

— TRAINING SYSTEM · YOUR FIRST MUSCLE

FIRST BUILD

Ten weeks to put on your first real, visible muscle. More volume than Foundations, honest hypertrophy rep ranges, and a plate built to grow on — for the beginner ready to add size.

LEVEL

Beginner

LENGTH

10 Weeks

SCHEDULE

3 Days / Wk

GOAL

Muscle



01 — BEGIN HERE

YOUR FIRST VISIBLE MUSCLE.

Once the movements feel natural, the question changes from "can I do this?" to "how do I grow?" First Build is the answer for a beginner. Ten weeks, three sessions, more sets in the rep ranges where muscle is actually built — paired with eating enough to grow. This is where the body starts to change in the mirror, not just on the log.

FOR YOU, IF

You've done Foundations of Form (or trained a few months), your technique is solid, and you want size. You're willing to eat a little more and push sets closer to hard.

NOT YET, IF

You're brand new — run Foundations of Form first; muscle is built on clean technique. Ready for more structure and volume later? Hypertrophy Method is the next step up.

THE THREE THINGS THAT BUILD MUSCLE

Enough hard sets per muscle each week · **progressive overload** (more reps, then more weight) · and **enough food and protein** to build with. Training is the signal; a small surplus is the material. Miss either and the mirror won't move. This program handles the training; Eating to Grow handles the plate.

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02

THE FIVE PRINCIPLES

Everything here follows from these. Read them once; they explain every choice that follows.

01 VOLUME DRIVES GROWTH

Muscle grows in response to enough hard sets. We add a little more weekly volume than Foundations — the dose that actually builds size. → [Studies](#) · [The science of muscle growth](#)

02 TRAIN CLOSER TO HARD

To grow, sets must be challenging — roughly 1–2 reps from failure on the working sets. Not grinding, but genuinely hard. That proximity is the stimulus.

03 PROGRESSIVE OVERLOAD, STILL

Add reps within the range, then add weight. Same engine as every VYSN program — just aimed at size. The log must trend up over the ten weeks.

04 EAT TO GROW

You cannot build much muscle without a small calorie surplus and enough protein. A slight, controlled surplus — not a dirty bulk. → [Pair: Eating to Grow](#)

05 FEEL THE MUSCLE WORK

For growth, controlling the weight beats throwing it. Full range, a smooth lowering, and tension on the target muscle build more than heavier, sloppier reps.



03

THE PLAN AT A GLANCE

Ten weeks, one page. Screenshot it. This is the whole program — everything after is detail.

THE ARC · THREE BLOCKS

WEEKS 1–4

VOLUME

3–4 × 10–15 · ~2 RIR. Build weekly sets. Chase the pump and the reps.

WEEKS 5–9

INTENSIFY

4 × 8–12 · 1–2 RIR. Heavier loads in slightly lower ranges; push the last set.

WEEK 10

DELOAD

2 × 10 · easy. Back off, recover, then start the next block bigger.

THE WEEK · THREE FULL-BODY SESSIONS, EACH HITTING EVERY MUSCLE

DAY A

PUSH FOCUS

- 1 Squat
- 2 DB Bench Press
- 3 Lat Pulldown
- 4 Lateral Raise
- 5 Triceps + Plank

DAY B

PULL FOCUS

- 1 Romanian Deadlift
- 2 Cable Row
- 3 Incline DB Press
- 4 DB Curl
- 5 Leg Curl + Calf

DAY C

LEGS + ARMS

- 1 Leg Press / Split Squat
- 2 Shoulder Press
- 3 One-arm DB Row
- 4 Curl + Triceps
- 5 Calf + Core

THE ONE RULE

Each working set, stop **1–2 reps short of failure** and log it. When you beat last week's reps at the same weight across all sets, **add a little weight** next time. More reps, then more weight — that climbing log is muscle being built.



04

THE MOVEMENT LIBRARY

Big lifts build the base; targeted isolations fill it in. For growth, the cue is always the same: control the weight and feel the muscle.

01 SQUAT & LEGS

Back Squat · Leg Press · Split Squat

Cue: full depth, controlled, drive through the whole foot. Avoid: half reps, bouncing out of the bottom.

02 HINGE & HAMSTRINGS

Romanian Deadlift · Leg Curl

Cue: feel the hamstring stretch, hips back, smooth return. Avoid: rounding the back, rushing the lowering.

03 PUSH · CHEST & SHOULDERS

DB Bench · Incline Press · Shoulder Press · Lateral Raise

Cue: full range, stretch at the bottom, squeeze at the top. Avoid: half reps, ego weight that kills the range.

04 PULL · BACK

Lat Pulldown · Cable Row · One-arm DB Row

Cue: stretch at the top, pull with the elbow, squeeze the back. Avoid: heaving with momentum.

05 ARMS

DB Curl · Triceps Pushdown / Overhead

Cue: slow, full range, no swinging — arms grow on tension, not momentum. Avoid: cheating reps with the body.

06 CORE & CALVES

Plank · Hanging / Dead Bug · Calf Raise

Cue: full range on calves; brace hard on core. Avoid: tiny bouncy calf reps.



05

THE SESSIONS

Warm up first. Sets & reps shown for **Block 1 (Weeks 1-4)**; progress per the block guide. Rest ~90s on big lifts, 60s on isolations. Push working sets to 1-2 RIR.

DAY A · PUSH FOCUS

EXERCISE	SETS × REPS	RIR	NOTE
Squat LEGS	3 × 8-12	2	Full depth
DB Bench Press CHEST	3 × 10-12	2	Stretch at bottom
Lat Pulldown BACK	3 × 10-12	2	Full stretch up top
Lateral Raise SHOULDERS	3 × 12-15	1	Light, controlled
Triceps + Plank ARMS · CORE	3 × 12 / 30s	1	Superset

DAY B · PULL FOCUS

EXERCISE	SETS × REPS	RIR	NOTE
Romanian Deadlift HAMSTRINGS	3 × 8-12	2	Feel the stretch
Seated Cable Row BACK	3 × 10-12	2	Squeeze, don't lean
Incline DB Press UPPER CHEST	3 × 10-12	2	~30° bench
DB Curl BICEPS	3 × 10-12	1	No swing
Leg Curl + Calf HAMS · CALVES	3 × 12-15	1	Full range

**DAY C · LEGS + ARMS**

EXERCISE	SETS × REPS	RIR	NOTE
Leg Press / Split Squat LEGS	3 × 10-15	2	Full range
Shoulder Press SHOULDERS	3 × 8-12	2	Ribs down
One-arm DB Row BACK	3 × 10-12	2	Each side
Curl + Triceps ARMS	3 × 12	1	Superset
Calf + Core CALVES · CORE	3 × 15 / 30s	1	Full range

06**HOW EACH BLOCK CHANGES**

BLOCK	SETS × REPS	RIR	WHAT YOU DO
1 · Volume WEEKS 1-4	3-4 × 10-15	~2	Build weekly sets. Higher reps, chase the pump and add reps weekly.
2 · Intensify WEEKS 5-9	4 × 8-12	1-2	More weight, slightly lower reps. Last set of each lift genuinely hard.
3 · Deload WEEK 10	2 × 10	4+	~60% loads, easy and clean. Recover, then run the next block bigger.

After 10 weeks: run it again with heavier starting weights, or step up to **Hypertrophy Method** — sixteen weeks and two dedicated splits for serious size.



07

THE PLATE · EATING TO GROW

You cannot build a wall without bricks. Muscle needs a small surplus of energy and plenty of protein — train hard, then give the body enough to grow on. A little extra, not a free-for-all.

BUILD EVERY PLATE FROM FOUR PARTS — EAT A LITTLE MORE OF EACH

PROTEIN

A palm+, each meal

The bricks. Eggs, curd, paneer, soya, chicken, fish, whey. Spread across 3–4 meals for the best growth.

CARBS

A full cupped hand+

The fuel that powers hard sets and feeds growth. Eat generously, especially around training.

VEGETABLES

Two fists

Health, fibre, micronutrients. Don't let the surplus crowd them out.

FATS

A thumb+

Useful calories for hormones and energy. Easy way to add to the surplus if the scale is flat.

THE SURPLUS, SIMPLY

Aim to gain about **0.25–0.5% of bodyweight a week** — slow enough that it's mostly muscle. Flat for two weeks? Add a little food. Gaining too fast? Trim it. The full method is **Eating to Grow**, free.

PROTEIN TARGET

~1.6–2.0 g per kg of bodyweight daily. A 70 kg person ≈ 110–140 g. Protein at every meal is the single most important habit for building muscle.

IN SHORT

A small surplus · protein high and frequent · carbs to fuel the sets · gain slowly. Grow on purpose, not by accident.



08

RECOVERY

Muscle is built between sessions, not during them. You break the tissue down with hard sets; food and sleep build it back bigger. Skimp on recovery and the volume just digs a hole.

SLEEP

7–9 hours. Growth hormone and muscle repair peak in deep sleep. The most anabolic thing you do all day costs nothing.

REST DAYS

A full day between sessions. The extra volume here needs it. Walk and eat; let the muscle rebuild.

MANAGE FATIGUE

Some tiredness is normal in a building block. If lifts stall for two weeks, take the deload early — fatigue is masking your gains.

TWO THINGS TO UNLEARN

A pump is not growth, but it's a clue. The pump fades by evening; real growth shows over weeks on the log and tape. Chase progress in the numbers, enjoy the pump as feedback.

More is not always better. Beyond a point, extra sets just add fatigue you can't recover from — especially as a beginner. Do the prescribed volume well before adding any.



09

THE WEEK LOG

Print this page. Tick each session and log bodyweight — for growth you want the scale and the lifts both trending gently up.

WEEK	DAY A	DAY B	DAY C	BODYWEIGHT
01 · Volume				
02				
03				
04				
05 · Intensify				
06				
07				
08				
09				
10 · Deload				



09

THE LIFT LOG

Log weight × reps for the main lifts. The goal is simple: beat last week's reps, then add weight. A log that climbs is muscle being built.

LIFT	WK 1	WK 3	WK 5	WK 7	WK 9
Squat					
Romanian Deadlift					
DB Bench Press					
Incline DB Press					
Cable Row					
Lat Pulldown					
Shoulder Press					

ARM / CHEST MEASURE (CM) · OPTIONAL

WK 1	WK 5	WK 10

NOTES TO SELF



10

QUESTIONS, ANSWERED

WILL I GET FAT EATING IN A SURPLUS?

Not if it's small. Aim to gain 0.25–0.5% of bodyweight a week — mostly muscle, a little fat. A slow, lean gain beats a dirty bulk you have to diet off later.

WHY HIGHER REPS THAN FOUNDATIONS?

Muscle grows across a wide rep range, but the 8–15 zone with enough sets is the sweet spot for building size without grinding heavy singles. It's about total hard work, not just heavy.

HOW DO I KNOW A SET IS HARD ENOUGH?

You should feel you could do only 1–2 more clean reps if you had to. If you could do five more, it was a warm-up — add weight or reps.

SHOULD I TAKE CREATINE OR PROTEIN POWDER?

Whey is a convenient way to hit protein; creatine is the one supplement with strong evidence for muscle and strength. Neither is required — food first. See the Studies on supplements.

MY WEIGHT ISN'T GOING UP.

Then you're not in a surplus — eat a little more, especially carbs around training. No surplus, no growth. Eating to Grow walks you through it.

CAN WOMEN RUN THIS PROGRAM?

Yes — without changes. The volume and progression build shapely, strong muscle for anyone; only the loads differ.

WHAT COMES AFTER WEEK 10?

Run it again heavier, or move up to [Hypertrophy Method](#) — sixteen weeks, two structured splits, for serious size.



BUILD IT SLOWLY. KEEP IT FOR GOOD.

The first muscle you build is the proof that the body answers when you train it well and feed it enough. Ten weeks won't make you huge — but it will make you bigger, and it will show you exactly how the rest is built.

PAIR THE PLATE

EATING TO GROW

The lean-surplus eating for this plan. Free.

NEXT PROGRAM

HYPERTROPHY METHOD

Sixteen weeks, two splits, for serious size.

EVERY MORNING

THE EDGE

One letter before noon. One principle, one practice.

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