as much hypertrophy stimulus as the next 5 sets combined. With each additional set, fatigue per set increases significantly while the growth stimulus decreases.

This is why you get diminishing returns from sets - the first few sets are incredibly valuable, but piling on more sets in the same session creates more fatigue than growth.

PART 4

Designing Your Split



PROGRAM DESIGN

How to Design a Good Split

Start With Your Real Life

Constraints First:

Good programs start from **constraints**, not fantasy:

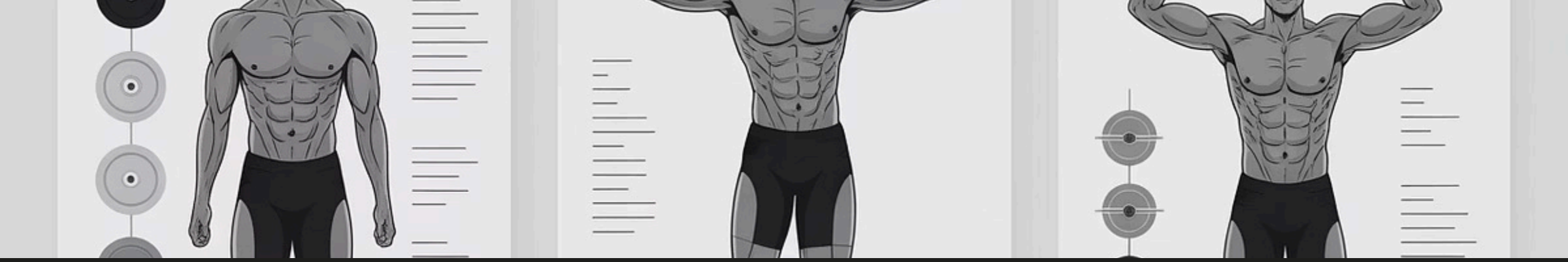
- How many days/week can you train most weeks?
- How much time do you have per session?
- What equipment do you have access to?

Your split should work during **busy weeks**, not just perfect weeks.

Principles:

Once constraints are clear:

- Ensure each major muscle (chest, back, quads, hamstrings, delts) gets **2–3 exposures/week**.
- Allocate **6–10 sets/week** per muscle as a baseline.
- Put priority muscles **earlier in the week** and **earlier in the session**.
- Choose stable, joint-friendly lifts that you can repeat and progress.



PROGRAM DESIGN

Popular Split Types

Which One Fits You?

3-Day Full-Body

- Great for busy adults.
- Each session hits multiple muscle groups.
- High stimulus with fewer gym visits.

4-Day Upper/Lower

- Two upper + two lower days.
- Easy to balance volume and recovery.
- Very flexible for strength or physique goals.

5–6 Day PPL (Push/Pull/Legs or Arnold Split)

- Higher frequency; good for physique focus.
- Requires more time and consistency.
- Must manage fatigue carefully.

PROGRAM DESIGN

3-Day Full-Body — Why It Works

The King for Busy Adults

A 3-day full-body setup:

- Trains each major muscle **3× per week** with moderate volume.
- Keeps individual sessions **45–60 min**.
- Fits well around work, kids, and other responsibilities.

Each session includes:

- 1–2 lower-body movements (squat/hinge).
- 1–2 pushes + 1–2 pulls.
- 1–3 isolation/accessory movements for delts/arms/core.

Weekly sets end up around:

- Quads: 6–8 sets
- Hamstrings/glutes: 6–8 sets
- Chest: 8–10 sets
- Back: 8–10 sets
- Delts: 6–8 sets
- Arms: 4–6 sets

PROGRAM TEMPLATES

Template Section

Detailed Split Templates Coming Next

PROGRAM TEMPLATES

4-Day Upper/Lower Split

Balanced and Scalable

Why it works:

- Hits each muscle ~2×/week
- Sessions stay 45–70 minutes
- Easy to customize to your goals

Key principles:

- Aim for **6–10 hard sets per muscle per week**
- Priority muscles (glutes, back, chest, delts) → closer to 10 sets
- Strong/sensitive areas (elbows, shoulders, low back) → closer to 6–8

Upper days:

- **Upper 1:** chest/back–focused (big presses + rows first)
- **Upper 2:** shoulder/arm–focused (presses, laterals, direct arms first)
- Still keep some chest/back on Upper 2 and some shoulder/arms on Upper 1 so most muscles train ~2×/week.

Lower days:

- **Lower 1:** more squat/quad–dominant
- **Lower 2:** more hinge/glute/hamstring–dominant

Scheduling:

- Don't run all 4 workouts in a row
- Most do best with **no more than 2 lifting days in a row**
- Example: train → train → rest → train → train → rest

PROGRAM TEMPLATES

PPL & Arnold-Style Splits

For People Who Love Training

5–6 Day Push/Pull/Legs (PPL)

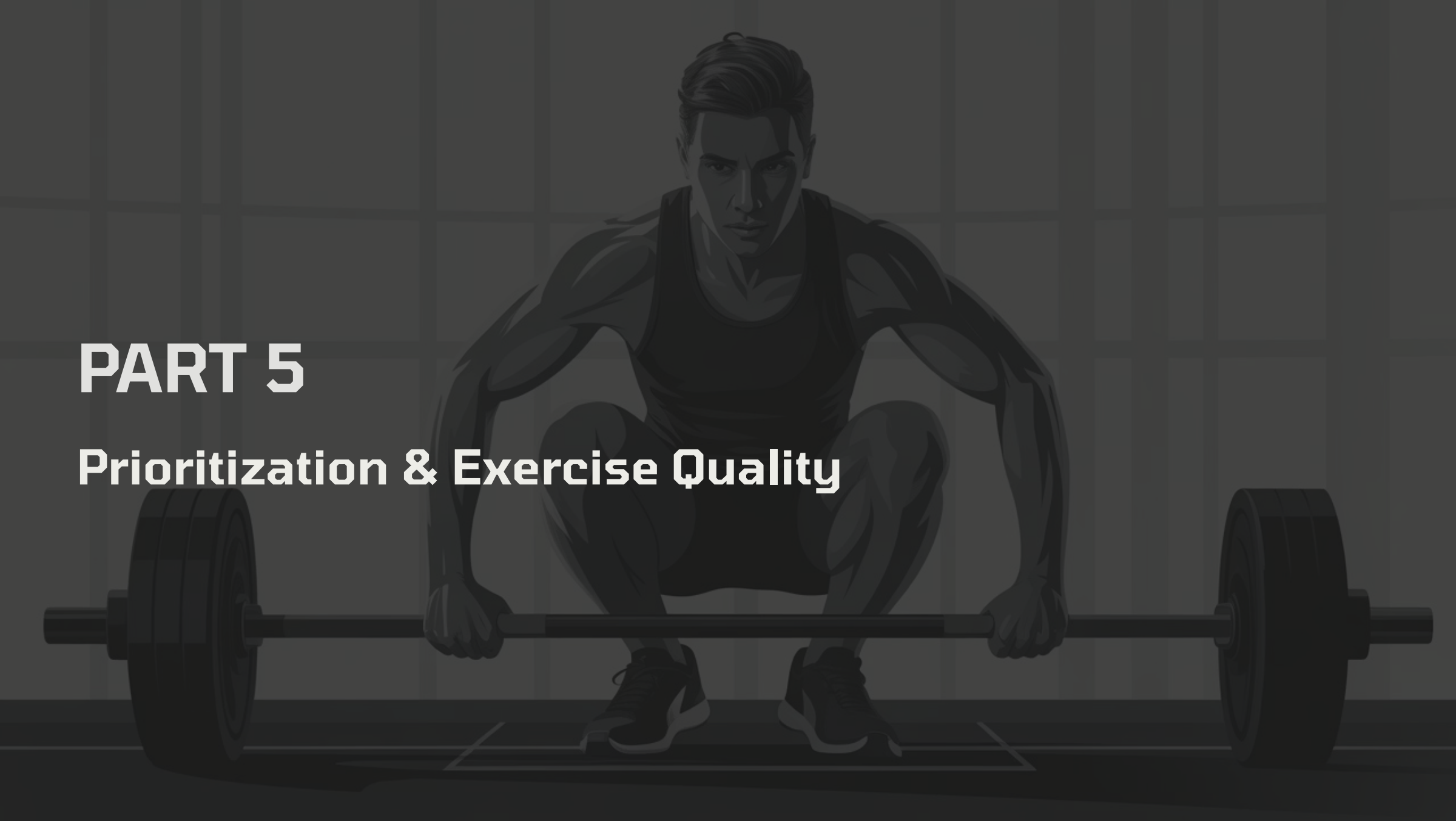
- Push: chest, shoulders, triceps
- Pull: back, biceps
- Legs: quads, hamstrings, glutes, calves

Works best when you:

- Sleep and recover well.
- Can commit 5–6 days/week.
- Are okay managing fatigue.
- Want to prioritize chest and back

Arnold-Style (Chest+Back / Legs / Shoulders+Arms)

- Fun variety, good for prioritizing shoulders/arms.
- Make sure total weekly sets per muscle stay recoverable.



PART 5

Prioritization & Exercise Quality

PRIORITIZATION

Making Your Goals Obvious in Your Split

Where You Put Volume Matters

In the Week:

- Train your most important muscle groups **earlier in the week**.
- Example: if you want bigger chest and delts, don't wait until Friday when you're exhausted.

In the Session:

- Start with your **highest-priority compounds** after your warm-up.
- Put isolations and less-important muscles later.
- Give priority muscles **1–2 more weekly sets** than others.

Over months, your split should make your goals obvious just by looking at where time and sets are going.

EXERCISE QUALITY

How to Judge an Exercise

Not Every Lift Deserves a Spot

A good exercise for you should be:

Stable

You can control the path and repeat it week to week (machines, supported dumbbell work often shine).

Targeted

You feel the intended muscle doing most of the work, not just joints or random spots.

Progressible

You can add reps or small weight over time without technique falling apart.

Joint-friendly

No persistent pain. Mild muscular discomfort is normal; sharp or joint-specific pain is not.

Tolerable mentally

You don't have to love it, but if you dread it every time, you probably won't be consistent or push yourself hard.

If a lift fails these tests, modify it or replace it.

PART 6

Deloads, Recovery & Tools

RECOVERY STRATEGY

Deloads

Planned Easing Off, Not Quitting

Why Deload:

Over weeks, fatigue builds up in the nervous system, connective tissue, and even mentally.

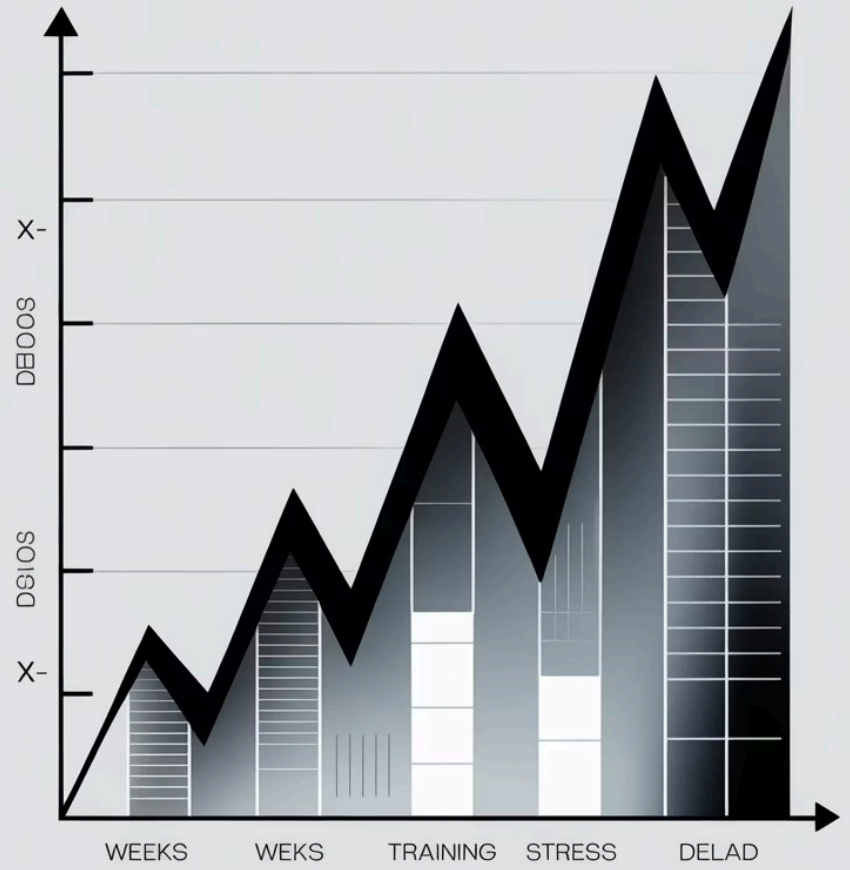
A **deload** is a short, planned drop in training stress to:

- Restore performance
- Let joints and connective tissue catch up
- Reduce risk of overuse issues

How to Deload:

- Cut **volume** by ~40–60% (fewer sets).
- Keep a few key lifts, but use **lighter loads** (~60–75% of usual) and stay at **3–4 RIR**.
- Focus on technique quality and general movement.

When you return, start from the **last good week**, not the most fatigued week.



RECOVERY STRATEGY

When Should You Deload?

Signs to Watch For

For most people, a deload every **8-12 weeks** works well, or sooner if:

Performance Decline

Performance is trending **down** for 2+ weeks despite good sleep and nutrition.

Joint Discomfort

Joints feel **achy** or you have recurring niggles.

Increased Perceived Effort

Usual weights feel much heavier than normal (high RPE at normal loads).

Recovery Markers

Resting heart rate is up, sleep is worse, or you feel unusually irritable.

These signs mean your **fatigue** is outrunning your **fitness**. A short deload lets them realign.

RECOVERY

Recovery Essentials

What Actually Matters Most

Signals That Matter:

- **Adequate calories and protein** (see Nutrition Blueprint).
- Reasonable training volume and intensity.
- Enough sleep to feel functional.

Myths vs Reality:

- **Soreness ≠ growth.** It mostly tells you the stimulus was novel, not necessarily better.
- Gadgets (massage guns, etc.) can help you feel better, but they don't replace training structure, nutrition, and sleep.
- Walking and light movement often **improve** recovery compared to doing nothing.

PREPARATION

Warm-Ups & Stretching

Getting Ready Without Wasting Time

Before you lift:

01

General warm-up (5–7 min)

- Light cardio (walk, bike, row).
- Goal: raise body temperature slightly.

02

Dynamic movement & light stretching (3–5 min)

- Leg swings, hip openers, band pull-aparts, easy bodyweight squats.
- Light stretching of the muscles your going to hit(don't hold a stretch more than 20-30 seconds consecutively)

03

Specific ramp-up sets

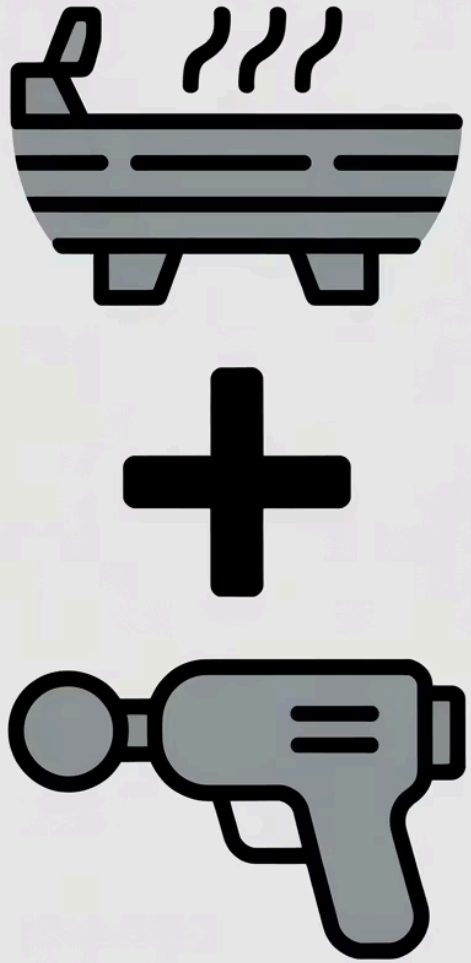
for the first lift

Example for squats:

- Empty bar ×10
- ~50% work weight ×5+
- ~75% × few reps

Static stretching:

- Long static holds before heavy lifting can temporarily reduce strength.
- Save longer static stretching for **after** training or separate mobility sessions.



RECOVERY TOOLS

Saunas & Massage Guns

Nice Extras, Not Magic

Saunas / Steam:

Possible benefits:

- Relaxation and stress reduction
- Heat exposure that can slightly challenge the cardiovascular system

What they **don't** do:

- "Detox" your body in a way that replaces your liver/kidneys
- Burn meaningful body fat on their own

Use them as a **bonus**, not a replacement for good training and nutrition.

Massage Guns:

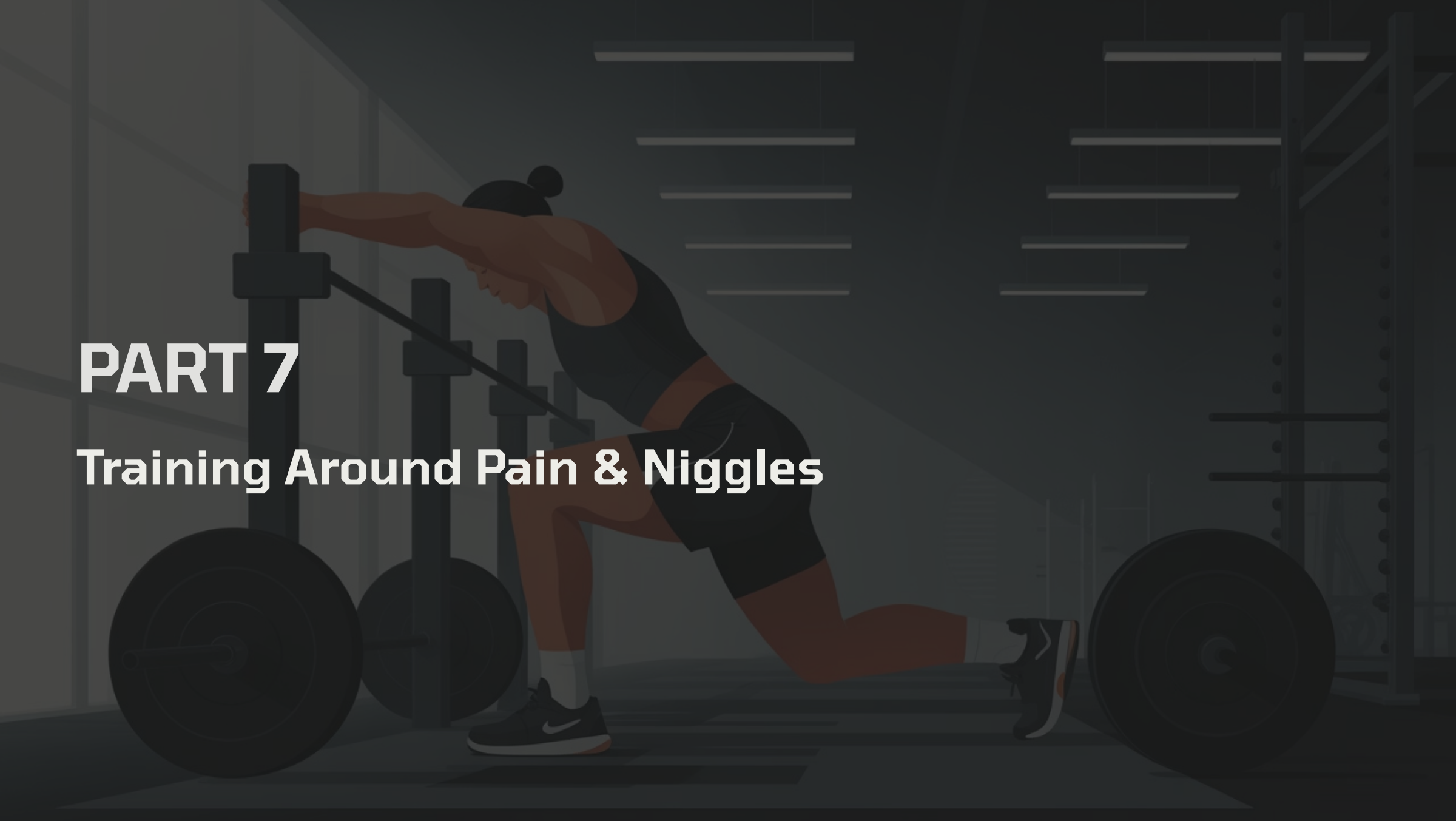
Can help with:

- Temporary reduction in perceived soreness
- Feeling more "ready" to train a muscle and increasing blood flow to that muscle

Limits:

- They don't remodel tissue or fix serious issues.
- They don't replace a proper warm-up or smart programming.

If you like them, use 30–60 seconds per muscle pre- or post-session.



PART 7

Training Around Pain & Niggles

INJURY MANAGEMENT

Training Around Pain

Stay in the Game Safely

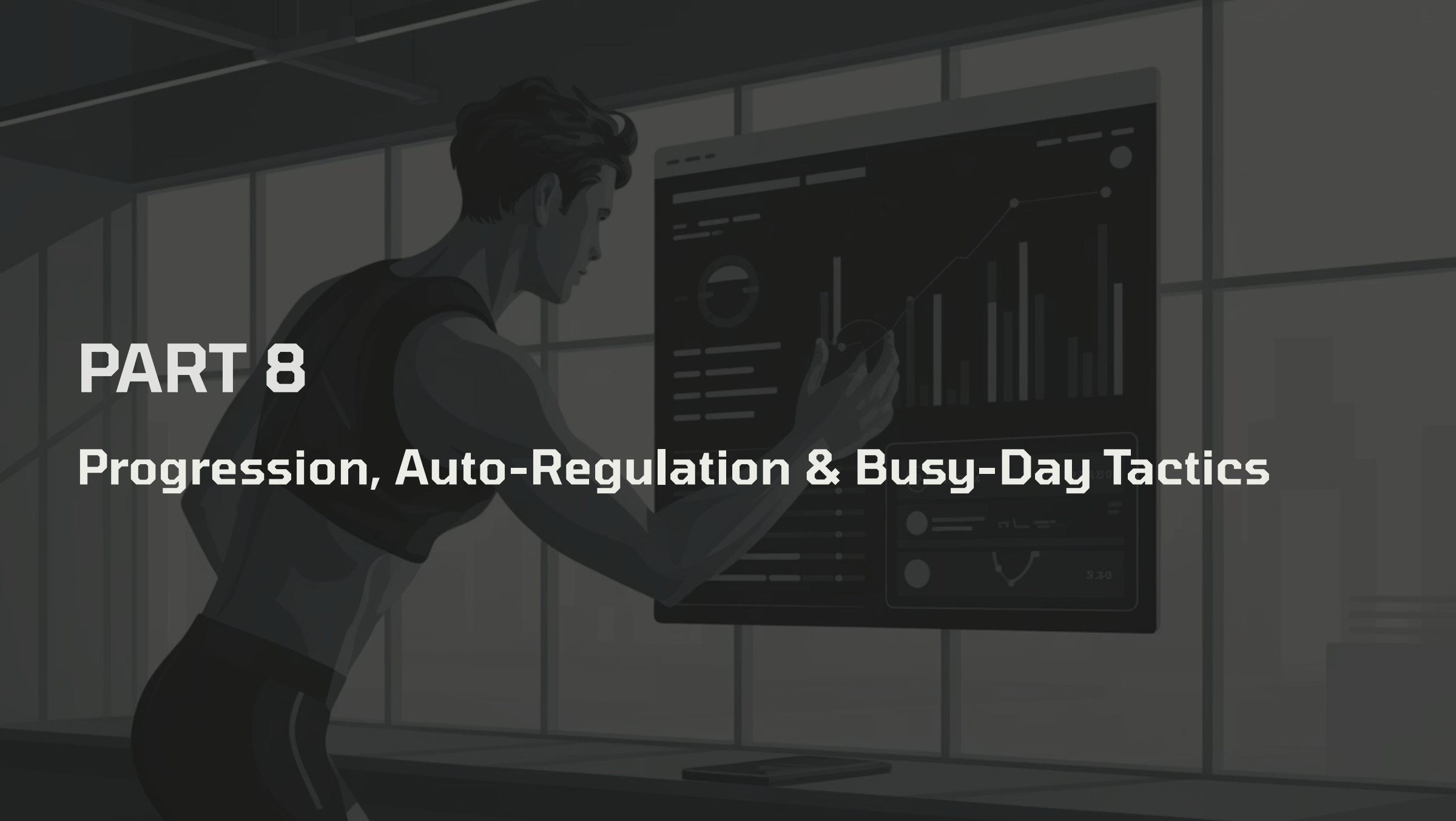
General Rules:

- **Pain-free range first:** If a movement hurts, shorten the range or lighten the load until it's tolerable.
- **Change the variation:**
  - Barbell squat → leg press or hack squat
  - Flat bench → incline DB or machine press
  - Pull-ups → pull-downs
- Train **unaffected muscle groups** if cleared by a professional.

Progressing Back:

- Start with lower loads and ranges that feel safe.
- Increase gradually (10–20% per week at most) if symptoms allow.
- If pain intensifies, regresses, or includes numbness/tingling, get checked by a qualified medical professional.

Training should challenge you, not leave you worried you've ruined a joint.



PART 8

Progression, Auto-Regulation & Busy-Day Tactics

PROGRESSION

Progression & Auto-Regulation

Matching Effort to the Day

Double Progression Recap:

- Choose a rep range (e.g., 6–10).
- Each week, aim to add **reps** at the same load within that range.
- Once you can hit the **top of the range** across your sets with the target RIR, increase the weight slightly.

Auto-Regulation:

Not every day will feel the same.

- On **good days**, you might do more reps or add weight while staying at your RIR target.
- On **tough days**, keep RIR the same even if weight drops—effort is matched, ego stays out.

For small muscles (delts, biceps), micro-jumps (1–2 lb) can keep progress smooth.

BUSY-DAY SOLUTIONS

When You're Short on Time

Make 30–40 Minutes Count

Structural Tricks:

- **Superset non-competing lifts:**
  - Row + DB press
  - Curl + triceps pressdown
- **Cluster/Drop sets:**
  - Cluster sets: Break a hard set into 2–3 mini-clusters with 10–20 seconds between mini-sets.
  - Drop sets: Use regular weight for 6-10 reps then once you hit failure immediately drop weight by around 50% or whatever percent would let you get another 6-10+ reps.
- **Rest-pause for isolations:**
  - Take one set near your RIR target, rest 15–20 s, then do small mini-sets to hit the total reps.

3-Exercise Busy-Day Plan:

If all else fails, pick:

- 1 lower-body lift (squat or hinge)
- 1 push (press)
- 1 pull (row/pull-down)

Do **3 hard sets** of each at your usual RIR. You're in and out, and progress keeps moving.

PART 9

Checklists, Schedules & Safety

CHECKLIST

Program Setup Checklist

Quick Self-Audit

- I picked a **split (3–6 days)** that fits my week.
- Each major/priority muscle is hit **2–3× per week**.
- Each muscle gets **6–10 hard sets/week** as a baseline.
- Exercises are **stable, joint-friendly, and progressible**.
- I'm using **RIR 1–3** for compounds, **0–2** for isolations.
- Sessions are capped at **45–70 min**; if needed, I trim sets, not warm-up.
- I have a **deload plan** (around every 4–8 weeks or when signs show).
- I know my **progression plan** (double progression, small jumps).

CARDIO

How to Use Cardio During a Cut

Start Small, Add as Needed

Cardio is a **tool to increase calorie burn**, not punishment. The goal is to **start light and add slowly** over the course of the cut.

- Begin with a small, sustainable dose (e.g., 2–3×/week, 20–30 min).
- As fat loss slows, you can **add a bit more time or an extra day** instead of slashing food immediately.
- Starting with a ton of cardio on day one leaves you **nowhere to go later**—you can't increase cardio forever as bodyweight and metabolism drop.

Think "minimum effective cardio":

- Use the least amount that lets you keep losing 0.5–1.0% of bodyweight per week.
- Only add more when progress truly stalls for 1–2 weeks and food is already reasonable.

CARDIO

Choosing the Right Type for You

Match Your Personality and Recovery

The **best cardio is the one you'll actually do** and can recover from. Different options:

Outdoor Walking

Pros: fresh air, sunlight, can be relaxing.

Cons: weather, safety, or cold/heat can make it inconsistent.

Incline Treadmill Walking

Pros: still low intensity, but incline = more calories burned; easy on joints; you can watch shows or listen to podcasts.

Cons: access to a gym/treadmill required; can be boring if you hate machines.

Bike (upright or recumbent)

Pros: low impact, easier on joints; good if walking bothers your knees/feet.

Cons: long sessions can make the hips/glutes tight; some people find the seat uncomfortable.

Stairmaster / StepMill

Pros: burns a lot of calories in less time; great conditioning.

Cons: fatiguing for the legs, which can hurt squat/deadlift performance if overdone.

Sports / Classes

Pros: fun, social, easy to push hard without thinking about it.

Cons: unpredictable intensity; higher fatigue and impact; more risk of dings, especially to knees/ankles.

Pick 1–2 main forms that **fit your joints, schedule, and preferences**, then stick with them so you can track and progress over time.

CARDIO

Cardio, Calories & Health

Why "No Cardio" Usually Backfires

If you do **no cardio**, the calorie deficit has to come almost entirely from **eating less**. That often means:

- Dropping carbs lower than needed → worse training performance, energy, and mood.
- More hunger and cravings.
- Greater metabolic slowdown over time because your body senses a bigger drop in intake and moves less.

Adding a **moderate amount of cardio** lets you:

- Burn extra calories so you can **eat a bit more food** while still losing fat.
- Keep more carbs around your workouts → better pumps, strength, and recovery.
- Support a healthier metabolism by staying active instead of only cutting intake.

Beyond fat loss, cardio is great for:

- Heart and vascular health.
- Better blood sugar control and insulin sensitivity.
- Improved mood, stress relief, and sleep quality.

You don't need to become an endurance athlete—but **some cardio** makes cutting smoother, healthier, and more sustainable.

IMPORTANT

Safety & Disclaimer

Train Smart, Not Reckless

This blueprint is **educational**, not personal medical advice.

If you:

- Have a medical condition,
- Are rehabbing an injury,
- Take medications that affect heart rate or blood pressure,

...talk to a qualified professional before starting or changing a program.

During training:

- Stop any exercise that causes sharp, escalating, or unfamiliar pain.
- Differentiate normal training discomfort (burn, fatigue) from joint or nerve pain.

When in doubt, **err on the side of caution** and get things checked.