

peachess

12 WEEK PLAN

Glutes, strength and cardio.

A balanced beginner plan for 2 or 3 days a week.



FOUNDATION



BUILD



STRENGTHEN

FREE GUIDE • GYM-BASED • SWAPS INCLUDED

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How this plan works

A free 12-week strength and cardio plan for adults new to lifting or returning after a break. It is glute-focused (squats, hip thrusts, hip hinges, single-leg and side-glute work every week) and balanced, with upper-body pushing, pulling and core work every week. The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans ask for strength work for all major muscle groups on 2 or more days a week. Legs, glutes, back and core are trained on at least two days here, but the chest press and shoulder press come once a week each, so not every muscle group is trained on two separate days: an editorial trade-off for shorter sessions.

Choose your schedule

- 2-day schedule: Workout A and Workout B, for example Monday and Thursday. Sessions take about 45 to 60 minutes.
- 3-day schedule: Workouts A, B and C, for example Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Sessions take about 35 to 45 minutes.

Both schedules use the same exercises and weekly sets; the 3-day option spreads that work over shorter sessions instead of adding volume. Studies found similar results across training frequencies when weekly volume is equal, so pick the schedule that fits your week. You can switch at the start of any week.

Three phases

- Weeks 1-4, Foundation: learn the movements, find starting weights, 2-3 work sets.
- Weeks 5-8, Build: dumbbell bench press, more sets, effort a little closer to the target.
- Weeks 9-12, Strengthen: heavier main lifts, reverse lunges, anti-rotation core.

Weeks 4 and 8 are lighter. Week 12 tapers slightly so you can compare with Week 1.

Equipment

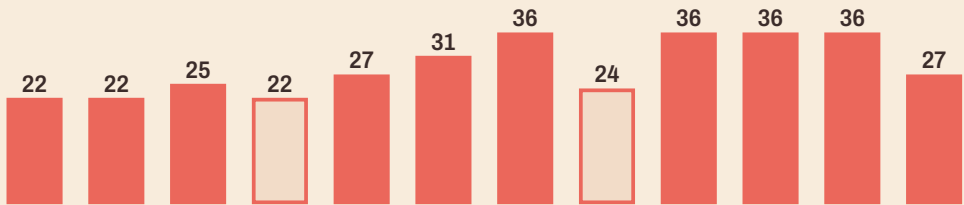
The plan is written for a standard gym: dumbbells, a bench, a cable station, a lat pulldown and a hip abduction machine. Every exercise lists an easier version and a swap, several using only dumbbells or a band. It is not a no-equipment plan: you need weights you can add to.

Please read

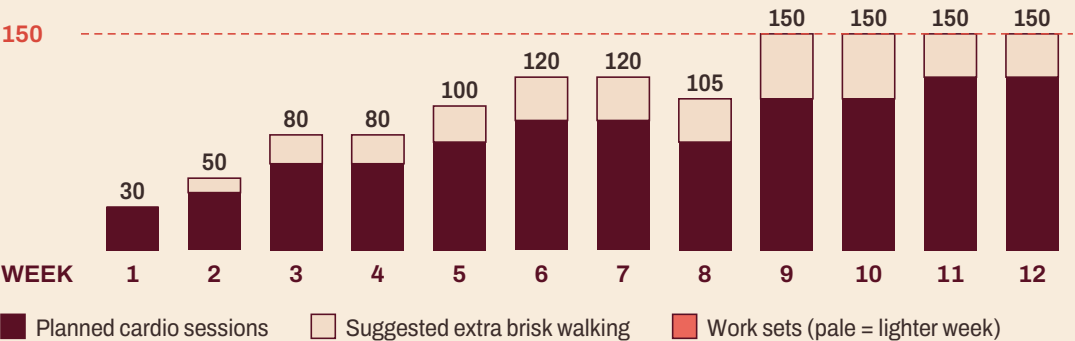
A general educational plan, not individualized programming: no trainer or clinician has reviewed or approved it for you, and it has not been tested as a complete program in a study. It follows public guidelines and research (credited at the back); the exact numbers are editorial choices. Not medical advice.

The 12 weeks at a glance

WEEKLY WORK SETS (SAME FOR 2-DAY AND 3-DAY)



WEEKLY MODERATE MINUTES: PLANNED CARDIO + EXTRA BRISK WALKING



Before you start

- ☐ I have read the safety notes and checked with a health care professional if any of them apply to me.
- ☐ I have chosen the 2-day or 3-day schedule, put lifting and cardio days in my calendar with rest days between, and planned a few short brisk walks.
- ☐ I know where each machine is, or I have chosen swaps for what my gym does not have.
- ☐ I understand reps in reserve and will not train to failure.
- ☐ I have printed or copied the log pages and will write down every work set.
- ☐ I will start lighter than I think and add weight only by the load rule.

Effort, reps in reserve and load

Reps in reserve (RIR) is how many more good-form reps you could have done when you stop a set. RIR 3 means you stop with about 3 clean reps left. Researchers use the same idea (RPE 9 = 1 RIR, RPE 8 = 2 RIR). Beginners tend to underestimate how many reps they have left, so this plan keeps effort moderate: RIR 3-4 at first, about 2 later, and 1-2 only on the machine lifts (pulldown, cable row, hip abduction) in Weeks 10 and 11. Free-weight lifts stay at RIR 2 or more throughout.

REPS IN RESERVE (RIR) AT THE END OF A WORK SET

0	1	2	3	4	5+
Failure: not used	Wk 10-11 machines	Wks 9-12	Wks 1-7	Wks 1-2, 4, 8	Warm-up sets

You never need to train to failure, and you should not force grinding reps. Meta-analyses found training to failure is not required for strength or muscle gains.

Warm-up sets are not work sets

Before your first lower-body lift and your first upper-body lift, do 1-2 warm-up sets: about half your work weight for 8 reps, then about three quarters for 4 reps. Warm-up sets are easy, are not counted in the sets listed, and are not logged as work. Work sets are the listed sets at your chosen weight and RIR target.

Finding your first weights (no max testing)

In Week 1, start lighter than you think. Do a set at the top of the rep range. If you finished with more than 4 reps left, go up one step next set or next session. If you could not reach the bottom of the range with good form, go down. You do not need, and should not attempt, a one-rep-max test.

The load rule (double progression)

- Stay at a weight until every work set reaches the top of the rep range at the target RIR or easier.
- Then add the smallest step next session: about 2-5 lb total for upper body or one dumbbell step, about 5-10 lb total for lower body.
- After a weight increase, reps will drop toward the bottom of the range. Build them back up.
- If reps fall below the range, or form slips, go back one step.
- Add weight OR a set in a week, never both on the same lift. In a week where a lift gains a set, keep its weight; a new exercise starts light (about RIR 4) and follows the RIR target before the load rule.
- In lighter weeks, lower the weight if needed to hit the listed reps at about RIR 4.

Holds (side plank) progress by seconds, and dead bug or Pallof press by slower, controlled reps.

Rest between sets

Rest 2 minutes after main lower-body lifts, about 90 seconds after single-leg and upper-body lifts, about 60 seconds after hip abduction and 45-60 seconds after core work. Take longer if you need it to hit your reps with good form.

Warm-up and cool-down

Before every workout (about 8 minutes)

- 4 minutes easy cardio: bike, walk or elliptical at effort 3-4 of 10.
- Bodyweight squats to a comfortable depth: 10 reps.
- Glute bridges: 10 reps with a 1-second squeeze.
- Hip hinge with hands on hips: 8 reps.
- Arm circles and band pull-aparts (or reaching arms forward and back): 10 each.
- Then the warm-up sets for your first lift (see Effort).

After every workout (about 5 minutes)

- 2-3 minutes of easy walking.
- Hold each stretch about 30 seconds per side, gently, without pain: hip flexor lunge stretch, seated figure-four glute stretch, standing hamstring stretch, doorway chest stretch.

Cardio and daily walking

Do 2-3 cardio sessions each week on non-lifting days or after lifting. Good choices: brisk walking, incline treadmill walking, cycling, an elliptical, or swimming. Use the 0-10 effort scale from the Physical Activity Guidelines: sitting is 0, your hardest possible effort is 10. Moderate is 5 or 6 (breathing harder, you can talk but not sing). Vigorous starts at 7 or 8.

Starting smaller on purpose

Adults need at least 150 to 300 minutes of moderate aerobic activity each week for substantial health benefits. Weeks 1-8 deliberately start below that. Week 1 is 2 x 15 minutes, which is 30 minutes and does not meet the guideline. The guidelines advise inactive people to start low and go slow. Some activity is better than none, and the planned sessions build to 3 x 40 minutes (120 minutes) by Week 11.

Count your extra walking

Brisk walking of any length counts toward the 150 minutes: the old rule that only 10-minute bouts count was removed in 2018. Each week page lists a suggested amount of extra brisk walking. Planned cardio plus that walking reaches 150 minutes from Week 9. If you are already active, you can reach 150 sooner. Easy strolling still helps you sit less, but count only brisk minutes. Warm-up and cool-down minutes count only if they are brisk. Vigorous minutes count double.

Recovery

Cardio stays at an easy-to-moderate effort so it does not interfere with lifting. Keep at least one full rest day a week. If your legs feel heavy before a lifting day, make that day's cardio an easy walk or skip it.

Soreness, fatigue and missed sessions

Soreness

Some muscle soreness for 1-3 days is common in the first weeks or after a new exercise. It is why Week 1 starts with only 2 sets. Light movement usually helps. Severe soreness, dark urine, or swelling are not normal; stop and seek medical advice.

Spacing

Leave at least 48 hours between hard sessions for the same muscles. Every workout in this plan trains the legs and glutes, so lifting days should never be back-to-back. Good patterns: Mon/Thu or Tue/Fri for 2 days; Mon/Wed/Fri for 3 days.

Managing fatigue

- Sleep and regular meals matter more than any extra set.
- If you are very tired, keep your weights and do one set fewer per exercise that session.
- If two sessions in a row feel much harder than they should, do a lighter week early (same as Week 4).

Missed sessions

- Missed one session: do it next time and carry on. Do not double up.
- Missed one week: repeat the last completed week.
- Missed two weeks or more: go back about two weeks and use slightly lighter weights.
- Illness: wait until you feel well, then restart with the lighter-week format.

Phase 1: Foundation

Learn every movement, find starting weights, build the habit. Effort stays comfortable.

2-day schedule

- **Workout A:** Goblet Squat, Hip Thrust, Incline Push-Up, Lat Pulldown, Dead Bug.
- **Workout B:** Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift, Dumbbell Step-Up, Seated Cable Row, Seated Dumbbell Shoulder Press, Seated Hip Abduction, Side Plank.

EXAMPLE 2-DAY WEEK

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Lift A	Cardio	Rest	Lift B	Rest	Cardio	Cardio*

3-day schedule

- **Workout A:** Goblet Squat, Incline Push-Up, Lat Pulldown, Dead Bug.
- **Workout B:** Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift, Seated Cable Row, Seated Hip Abduction, Side Plank.
- **Workout C:** Hip Thrust, Dumbbell Step-Up, Seated Dumbbell Shoulder Press.

EXAMPLE 3-DAY WEEK

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Lift A	Cardio	Lift B	Cardio*	Lift C	Cardio	Rest

*Third cardio session from Week 3. Cardio can also follow a lifting session. Keep at least one full rest day and never lift on back-to-back days.

PHASE 1: FOUNDATION

Week 1

Learn the movements. Pick weights you could lift about 4 more times at the top of the rep range. Write every weight down.

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	RIR	REST	2-DAY	3-DAY
Goblet Squat	2	10-12	3-4	2 min	A	A
Hip Thrust	2	10-12	3-4	2 min	A	C
Incline Push-Up	2	8-12	3-4	90 s	A	A
Lat Pulldown	2	10-12	3-4	90 s	A	A
Dead Bug	2	6 each side	control	45-60 s	A	A
Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift	2	10-12	3-4	2 min	B	B
Dumbbell Step-Up	2	8-10 each leg	3-4	90 s	B	C
Seated Cable Row	2	10-12	3-4	90 s	B	B
Seated Dumbbell Shoulder Press	2	10-12	3-4	90 s	B	C
Seated Hip Abduction	2	12-15	3-4	60 s	B	B
Side Plank	2	15-20 s each side	control	45-60 s	B	B

Work sets per session; warm-up sets not included. The 2-day and 3-day columns show the workout. Core: stop when form slips. Weekly work sets: 22 on either schedule.

CARDIO THIS WEEK

- **2 sessions x 15 minutes** (30 min): brisk walk, effort 5 of 10.
- Planned total about 30 moderate minutes, below the 150-minute guideline on purpose while you build up. Extra brisk walking is welcome if it feels good.

PHASE 1: FOUNDATION

Week 2

Same sets. Aim for one or two more reps than last week at the same weight, or the next weight up if you hit the top of the range with 3 or more reps left.

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	RIR	REST	2-DAY	3-DAY
Goblet Squat	2	10-12	3-4	2 min	A	A
Hip Thrust	2	10-12	3-4	2 min	A	C
Incline Push-Up	2	8-12	3-4	90 s	A	A
Lat Pulldown	2	10-12	3-4	90 s	A	A
Dead Bug	2	6 each side	control	45-60 s	A	A
Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift	2	10-12	3-4	2 min	B	B
Dumbbell Step-Up	2	8-10 each leg	3-4	90 s	B	C
Seated Cable Row	2	10-12	3-4	90 s	B	B
Seated Dumbbell Shoulder Press	2	10-12	3-4	90 s	B	C
Seated Hip Abduction	2	12-15	3-4	60 s	B	B
Side Plank	2	15-20 s each side	control	45-60 s	B	B

Work sets per session; warm-up sets not included. The 2-day and 3-day columns show the workout. Core: stop when form slips. Weekly work sets: 22 on either schedule.

CARDIO THIS WEEK

- **2 sessions x 20 minutes** (40 min): brisk walk, effort 5 of 10. **Plus about 10 minutes** of extra brisk walking, any bout length.
- Planned total about 50 moderate minutes, below the 150-minute guideline on purpose while you build up. Extra brisk walking is welcome if it feels good.

PHASE 1: FOUNDATION

Week 3

Main lower lifts (squat, hip thrust, Romanian deadlift) go from 2 to 3 work sets: keep last week's weight on those three. Other exercises stay at 2 sets and may progress by the load rule.

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	RIR	REST	2-DAY	3-DAY
Goblet Squat	3	10-12	3	2 min	A	A
Hip Thrust	3	10-12	3	2 min	A	C
Incline Push-Up	2	8-12	3	90 s	A	A
Lat Pulldown	2	10-12	3	90 s	A	A
Dead Bug	2	6 each side	control	45-60 s	A	A
Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift	3	10-12	3	2 min	B	B
Dumbbell Step-Up	2	8-10 each leg	3	90 s	B	C
Seated Cable Row	2	10-12	3	90 s	B	B
Seated Dumbbell Shoulder Press	2	10-12	3	90 s	B	C
Seated Hip Abduction	2	12-15	3	60 s	B	B
Side Plank	2	15-20 s each side	control	45-60 s	B	B

Work sets per session; warm-up sets not included. The 2-day and 3-day columns show the workout. Core: stop when form slips. Weekly work sets: 25 on either schedule.

CARDIO THIS WEEK

- **3 sessions x 20 minutes** (60 min): brisk walk or easy cycle, effort 5 to 6 of 10. **Plus about 20 minutes** of extra brisk walking, any bout length.
- Planned total about 80 moderate minutes, below the 150-minute guideline on purpose while you build up. Extra brisk walking is welcome if it feels good.

Week 4

Lighter week: 2 sets, stopping with about 4 reps left. Start from last week's weights and lower them if needed to reach the listed reps at RIR 4; do not force them if you are tired. Let soreness settle before Phase 2.

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	RIR	REST	2-DAY	3-DAY
Goblet Squat	2	10-12	4	2 min	A	A
Hip Thrust	2	10-12	4	2 min	A	C
Incline Push-Up	2	8-12	4	90 s	A	A
Lat Pulldown	2	10-12	4	90 s	A	A
Dead Bug	2	6 each side	control	45-60 s	A	A
Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift	2	10-12	4	2 min	B	B
Dumbbell Step-Up	2	8-10 each leg	4	90 s	B	C
Seated Cable Row	2	10-12	4	90 s	B	B
Seated Dumbbell Shoulder Press	2	10-12	4	90 s	B	C
Seated Hip Abduction	2	12-15	4	60 s	B	B
Side Plank	2	15-20 s each side	control	45-60 s	B	B

Work sets per session; warm-up sets not included. The 2-day and 3-day columns show the workout. Core: stop when form slips. Weekly work sets: 22 on either schedule.

CARDIO THIS WEEK

- **3 sessions x 20 minutes** (60 min): relaxed brisk pace, effort 5 of 10. **Plus about 20 minutes** of extra brisk walking, any bout length.
- Planned total about 80 moderate minutes, below the 150-minute guideline on purpose while you build up. Extra brisk walking is welcome if it feels good.

Phase 2: Build

Add a set to the main lifts, move from push-ups to dumbbell pressing, and work a little closer to the effort target.

2-day schedule

- **Workout A:** Goblet Squat, Hip Thrust, Dumbbell Bench Press, Lat Pulldown, Seated Hip Abduction, Dead Bug.
- **Workout B:** Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift, Dumbbell Step-Up, Seated Cable Row, Seated Dumbbell Shoulder Press, Seated Hip Abduction, Side Plank.

EXAMPLE 2-DAY WEEK

MON Lift A	TUE Cardio	WED Rest	THU Lift B	FRI Rest	SAT Cardio	SUN Cardio*
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3-day schedule

- **Workout A:** Goblet Squat, Dumbbell Bench Press, Lat Pulldown, Dead Bug.
- **Workout B:** Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift, Seated Cable Row, Seated Hip Abduction, Side Plank.
- **Workout C:** Hip Thrust, Dumbbell Step-Up, Seated Dumbbell Shoulder Press, Seated Hip Abduction.

EXAMPLE 3-DAY WEEK

MON Lift A	TUE Cardio	WED Lift B	THU Cardio*	FRI Lift C	SAT Cardio	SUN Rest
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*Third cardio session from Week 3. Cardio can also follow a lifting session. Keep at least one full rest day and never lift on back-to-back days.

New this phase: Dumbbell Bench Press. Start each new exercise light, around RIR 4, for the first session, then follow the week's target.

PHASE 2: BUILD

Week 5

New phase: dumbbell bench press replaces incline push-ups, hip abduction now appears in both 2-day sessions, rep ranges drop slightly. Main lifts return to 3 sets at your Week 3 weights, no heavier. Start new lifts light.

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	RIR	REST	2-DAY	3-DAY
Goblet Squat	3	8-10	2-3	2 min	A	A
Hip Thrust	3	8-12	2-3	2 min	A	C
Dumbbell Bench Press	2	8-10	2-3	90 s	A	A
Lat Pulldown	2	8-12	2-3	90 s	A	A
Seated Hip Abduction	2	12-15	2-3	60 s	A + B	B + C
Dead Bug	2	8 each side	control	45-60 s	A	A
Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift	3	8-10	2-3	2 min	B	B
Dumbbell Step-Up	2	8-10 each leg	2-3	90 s	B	C
Seated Cable Row	2	8-12	2-3	90 s	B	B
Seated Dumbbell Shoulder Press	2	8-10	2-3	90 s	B	C
Side Plank	2	20-30 s each side	control	45-60 s	B	B

Work sets per session; warm-up sets not included. The 2-day and 3-day columns show the workout (two letters: do it in both sessions). Core: stop when form slips. Weekly work sets: 27 on either schedule.

CARDIO THIS WEEK

- **3 sessions x 25 minutes** (75 min): brisk walk, incline walk or cycle, effort 5 to 6 of 10. **Plus about 25 minutes** of extra brisk walking, any bout length.
- Planned total about 100 moderate minutes, below the 150-minute guideline on purpose while you build up. Extra brisk walking is welcome if it feels good.

PHASE 2: BUILD

Week 6

Upper-body lifts go to 3 sets at last week's weights. Add weight only on lifts whose sets did not change, and only where every set reached the top of the range at RIR 2-3 or easier.

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	RIR	REST	2-DAY	3-DAY
Goblet Squat	3	8-10	2-3	2 min	A	A
Hip Thrust	3	8-12	2-3	2 min	A	C
Dumbbell Bench Press	3	8-10	2-3	90 s	A	A
Lat Pulldown	3	8-12	2-3	90 s	A	A
Seated Hip Abduction	2	12-15	2-3	60 s	A + B	B + C
Dead Bug	2	8 each side	control	45-60 s	A	A
Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift	3	8-10	2-3	2 min	B	B
Dumbbell Step-Up	2	8-10 each leg	2-3	90 s	B	C
Seated Cable Row	3	8-12	2-3	90 s	B	B
Seated Dumbbell Shoulder Press	3	8-10	2-3	90 s	B	C
Side Plank	2	20-30 s each side	control	45-60 s	B	B

Work sets per session; warm-up sets not included. The 2-day and 3-day columns show the workout (two letters: do it in both sessions). Core: stop when form slips. Weekly work sets: 31 on either schedule.

CARDIO THIS WEEK

- **3 sessions x 30 minutes** (90 min): brisk, effort 5 to 6 of 10. **Plus about 30 minutes** of extra brisk walking, any bout length.
- Planned total about 120 moderate minutes, below the 150-minute guideline on purpose while you build up. Extra brisk walking is welcome if it feels good.

PHASE 2: BUILD

Week 7

Step-ups, hip abduction and core go to 3 sets at last week's weights; other lifts may progress by the load rule. This is the highest-volume week so far; keep the effort target, do not chase extra sets.

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	RIR	REST	2-DAY	3-DAY
Goblet Squat	3	8-10	2-3	2 min	A	A
Hip Thrust	3	8-12	2-3	2 min	A	C
Dumbbell Bench Press	3	8-10	2-3	90 s	A	A
Lat Pulldown	3	8-12	2-3	90 s	A	A
Seated Hip Abduction	3	12-15	2-3	60 s	A + B	B + C
Dead Bug	3	8 each side	control	45-60 s	A	A
Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift	3	8-10	2-3	2 min	B	B
Dumbbell Step-Up	3	8-10 each leg	2-3	90 s	B	C
Seated Cable Row	3	8-12	2-3	90 s	B	B
Seated Dumbbell Shoulder Press	3	8-10	2-3	90 s	B	C
Side Plank	3	20-30 s each side	control	45-60 s	B	B

Work sets per session; warm-up sets not included. The 2-day and 3-day columns show the workout (two letters: do it in both sessions). Core: stop when form slips. Weekly work sets: 36 on either schedule.

CARDIO THIS WEEK

- **3 sessions x 30 minutes** (90 min): brisk, effort 5 to 6 of 10. **Plus about 30 minutes** of extra brisk walking, any bout length.
- Planned total about 120 moderate minutes, below the 150-minute guideline on purpose while you build up. Extra brisk walking is welcome if it feels good.

Week 8

Lighter week: 2 sets, stopping with about 4 reps left. Start from last week's weights and lower them if needed to reach the listed reps at RIR 4; do not force them if you are tired.

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	RIR	REST	2-DAY	3-DAY
Goblet Squat	2	8-10	4	2 min	A	A
Hip Thrust	2	8-12	4	2 min	A	C
Dumbbell Bench Press	2	8-10	4	90 s	A	A
Lat Pulldown	2	8-12	4	90 s	A	A
Seated Hip Abduction	2	12-15	4	60 s	A + B	B + C
Dead Bug	2	8 each side	control	45-60 s	A	A
Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift	2	8-10	4	2 min	B	B
Dumbbell Step-Up	2	8-10 each leg	4	90 s	B	C
Seated Cable Row	2	8-12	4	90 s	B	B
Seated Dumbbell Shoulder Press	2	8-10	4	90 s	B	C
Side Plank	2	20-30 s each side	control	45-60 s	B	B

Work sets per session; warm-up sets not included. The 2-day and 3-day columns show the workout (two letters: do it in both sessions). Core: stop when form slips. Weekly work sets: 24 on either schedule.

CARDIO THIS WEEK

- **3 sessions x 25 minutes** (75 min): relaxed brisk pace, effort 5 of 10. **Plus about 30 minutes** of extra brisk walking, any bout length.
- Planned total about 105 moderate minutes, below the 150-minute guideline on purpose while you build up. Extra brisk walking is welcome if it feels good.

Phase 3: Strengthen

Heavier main lifts in slightly lower rep ranges, reverse lunges for single-leg work, anti-rotation core.

2-day schedule

- Workout A:** Goblet Squat, Hip Thrust, Dumbbell Bench Press, Lat Pulldown, Seated Hip Abduction, Pallof Press.
- Workout B:** Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift, Dumbbell Reverse Lunge, Seated Cable Row, Seated Dumbbell Shoulder Press, Seated Hip Abduction, Side Plank.

EXAMPLE 2-DAY WEEK

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Lift A	Cardio	Rest	Lift B	Rest	Cardio	Cardio*

3-day schedule

- Workout A:** Goblet Squat, Dumbbell Bench Press, Lat Pulldown, Pallof Press.
- Workout B:** Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift, Seated Cable Row, Seated Hip Abduction, Side Plank.
- Workout C:** Hip Thrust, Dumbbell Reverse Lunge, Seated Dumbbell Shoulder Press, Seated Hip Abduction.

EXAMPLE 3-DAY WEEK

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Lift A	Cardio	Lift B	Cardio*	Lift C	Cardio	Rest

*Third cardio session from Week 3. Cardio can also follow a lifting session. Keep at least one full rest day and never lift on back-to-back days.

New this phase: Pallof Press, Dumbbell Reverse Lunge. Start each new exercise light, around RIR 4, for the first session, then follow the week's target.

PHASE 3: STRENGTHEN

Week 9

New phase: reverse lunges replace step-ups (start them lighter), Pallof press replaces dead bug, hip thrust and pressing move to 6-10 reps. Every lift is back to 3 sets, so start from your Week 7 weights and add weight from Week 10 by the load rule.

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	RIR	REST	2-DAY	3-DAY
Goblet Squat	3	8-10	2	2 min	A	A
Hip Thrust	3	6-10	2	2 min	A	C
Dumbbell Bench Press	3	6-10	2	90 s	A	A
Lat Pulldown	3	8-12	2	90 s	A	A
Seated Hip Abduction	3	12-15	2	60 s	A + B	B + C
Pallof Press	3	8 each side, 2 s hold	control	45-60 s	A	A
Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift	3	8-10	2	2 min	B	B
Dumbbell Reverse Lunge	3	8-10 each leg	2	90 s	B	C
Seated Cable Row	3	8-12	2	90 s	B	B
Seated Dumbbell Shoulder Press	3	6-10	2	90 s	B	C
Side Plank	3	30-40 s each side	control	45-60 s	B	B

Work sets per session; warm-up sets not included. The 2-day and 3-day columns show the workout (two letters: do it in both sessions). Core: stop when form slips. Weekly work sets: 36 on either schedule.

CARDIO THIS WEEK

- **3 sessions x 35 minutes** (105 min): brisk, effort 5 to 6 of 10. **Plus about 45 minutes** of extra brisk walking, any bout length.
- Planned total about 150 moderate minutes: this meets the 150-minute weekly guideline minimum.

PHASE 3: STRENGTHEN

Week 10

Same sets. Progress weight or reps using the load rule. Machine lifts (pulldown, cable row, hip abduction) may now stop at 1-2 reps in reserve; free-weight lifts stay at 2.

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	RIR	REST	2-DAY	3-DAY
Goblet Squat	3	8-10	2	2 min	A	A
Hip Thrust	3	6-10	2	2 min	A	C
Dumbbell Bench Press	3	6-10	2	90 s	A	A
Lat Pulldown	3	8-12	1-2	90 s	A	A
Seated Hip Abduction	3	12-15	1-2	60 s	A + B	B + C
Palloy Press	3	8 each side, 2 s hold	control	45-60 s	A	A
Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift	3	8-10	2	2 min	B	B
Dumbbell Reverse Lunge	3	8-10 each leg	2	90 s	B	C
Seated Cable Row	3	8-12	1-2	90 s	B	B
Seated Dumbbell Shoulder Press	3	6-10	2	90 s	B	C
Side Plank	3	30-40 s each side	control	45-60 s	B	B

Work sets per session; warm-up sets not included. The 2-day and 3-day columns show the workout (two letters: do it in both sessions). Core: stop when form slips. Weekly work sets: 36 on either schedule.

CARDIO THIS WEEK

- **3 sessions x 35 minutes** (105 min): brisk, effort 5 to 6 of 10. **Plus about 45 minutes** of extra brisk walking, any bout length.
- Planned total about 150 moderate minutes: this meets the 150-minute weekly guideline minimum.

PHASE 3: STRENGTHEN

Week 11

Peak week: same sets as weeks 9-10, the longest cardio sessions, and small weight or rep gains where the load rule allows. Never grind a rep with poor form; end the set instead.

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	RIR	REST	2-DAY	3-DAY
Goblet Squat	3	8-10	2	2 min	A	A
Hip Thrust	3	6-10	2	2 min	A	C
Dumbbell Bench Press	3	6-10	2	90 s	A	A
Lat Pulldown	3	8-12	1-2	90 s	A	A
Seated Hip Abduction	3	12-15	1-2	60 s	A + B	B + C
Palloy Press	3	8 each side, 2 s hold	control	45-60 s	A	A
Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift	3	8-10	2	2 min	B	B
Dumbbell Reverse Lunge	3	8-10 each leg	2	90 s	B	C
Seated Cable Row	3	8-12	1-2	90 s	B	B
Seated Dumbbell Shoulder Press	3	6-10	2	90 s	B	C
Side Plank	3	30-40 s each side	control	45-60 s	B	B

Work sets per session; warm-up sets not included. The 2-day and 3-day columns show the workout (two letters: do it in both sessions). Core: stop when form slips. Weekly work sets: 36 on either schedule.

CARDIO THIS WEEK

- **3 sessions x 40 minutes** (120 min): brisk, effort 5 to 6 of 10. **Plus about 30 minutes** of extra brisk walking, any bout length.
- Planned total about 150 moderate minutes: this meets the 150-minute weekly guideline minimum.

PHASE 3: STRENGTHEN

Week 12

Finish week with slightly fewer sets. Compare this week's log with Week 1: same exercise, how much weight and how many reps.

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	RIR	REST	2-DAY	3-DAY
Goblet Squat	3	8-10	2-3	2 min	A	A
Hip Thrust	3	6-10	2-3	2 min	A	C
Dumbbell Bench Press	2	6-10	2-3	90 s	A	A
Lat Pulldown	2	8-12	2-3	90 s	A	A
Seated Hip Abduction	2	12-15	2-3	60 s	A + B	B + C
Palloy Press	2	8 each side, 2 s hold	control	45-60 s	A	A
Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift	3	8-10	2-3	2 min	B	B
Dumbbell Reverse Lunge	2	8-10 each leg	2-3	90 s	B	C
Seated Cable Row	2	8-12	2-3	90 s	B	B
Seated Dumbbell Shoulder Press	2	6-10	2-3	90 s	B	C
Side Plank	2	30-40 s each side	control	45-60 s	B	B

Work sets per session; warm-up sets not included. The 2-day and 3-day columns show the workout (two letters: do it in both sessions). Core: stop when form slips. Weekly work sets: 27 on either schedule.

CARDIO THIS WEEK

- **3 sessions x 40 minutes** (120 min): brisk, effort 5 to 6 of 10. **Plus about 30 minutes** of extra brisk walking, any bout length.
- Planned total about 150 moderate minutes: this meets the 150-minute weekly guideline minimum.

Exercise guide

Every programmed exercise, with setup, steps, cues, common mistakes, an easier version and a swap. Instructions are written as text on purpose: no body drawings that could mislead.

SQUAT

Goblet Squat

Works: Glutes, quadriceps, adductors; trunk braces. **Equipment:** One dumbbell or kettlebell.
Used in: weeks 1-12.

Setup. Hold one dumbbell vertically against your chest, both hands cupping the top end. Stand with feet about shoulder-width apart or slightly wider, toes turned out a little.

1. Take a breath and brace your midsection as if about to be nudged.
2. Sit your hips down and slightly back between your heels. Let your knees travel forward and out in line with your toes.
3. Go as deep as you can while your heels stay down and your lower back stays neutral. Thighs near parallel is a good target; a box can mark depth.
4. Push through your whole foot to stand. Finish tall with glutes squeezed, without leaning back.

Cues. Elbows point down inside the knees. Chest tall. Exhale as you stand.

Avoid. Knees caving inward, heels lifting, lower back rounding at the bottom, bouncing out of the bottom.

Easier version. Box squat: sit back to a bench or box at a height you control, touch it lightly without relaxing, then stand. Lower the box over the weeks.

Swap. Leg press: sit with your back flat on the pad, feet shoulder-width in the middle of the platform. Lower the sled until your hips are about to curl off the pad, then press through your midfoot and heels. Stop just short of locking your knees. Also use this when your heaviest dumbbell is too light for the reps.

HIP EXTENSION (BRIDGE)

Hip Thrust

Works: Glutes (main), hamstrings. **Equipment:** Bench plus barbell with pad, or one dumbbell.

Used in: weeks 1-12.

Setup. Sit on the floor with the lower edge of your shoulder blades against a sturdy bench set against a wall. Pad the bar across the crease of your hips, or hold a dumbbell on your hips. Feet flat, about hip-width.

1. Tuck your chin slightly and keep your ribs down.
2. Push through your heels and midfoot to lift your hips until your torso is about level with the floor.
3. At the top your shins should be close to vertical. Pause for 1 second and squeeze your glutes.
4. Lower under control until your hips are a few inches above the floor, then repeat.

Cues. Move from the hips, not the lower back. Eyes follow the torso, looking forward at the top rather than at the ceiling.

Avoid. Arching the lower back to get higher, pushing through the toes, feet so far out that the hamstrings cramp or so close that the thighs take over.

Easier version. Glute bridge: lie on your back with knees bent and feet flat. Press through your heels to lift your hips into a straight line from shoulders to knees, pause, lower. Add a dumbbell on the hips when 15 easy reps feel comfortable.

Swap. Hip thrust machine or Smith machine with the same setup. If lying back is off-limits (for example later pregnancy), use the cable pull-through described under Romanian Deadlift.

HORIZONTAL PUSH

Incline Push-Up

Works: Chest, shoulders, triceps; trunk holds a plank. **Equipment:** Bench, box, or a fixed Smith machine bar. **Used in:** weeks 1-4.

Setup. Hands on the edge of a sturdy bench slightly wider than your shoulders. Walk your feet back until your body is a straight line from head to heels.

1. Brace your glutes and midsection.
2. Lower your chest toward the bench with elbows about 45 degrees from your body.
3. Push the bench away until your arms are straight.

Cues. The body moves as one plank. Progress by using a lower surface.

Avoid. Hips sagging, head reaching forward, elbows straight out to the sides.

Easier version. Higher surface: a kitchen counter or wall push-up.

Swap. Machine chest press, or the dumbbell bench press with light weights.

VERTICAL PULL

Lat Pulldown

Works: Upper back (lats), biceps. **Equipment:** Lat pulldown machine. **Used in:** weeks 1-12.

Setup. Set the thigh pad so your legs are held snugly. Grip the bar slightly wider than your shoulders, palms facing away.

1. Sit tall with a small lean back.
2. Pull your elbows down toward your ribs, bringing the bar to your upper chest.
3. Control the bar back up until your arms are straight and you feel a stretch under your arms.

Cues. Shoulders down, away from the ears. Chest meets the bar.

Avoid. Pulling behind the neck, leaning far back to swing the weight, shrugging.

Easier version. Lighter weight, or a band pulldown: anchor a band high, kneel, and pull both hands down to the sides of your chest.

Swap. Assisted pull-up machine (more assistance is easier), or a half-kneeling one-arm cable pulldown using the same elbow path.

Dead Bug

Works: Deep abdominals, hip flexors. **Equipment:** Mat. **Used in:** weeks 1-8.

Setup. Lie on your back with arms pointing to the ceiling and hips and knees bent to 90 degrees.

1. Gently press your lower back toward the floor.
2. Slowly reach one arm overhead and the opposite leg out long, stopping before your lower back lifts.
3. Return to the start and switch sides. One reach per side counts as one rep per side.

Cues. Exhale as you reach. Slow is better than far.

Avoid. Lower back arching off the floor, holding your breath, rushing.

Easier version. Heel taps: keep the arms still and lower one bent leg at a time to tap the heel.

Swap. Bird dog (no lying on your back): on hands and knees, reach one arm forward and the opposite leg back until level, hold 2 seconds, return, switch.

HIP HINGE

Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift

Works: Glutes, hamstrings, back muscles hold position. **Equipment:** Two dumbbells. **Used in:** weeks 1-12.

Setup. Stand tall with feet hip-width apart, a dumbbell in each hand in front of your thighs, knees softly bent.

1. Push your hips straight back, letting the dumbbells slide down close to your thighs.
2. Keep your back flat and knees soft (not squatting). Lower until you feel a strong stretch in the back of your thighs, usually around knee to mid-shin.
3. Drive your hips forward to stand, squeezing your glutes at the top.
4. Stand tall at the top without leaning back.

Cues. Think hips back, not chest down. Keep the weights close enough to brush your legs.

Avoid. Rounding the back to reach lower, bending the knees into a squat, letting the dumbbells drift away from the legs.

Easier version. Dowel hinge: hold a broomstick along your spine touching head, upper back and tailbone. Practice the hip hinge until all three points stay in contact, then add light dumbbells and a shorter range.

Swap. Cable pull-through: stand facing away from a low cable with a rope between your legs. Walk forward two steps, hinge back letting the rope pull your hands between your thighs, then drive your hips forward to stand. A kettlebell held in both hands also works for the same hinge.

SINGLE-LEG

Dumbbell Step-Up

Works: Glutes, quadriceps; balance. **Equipment:** Sturdy box or bench, two dumbbells optional. **Used in:** weeks 1-8.

Setup. Use a stable box that puts your working knee a little below hip height when your foot is on it (often 12 to 18 inches). Stand facing it.

1. Place your whole working foot on the box.
2. Lean your torso slightly forward and drive through the heel and midfoot of the top leg to stand up. Push as little as possible with the back foot.
3. Bring the trailing foot up to stand tall on the box.
4. Step down slowly with the trailing leg first, staying in control. Finish all reps on one side, then switch.

Cues. The top leg does the work. Knee tracks over the middle toes.

Avoid. Bouncing off the back foot, a box so high the hips twist, rushing the step down.

Easier version. Lower box and no weights, holding a rail or rack for balance.

Swap. Supported split squat: stand in a long split stance holding a rack with one hand. Lower straight down until the back knee is a few inches from the floor, then push through the front foot to rise.

HORIZONTAL PULL

Seated Cable Row

Works: Mid and upper back, rear shoulders, biceps. **Equipment:** Cable row station. **Used in:** weeks 1-12.

Setup. Sit with feet on the platform, knees slightly bent, and hold the handle with arms straight. Sit tall.

1. Pull the handle to your lower ribs, keeping elbows close to your sides.
2. Squeeze your shoulder blades back briefly.
3. Return with control until your arms are straight, letting the shoulders reach forward slightly without rounding your lower back.

Cues. Torso stays still. Lead with the elbows.

Avoid. Rocking the torso back and forth, shrugging, rounding the lower back.

Easier version. Lighter weight with a 1-second pause at the ribs.

Swap. One-arm dumbbell row: one hand and the same-side knee on a bench, back flat. Pull the dumbbell toward your hip, lower until the arm is straight. Do all reps, switch sides.

VERTICAL PUSH

Seated Dumbbell Shoulder Press

Works: Shoulders, triceps, upper back stabilizers. **Equipment:** Upright bench, two dumbbells. **Used in:** weeks 1-12.

Setup. Set the bench upright. Sit with your back supported and dumbbells at shoulder height, palms facing forward or slightly toward each other.

1. Brace and keep your ribs down.
2. Press the dumbbells up until your arms are straight overhead, without locking hard.
3. Lower with control to about ear or shoulder height.

Cues. Wrists stacked over elbows. Do not arch the lower back to finish the rep.

Avoid. Big lower-back arch, dumbbells drifting far forward, shortening the range as fatigue builds.

Easier version. Lighter dumbbells, or one arm at a time with the free hand on your thigh.

Swap. Machine shoulder press, or a half-kneeling landmine press: kneel on one knee, hold the end of a barbell anchored in a landmine at shoulder height, press it up and forward.

HIP ABDUCTION

Seated Hip Abduction

Works: Gluteus medius and minimus, upper glute. **Equipment:** Hip abduction machine. **Used in:** weeks 1-12.

Setup. Sit with your back against the pad and the pads on the outside of your knees. Set a starting width you can control.

1. Push your knees apart to your comfortable end range.
2. Pause for 1 second.
3. Return slowly, stopping before the weight stack touches down.

Cues. Slow on the way back. You may lean slightly forward from the hips if that feels better in the glutes.

Avoid. Swinging, letting the stack slam, going so heavy the range shrinks to a few inches.

Easier version. Side-lying leg raise: lie on your side, bottom knee bent, top leg straight in line with your body. Lift the top leg about 12 to 18 inches, toes pointing forward, pause, lower slowly.

Swap. Banded seated abduction: sit on a bench with a loop band just above your knees and press your knees apart. Or a standing cable abduction with an ankle strap, holding the machine for balance.

LATERAL CORE

Side Plank

Works: Obliques, side glutes, shoulder stabilizers. **Equipment:** Mat. **Used in:** weeks 1-12.

Setup. Lie on your side with your elbow under your shoulder and forearm on the floor. Knees bent (easier) or legs straight and stacked.

1. Lift your hips until your body forms a straight line.
2. Hold for the prescribed seconds while breathing steadily.
3. Lower, rest briefly, repeat on the other side.

Cues. Push the floor away with the forearm. Hips stay stacked, not rolling back.

Avoid. Hips sagging, shoulder shrugging toward the ear, holding the breath.

Easier version. Knees-bent side plank, or shorter holds repeated two or three times.

Swap. Suitcase carry: hold one dumbbell at your side and walk tall for 20 to 30 yards without leaning, then switch hands.

HORIZONTAL PUSH

Dumbbell Bench Press

Works: Chest, front shoulders, triceps. **Equipment:** Flat bench, two dumbbells. **Used in:** weeks 5-12.

Setup. Sit on the end of the bench with the dumbbells on your thighs. Lie back and bring them to chest level at your sides. Feet flat on the floor.

1. Hold the dumbbells with forearms vertical and elbows about 45 degrees from your body.
2. Press up until the dumbbells are over your shoulders.
3. Lower with control until they are about level with your chest, then press again.
4. Finish by bringing the dumbbells to your chest and rolling up to sit, or lowering them to the floor from low height.

Cues. Shoulder blades set back against the bench. Smooth, even pressing.

Avoid. Elbows flared straight out to the sides, bouncing at the bottom, hips lifting off the bench.

Easier version. Incline push-up (see below) or lighter dumbbells.

Swap. Machine chest press with the same elbow angle. If lying flat is not advised (for example later pregnancy), use an incline bench or the machine.

ANTI-ROTATION CORE

Pallof Press

Works: Obliques, deep abdominals. **Equipment:** Cable station or resistance band. **Used in:** weeks 9-12.

Setup. Set a cable handle at chest height. Stand side-on to the machine with feet hip-width, hold the handle at your chest with both hands, and step away until there is tension.

1. Brace and press the handle straight out in front of your chest.
2. Hold for 2 seconds without letting your torso turn toward the machine.
3. Bring the handle back to your chest. Finish all reps, then face the other way.

Cues. Hips and shoulders stay square. Slow and steady.

Avoid. Twisting toward the cable, shrugging, standing too close for any tension.

Easier version. Half-kneeling version or a lighter weight.

Swap. Band Pallof press: anchor a band at chest height to a rack and follow the same steps.

SINGLE-LEG

Dumbbell Reverse Lunge

Works: Glutes, quadriceps, adductors; balance. **Equipment:** Two dumbbells (or bodyweight).

Used in: weeks 9-12.

Setup. Stand tall with feet hip-width apart, a dumbbell in each hand at your sides.

1. Step one foot back about two to three feet, landing on the ball of that foot.
2. Lower until the back knee is a few inches above the floor. A slight forward lean of the torso is fine and shifts work toward the glutes.
3. Push through the midfoot of the front leg to return to standing.
4. Complete all reps on one leg, then switch (or alternate if balance is steady).

Cues. Most weight on the front foot. Front knee in line with the toes.

Avoid. A short step that loads the front knee, front knee caving inward, dropping hard onto the back knee.

Easier version. Supported split squat (see Step-Up swap) with a smaller range, or bodyweight only.

Swap. Step-up (see Dumbbell Step-Up) or a Smith machine reverse lunge using the same steps.

Safety, pain and medical notes

Stop and seek medical help

Stop exercising and get medical help right away if you have chest pain or pressure, fainting or near-fainting, unusual shortness of breath, an irregular or racing heartbeat, or sudden severe headache or dizziness.

Pain rules

- Muscle effort and mild burning during a set are normal. Sharp, pinching, or joint pain is not: stop that exercise.
- Try the easier version or the swap with a smaller range and lighter weight. If it is pain-free, continue with it.
- If the pain returns, skip that movement for the session. If pain lasts more than a few days, worsens, or comes with swelling, numbness or tingling, see a health care professional.
- Do not train through an injury to keep a streak.

Pregnancy and after giving birth

If you are pregnant, talk with your health care provider before starting or continuing this plan, and follow their advice over this book. The U.S. guidelines say pregnant women should be under the care of a health care provider and should avoid exercises lying on the back after the first trimester. In this plan that affects the bench press, dead bug and hip thrust; use the incline or machine swaps, bird dog, and cable pull-through. ACOG lists warning signs to stop exercise during pregnancy, including vaginal bleeding, abdominal pain, regular painful contractions, fluid leakage, dizziness, headache, chest pain, and calf pain or swelling.

After giving birth, return gradually once your provider says it is medically safe, which depends on how you gave birth and any complications. A pelvic floor or women's health physical therapist can help you decide when to add load.

Chronic conditions, injuries and medications

If you have heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, a joint or back condition, are recovering from an injury or surgery, or take medication that affects heart rate or balance, check with a health care professional about which activities and amounts are right for you. This plan cannot diagnose anything or replace individual advice.

About glutes, waist and results

Muscles grow and get stronger when they are trained progressively over months, and the timeline differs widely between people. This plan cannot promise a particular shape, size or result in 12 weeks.

A smaller waist is not something exercise can target directly. Spot reduction does not work: in a randomized trial, six weeks of abdominal exercises improved core endurance but did not reduce belly fat or waist circumference. Waist size reflects overall body composition, which depends on your total activity, sleep, eating pattern, genetics and life stage. The core work here builds trunk strength and control for lifting and daily life.

This book does not give calorie targets or a diet. Eat regular, balanced meals with enough protein and enough total food to recover from training. If you want to change your body weight, a registered dietitian or your doctor can help you plan safely. Avoid crash diets: under-eating makes training harder and recovery worse.

Useful things to track instead of the mirror alone: the weights and reps in your log, how stairs and carrying feel, weekly active minutes, and how often you showed up.

12-week tracker

Tick each session as you finish it. Write total brisk minutes (cardio plus walks) and one number you are proud of, for example a new hip thrust weight.

WEEK	LIFT DAYS	CARDIO SESSIONS	BRISK MINUTES	BEST LIFT / NOTE
Week 1	☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐ 15 min	goal 30	
Week 2	☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐ 20 min	goal 50	
Week 3	☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐ ☐ 20 min	goal 80	
Week 4	☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐ ☐ 20 min	goal 80	
Week 5	☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐ ☐ 25 min	goal 100	
Week 6	☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐ ☐ 30 min	goal 120	
Week 7	☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐ ☐ 30 min	goal 120	
Week 8	☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐ ☐ 25 min	goal 105	
Week 9	☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐ ☐ 35 min	goal 150	
Week 10	☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐ ☐ 35 min	goal 150	
Week 11	☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐ ☐ 40 min	goal 150	
Week 12	☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐ ☐ 40 min	goal 150	

On the 2-day schedule tick two lift boxes; on the 3-day schedule tick three.

Using the workout logs

- Use only the log pages for your phase and schedule (2-day: Workouts A and B; 3-day: A, B and C). Each named workout comes once a week, so its two tables are two different weeks, never two workouts in one session.
- Each session, fill one table with that week's sets, reps and RIR. Example for Week 1 Goblet Squat (2 sets, RIR 3-4): Set 1: 20 × 12; Set 2: 20 × 11; Set 3: blank.

Workout A log

Tables 1 and 2 are Workout A in two different weeks; fill one per session. Write weight × reps per work set, for example 25 × 10, and the RIR you finished at. Use the sets, reps and RIR on that week's page; leave Set 3 blank where it lists 2 sets. Print or copy this page twice for weeks 1-4. Warm-up sets are not logged.

TABLE 1 · WORKOUT A · EARLIER WEEK			WEEK ____	DATE _____
EXERCISE	SET 1	SET 2	SET 3	RIR / DONE
Goblet Squat				
Hip Thrust				
Incline Push-Up				
Lat Pulldown				
Dead Bug				
Notes / pain / energy				

TABLE 2 · WORKOUT A · LATER WEEK			WEEK ____	DATE _____
EXERCISE	SET 1	SET 2	SET 3	RIR / DONE
Goblet Squat				
Hip Thrust				
Incline Push-Up				
Lat Pulldown				
Dead Bug				
Notes / pain / energy				

Workout B log

Tables 1 and 2 are Workout B in two different weeks; fill one per session. Write weight × reps per work set, for example 25 × 10, and the RIR you finished at. Use the sets, reps and RIR on that week's page; leave Set 3 blank where it lists 2 sets. Print or copy this page twice for weeks 1-4. Warm-up sets are not logged.

TABLE 1 · WORKOUT B · EARLIER WEEK

WEEK ____ DATE _____

EXERCISE	SET 1	SET 2	SET 3	RIR / DONE
Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift				
Dumbbell Step-Up				
Seated Cable Row				
Seated Dumbbell Shoulder Press				
Seated Hip Abduction				
Side Plank				
Notes / pain / energy				

TABLE 2 · WORKOUT B · LATER WEEK

WEEK ____ DATE _____

EXERCISE	SET 1	SET 2	SET 3	RIR / DONE
Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift				
Dumbbell Step-Up				
Seated Cable Row				
Seated Dumbbell Shoulder Press				
Seated Hip Abduction				
Side Plank				
Notes / pain / energy				

Workout A log

Tables 1 and 2 are Workout A in two different weeks; fill one per session. Write weight × reps per work set, for example 25 × 10, and the RIR you finished at. Use the sets, reps and RIR on that week's page; leave Set 3 blank where it lists 2 sets. Print or copy this page twice for weeks 1-4. Warm-up sets are not logged.

TABLE 1 · WORKOUT A · EARLIER WEEK WEEK ____ DATE _____

EXERCISE	SET 1	SET 2	SET 3	RIR / DONE
Goblet Squat				
Incline Push-Up				
Lat Pulldown				
Dead Bug				

Notes / pain / energy

TABLE 2 · WORKOUT A · LATER WEEK WEEK ____ DATE _____

EXERCISE	SET 1	SET 2	SET 3	RIR / DONE
Goblet Squat				
Incline Push-Up				
Lat Pulldown				
Dead Bug				

Notes / pain / energy

Workout B log

Tables 1 and 2 are Workout B in two different weeks; fill one per session. Write weight × reps per work set, for example 25 × 10, and the RIR you finished at. Use the sets, reps and RIR on that week's page; leave Set 3 blank where it lists 2 sets. Print or copy this page twice for weeks 1-4. Warm-up sets are not logged.

TABLE 1 · WORKOUT B · EARLIER WEEK WEEK ____ DATE _____

EXERCISE	SET 1	SET 2	SET 3	RIR / DONE
Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift				
Seated Cable Row				
Seated Hip Abduction				
Side Plank				

Notes / pain / energy

TABLE 2 · WORKOUT B · LATER WEEK WEEK ____ DATE _____

EXERCISE	SET 1	SET 2	SET 3	RIR / DONE
Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift				
Seated Cable Row				
Seated Hip Abduction				
Side Plank				

Notes / pain / energy

Workout C log

Tables 1 and 2 are Workout C in two different weeks; fill one per session. Write weight × reps per work set, for example 25 × 10, and the RIR you finished at. Use the sets, reps and RIR on that week's page; leave Set 3 blank where it lists 2 sets. Print or copy this page twice for weeks 1-4. Warm-up sets are not logged.

TABLE 1 · WORKOUT C · EARLIER WEEK			WEEK ____	DATE _____
EXERCISE	SET 1	SET 2	SET 3	RIR / DONE
Hip Thrust				
Dumbbell Step-Up				
Seated Dumbbell Shoulder Press				
Notes / pain / energy				

TABLE 2 · WORKOUT C · LATER WEEK			WEEK ____	DATE _____
EXERCISE	SET 1	SET 2	SET 3	RIR / DONE
Hip Thrust				
Dumbbell Step-Up				
Seated Dumbbell Shoulder Press				
Notes / pain / energy				

Workout A log

Tables 1 and 2 are Workout A in two different weeks; fill one per session. Write weight × reps per work set, for example 25 × 10, and the RIR you finished at. Use the sets, reps and RIR on that week's page; leave Set 3 blank where it lists 2 sets. Print or copy this page twice for weeks 5-8. Warm-up sets are not logged.

TABLE 1 · WORKOUT A · EARLIER WEEK			WEEK ____ DATE _____	
EXERCISE	SET 1	SET 2	SET 3	RIR / DONE
Goblet Squat				
Hip Thrust				
Dumbbell Bench Press				
Lat Pulldown				
Seated Hip Abduction				
Dead Bug				
Notes / pain / energy				

TABLE 2 · WORKOUT A · LATER WEEK			WEEK ____ DATE _____	
EXERCISE	SET 1	SET 2	SET 3	RIR / DONE
Goblet Squat				
Hip Thrust				
Dumbbell Bench Press				
Lat Pulldown				
Seated Hip Abduction				
Dead Bug				
Notes / pain / energy				

Workout B log

Tables 1 and 2 are Workout B in two different weeks; fill one per session. Write weight × reps per work set, for example 25 × 10, and the RIR you finished at. Use the sets, reps and RIR on that week's page; leave Set 3 blank where it lists 2 sets. Print or copy this page twice for weeks 5-8. Warm-up sets are not logged.

TABLE 1 · WORKOUT B · EARLIER WEEK			WEEK ____	DATE _____
EXERCISE	SET 1	SET 2	SET 3	RIR / DONE
Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift				
Dumbbell Step-Up				
Seated Cable Row				
Seated Dumbbell Shoulder Press				
Seated Hip Abduction				
Side Plank				
Notes / pain / energy				

TABLE 2 · WORKOUT B · LATER WEEK			WEEK ____	DATE _____
EXERCISE	SET 1	SET 2	SET 3	RIR / DONE
Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift				
Dumbbell Step-Up				
Seated Cable Row				
Seated Dumbbell Shoulder Press				
Seated Hip Abduction				
Side Plank				
Notes / pain / energy				

Workout A log

Tables 1 and 2 are Workout A in two different weeks; fill one per session. Write weight × reps per work set, for example 25 × 10, and the RIR you finished at. Use the sets, reps and RIR on that week's page; leave Set 3 blank where it lists 2 sets. Print or copy this page twice for weeks 5-8. Warm-up sets are not logged.

TABLE 1 · WORKOUT A · EARLIER WEEK WEEK ____ DATE _____

EXERCISE	SET 1	SET 2	SET 3	RIR / DONE
Goblet Squat				
Dumbbell Bench Press				
Lat Pulldown				
Dead Bug				

Notes / pain / energy

TABLE 2 · WORKOUT A · LATER WEEK WEEK ____ DATE _____

EXERCISE	SET 1	SET 2	SET 3	RIR / DONE
Goblet Squat				
Dumbbell Bench Press				
Lat Pulldown				
Dead Bug				

Notes / pain / energy

Workout B log

Tables 1 and 2 are Workout B in two different weeks; fill one per session. Write weight × reps per work set, for example 25 × 10, and the RIR you finished at. Use the sets, reps and RIR on that week's page; leave Set 3 blank where it lists 2 sets. Print or copy this page twice for weeks 5-8. Warm-up sets are not logged.

TABLE 1 · WORKOUT B · EARLIER WEEK WEEK ____ DATE _____

EXERCISE	SET 1	SET 2	SET 3	RIR / DONE
Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift				
Seated Cable Row				
Seated Hip Abduction				
Side Plank				

Notes / pain / energy

TABLE 2 · WORKOUT B · LATER WEEK WEEK ____ DATE _____

EXERCISE	SET 1	SET 2	SET 3	RIR / DONE
Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift				
Seated Cable Row				
Seated Hip Abduction				
Side Plank				

Notes / pain / energy

Workout C log

Tables 1 and 2 are Workout C in two different weeks; fill one per session. Write weight × reps per work set, for example 25 × 10, and the RIR you finished at. Use the sets, reps and RIR on that week's page; leave Set 3 blank where it lists 2 sets. Print or copy this page twice for weeks 5-8. Warm-up sets are not logged.

TABLE 1 · WORKOUT C · EARLIER WEEK WEEK ____ DATE _____

EXERCISE	SET 1	SET 2	SET 3	RIR / DONE
Hip Thrust				
Dumbbell Step-Up				
Seated Dumbbell Shoulder Press				
Seated Hip Abduction				

Notes / pain / energy

TABLE 2 · WORKOUT C · LATER WEEK WEEK ____ DATE _____

EXERCISE	SET 1	SET 2	SET 3	RIR / DONE
Hip Thrust				
Dumbbell Step-Up				
Seated Dumbbell Shoulder Press				
Seated Hip Abduction				

Notes / pain / energy

Workout A log

Tables 1 and 2 are Workout A in two different weeks; fill one per session. Write weight × reps per work set, for example 25 × 10, and the RIR you finished at. Use the sets, reps and RIR on that week's page; leave Set 3 blank where it lists 2 sets. Print or copy this page twice for weeks 9-12. Warm-up sets are not logged.

TABLE 1 · WORKOUT A · EARLIER WEEK			WEEK ____ DATE _____	
EXERCISE	SET 1	SET 2	SET 3	RIR / DONE
Goblet Squat				
Hip Thrust				
Dumbbell Bench Press				
Lat Pulldown				
Seated Hip Abduction				
Pallof Press				
Notes / pain / energy				

TABLE 2 · WORKOUT A · LATER WEEK			WEEK ____ DATE _____	
EXERCISE	SET 1	SET 2	SET 3	RIR / DONE
Goblet Squat				
Hip Thrust				
Dumbbell Bench Press				
Lat Pulldown				
Seated Hip Abduction				
Pallof Press				
Notes / pain / energy				

Workout B log

Tables 1 and 2 are Workout B in two different weeks; fill one per session. Write weight × reps per work set, for example 25 × 10, and the RIR you finished at. Use the sets, reps and RIR on that week's page; leave Set 3 blank where it lists 2 sets. Print or copy this page twice for weeks 9-12. Warm-up sets are not logged.

TABLE 1 · WORKOUT B · EARLIER WEEK			WEEK ____	DATE _____
EXERCISE	SET 1	SET 2	SET 3	RIR / DONE
Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift				
Dumbbell Reverse Lunge				
Seated Cable Row				
Seated Dumbbell Shoulder Press				
Seated Hip Abduction				
Side Plank				
Notes / pain / energy				

TABLE 2 · WORKOUT B · LATER WEEK			WEEK ____	DATE _____
EXERCISE	SET 1	SET 2	SET 3	RIR / DONE
Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift				
Dumbbell Reverse Lunge				
Seated Cable Row				
Seated Dumbbell Shoulder Press				
Seated Hip Abduction				
Side Plank				
Notes / pain / energy				

Workout A log

Tables 1 and 2 are Workout A in two different weeks; fill one per session. Write weight × reps per work set, for example 25 × 10, and the RIR you finished at. Use the sets, reps and RIR on that week's page; leave Set 3 blank where it lists 2 sets. Print or copy this page twice for weeks 9-12. Warm-up sets are not logged.

TABLE 1 · WORKOUT A · EARLIER WEEK WEEK ____ DATE _____

EXERCISE	SET 1	SET 2	SET 3	RIR / DONE
Goblet Squat				
Dumbbell Bench Press				
Lat Pulldown				
Pallof Press				

Notes / pain / energy

TABLE 2 · WORKOUT A · LATER WEEK WEEK ____ DATE _____

EXERCISE	SET 1	SET 2	SET 3	RIR / DONE
Goblet Squat				
Dumbbell Bench Press				
Lat Pulldown				
Pallof Press				

Notes / pain / energy

Workout B log

Tables 1 and 2 are Workout B in two different weeks; fill one per session. Write weight × reps per work set, for example 25 × 10, and the RIR you finished at. Use the sets, reps and RIR on that week's page; leave Set 3 blank where it lists 2 sets. Print or copy this page twice for weeks 9-12. Warm-up sets are not logged.

TABLE 1 · WORKOUT B · EARLIER WEEK WEEK ____ DATE _____

EXERCISE	SET 1	SET 2	SET 3	RIR / DONE
Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift				
Seated Cable Row				
Seated Hip Abduction				
Side Plank				

Notes / pain / energy

TABLE 2 · WORKOUT B · LATER WEEK WEEK ____ DATE _____

EXERCISE	SET 1	SET 2	SET 3	RIR / DONE
Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift				
Seated Cable Row				
Seated Hip Abduction				
Side Plank				

Notes / pain / energy

Workout C log

Tables 1 and 2 are Workout C in two different weeks; fill one per session. Write weight × reps per work set, for example 25 × 10, and the RIR you finished at. Use the sets, reps and RIR on that week's page; leave Set 3 blank where it lists 2 sets. Print or copy this page twice for weeks 9-12. Warm-up sets are not logged.

TABLE 1 · WORKOUT C · EARLIER WEEK WEEK ____ DATE _____

EXERCISE	SET 1	SET 2	SET 3	RIR / DONE
Hip Thrust				
Dumbbell Reverse Lunge				
Seated Dumbbell Shoulder Press				
Seated Hip Abduction				

Notes / pain / energy

TABLE 2 · WORKOUT C · LATER WEEK WEEK ____ DATE _____

EXERCISE	SET 1	SET 2	SET 3	RIR / DONE
Hip Thrust				
Dumbbell Reverse Lunge				
Seated Dumbbell Shoulder Press				
Seated Hip Abduction				

Notes / pain / energy

Sources and credits

What is evidence and what is editorial

Evidence-based: the weekly targets (150-300 moderate minutes and muscle-strengthening on 2 or more days for all major muscle groups), the 0-10 effort scale, starting low and going slow, the safety referrals, 8-12 reps and 1-3 sets as effective ranges, progressive overload, not needing training to failure, similar results from 2 or 3 days when weekly volume is equal, rests of 60-120 seconds for untrained lifters, squats and hip thrusts both building glutes, and core exercise not spot-reducing fat.

Editorial choices by Peachess (not tested as a whole program): the specific exercises, their order and pairing, the exact sets per week, rep ranges per phase, RIR targets, lighter weeks 4 and 8, cardio minutes per week, the extra-walking amounts, the load rule step sizes, warm-up and cool-down, and all instructions. No source endorses this plan. Training the chest press and the shoulder press once a week each, rather than each muscle group on two separate days, is also an editorial choice. Sources were opened and checked on 2026-10-01. Guideline pages and reports were read in full; for journal articles only the PubMed abstract was read, and those references are marked "abstract only". One trial comparing squats and hip thrusts was left out because its data quality has been publicly questioned; the plan does not depend on it.

References

ODPHP-TOP10. U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, ODPHP. Top 10 Things to Know About the Second Edition of the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans.
<https://odphp.health.gov/our-work/nutrition-physical-activity/physical-activity-guidelines/current-guidelines/top-10-things-know>

Supports: Weekly aerobic target (150-300 min moderate) and 2+ strength days; counting short brisk walks; page verified current (last updated Nov 19, 2025).

PAG2. U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services. Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, 2nd edition (2018).
https://odphp.health.gov/sites/default/files/2019-09/Physical_Activity_Guidelines_2nd_edition.pdf

Supports: All-major-muscle-group strength 2+ days; 0-10 effort scale for cardio; gradual start; 8-12 reps and 1-3 sets; small progressive overload; warm-up counting; pregnancy and chronic-condition referral.

WHO-FS. World Health Organization. Physical activity (fact sheet).
<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/physical-activity>

Supports: Cross-check: 150 min/week moderate activity is also the WHO adult minimum.

ACOG-804. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. Physical Activity and Exercise During Pregnancy and the Postpartum Period, Committee Opinion No. 804 (2020; page shows Reaffirmed 2023).

<https://www.acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/committee-opinion/articles/2020/04/physical-activity-and-exercise-during-pregnancy-and-the-postpartum-period>

Supports: Pregnancy warning-sign list and gradual, medically cleared postpartum return (general referral only).

ACSM-2026. Currier BS, ... Schoenfeld BJ, ... Phillips SM. ACSM Position Stand. Resistance Training Prescription for Muscle Function, Hypertrophy, and Physical Performance in Healthy Adults: An Overview of Reviews. *Med Sci Sports Exerc* 2026;58(4):851-872 (abstract only).

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/41843416/>

Supports: Progressive training, 2-3 sets, 2+ sessions/week, full range of motion, main lifts first, glute sets building toward ~10/week, failure not required, machine or free-weight equipment both acceptable.

ACSM-2009. American College of Sports Medicine. ACSM position stand. Progression models in resistance training for healthy adults. *Med Sci Sports Exerc* 2009;41(3):687-708 (abstract only).

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/19204579/>

Supports: Historic context for 6-12 rep zones and 1-2 min rests; updated by ACSM-2026.

SCHOENFELD-VOL-2017. Schoenfeld BJ, Ogborn D, Krieger JW. Dose-response relationship between weekly resistance training volume and increases in muscle mass. *J Sports Sci* 2017 (abstract only).

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27433992/>

Supports: Gradual weekly set increases across phases.

SCHOENFELD-LOAD-2017. Schoenfeld BJ, Grgic J, Ogborn D, Krieger JW. Strength and Hypertrophy Adaptations Between Low- vs. High-Load Resistance Training. *J Strength Cond Res* 2017 (abstract only).

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28834797/>

Supports: Rep ranges from 6-20 are all productive; lower reps on main lifts in weeks 9-12 for strength.

REFALO-2023. Refalo MC, Helms ER, Trexler ET, Hamilton DL, Fyfe JJ. Influence of Resistance Training Proximity-to-Failure on Skeletal Muscle Hypertrophy. *Sports Med* 2023 (abstract only).

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36334240/>

Supports: No forced failure; sets stop with reps in reserve.

GRGIC-FAIL-2022. Grgic J, Schoenfeld BJ, Orazem J, Sabol F. Effects of resistance training performed to repetition failure or non-failure on muscular strength and hypertrophy. *J Sport Health Sci* 2022 (abstract only).

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33497853/>

Supports: No forced failure.

ROBINSON-2024. Robinson ZP, et al.. Exploring the Dose-Response Relationship Between Estimated Resistance Training Proximity to Failure, Strength Gain, and Muscle Hypertrophy. *Sports Med* 2024 (abstract only).

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/38970765/>

Supports: RIR moving from 3-4 early toward 1-2 on stable machine/isolation lifts later.

ZOURDOS-2016. Zourdos MC, et al.. Novel Resistance Training-Specific Rating of Perceived Exertion Scale Measuring Repetitions in Reserve. J Strength Cond Res 2016 (abstract only). <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26049792/>

Supports: RIR definition used in the plan.

SCHOENFELD-FREQ-2019. Schoenfeld BJ, Grgic J, Krieger J. How many times per week should a muscle be trained to maximize muscle hypertrophy? J Sports Sci 2019 (abstract only). <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30558493/>

Supports: 2-day and 3-day options spread similar weekly sets; the third day redistributes rather than piles on volume.

RALSTON-FREQ-2018. Ralston GW, et al.. Weekly Training Frequency Effects on Strength Gain: A Meta-Analysis. Sports Med Open 2018 (abstract only). <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30076500/>

Supports: Same as above for strength.

GRGIC-REST-2018. Grgic J, et al.. Effects of Rest Interval Duration in Resistance Training on Measures of Muscular Strength. Sports Med 2018 (abstract only). <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28933024/>

Supports: Rest 60-120 s; 2 min on main lower-body lifts.

PLOTKIN-2023. Plotkin DL, et al.. Hip thrust and back squat training elicit similar gluteus muscle hypertrophy and transfer similarly to the deadlift. Front Physiol 2023 (abstract only). <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/37877099/>

Supports: Both squat-pattern and hip-thrust-pattern lifts are programmed for glutes.

VISPUTE-2011. Vispute SS, et al.. The effect of abdominal exercise on abdominal fat. J Strength Cond Res 2011 (abstract only). <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/21804427/>

Supports: Waist section: core work builds strength and endurance; it does not spot-reduce.

Fonts

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Disclaimer

This free plan is general education, not medical advice or individual programming. It has not been tested as a complete program and has not been approved by a qualified trainer or clinician for you. Exercise involves some risk; use the safety pages and consult a health care professional when they apply to you.