

THE BEGINNER'S GUIDE FOR PRO RESULTS

EVERY TRAINING SPLIT GUIDE + BONUS PROGRAM



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ADAPT FITNESS

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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

- **Bro Split (4-7x/week)** — Traditional body-part splits with flexible weekly frequency
- **Upper-Lower (3-5x/week)** — Efficient full-body coverage in alternating workouts
- **Push-Pull-Legs (4-6x/week)** — Movement-pattern based training with variable frequency
- **Bo's Personal Program (6x/week)** — Advanced hybrid split with quad/glute emphasis

TERMINOLOGY

- **Sets x Reps** — 3x10 means 3 sets of 10 reps
- **RIR** — Reps In Reserve (2 RIR = stop 2 reps before failure)
- **RPE** — Rate of Perceived Exertion (1-10 scale, 8 RPE = hard but not maximal)
- **Tempo** — Speed of movement (3-0-1-0 = 3 sec down, 0 pause, 1 sec up, 0 pause)
- **Superset (SS)** — Perform two exercises back-to-back without rest
- **Drop Set** — Reduce weight immediately after hitting failure and continue

WHAT COUNTS AS A PR

More weight for the same reps OR more reps with the same weight — but **only** if form, rest time, machine, and exercise order are unchanged. Getting stronger in a movement is NOT the same as making a muscle stronger.

A wider squat stance, lower bar position, longer rest, or different machine does **not** count. Real progress means the muscle got stronger — nothing else changed.

PROGRESSION

Increase weight when you hit the top of the rep range with good form and 1-2 RIR. Add 5-10 lbs for compound movements, 2.5-5 lbs for isolation. Track progress over **4-6 week trends**, not session to session.

REST PERIODS

- Compound lifts: 2-3 minutes
- Isolation exercises: 60-90 seconds
- Supersets/circuits: 90-120 seconds between rounds

THE SCIENCE OF BUILDING MUSCLE

TWO TYPES OF MUSCLE GROWTH

Myofibrillar hypertrophy increases the contractile strength and protein density of your muscle fibers. This is what happens when you progressively overload — the actual muscle proteins get bigger and stronger.

Sarcoplasmic hypertrophy increases blood volume, capillary density, glycogen storage, and fluid within the muscle. This is the "pump" — and it contributes significantly to visible muscle size. Think of the difference between a fresh steak and beef jerky. Both are muscle tissue, but one has dramatically more volume.

Both types of growth contribute to muscle size. A well-designed program targets both — heavy progressive overload for myofibrillar growth, and higher-rep blood volume work for sarcoplasmic growth.

PROGRESSIVE OVERLOAD DONE RIGHT

Key principle: We are not trying to get stronger in a movement like powerlifting. We are trying to make a MUSCLE stronger. Better execution, fuller range of motion, and making the target muscle do the work builds more muscle than adding weight with worse form. Execution quality is the most underrated form of progressive overload.

PROXIMITY TO FAILURE

The real driver of muscle growth is how close you train to failure — not the exact rep count. Moderate rep ranges (6-12 for compounds, 10-20 for isolation) cover most people, but the intensity of effort matters more than the number on the rep counter.

HOW TO PICK EXERCISES

When choosing exercises, ask three questions:

- **Can you feel the target muscle working?** If not, adjust the setup or pick a different movement for your structure.
- **Can you repeat it safely for months?** Exercises that beat up your joints aren't sustainable. Machines often outperform free weights for long-term hypertrophy.
- **Can you push close to failure without form breaking down?** Pick movements where you can train hard without risk.

CONSISTENCY OVER DECADES

If you convert just 10g of protein to new muscle tissue each day, you gain **8 lbs of pure muscle per year**. Muscle growth is essentially immeasurable on a day-to-day basis. You won't notice it week to week — then 6 months pass and you've gained 5 lbs of real tissue.

The difference between people who build impressive physiques and those who don't isn't genetics or programs — it's the ability to be **consistently good** with eating and training for years. Not perfect. Consistently good. Let time do the rest.



WARM-UP PROTOCOLS

UPPER BODY WARM-UP (5-7 MINUTES)

EXERCISE	SETS x REPS	COACHING NOTE
Arm Circles	2x10 each	Forward and backward, full ROM
Band Pull-Aparts	2x15	Focus on scapular retraction
Scapular Push-Ups	2x8	Protract and retract shoulder blades
Wall Angels	2x10	Maintain contact with wall
Light Press	1x12	50% working weight, controlled tempo

LOWER BODY WARM-UP (5-7 MINUTES)

EXERCISE	SETS x REPS	COACHING NOTE
Leg Swings (Front/Back)	2x10 each	Dynamic, controlled movement
Leg Swings (Side-to-Side)	2x10 each	Open up hip flexors
Bodyweight Squats	2x12	Focus on depth and form
Glute Bridges	2x15	Squeeze at top, 1 sec hold
Walking Lunges	2x8 each	Warm up stabilizers
Light Goblet Squat	1x10	50% working weight

BRO SPLIT — BODY-PART FOCUSED

Traditional body-part splits with flexible weekly frequency. Inspired by Jay Cutler's approach: pair each major muscle group with secondary isolation work to increase efficiency. Train the big muscle first while fresh, finish with targeted isolation.

4-DAY OPTION

Chest/Side Delts/Triceps | Back/Rear Delts/Biceps | Rest | Quads/Adductors/Hams | Shoulders/Arms | Rest | Rest

DAY 1 — CHEST / MEDIAL DELTS / TRICEPS

EXERCISE	SETS x REPS	COACHING NOTE
Incline Press	4x6-8	RPE 8-9, set angle based on YOUR rib cage
Flat Press	3x8-10	Control eccentric, drive through the chest
Flyes / Pec Deck	3x12-15	Squeeze at peak contraction — blood volume
Dips (Chest Lean)	3x8-12	Lean forward, control descent
Push-Ups	2xAMRAP	To failure, maintain form
Lateral Raises	3x12-15	Side delt isolation — control tempo, slight lean
Pushdowns	3x12-15	Full extension, squeeze — tricep isolation

DAY 2 — BACK / REAR DELTS / BICEPS

EXERCISE	SETS x REPS	COACHING NOTE
Deadlifts	4x5-6	RPE 8-9, brace core, hinge at hips
Pull-Ups / Pulldowns	4x6-10	Full ROM, spread scapula at top
Rows	3x8-10	Squeeze shoulder blades, torso stable

EXERCISE	SETS x REPS	COACHING NOTE
One-Arm Rows	3x10-12	Each arm, avoid rotation
Rear Delt Flyes / Reverse Pec Deck	3x15-20	Control both directions — rear delt isolation
Barbell Curls	3x10-12	Strict form, no swinging — bicep isolation

DAY 3 — QUADS / ADDUCTORS / HAMSTRINGS

EXERCISE	SETS x REPS	COACHING NOTE
Squats	4x6-8	RPE 8-9, depth to parallel, brace hard
Leg Press	3x10-12	Full ROM, control eccentric
Bulgarian Split Squats	3x10 each	Front leg loaded, upright torso
Leg Extensions	3x12-15	Slow eccentric, squeeze at peak
Walking Lunges	3x12 each	Alternate legs, upright posture
Adductor Machine	3x15-20	Squeeze at contraction — adductor isolation
Lying Leg Curls	3x12-15	Control tempo — hamstring isolation
Calf Raises	4x15-20	Full stretch and contraction



DAY 4 — SHOULDERS / ARMS

EXERCISE	SETS x REPS	COACHING NOTE
Overhead Press	4x6-8	Strict form, brace core
Lateral Raises	4x12-15	Control tempo, 2 sec hold at top
Rear Delt Flyes	3x12-15	Focus on contraction
Barbell Curls	3x8-10	Strict form, control eccentric
Close-Grip Press	3x8-10	Elbows tucked, triceps do the work
Hammer Curls	2x12-15	Alternating or together
Overhead Extensions	2x12-15	Deep stretch, full extension

5-DAY OPTION

Chest/Side Delts/Triceps | Back/Rear Delts/Biceps | Quads/Adductors/Hams | Shoulders | Arms | Rest | Rest

Same Day 1-3 as 4-day. Shoulders and arms each get dedicated days for more volume.

DAY 4 — SHOULDERS (5-DAY)

EXERCISE	SETS x REPS	COACHING NOTE
Overhead Press	4x6-8	Strict form, brace core
Arnold Press	3x10-12	Full rotation at top
Lateral Raises	4x12-15	Control tempo, 2 sec hold at top
Front Raises	3x12-15	Don't swing — lighter than you think
Rear Delt Flyes	3x15-20	Focus on contraction, not weight
Face Pulls	3x15-20	External rotation at peak

DAY 5 — ARMS (5-DAY)

EXERCISE	SETS x REPS	COACHING NOTE
Barbell Curls	4x8-10	Strict form, control eccentric
Close-Grip Press	4x8-10	Elbows tucked, triceps do the work
Hammer Curls	3x10-12	Alternating arms
Overhead Extensions	3x10-12	Deep stretch, full extension
Preacher Curls	3x12-15	Full stretch at bottom, peak contraction
Pushdowns	3x12-15	Rope or bar, full extension
Incline Curls	2x12-15	Long head stretch — arms behind torso

6-DAY OPTION

Chest/Side Delts/Tri | Back/Rear Delts/Bi | Quads/Adductors/Hams | Shoulders | Arms | Glutes/Hams/Calves (Light) | Rest

Same Days 1-5, plus a dedicated light lower body day targeting glutes and hamstrings with higher reps (12-20 range) for blood volume and metabolic stress.

DAY 6 — GLUTES / HAMSTRINGS / CALVES (LIGHT)

EXERCISE	SETS x REPS	COACHING NOTE
Romanian Deadlifts	3x12-15	Lighter weight, focus on stretch and contraction
Hip Thrusts / Bridges	3x15-20	Pause and squeeze at top — glute emphasis
Leg Press (Feet High + Wide)	3x15-20	Glute/ham focus, deep ROM
Seated Leg Curls	3x15-20	Control tempo, constant tension
Kickbacks	3x15-20	Focus on contraction, not momentum
Adductor Machine	2x20	Squeeze and hold at contraction
Standing Calf Raises	4x15-20	Full ROM, pause at top
Seated Calf Raises	3x15-20	Soleus focus

7-DAY OPTION

Chest/Tri | Back/Bi | Quads | Shoulders | Arms | Chest/Back (Light) | Glutes/Hams/Calves (Light)

Advanced. Same Days 1-5, plus a light chest/back pump day AND a light glute/ham day. Monitor recovery closely — if you're dragging by Day 6, reduce volume by 20-30%.

DAY 6 — CHEST / BACK (LIGHT)

EXERCISE	SETS x REPS	COACHING NOTE
Incline Press	3x12-15	50-60% working weight, form and squeeze
Flyes / Pec Deck	3x15-20	Blood volume, constant tension
Push-Ups	2xAMRAP	Slow tempo, chest focus
Pulldowns	3x12-15	50-60% working weight, squeeze lats
Seated Rows	3x12-15	Light weight, focus on contraction
Face Pulls	3x15-20	Rear delts, external rotation

DAY 7 — GLUTES / HAMSTRINGS / CALVES (LIGHT)

EXERCISE	SETS x REPS	COACHING NOTE
Romanian Deadlifts	3x12-15	Lighter weight, stretch focus
Hip Thrusts / Bridges	3x15-20	Pause and squeeze — glute emphasis
Leg Press (Feet High + Wide)	3x15-20	Glute/ham focus, deep ROM
Seated Leg Curls	3x15-20	Control tempo, constant tension
Kickbacks	3x15-20	Contraction focus
Standing Calf Raises	4x15-20	Full ROM
Seated Calf Raises	3x15-20	Soleus focus

UPPER-LOWER SPLIT

Efficient full-body coverage in alternating workouts. Choose your weekly frequency based on recovery and goals.

3-DAY OPTION

Upper A | Lower A | Rest | Upper B | Rest | Rest | Rest

UPPER A (HORIZONTAL PUSH/PULL)

EXERCISE	SETS x REPS	COACHING NOTE
Flat Press	4x6-8	Compound focus, RPE 8
Rows	4x6-8	Match press volume
Incline Press	3x10-12	Upper chest
Seated Rows	3x10-12	Mid-back thickness
Lateral Raises	3x12-15	Side delts
Rear Delt Flyes	3x12-15	Posterior shoulder
Pushdowns	2x12-15	Tricep finisher

LOWER A (QUAD DOMINANT)

EXERCISE	SETS x REPS	COACHING NOTE
Squats	4x6-8	Quad focus, upright torso
Leg Press	3x10-12	High foot placement
Bulgarian Split Squats	3x10 each	Front leg focus
Leg Extensions	3x12-15	Quad isolation, control tempo

EXERCISE	SETS x REPS	COACHING NOTE
Adductor Machine	3x15-20	Squeeze at contraction
Standing Calf Raises	4x15-20	Full ROM

UPPER B (VERTICAL PUSH/PULL)

EXERCISE	SETS x REPS	COACHING NOTE
Overhead Press	4x6-8	Strict form, brace core
Pull-Ups / Pulldowns	4x6-10	Add weight if needed
Incline Press	3x8-10	Upper chest focus
One-Arm Rows	3x10-12	Each arm, squeeze back
Curls	3x10-12	Strict form
Overhead Extensions	3x12-15	Long head stretch
Face Pulls	2x15-20	Rear delts and rotator cuff



4-DAY OPTION

Upper A | Lower A | Rest | Upper B | Lower B | Rest | Rest

Two upper and two lower sessions per week. Vary exercises between sessions for balanced development. Upper A/B listed above.

LOWER B (POSTERIOR CHAIN)

EXERCISE	SETS x REPS	COACHING NOTE
Deadlifts	4x5-6	Conventional or sumo, RPE 8-9
Romanian Deadlifts	3x8-10	Hamstring focus, arch lower back
Hip Thrusts	3x10-12	Glute emphasis, pause at top
Leg Curls	3x12-15	Hamstring isolation
Leg Press (Feet High + Wide)	3x12-15	Glute/ham focus
Seated Calf Raises	4x15-20	Soleus focus

5-DAY OPTION

Upper A | Lower A | Upper B | Lower B | Upper C | Rest | Rest

Three upper, two lower sessions. Upper C adds variety and targets any lagging areas. Rotate emphasis each week.

UPPER C (STRENGTH + VOLUME)

EXERCISE	SETS x REPS	COACHING NOTE
Flat Press	3x5-7	Heavier weight, RPE 8-9 — strength focus
Pulldowns (Wide Grip)	3x8-10	Full stretch, squeeze lats
Overhead Press	3x8-10	Strict form
Rows (any variation)	3x10-12	Find where YOU feel your back

EXERCISE	SETS x REPS	COACHING NOTE
Lateral Raises	3x12-15	Control tempo, slight lean
Hammer Curls	3x10-12	Brachialis and forearms
Dips (Upright)	3x10-12	Tricep emphasis, full lockout

PUSH-PULL-LEGS SPLIT

Movement-pattern based training with variable frequency. For options that don't split evenly into 3 or 6 days, the extra training day should target your highest priority muscle groups — typically whatever is lagging or needs the most development.

4-DAY OPTION

Push | Pull | Rest | Legs | Rest | Priority Day | Rest

Three base days plus one Priority Day targeting your weakest area. Choose from the priority options below based on what YOU need most.

PUSH DAY

EXERCISE	SETS x REPS	COACHING NOTE
Flat Press	4x6-8	Primary chest builder
Overhead Press	3x8-10	Strict form, no leg drive
Incline Press	3x10-12	Upper chest focus
Flyes	3x12-15	Peak contraction, blood volume
Lateral Raises	3x12-15	Side delts, control tempo
Dips (Upright)	3x10-12	Upright for triceps
Pushdowns	2x12-15	Full extension, squeeze

PULL DAY

EXERCISE	SETS x REPS	COACHING NOTE
Deadlifts	4x5-6	Primary back builder, RPE 8-9
Pull-Ups	4x6-10	Add weight if needed

EXERCISE	SETS x REPS	COACHING NOTE
Rows	3x8-10	Squeeze shoulder blades
Seated Rows	3x10-12	Mid-back thickness
Face Pulls	3x15-20	Rear delts, external rotation
Curls	3x10-12	Strict form, control eccentric
Hammer Curls	2x12-15	Brachialis focus

LEGS DAY

EXERCISE	SETS x REPS	COACHING NOTE
Squats	4x6-8	Depth to parallel, brace core
Romanian Deadlifts	3x8-10	Hip hinge, hamstring focus
Leg Press	3x10-12	Full ROM, control eccentric
Walking Lunges	3x12 each	Alternate legs, upright
Leg Curls	3x12-15	Hamstring isolation
Leg Extensions	3x12-15	Quad isolation, control tempo
Calf Raises	4x15-20	Full ROM, pause at top

PRIORITY DAY — PUSH EMPHASIS

Use this if chest, shoulders, or triceps are lagging:

EXERCISE	SETS x REPS	COACHING NOTE
Incline Press	4x6-8	Upper chest PR focus — beat the logbook
Overhead Press	3x8-10	Strict form, brace core
Flat Press	3x10-12	Controlled reps, mind-muscle connection
Flyes / Pec Deck	3x12-15	Peak contraction
Lateral Raises	4x12-15	Extra set — build the delt caps
Close-Grip Press	3x10-12	Tricep mass builder
Overhead Extensions	3x12-15	Long head stretch

PRIORITY DAY — PULL EMPHASIS

Use this if back or biceps are lagging:

EXERCISE	SETS x REPS	COACHING NOTE
Pull-Ups	4x6-10	Track total reps, beat last session
Rows	4x8-10	Extra set — mid-back thickness
Pulldowns	3x10-12	Squeeze lats, spread scapula
Rope Rows / Pullovers	3x12-15	Lat mind-muscle connection
Rear Delt Flyes	3x15-20	Rear delt volume
Barbell Curls	3x10-12	Strict form
Preacher Curls	3x12-15	Full ROM, peak contraction

PRIORITY DAY — LEGS EMPHASIS

Use this if quads, glutes, or hamstrings are lagging:

EXERCISE	SETS x REPS	COACHING NOTE
Squat Variation	4x6-8	Quad emphasis, upright torso
Leg Press	4x10-12	Extra set — deep ROM, quad burn
Bulgarian Split Squats	3x10 each	Unilateral focus
Leg Extensions	3x12-15	Superset with walking lunges
Walking Lunges	3x12 each	Immediately after extensions
Hip Thrusts	3x10-12	Glute emphasis, pause at top
Lying Leg Curls	3x12-15	Hamstring isolation
Calf Raises	4x15-20	Full ROM



5-DAY OPTION

Push | Pull | Legs | Rest | Push (Priority) | Pull (Priority) | Rest

Hit each pattern approximately 2x per week. The second Push and Pull sessions use the Priority Emphasis versions listed above to target your weakest areas. Rest day after legs for recovery.

6-DAY OPTION

Push | Pull | Legs | Push | Pull | Legs | Rest

Classic PPL — each pattern twice per week. Use base versions for the first 3 days and priority emphasis versions for the second 3 days. Advanced volume, monitor recovery closely.

BONUS

BO'S PERSONAL PROGRAM

Advanced 6-day hybrid split with specialized lower body emphasis. This program separates quad-dominant and glute/hamstring work across two leg days, combined with classic push-pull-upper training.

Mon: Lower (Quad) | Tue: Push | Wed: Pull | Thu: Rest | Fri: Lower (Glute/Ham) | Sat: Upper | Sun: Rest

MONDAY — LOWER BODY (QUAD FOCUSED)

EXERCISE	SETS x REPS	COACHING NOTE
Seated Leg Curls	4x15-20	Full ROM, pause at top
Machine Adductors	3x 20-25	Upright posture
Squat Variation	4x6-8	Upright torso, quad emphasis
Leg Press (High Foot)	4x10-12	Quad focus, control tempo
Leg Extensions	3x12-15	Slow eccentric, peak contraction
Bulgarian Split Squats	3x10 each	Front leg loaded, upright

TUESDAY — PUSH

EXERCISE	SETS x REPS	COACHING NOTE
Lateral Raises	3x12-15	Side delts, control tempo
Chest Flye	3x12-15	Strict form, brace core
Incline Press	3x10-12	Upper chest focus
Flat Press	4x6-8	Primary chest builder
Dips (Chest Lean)	3x10-12	Lean forward, control descent
Pushdowns	3x12-15	Full extension, squeeze
Overhead Extensions	2x12-15	Stretch triceps fully

WEDNESDAY — PULL

EXERCISE	SETS x REPS	COACHING NOTE
Single Arm Pulldown	4x8-12	Progressive Overload Focus, RPE 8-9
Chest Supported Rows	4x8-12	Full ROM, controlled
Wide Grip Pulldowns	3x12-15	Pull Handles Apart
Straight Arm Pulldowns	3x10-12	Lat Isolation
Rear Delt Flyes	3x15-20	Posterior shoulder focus
Bicep Curls	3x10-12	Strict form, no swing
Hammer Curls	3x12-15	Brachialis and forearms

THURSDAY — REST

FRIDAY — LOWER BODY (GLUTE & HAMSTRING)

EXERCISE	SETS x REPS	COACHING NOTE
Hip Abduction	4x10-12	Glute emphasis, pause at top
Lying Hamstring Curls	3x15-20	Keep hips down, press quads into pad.
Romanian Deadlifts	4x8-10	Hip hinge, hamstring stretch
Seated Leg Curls	4x12-15	Hamstring isolation, control
Leg Press (Low Foot)	3x10-12	Glute/ham focus, deep ROM
Seated Calf Raises	4x15-20	Soleus focus, full ROM

SATURDAY — UPPER BODY (FULL)

EXERCISE	SETS x REPS	COACHING NOTE
Incline Press	4x8-10	Upper chest focus
Pulldowns	4x10-12	Wide grip, full stretch
Shoulder Press	3x10-12	Neutral or pronated grip
Flyes	3x12-15	Peak contraction, squeeze
Lateral Raises	3x15-20	Rear delts, external rotation
Curls	3x10-12	Controlled tempo, full ROM
Dips	3x10-12	Bodyweight or weighted

SUNDAY — REST

BO'S NOTES: This split allows maximum quad development on Monday when you're fresh, then hits glutes/hamstrings on Friday after upper body recovery. Saturday's upper session is lighter volume to avoid burnout before rest day. Monitor fatigue — if you're dragging by Saturday, reduce volume by 20-30%.

BUILD YOUR OWN NUTRITION GUIDE

Nutrition doesn't need to be complicated. This section gives you the exact formulas to calculate your calories for any goal — fat loss, maintenance, or building muscle — plus how to set your macros and make adjustments based on real-world progress.

STEP 1: FIND YOUR MAINTENANCE CALORIES

Your maintenance calories are the amount you eat to stay the same weight. Everything else is built from this number.

THE SIMPLE FORMULA

Bodyweight (lbs) x Activity Multiplier = Maintenance Calories

ACTIVITY LEVEL	MULTIPLIER	DESCRIPTION
Sedentary	13-14	Desk job, little to no exercise
Lightly Active	14-15	Training 3-4x/week, mostly sitting otherwise
Moderately Active	15-16	Training 4-5x/week, active job or daily movement
Very Active	16-18	Training 5-6x/week, physical job, high NEAT

Example: A 180 lb male who trains 4x/week with a desk job = $180 \times 14.5 = \sim 2,610$ calories/day at maintenance. This is your starting point. You will adjust from here based on real results.

STEP 2: SET YOUR GOAL FAT LOSS CALORIES

Maintenance minus 300-500 calories per day.

A 300-500 calorie deficit produces roughly 0.5-1 lb of fat loss per week. This is aggressive enough to see real progress but conservative enough to preserve muscle mass and keep training performance high.

- **Moderate deficit (recommended):** Maintenance minus 300-400 calories

- **Aggressive deficit:** Maintenance minus 500-700 calories — use only if you have significant fat to lose and can handle reduced performance
- **Never go below:** Bodyweight x 10 calories. Below this, you risk muscle loss, hormonal disruption, and metabolic adaptation

Example: 180 lb male, maintenance = 2,610. Fat loss calories = 2,610 - 400 = **~2,200 calories/day**. At this rate, expect to lose roughly 0.75 lb per week while preserving muscle.

MAINTENANCE CALORIES

Bodyweight x Activity Multiplier (calculated above).

Use maintenance when you're happy with your body composition and want to maintain your physique while training hard. Also use maintenance for 2-4 weeks between fat loss and mass phases to let your metabolism stabilize.

MASS BUILDING CALORIES (LEAN GAIN)

Maintenance plus 200-400 calories per day.

The goal is to gain weight slowly — roughly 0.5-1 lb per week for beginners, 0.25-0.5 lb per week for intermediates. Gaining faster than this means you're adding unnecessary body fat.

- **Conservative surplus (recommended):** Maintenance plus 200-300 calories
- **Aggressive surplus:** Maintenance plus 400-500 calories — use only if you're a true beginner or significantly underweight

Example: 180 lb male, maintenance = 2,610. Mass building calories = 2,610 + 300 = **~2,900 calories/day**. The body is arguably most anabolic in the 10-12% body fat range — stay reasonably lean while gaining.

STEP 3: SET YOUR MACROS

Once you have your total calories, split them into protein, carbs, and fats. These ratios shift based on your goal.

PROTEIN — THE FOUNDATION

1g per pound of bodyweight per day. This is non-negotiable for every goal. Protein supports muscle growth, recovery, and satiety. All essential amino acids must be present for protein synthesis to occur — prioritize complete protein sources like meat, eggs, dairy, and fish.

FATS — THE FLOOR

0.3-0.5g per pound of bodyweight per day. Healthy fats support hormones (including testosterone), brain function, and joint health. Don't go below 0.3g/lb or hormonal issues can develop over time.

CARBS — THE REMAINDER

Fill remaining calories with carbohydrates. Carbs fuel your training, support recovery, and drive glycogen storage. They are your performance fuel — high carb days on heavy training days boost glycogen, insulin, anabolism, and metabolism.

GOAL	PROTEIN	FATS	CARBS
Fat Loss	1g/lb bodyweight	0.35-0.45g/lb	Fill remaining (lower)
Maintenance	1g/lb bodyweight	0.35-0.45g/lb	Fill remaining
Mass Building	1g/lb bodyweight	0.3-0.4g/lb	Fill remaining (higher)

Full Example — 180 lb male, fat loss at 2,200 calories:

Protein: 180g (720 cal) | Fats: 70g (630 cal) | Carbs: 213g (850 cal) = 2,200 total

Full Example — 180 lb male, mass building at 2,900 calories:

Protein: 180g (720 cal) | Fats: 65g (585 cal) | Carbs: 399g (1,595 cal) = 2,900 total

STEP 4: CARB CYCLING (OPTIONAL BUT EFFECTIVE)

Instead of eating the same calories every day, rotate carbs based on training intensity. This keeps your metabolism elevated and matches fuel to demand.

- **High carb days:** Your heaviest training days (legs, back). Carbs 20-30% above daily average.
- **Medium carb days:** Moderate training days. Carbs at your daily average.

- **Low carb days:** Rest days or light training. Carbs 20-30% below daily average. Increase fats and protein slightly.

Keep total weekly calories the same — you're just redistributing when you eat them for better performance and recovery.

Fat loss example (2,200 cal avg): High day ~2,400 cal (training) | Medium day ~2,200 cal | Low day ~2,000 cal (rest)

Mass building example (2,900 cal avg): High day ~3,200 cal (training) | Medium day ~2,900 cal | Low day ~2,600 cal (rest)



STEP 5: ADJUST BASED ON PROGRESS

No formula is perfect on day one. Your starting numbers are an educated guess — real-world results tell you what to change. Weigh yourself daily, take the weekly average, and compare week over week.

FAT LOSS ADJUSTMENTS

WHAT'S HAPPENING	WHAT TO DO
Losing 0.5-1 lb/week	Perfect. Change nothing. Keep going.
Losing faster than 1.5 lb/week	Add 100-200 calories (mostly carbs). You're losing too fast and risk muscle loss.
Weight stalled for 2+ weeks	Drop 100-200 calories (reduce carbs first) OR add 1-2 cardio sessions. Don't panic after 1 week — water fluctuations are normal.
Feeling drained, lifts dropping	Take a diet break — eat at maintenance for 1-2 weeks. Refeed with a high carb day. Your metabolism needs a reset.
Body temp dropping, always cold	Metabolism is adapting. Take a full day and eat as much as you want. If you sweat that night, your metabolism got a kick start. Return to plan the next day.

MASS BUILDING ADJUSTMENTS

WHAT'S HAPPENING	WHAT TO DO
Gaining 0.5-1 lb/week (beginner)	On track. Keep going. Consistent slow gains compound over time.
Gaining 0.25-0.5 lb/week (intermediate)	Perfect. Muscle growth slows with experience. This pace is realistic.
Gaining faster than 1.5 lb/week	You're gaining too much fat. Drop 100-200 calories from carbs. Slow down.
Not gaining after 2+ weeks	Add 100-200 calories (mostly carbs). Your metabolism adapted or you're more active than estimated.
Waistline increasing rapidly	Body fat is climbing too fast. Cut surplus in half. The body is most anabolic at 10-12% BF — gaining fat past this range reduces muscle-building efficiency.

PRE / DURING / POST WORKOUT NUTRITION

- **Before training (60-90 min):** Protein + fastcarbs— fuel the session
- **During training:** Fast carbs + protein for blood flow and nutrient delivery to working muscles
- **Post-workout (within 60 min):** Protein + carbs — if you eat carbs after a hard workout, they will be properly utilized regardless of time of day

PRACTICAL MEAL EXAMPLES

- **Low day meal:** 6oz steak, 1 cup white rice, 1/4 cup cashews (~60g protein, 50g carbs, 14g fat)
- **High day meal:** 4-6oz chicken or tilapia, 2 cups white rice — repeated every 2-3 hours
- **Quick breakfast:** 1 scoop egg protein, 1 scoop whey, 1 cup oats, 1/4 cup cashews, blended with ice — great amino acid mix with healthy fats and soluble fiber
- **Simple rule:** If you can't pick it, grow it, or kill it — don't eat it

THE 10g RULE: If you convert just 10g of protein to new muscle tissue each day, that's 8 lbs of pure muscle per year. You don't need extreme diets. You need consistent, quality nutrition over time. Anyone can be consistently good for 15 years. That's how physiques are built.

CARDIO RECOMMENDATIONS

LISS (LOW-INTENSITY STEADY STATE)

- 20-45 minutes at 60-70% max heart rate
- Best for: Active recovery, fat loss, aerobic base
- Frequency: 2-4x per week on non-leg days or post-workout
- Examples: Incline walking, cycling, rowing, swimming

Cardio actually **helps** leg training by improving cardiovascular capacity and oxygen utilization under heavy loads. Your lungs can give out before your legs — cardio fixes that.

HIIT (HIGH-INTENSITY INTERVAL TRAINING)

- 10-20 minutes total: 30 sec work / 90 sec rest intervals
- Best for: Fat loss, conditioning, time efficiency
- Frequency: 1-3x per week, avoid on leg days
- Examples: Sprint intervals, bike sprints, battle ropes, sled pushes

INTEGRATION GUIDELINES

- If fat loss is the goal: Add 3-4 LISS sessions + 1-2 HIIT per week
- If muscle gain is the goal: Keep cardio minimal (2 LISS sessions max)
- Always prioritize recovery — if cardio impacts lifting performance, scale back

STRETCHING & MOBILITY

Post-workout static stretching (hold 30-60 seconds per stretch). Deep stretching after training helps drive blood into the muscle and can assist with fascial tissue expansion for growth.

UPPER BODY POST-WORKOUT

- Doorway Chest Stretch
- Overhead Tricep Stretch
- Cross-Body Shoulder Stretch
- Lat Stretch (hanging or doorframe) — stretch lats after every back workout, hold 60+ seconds

LOWER BODY POST-WORKOUT

- Standing Quad Stretch •
- Seated Hamstring Stretch •
- Pigeon Pose (hip flexors) • Calf
- Stretch (wall or step) • Glute
- Stretch (figure-4 position)



EXERCISE LIBRARY BY MUSCLE GROUP

Use this table to swap exercises within any program, or build your own workouts. Prioritize movements where you feel the target muscle working, can progress safely over months, and can push close to failure without form breaking down.

CHEST

EXERCISE	FOCUS	COACHING CUE
Incline Press	Upper chest	Set angle based on YOUR rib cage
Flat Press	Overall mass	Set your active ROM, press through the chest
Flyes / Pec Deck	Stretch + contraction	Great for pre-exhaust or blood volume
Dips (lean forward)	Lower chest	If shoulders take over, this isn't your movement
Floor Press	Lockout + mid-range	Dead stop eliminates momentum

BACK

EXERCISE	FOCUS	COACHING CUE
Deadlifts / Rack Pulls	Full posterior chain	If legs are sore, rack pulls let you hit back hard
Pull-Ups	Lat width	Track total reps as PR, don't count half reps
Pulldowns	Lat isolation	Don't sacrifice contraction for weight
Rows (any variation)	Mid-back thickness	Find where YOU feel your back, not arms
Rope Rows / Pullovers	Lat connection	Start here if you can't feel your lats

SHOULDERS

EXERCISE	FOCUS	COACHING CUE
Overhead Press	Overall mass	If mobility limits overhead, use seated/machine
Lateral Raises	Side delt cap	If traps take over, lighten the weight
Rear Delt Flyes	Rear delts	Control both directions, no momentum
Upright Rows	Side delts + traps	Skip if shoulders bother you
Front Raises	Front delt isolation	Don't swing — lighter than you think



TRICEPS

EXERCISE	FOCUS	COACHING CUE
Close-Grip Press	Overall mass	Elbows tucked, make triceps do the work
Dips (upright)	All three heads	Machine dips are joint-friendly alternative
Pushdowns	Lateral head	Full extension, don't let elbows drift
Overhead Extensions	Long head stretch	Mechanical drop set: apart then together then partials
Skull Crushers	All three heads	If elbows hurt, swap to pushdowns

BICEPS

EXERCISE	FOCUS	COACHING CUE
Barbell Curls	Overall mass	Strict form — execution drives growth
Hammer Curls	Brachialis + forearms	Alternate arms when fatiguing
Preacher Curls	Short head emphasis	Form is everything, full stretch at bottom
Incline Curls	Long head stretch	Arms behind torso, increases ROM
Drag Curls	Peak contraction	Great finisher when already fatigued

QUADS

EXERCISE	FOCUS	COACHING CUE
Squats (back or front)	Overall mass	Pick pattern that fits YOUR structure
Leg Press	Quad + glute loading	Don't fake progress with less depth
Bulgarian Split Squats	Unilateral focus	Great for fixing imbalances
Leg Extensions	Quad isolation	Superset with squats for a brutal finisher
Walking Lunges	Quads + stability	Warm-up or high-rep burnout

HAMSTRINGS

EXERCISE	FOCUS	COACHING CUE
Romanian Deadlifts	Stretch under load	Arch lower back, force the stretch
Lying Leg Curls	Isolation	Add forced reps or slow negatives at failure
Seated Leg Curls	Isolation (diff. angle)	Track total reps across sets as PR
Stiff-Leg Deadlifts	Deep stretch	Wide stance hits adductors too
Single-Leg Curls	Unilateral isolation	Fixes side-to-side imbalances



GLUTES

EXERCISE	FOCUS	COACHING CUE
Hip Thrusts / Bridges	Glute emphasis	Pause and squeeze at top 1-2 seconds
Sumo Deadlifts	Glutes + adductors	Listen to body on sumo vs RDL based on soreness
Leg Press (high + wide)	Glutes + hams	Arch lower back, NOT a quad movement here
Kickbacks	Glute isolation	Focus on contraction, not momentum
Lunges (long stride)	Glutes + quads	Longer stride shifts emphasis to glutes

ABS

EXERCISE	FOCUS	COACHING CUE
Hanging Leg Raises	Lower abs	Control the swing, curl the pelvis
Cable Crunches	Upper abs under load	Round spine, pull ribs to hips
Planks	Core stability	Brace like you're about to get punched
Ab Wheel Rollouts	Full core	Control the rollout, start from knees
Lying Leg Raises	Lower abs	Press lower back into floor, slow and controlled

Execution quality is the most underrated form of progressive overload. Better control, fuller range of motion, and making the target muscle do the work will build more muscle than adding weight with worse form. A stronger muscle is a bigger muscle — but only if the muscle is actually doing the work.

EXERCISE SUBSTITUTIONS

Equipment not available? Use these swaps:

EXERCISE	SUBSTITUTIONS
Flat Press	Incline Press, Floor Press, Push-Ups (weighted)
Squats	Leg Press, Hack Squat, Bulgarian Split Squats
Deadlifts	Rack Pulls, Romanian Deadlifts, Sumo Deadlifts
Pull-Ups	Pulldowns, Inverted Rows
Rows	Any row variation, T-Bar Rows, Rope Rows
Overhead Press	Seated Press, Landmine Press
Leg Press	Hack Squat, Front Squat
Dips	Close-Grip Press, Machine Dips, Push-Ups

NO EQUIPMENT? Increase bodyweight rep ranges, slow the tempo (4-sec eccentric), and use resistance bands. Or train with us in person at Adapt Fitness — 4300 Alpha Rd, Suite 100, Dallas TX. **\$49/month membership.** adapt.fitness

ADAPT FITNESS

THE BEGINNER'S GUIDE FOR PRO RESULTS

Questions? Email bo@adapt.fitness

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The best exercise is the one you'll do consistently
with good form and progressive overload.