

— TRAINING SYSTEM · THE STEP UP

UPPER / LOWER

Four days, two splits, every muscle trained twice a week. The intermediate step up from full-body — more volume, more focus, the same one rule for getting stronger.

LEVEL

Intermediate

LENGTH

10 Weeks

SCHEDULE

4 Days / Wk

SPLIT

Upper / Lower



01 — BEGIN HERE

MORE VOLUME, WITHOUT THE BURNOUT.

Full-body got you started; eventually it runs out of room. There are only so many hard sets you can pack into one session before quality drops. Upper/Lower solves it — split the body in two, train four days a week, and hit every muscle twice with fresh energy each time. It's the simplest, most proven step up from beginner training.

FOR YOU, IF

You've run Foundations or trained 6–12 months, you recover well from full-body, and you can commit to four sessions a week. You want more volume and faster progress.

NOT YET, IF

You're still learning the lifts or can only train three days — stay on Foundations of Form or First Build. Want six days and maximum volume? Step up to Push Pull Legs.

WHY TWICE A WEEK BEATS ONCE

Training a muscle every five to seven days leaves growth on the table; twice a week roughly doubles the quality stimulus without doubling fatigue. Four focused sessions let you add the volume that drives intermediate progress — and recover from it. → Studies · The science of muscle growth

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02

THE FIVE PRINCIPLES

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

01 FREQUENCY, TWICE A WEEK

Each muscle is trained on two days, every week. Two moderate sessions beat one punishing one — more total quality work, spread so you can actually recover and repeat.

02 EARN YOUR VOLUME

The jump from full-body is more sets per muscle each week. Add them gradually — start at the lower end and build. More is only better if you recover from it.

03 PROGRESSIVE OVERLOAD, STILL

The engine never changes. Beat last week's reps, then add weight. The split gives you more room to apply it — across more lifts, more often. → [Studies](#) · [Progressive overload](#)

04 HEAVY DAY, VOLUME DAY

Of the two sessions per muscle, one leans heavier (lower reps), one leans toward volume (higher reps). Both build; together they cover the full spectrum of growth.

05 BALANCE PUSH AND PULL

Upper days pair pressing with equal pulling. Balanced volume builds a complete, healthy physique — and keeps the shoulders and lower back happy under heavier loads.



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

Build weekly sets. Moderate loads, ~2 RIR. Settle into four days.

WEEKS 5-9

INTENSIFY

Heavier on the strength lifts, push volume on the rest. 1-2 RIR.

WEEK 10

DELOAD

Half the sets, easy loads. Recover, then run it again heavier.

THE WEEK · FOUR SESSIONS, EACH MUSCLE TWICE

UPPER A

HEAVY

- 1 Bench Press
- 2 Barbell Row
- 3 Shoulder Press
- 4 Lat Pulldown
- 5 Curl / Triceps

LOWER A

HEAVY

- 1 Squat
- 2 Romanian Deadlift
- 3 Leg Press
- 4 Leg Curl
- 5 Calf · Core

UPPER B

VOLUME

- 1 Incline DB Press
- 2 Cable Row
- 3 Lateral Raise
- 4 Face Pull
- 5 Curl / Triceps

LOWER B

VOLUME

- 1 Front Squat / Hack
- 2 Hip Thrust
- 3 Split Squat
- 4 Leg Extension
- 5 Calf · Core

THE ONE RULE

Beat the log. **Add a rep on every working set until you hit the top of the range, then add weight and drop back down.** Heavy days chase load; volume days chase reps. The log climbing across ten weeks is the program working.



04

THE FOUR DAYS

A simple weekly rhythm: two upper, two lower, a rest day between hard sessions. Every muscle is hit on its heavy day and again on its volume day.

DAY	SESSION	TRAINS
Mon	Upper A · Heavy	Chest, back, shoulders, arms — lower reps, bigger loads
Tue	Lower A · Heavy	Quads, hamstrings, glutes, calves — squat and hinge led
Wed	Rest / walk	Recover; easy steps
Thu	Upper B · Volume	Same muscles, higher reps, more isolation and shoulders
Fri	Lower B · Volume	Quads and glutes again, hypertrophy focus
Sat / Sun	Rest / walk	Two days off; live, recover, eat

WEEKLY SETS PER MUSCLE · THE INTERMEDIATE DOSE

Across the two days, each major muscle gets roughly **10–16 hard sets a week** — the range that drives growth for most intermediates. Start near the bottom in Block 1 and build toward the top by Block 2. If recovery suffers, hold or trim; the goal is sets you can grow from, not just survive.

CAN'T DO 4 DAYS?

Run it as a 3-day rotation (Upper A, Lower A, Upper B, then Lower B next week, and so on). You'll progress a touch slower, but every session still counts.



05

THE SESSIONS

Warm up before the first heavy lift. Sets & reps shown for **Block 1 (Weeks 1-4)**; progress per the block guide. Rest 2-3 min on the big lifts, 60-90s on the rest.

UPPER A · HEAVY

EXERCISE	SETS × REPS	RIR	NOTE
Bench Press CHEST	4 × 5-8	2	Main press
Barbell Row BACK	4 × 6-8	2	Match the press
Shoulder Press DELTS	3 × 6-10	2	Seated or standing
Lat Pulldown BACK	3 × 8-12	2	Full stretch
Curl + Triceps ARMS	3 × 8-12	1	Superset

LOWER A · HEAVY

EXERCISE	SETS × REPS	RIR	NOTE
Squat QUADS	4 × 5-8	2	The main lift
Romanian Deadlift HAMSTRINGS	3 × 6-10	2	Feel the stretch
Leg Press QUADS	3 × 10-12	2	Full range
Leg Curl HAMSTRINGS	3 × 10-12	1	Slow
Calf + Core CALVES · CORE	3 × 12-15	1	Full range



UPPER B · VOLUME

EXERCISE	SETS × REPS	RIR	NOTE
Incline DB Press UPPER CHEST	4 × 8–12	1–2	Stretch at bottom
Seated Cable Row BACK	4 × 10–12	1–2	Squeeze
Lateral Raise SIDE DELTS	4 × 12–20	1	Light, strict
Face Pull REAR DELTS	3 × 15–20	1	Healthy shoulders
Curl + Triceps ARMS	3 × 10–15	1	Superset

LOWER B · VOLUME

EXERCISE	SETS × REPS	RIR	NOTE
Front Squat / Hack QUADS	3 × 8–12	1–2	Quad-focused
Hip Thrust GLUTES	3 × 8–12	1–2	Squeeze the top
Split Squat QUADS · SINGLE-LEG	3 × 10–12	1	Each leg
Leg Extension + Calf QUADS · CALVES	3 × 12–15	1	Superset

06

HOW EACH BLOCK CHANGES

BLOCK	HEAVY / VOLUME	WHAT YOU DO
1 · Volume WEEKS 1–4	~2 RIR	Settle in; build weekly sets toward the top of the range.
2 · Intensify WEEKS 5–9	1–2 RIR	Add load on the heavy lifts; push the last set of volume work close.
3 · Deload WEEK 10	4+ RIR	Half the sets, ~60% loads. Recover, then restart heavier.

After ten weeks: run it again heavier, or step up to **Push Pull Legs** for six days and even more volume.



07

THE PLATE

Four hard sessions a week need fuel. Match the plate to your goal — a slight surplus to build, a modest deficit to lean out — but in both cases, protein and enough carbs to train hard come first.

BUILD EVERY PLATE FROM FOUR PARTS

PROTEIN

A palm+, each meal

The non-negotiable for recovery and growth across four sessions. 1.6–2.0 g/kg daily.

CARBS

A cupped hand+

Fuel for the volume. Put the most around your training days and sessions.

VEGETABLES

Two fists

Health, fibre, fullness. The base of every plate.

FATS

A thumb

Enough for hormones and energy; the dial you turn for total calories.

BUILDING?

Eat in a small surplus and gain slowly. Pair with **Muscle-Gain System** or **Eating to Grow** to dial it in.

LEANING OUT?

Hold a modest deficit and keep protein high to protect the muscle this volume builds. Pair with **Fat-Loss Architecture**.

IN SHORT

Protein every meal · carbs to fuel four hard sessions · calories set to your goal. Recovery is built in the kitchen as much as the bedroom.



08

RECOVERY

Four days of training is more stimulus and more fatigue. Recovery is no longer optional housekeeping — it's the thing that lets the extra volume turn into muscle instead of a hole.

SLEEP

7–9 hours, consistently. The more you train, the more it matters. Non-negotiable on a four-day split.

REST DAYS

The mid-week and weekend rest days are part of the design. Walk and eat; don't add hard sessions in the gaps.

AUTO-REGULATE

Some days you're flat. Hit the prescribed reps at a slightly lighter load rather than grinding. Live to progress next week.

TWO SIGNS YOU'RE OVERREACHING

The log stops moving for two weeks. If reps and loads stall across multiple lifts at once, you're under-recovered — pull volume back or take the deload early.

Sleep and mood dip. Persistent fatigue, poor sleep, low motivation: classic overreaching. Back off a notch; the gains are in the recovery, not the extra set.



09

THE WEEK LOG

Print this. Tick the four sessions each week, ten weeks. The page filling in is the proof you showed up.

WEEK	UPPER A	LOWER A	UPPER B	LOWER B	NOTES
01 · Vol					
02					
03					
04					
05 · Int					
06					
07					
08					
09					
10 · Deload					



09

THE LIFT LOG

Log weight × reps for the key lifts. Heavy days: chase load. Volume days: chase reps. Beat the line, then add weight.

LIFT	WK 1	WK 3	WK 5	WK 7	WK 9
Bench Press					
Barbell Row					
Squat					
Romanian Deadlift					
Shoulder Press					
Incline DB Press					
Hip Thrust					

BODYWEIGHT

WK 1	WK 5	WK 10

NOTES TO SELF



10

QUESTIONS, ANSWERED

IS UPPER/LOWER BETTER THAN FULL-BODY?

Not better — next. Full-body is ideal early; once you can handle more volume, splitting into four days lets you do more quality work per muscle. It's the natural progression.

WHICH DAYS SHOULD I TRAIN?

Any layout with rest between hard sessions works — e.g. Mon/Tue/Thu/Fri, or Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat. Avoid four days in a row; let the body recover.

CAN I ADD ARMS OR ABS?

Yes — a little. Arms are already in; add a few direct sets or some core at the end of any day if you recover well. Don't let extras crowd out the main lifts.

HEAVY AND VOLUME — WHY BOTH?

Muscle grows across rep ranges. Heavy days build strength that lets you lift more on volume days; volume days drive size. Together they cover the whole picture.

I CAN ONLY MAKE THREE DAYS SOME WEEKS.

Run the four sessions on a rolling basis (next missed one becomes the next session). Consistency over a month beats a perfect but unsustainable week.

BULK OR CUT ON THIS?

Either. The training is the same; the plate decides. Pair with Muscle-Gain System to build or Fat-Loss Architecture to lean out.

WHAT COMES AFTER WEEK 10?

Run it again heavier, or step up to **Push Pull Legs** for six days and maximum volume — or peak your strength with **Strength Architecture**.



TWICE THE TOUCHES. TWICE THE PROGRESS.

Splitting the body in two is the oldest step up in lifting because it works: more quality volume, hit twice a week, recovered and repeated. Run it honestly for ten weeks and you'll out-train the version of you that only trained the whole body at once.

NEXT PROGRAM

PUSH PULL LEGS

Six days, maximum volume, for the committed.

PAIR THE PLATE

PERFORMANCE FUELING

Eat around four hard sessions a week.

EVERY MORNING

THE EDGE

One letter before noon. One principle, one practice.

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