



Three steps to add lean muscle fast

Shred fat and get a six-pack

Tried and tested protocol

The 12 Week Lean Muscle Project



Disclaimer

Before beginning any exercise or nutritional programme, please consult with your doctor to make sure you are in good health. This manual is not meant to replace proper medical advice by a qualified health practitioner. No liability is assumed by ABC Fit or Aaron Breckell for any of the information contained in this document.

Published by ABC Fit

All rights reserved. No part of this document may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher.



Contents

- 01 The 12 Week Lean Muscle Project intro
- 02 Before you begin
- 03 Tracking progress
- 04 **Exercise**
- 05 Factors for hypertrophy
- 06 Advanced training techniques
- 07 Understanding the programme cards
- 08 Phase 1 workouts
- 10 Phase 2 workouts
- 12 Phase 3 workouts
- 14 Phase 4 workouts
- 16 Phase 5 workouts
- 18 Pushing the fat burning potential
- 19 Exercise descriptions
- 37 **Nutrition**
- 38 The seven principles of nutrition
- 43 Supplements
- 46 **Recovery**
- 47 Active recovery intro
- 48 Mobility work guidelines
- 50 Active recovery diary - Monday
- 51 Active recovery diary - Tuesday
- 52 Active recovery diary - Wednesday
- 53 Active recovery diary - Thursday
- 54 Active recovery diary - Friday
- 55 Active recovery diary - Saturday
- 56 Active recovery diary - Sunday
- 57 FAQs
- 59 Social media
- 60 About ABC Fit

Cover image model: Aaron Breckell/Photographer: J Holloway

The 12 Week Lean Muscle Project Intro

Hello and welcome to The 12 Week Lean Muscle Project. First off, I want to thank you for choosing ABC Fit as your trusted source of fitness information and motivation. I'm going to make this intro as quick as I can, because I want you to get your head stuck into this training manual straight away so you can get acquainted with the golden nuggets of information it takes to rapidly add lean muscle and burn body fat.

The manual is divided into 3 sections:

- A** - Exercise
- B** - Nutrition
- C** - Recovery

Each section will give you a specific set of instructions. Follow them closely and you'll:

- Learn how to stimulate your muscles to grow through correct training.
- Provide your body with growth inducing nutrients through food.
- Uncover the various techniques that will speed up the recovery process and keep your tissues and joints healthy.

All the protocols outlined throughout this book have been tried and tested out in the field countless times by myself and my extensive range of clientele. Each section of the book is designed to work in harmony with the other, so ensure you're combining step A, B and C together to the best of your ability. Understand that you are the only person who can hold you back. So stop the excuses, work hard and you'll reap the rewards of success. Are you ready to get started? Good, let's do this! Enjoy the next 12 weeks, it's going to be one hell of a journey.

Your coach,

Aaron Breckell



Before You Begin

Before you begin, it's important to set some goals for the next 12 weeks. Without a goal you can focus on and work towards, your progress will suffer. So grab a pen and paper and let's set some goals.

Goal Setting

SMART goal

A SMART goal is Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound. Since this is a 12 week plan, let's set a 12 week goal. Realistically, you could potentially gain 0.2KG - 0.4KG of lean body mass per week. So work out how much you want to gain and jot it down.

Benefits

Imagine yourself 12 weeks from now. You've achieved your goal, how is this going to benefit you? How are you going to look and feel?

Challenges

What challenges are you going to face over the next 12 weeks?

Solutions

What's your challenge? Let's have a think about potential solutions you could implement this week that will help eradicate them. Here's some of the most common challenges I hear with a corresponding solution.

Lack of time - better diary planning.

Wrong food choices - read section B and educate yourself on better food choices.

Alcohol - limit alcohol to weekends.

Tracking Progress

If your goal is SMART, it should be measurable. I would strongly urge you pick two or more methods below to track your progress. Perform a re-test every 2-4 weeks to ensure the changes you're seeing are for the better. If they're not, that's fine. You just need to work out why and what you can do to change that.

Body photos

Wear as little clothing as possible and take from front, side and back. When you come to take a second batch of progress photos, make sure you're in the same room with the same lighting.

Weight

Use an accurate set of scales in pounds or kilograms. When you come to do a progress check use the same scales on the same type of flooring.



Body fat calliper test

This is a great way of determining your body fat percentage. Since your goal is to gain lean muscle not fat, this number should not be going up too much. Seek a trained fitness professional to perform the test.

Circumference measurements

Pick body parts including calves, thighs, waist, chest, arms and neck and take a circumference measurement in centimetres or inches. This is a great way to see where you're adding muscle.

Record your workouts

It doesn't matter whether you use your mobile, a tablet or even just good old fashioned pen and paper, you need to be recording your workouts. To see optimal results from this training plan you need to be applying what's known as progressive overload. This is a gradual increase in training stress placed on the body. In other words, each consecutive workout you should be striving to lift a little more than the last. This is where recording your workouts comes in handy because you can see exactly what you did last time. Be sure to record the following:

- Date and time of workout
- Exercise/sets/reps completed
- Weights used
- Time taken to complete the session



A = EXERCISE

Activity requiring physical effort, carried out to sustain or improve health and fitness

Factors for Hypertrophy

If you're looking for increased muscle size, you need to go into the gym with a specific purpose. If every workout has a purpose then you will adapt and grow. Time and time again, research has confirmed heavy resistance training is the most effective method of achieving hypertrophy. The reason being, heavy weight stimulates the type II muscle fibres; these are the ones with most potential for growth.

So we understand heavy resistance training is a good place to start for increasing muscle size, but if we start to dig deeper there's three major pathways that actually induce this hypertrophy. According to Brad Schoenfeld in The Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research, mechanical tension, muscle damage and metabolic stress are the factors that will induce the results you desire.

Mechanical tension is a result of heavy resistance training. It is created by muscle stretch, strict form and heavy weights. Increased weight isn't the be-all and end-all of maximising tension though. Try experimenting with the tempo or speed at which you perform an exercise. A five-second eccentric (negative portion of the rep) will certainly jack up the tension!

Increased mechanical tension is very efficient at doing muscle damage. Around two days after a workout your DOMS (Delayed Onset Muscle Soreness) will likely reach its peak. This soreness is somewhat indicative of the amount of damage you did. Damage is created by doing something unfamiliar to the body. This could be more weight, more reps, reduced rest periods or an alternative tempo etc. Otherwise known as progressive overload. The human body desires a state of homeostasis. When this pattern of balance is interrupted, adaptations will take place.

Metabolic stress results from several factors including:

- The hypoxia or lack of oxygen supply to the muscles during a set.
- The trapping of blood in the muscle that creates the swelling look and the feeling that many bodybuilders chase, known as "the pump".
- The by-products of anaerobic metabolism, such as lactate build-up and the increased hormonal surge that goes with it.

There we have it, three factors that all go hand-in-hand for maximum hypertrophy. If you take home one point from this section - don't judge the effectiveness of a hypertrophy workout on how much weight you just moved, but rather how much mechanical tension, muscle damage and metabolic stress you created. Followed correctly the workouts you will be following over the next 12 weeks will effectively stimulate hypertrophy through these pathways.

Advanced Training Techniques

In order to rapidly add lean muscle onto your frame, you'll notice a variety of advanced training techniques come up over the next 12 weeks. Familiarise yourself with the terms and what they mean before starting the plan.

Ramp up - Perform 2-3 sets with a lighter weight that gradually builds up to your first working set weight. This acts as a warm up for your muscles, joints and tendons as well as a cue for your central nervous system to fire up the working muscles more efficiently.

Super-set - This is two exercises performed back-to-back with little to no rest inbetween. It's a great way of increasing the intensity of your sessions, building muscle, burning fat and getting more work done in a shorter amount of time. It's displayed as one number and two letters:

1A: exercise 1

1B: exercise 2

Tri-set - This is three exercises performed back-to-back with little to no rest inbetween. It's displayed as one number and three letters:

1A: exercise 1

1B: exercise 2

1C: exercise 3

Giant-set - This is four or more exercises performed back-to-back with little to no rest inbetween. It's displayed as 1 number and 4+ letters:

1A: exercise 1

1B: exercise 2

1C: exercise 3

1D: exercise 4

Fail - The exercise is taken to a point of complete failure. This meaning, another rep couldn't be completed without breaking good form.

Drop set - After completing your last rep of your last set, drop the weight by around 20% and continue to perform reps to fail. Once reached, drop the weight by another 20% and again rep out to fail. This is a great way of extending time under tension and squeezing every last ounce of work out of your muscles.

Iso-hold - On the last rep and set of an exercise, hold the top position for six seconds. For example, if you were instructed to perform an Iso-hold on the last rep of a pull-up, you would pull yourself up to the top position and hold for six seconds before lowering yourself down and finishing the set. This is a tough, high intensity technique that creates a lot of intra-muscular tension.

Understanding The Programme Cards

The programme card is an extremely effective and simple way to prescribe exercise. This page guides you through the basics of using and reading the programme cards.

The workout name is displayed at the top.

Exercises are displayed down the left side.

Tempo - determines the speed at which you should perform an exercise. It is displayed using four digits.
 -1st digit: seconds on the eccentric.
 -2nd digit: seconds on the pause at the bottom.
 -3rd digit: seconds on the concentric.
 -4th digit: seconds on the pause at the top.

Workout A:

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	TEMPO	REST	NOTES
1: barbell squat	4	8	4010	90 sec	1: warm up with 2-3 lighter sets 2B: drop set on last set
2A: walking dumbbell lunges	3	20	2010	5 sec	
2B: leg extension	3	10	3010	60 sec	
3A: crunch	2	12	2010	5 sec	
3B: hanging leg raise	2	12	2010	5 sec	
3C: plank	2	60 sec	NA	60 sec	

Sets - how many blocks of reps you should perform.

Reps - how many times you perform the movement in a given set.

Rest - how long to rest between sets.

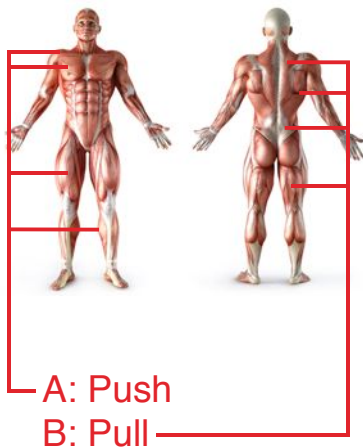
Numbers and letters indicate the order you should perform exercises in. In this example, a walking lunge is performed followed by a leg extension with five seconds rest between exercises. After both exercises have been performed, you would then rest for 60 seconds and repeat for sets.

Notes - provide specific information you may need to know for various exercises.

Phase One

Phase Focus: Foundational strength

Welcome to phase one of the 12 week plan. Here we are going to be using a push/pull split and focusing on strength. During this first two weeks of the plan, your main focus should be nailing strict form whilst trying to increase your weights on all exercises. You'll be using big compound lifts which will build strength and muscle, and burn fat. You'll also experience a spike in growth hormone and free testosterone. The strength work will lead nicely into phase two of the plan. The reason being - the stronger you can get here, the more weight you'll be able to handle during phase two, giving a greater training effect.



Week 1

M workout A

T workout B

W

T workout A

F workout B

S

S

Week 2

M workout A

T workout B

W

T workout A

F workout B

S

S

Do not be surprised if your strength rockets initially. For each exercise select a weight that allows you to complete the desired number of reps, but the last few should be a challenge. Due to the compound exercises used and the amount of muscle groups you work per session, you are going to burn a lot of calories. As a result you should notice your body fat levels dropping. This is great because fat contains aromatase, an enzyme that converts testosterone into estrogen. So the leaner you become, the more available testosterone you'll have for muscle building. This first two weeks really will set you up for the entire programme.

Workout A: Push (quadriceps, chest, shoulders, calves)

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	TEMPO	REST	NOTES
1: BB back squat	4	6	3010	90 sec	1: ramp up to working weight
2: DB split squat	4	6	3010	90 sec	
3: flat BB bench press	4	6	3010	90 sec	3: ramp up to working weight
4: parallel bar dips	4	6	2110	90 sec	
5: standing BB press	4	6	3010	90 sec	6: ramp up to working weight
6: calf press	4	8	2111	60 sec	

Workout B: Pull (hamstrings, glutes, back, core)

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	TEMPO	REST	NOTES
1: BB romanian deadlift	5	5	5010	120 sec	1: ramp up to working weight
2: lying hamstring curl	4	6	4010	90 sec	
3: wide grip pull ups	4	6	3010	90 sec	3: ramp up to working weight
4: bent over BB row	4	6	3010	90 sec	
5: standing DB shrugs	4	6	2011	90 sec	
6: suspension strap roll outs	4	8	2121	60 sec	

Please note: Exercise names throughout the plan have been shortened to save space.

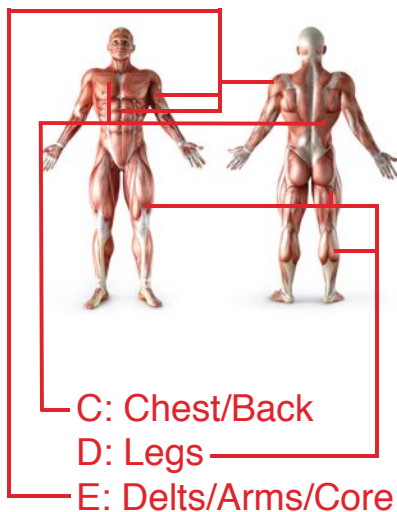
BB = barbell

DB = dumbbell

Phase Two

Phase Focus: Functional Hypertrophy

During phase two our main focus is going to be functional hypertrophy. This can be defined as an increase in the contractile elements of a muscle, meaning you will become as strong as you look. You will be training four days per week with a three day workout split. This means on workout day four of your week you just begin the three day cycle again, thus each muscle group gets trained every 4-6 days. This is ideal considering most individuals take 48-72 hours to make a full recovery. You'll be using plenty of supersets here - great for building muscle and burning fat. You'll also notice the reps and tempos combine to make each set last for around 20-40 sec of time under tension. This is ideal for stimulating maximum hypertrophy.



With these workouts use a weight that has you struggling on the last few reps, but still able to complete the set. During the concentric phase of each exercise really explode and drive the weights up. This will ignite the fast twitch muscle fibres, which have the most potential for growth.

Week 3

M workout C

T workout D

W

T workout E

F workout C

S

S

Week 4

M workout D

T workout E

W

T workout C

F workout D

S

S

Week 5

M workout E

T workout C

W

T workout D

F workout E

S

S

Workout C: Chest and Back

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	TEMPO	REST	NOTES
1A: incline BB press	4	6	3010	10 sec	1A/1B: ramp up to working weight 1B: 6 sec iso-hold on last rep of last set
1B: neutral grip chin-up	4	8	2011	90 sec	
2A: flat DB press	4	8	4010	10 sec	
2B: 1 arm DB row	4	10	3011	90 sec	
3A: standing cable flye	3	10	2011	10 sec	
3B: incline DB Y-raise	3	10	2011	60 sec	

Workout D: Quadriceps, Hamstrings and Calves

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	TEMPO	REST	NOTES
1A: BB back squat	4	6	3010	10 sec	1A/1B: ramp up to working weight 1B: drop set on last set 2A: complete all reps on 1 leg before changing to the other 2B: hold a weight plate for additional load if needed
1B: seated leg curl	4	8	3010	90 sec	
2A: walking DB lunges	3	10	2010	10 sec	
2B: 1 leg back extension	3	8	4010	90 sec	
3A: DB step-up	3	10	2010	10 sec	
3B: DB farmers walks	3	40M	NA	60 sec	
4A: calf press	3	10	3011	10 sec	4A: ramp up to working weight
4B: seated calf raise	3	15	2010	60 sec	

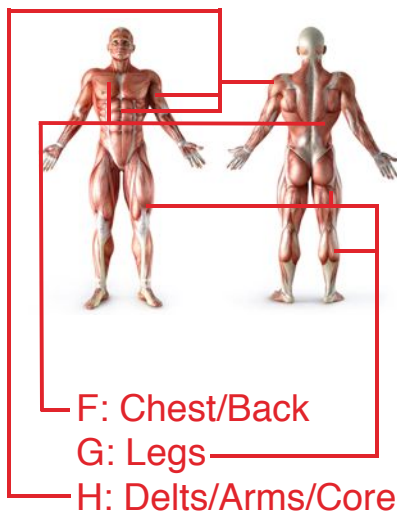
Workout E: Delts, Biceps, Triceps and Core

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	TEMPO	REST	NOTES
1A: seated DB press	4	8	3010	10 sec	1A: ramp up to working weight
1B: cable upright row	4	10	2011	90 sec	
2A: standing BB curl	4	8	2011	10 sec	2B: aim to keep your torso upright to shift emphasis onto the triceps
2B: parallel bar dips	4	6	2011	60 sec	
3A: incline DB hammer curl	3	10	3010	10 sec	
3B: straight bar press down	3	10	2011	60 sec	
4: hanging garhammer raise	1	100	2010	60 sec	4: complete 100 reps in one long set, take small 20 sec breaks if needed

Phase Three

Phase Focus: Deload

For one week only you're going to be slashing all sets in half and training for just three days. This will give your muscles, joints and central nervous system a well earned break. Aim to keep your weights on par with what you were lifting during phase two. Many people experience what's known as supercompensation here. As you progressed through phase two, you would have reached a point of overreaching. During this deload week your body will bounce back and come back bigger and stronger than ever.



Week 6
M workout F
T workout G
W
T workout H
F
S
S

Workout Diary

Workout F: Chest and Back

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	TEMPO	REST	NOTES
1A: incline BB press	3	6	3010	10 sec	1A/1B: ramp up to working weight
1B: neutral grip chin-up	3	8	2011	90 sec	
2A: flat DB press	2	8	4010	10 sec	
2B: 1 arm DB row	2	10	3011	90 sec	
3A: standing cable flye	2	10	2011	10 sec	
3B: incline DB Y-raise	2	10	2011	60 sec	

Workout G: Quadriceps, Hamstrings and Calves

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	TEMPO	REST	NOTES
1A: BB back squat	3	6	3010	10 sec	1A/1B: ramp up to working weight
1B: seated leg curl	3	8	3010	90 sec	
2A: walking DB lunges	2	10	2010	10 sec	2A: complete all reps on 1 leg before changing to the other
2B: 1 leg back extension	2	8	4010	90 sec	
3A: DB step-up	2	10	2010	10 sec	2B: hold a weight plate for additional load if needed
3B: DB farmers walks	2	40M	NA	60 sec	
4A: calf press	2	10	3011	10 sec	4A: ramp up to working weight
4B: seated calf raise	2	15	2010	60 sec	

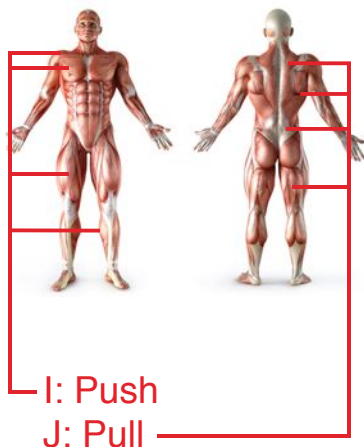
Workout H: Delts, Biceps, Triceps and Core

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	TEMPO	REST	NOTES
1A: seated DB press	3	8	3010	10 sec	1A: ramp up to working weight
1B: cable upright row	3	10	2011	90 sec	
2A: standing BB curl	2	8	2011	10 sec	2B: aim to keep your torso upright to shift emphasis onto the triceps
2B: parallel bar dips	2	6	2011	60 sec	
3A: incline DB hammer curl	2	10	3010	10 sec	
3B: straight bar press down	2	10	2011	60 sec	
4: hanging garhammer raise	1	50	2010	60 sec	4: complete 50 reps in one long set, take small 20 sec breaks if needed

Phase Four

Phase Focus: Strength and Functional Hypertrophy

Are you feeling fresh and ready to go? After your deload week you should be! Phase four welcomes back a more strength/functional hypertrophy orientated phase. The push/pull split makes a return for the next two weeks, with rep ranges falling between 6-8. This strikes a good balance between strength and hypertrophy. Again think form and increasing the weights where you can. Remember the stronger you can get here, the more weight you'll be able to handle during phase five.



Week 7

M workout I

T workout J

W

T workout I

F workout J

S

S

Week 8

M workout I

T workout J

W

T workout I

F workout J

S

S

Workout I: Push (quadriceps, chest, shoulders, calves)

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	TEMPO	REST	NOTES
1: BB front squat	4	6	3010	90 sec	1: ramp up to working weight
2: walking DB lunges	4	8	2010	90 sec	2: alternate legs
3: incline BB bench press	4	8	3010	90 sec	3: ramp up to working weight
4: parallel bar dips	3	8	4010	90 sec	3: drop set on last set
5: seated BB military press	4	8	3010	90 sec	5: ramp up to working weight
6: standing calf raise	5	8	2111	60 sec	6: ramp up to working weight

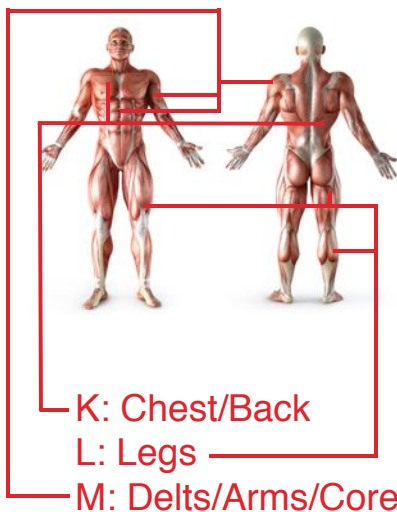
Workout J: Pull (hamstrings, glutes, back, core)

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	TEMPO	REST	NOTES
1: BB romanian deadlift	4	6	5010	120 sec	1: ramp up to working weight
2: seated hamstring curl	4	6	4010	90 sec	2: ramp up to working weight
3: seated lat pulldown	4	8	3110	90 sec	3: ramp up to working weight
4: seated machine row	3	8	3010	90 sec	4: drop set on last set
5: BB deadlifts	4	6	2110	90 sec	5: ramp up to working weight
6: seated medicine ball twists	4	45 sec	2020	60 sec	

Phase Five

Phase Focus: Sarcoplasmic Hypertrophy

When it comes to fully developing the body, it's important we explore all forms of hypertrophy. During the last four weeks of the plan you're going to be using a combo of high volume, short-sets, tri-sets and extended periods of time under tension. This will lead to sarcoplasmic hypertrophy of the muscles. Sarcoplasmic hypertrophy is an increase in the non-contractile elements of a muscle, meaning it will lead to an increase in lean body mass, but not an improvement in the capacity to produce force. Trainees that only focus on this type of hypertrophy will often look like they can lift heavy weights, but in actual fact it's all show muscle.



Be prepared to feel an intense pump with each of these workouts. Each time you leave the gym you'll be drenched in sweat and your muscles will be engorged with blood. Enjoy this last phase, train as hard as you can and you'll build muscle and burn fat simultaneously.

Week 9

M workout K

T workout L

W

T workout M

F workout K

S

S

Week 10

M workout L

T workout M

W

T workout K

F workout L

S

S

Week 11

M workout M

T workout K

W

T workout L

F workout M

S

S

Week 12

M workout K

T workout L

W

T workout M

F Programme Complete!

S

S

Workout K: Chest and Back

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	TEMPO	REST	NOTES
1A: BB deadlift	4	12	2110	10 sec	1A/1B/1C/1D: ramp up to working weight
1B: bent over DB rows	4	12	2011	10 sec	
1C: seated lat pulldown	4	12	2010	10 sec	
1D: rope facepull	4	15	2011	90 sec	1D: drop set on last set
2A: incline DB press	3	12	2010	10 sec	2A: ramp up to working weight
2B: foam roller DB flies	3	15	2110	10 sec	
2C: press up	3	FAIL	2010	60 sec	

Workout L: Quadriceps, Hamstrings and Calves

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	TEMPO	REST	NOTES
1A: BB front squat	4	10	2010	10 sec	1A/1B/1C/1D: ramp up to working weight
1B: walking DB lunges	4	15	2010	10 sec	1B: alternate legs
1C: seated leg curl	4	6	5010	10 sec	1D: 6 sec iso-hold on last rep of last set
1D: leg extension	4	12	2010	90 sec	
2: leg press	1	50	2010	90 sec	2: ramp up to a comfortable weight for 25 reps, then perform 50 reps, do whatever it takes, just get it done!
3A: calf press	3	12	2010	10 sec	3A: ramp up to working weight
3B: standing calf raise	3	15	2010	10 sec	
3C: seated calf raise	3	15	2011	20 sec	
3D: DB farmers walks	3	30M	NA	60 sec	

Workout M: Delts, Biceps, Triceps and Core

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	TEMPO	REST	NOTES
1A: standing DB lateral raise	3	15	2010	10 sec	
1B: seated BB press	3	12	4010	10 sec	1B: ramp up to working weight
1C: reverse cable flye	3	12	2010	60 sec	
2A: ez bar preacher curl	3	12	3010	10 sec	2A/2B: ramp up to working weight
2B: DB skull crushers	3	12	3010	10 sec	
2C: alternating DB curl	3	12	2011	10 sec	
2D: rope press downs	3	12	2011	60 sec	2D: drop set on last set
3A: suspension strap rollout	3	10	2121	10 sec	
3B: garhammer raise	3	15	2010	10 sec	
3C: standing cable twist	3	15	2010	30 sec	

Pushing The Fat Burning Potential

Following the workouts presented so far will dramatically change your body composition. You'll build lean tissue and reduce body fat. But if you really want to push the fat burning potential of this programme, try adding in 1-3 morning HIIT (high intensity interval training) sessions a week. This is an extremely effective way to burn fat and increase your metabolic rate for up to 48 hours post-session. Perform these interval sessions separate to your weights sessions, preferably first thing in the morning in a semi-fasted state.

Don't do fasted cardio!

Doing your HIIT sessions in a fasted state is a poor decision. It'll result in a shocking performance and you'll eat up hard-earned muscle tissue for energy. Instead, go for a semi-fasted state. By this I mean a 20-30g whey protein shake and 5-10mg per KG of body weight of caffeine. This combo will keep you focused, supply your muscles with amino acids to prevent breakdown and provide instant energy. The caffeine will also further increase metabolism, due to being a thermogenic compound. 30 minutes after your morning session eat breakfast and carry on your day as normal.

Beginner protocol

30 sec work
60 sec rest
X 12

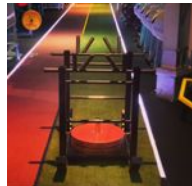
Advanced protocol

30 sec work
30 sec rest
X 20

Warm up with 5-10 minutes of light cardio activity before beginning your session. Give it your all and leave nothing on the table during your work periods. During the rest periods, perform your chosen activity at a slower pace or stop completely. If you're into using heart rate monitoring devices, you should aim for your heart rate to be at 90-95% of your max during the work periods and should see it fall to around 60-70% during the rests.

Select an activity from the list below:

Outdoor sprints
Exercise bike
Treadmill sprints
Cross trainer
Battle rope drills
Kettlebell swings
Jump rope
Strongman activities (tyres, sledgehammer, prowler sled etc.)



Exercise Descriptions

Here you will find a description of the exercises used throughout the 12 week programme. Coaching cues are given for some exercises, these are important points you need to understand if you want to get the most out of the exercise.

Quadriceps

Barbell back squat

With a bar across the top of your shoulders and a firm grip on the bar, keep your back flat and push your hamstrings and glutes back. As you sit down into the squat keep your shins as vertical as possible. When you reach end-range drive through your heels and stand back up.

Coaching cue - screw your feet into the ground. This will create external rotation torque in the knees and hips, creating more stable joints.



Dumbbell split squat

Performed like a regular squat, with a staggered stance. Hold a pair of dumbbells at your side and keep most of your weight centred over the front leg. Keep your back leg on your toes. Perform all reps on one leg before switching to the other.



Walking dumbbell lunges

Holding a pair of dumbbells at your sides stand up tall and take a step forward into the lunge. The front knee should be bent at 90 degrees in the bottom position. Be sure not to let your back knee smash into the ground in the bottom position. Step back up to finish the lunge, before going for the next rep.



Dumbbell step-up

Hold a pair of dumbbells at your sides and place one foot onto a box or bench. Keep your chest and head up and step up onto the box or bench. Carefully step back down. Complete all reps on one leg before changing sides. Resist the urge to push off the ground with the back leg.



Dumbbell farmers walks

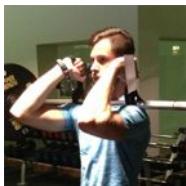
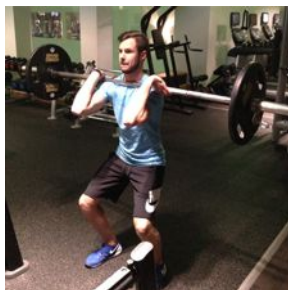
Whilst holding a pair of heavy dumbbells at your sides, walk the prescribed distance. Despite being listed as a quads exercise, this strongman inspired move is a total body conditioner.

Coaching cue - think posture with this exercise. Imagine balancing a book on your head whilst walking.



Barbell front squat

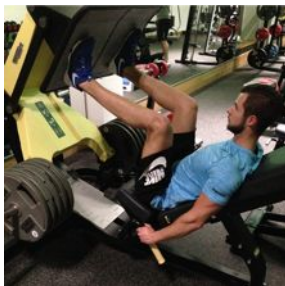
Place a bar across the front of your shoulders. If you protract your scapula forward it will create a shelf to hold the bar. If you're mobile enough you should be able to hold it in place. If you can't, see coaching cue. From this position, sit back into the squat, before driving back up to finish the rep. Because your torso remains more upright during this squat variation, more emphasis is placed on the quads.



Coaching cue - if you struggle with getting your arms and shoulders to hold the bar in position, try using lifting straps as handles.

Leg press

Get yourself set up on a leg press machine. Sit in the chair and place your feet on the platform about halfway up and hip width distance apart. Press the platform away from you, being careful not to lock the knees in the top position. Lower the platform to the starting position.



Leg extension

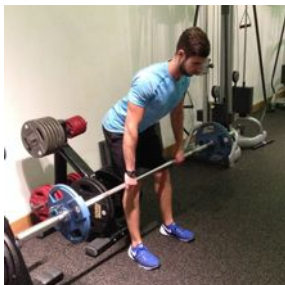
This is a great quads isolation exercise. Get yourself set up on a leg extension machine. Extend your knee until it's straight, squeeze the quads and lower back to the start. Be careful not to bang the weights with this one.



Hamstrings

Barbell Romanian deadlift

This is a great exercise for hitting everything along the posterior chain. Holding a bar at arms length, hinge at the hip until you feel a stretch in the hamstrings. Reverse this motion and stand back up to finish the rep. Ensure you keep your back flat and core engaged with this one.



Lying hamstring curl

Use a lying hamstring curl machine or lie prone on a bench and get a partner to place a dumbbell between your feet. Flex your knee using your hamstrings and curl your ankles up as close to your butt as possible. Slowly lower the weight to the start position. Keep your knees slightly off lock in the start position to reduce joint stress.

Coaching cue - squeeze your hamstrings at the top of each rep to really recruit as many fibres as possible.



Seated leg curl

Get yourself set up on seated leg curl machine. Flex your knee to at least 90 degrees and once again squeeze your hamstrings before lowering the weight back to the starting position.



One leg back extension

Using a 45 degree back extension bench, keep one leg straight whilst the other is bent at 90 degrees. Keep your back flat and hinge at the hip until you can feel a stretch in your working leg hamstring. Once you reach end-range, return back up to the start to finish the rep. This is a great exercise to correct any imbalances in strength and size you may have in your posterior chain. Perform all reps on one side before switching to the other.



Chest

Barbell bench press

Lying on a flat bench grab a bar slightly wider than shoulder width grip apart. Lower the bar under control to mid chest before pressing it back up to the starting position. Don't bounce the bar off your chest, and keep your elbows slightly off lock in the top position to keep constant tension on the muscles.

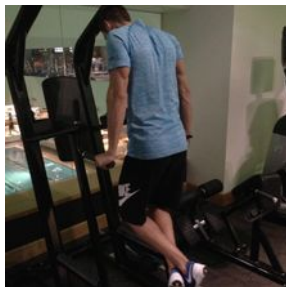
Coaching cue - externally rotating your hands whilst performing the bench press will create torque in the elbows and shoulders for greater stability. Imagine trying to break the bar in half.



Parallel bar dips

Using a set of parallel bars, drop your body down until you can feel a stretch across the chest and shoulders. Press back up to the top position and keep your elbows slightly off lock in the top position to keep constant tension on the working muscles.

Coaching cue - leaning your torso forward will shift more emphasis onto the chest. Screw your hands into the bars, to create external rotation torque. This will create stability in the shoulders.



Incline barbell press

Lying on an inclined bench grab a bar slightly wider than shoulder width grip apart. Lower the bar under control to the upper chest before pressing it back up to the starting position. Don't bounce the bar off your chest, and keep your elbows slightly off lock in the top position to keep constant tension on the muscles.



Flat dumbbell bench press

Lying on a flat bench grab a pair of dumbbells. Lower the dumbbells under control to the sides of your chest before pressing them back up to the starting position. Keep your elbows slightly off lock to keep constant tension on the muscles and don't smash the dumbbells together in the top position.



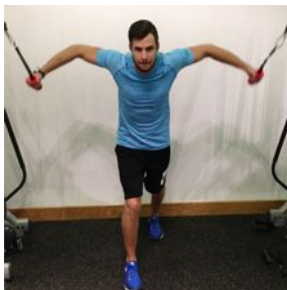
Incline dumbbell press

Lying on a 45 degree inclined bench and pick up a pair of dumbbells. Lower the dumbbells under control to the sides of your chest before pressing them back up to the starting position. Keep your elbows slightly off lock to keep constant tension on the muscles and don't smash the dumbbells together in the top position.



Standing cable flye

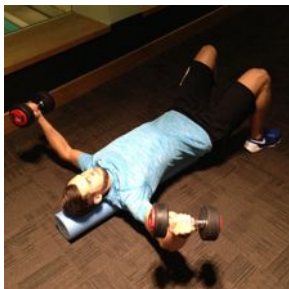
Using a cable column with the pulleys set to a high leverage point, grab the pair of D-handles. Take a split stance and lean slightly into it to gain better leverage. Keep your elbows slightly bent, but fixed and bring your hands together out in front of your body. Imagine hugging a big tree. Squeeze the pec muscles in the bottom position before returning to the start.



Coaching cue - ensure each rep has a stretch and squeeze to get the most out of this exercise. Stretch the pecs on the eccentric, squeeze the pecs on the concentric.

Foam roller flies

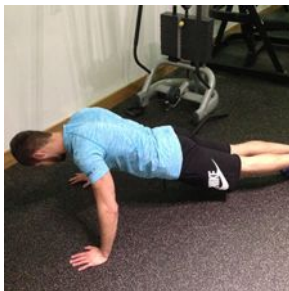
Lying on a long 90cm foam roller, grab two light dumbbells and press them up to the sky. With your elbows slightly bent, but fixed, open your arms up to feel a stretch across the chest and shoulders. Performing this exercise on a foam roller will allow greater range of motion from the scapula, meaning a greater stretch and more muscle fibres recruited. More muscle recruited, means more muscle built.



Press-up

With your feet around hip width and arms slightly wider than shoulder width, lying face down press yourself up until your elbows are slightly off lock in the top position. Slowly lower yourself back to the starting position. Keep your body in a straight line all throughout this movement.

Coaching cue - keep your glutes and core switched on at all times to prevent your hips from dropping down to low.



Back

Barbell deadlift

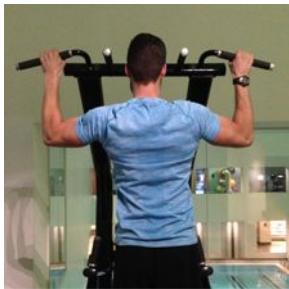
This exercise really is as simple as loading up a barbell and picking it up off the floor. Take a shoulder width stance and grip the bar slightly wider than shoulder width apart. Keep your back flat at all times and bend your knees to begin the lift. Think of the exercise like a squat, with the bar in a different position. After each rep lower the bar to the floor before re-setting and going for the next rep.



Wide grip pull-ups

Grab a chin-up bar with a wide overhand grip. Hang out at arms length and pull your chest to the bar, squeezing your shoulder blades together at the top. Slowly lower yourself back to a dead hang. That's one rep. If you can't do pull-ups use a heavy jump stretch band to help you.

Coaching cue - keep your legs straight, ankles together and glutes switched on. This will help keep your spine in proper neutral alignment.



Neutral grip chin-ups

Grab a chin-up bar with a shoulder width, palms facing each other grip. Hang out at arms length and pull your chest to the bar, squeezing your shoulder blades together at the top. Slowly lower yourself back to a dead hang. That's one rep.



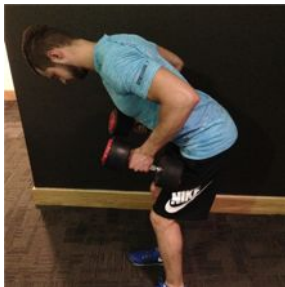
Bent over barbell row

Grab a barbell with a slightly wider than shoulder width, overhand grip. Hold the bar at arms length and tip forward at the waist, keeping your knees slightly bent and your back flat. Keep your torso stable and pull the bar up to your lower chest. Briefly squeeze your shoulder blades together before lowering the bar to the starting position.



Bent over dumbbell row

Grab a pair of dumbbells with a neutral, palms facing each other grip. Hold the dumbbells at arms length and tip forward at the waist, keeping your knees slightly bent and your back flat. Keep your torso stable and pull the dumbbells up to the sides of your chest. Briefly squeeze your shoulder blades together before lowering them to the starting position.



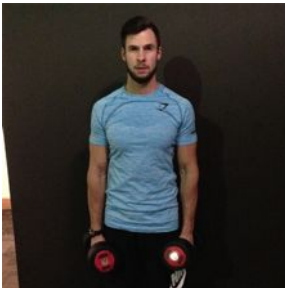
One arm dumbbell rows

Place one knee and one arm on a bench and lower your torso so it's almost parallel to the floor. Pick up a dumbbell with your free hand, palm facing inwards and let it hang at arms length. Pull the dumbbell up towards the side of your chest and squeeze your shoulder blade briefly before lowering it the the starting position. Ensure you keep your back flat at all times. Complete all reps on one arm before changing to the other.



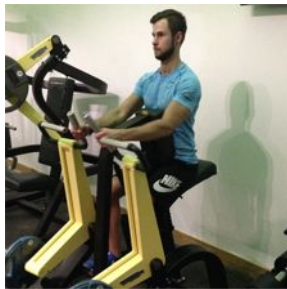
Standing dumbbell shrugs

Hold a pair of dumbbells at your sides and stand up tall. Shrug your shoulders as high as you can and squeeze your upper back and trap muscles at the top, before lowering to the start. The movement should be straight up and down, don't roll the shoulders as you lose a lot of tension on the muscles this way. And remember more mechanical tension means more hypertrophy.



Seated machine row

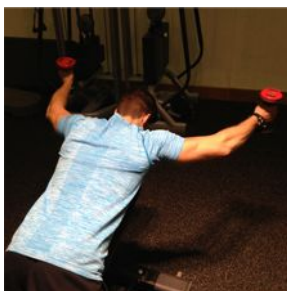
Take a seat on a machine row. Ensure the front pad remains in contact with your chest at all times. Grab the handles and pull them towards you. Again, squeeze your shoulder blades together at the top of the movement before returning to the start position.



Incline dumbbell Y-raise

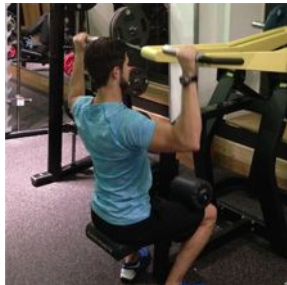
Lie face down on an inclined bench. Pick up a pair of dumbbells with a neutral grip and raise them up, before lowering to the start. Imagine looking at yourself from a birds eye view, at end range you would look like a letter Y.

Coaching cue - keep this movement under control at all times. It's very easy to cheat and swing the weights with this one.



Seated lat pulldowns

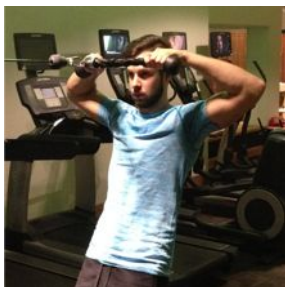
Take a seat on a lat pulldown machine and grab the handles with a slightly wider than shoulder width grip. Pull them down to the top of your chest, squeezing your shoulder blades together, before returning to the start.



Rope face pull

Set an adjustable cable column to around head height and attach a rope. Grab the rope and take a few steps back. Pull the rope to your face and squeeze your upper back muscles together, before returning to the starting position.

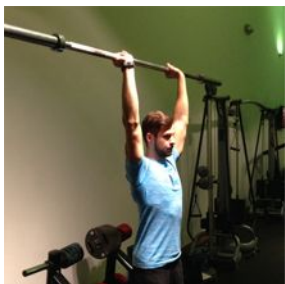
Coaching cue - try and pull the rope apart to really switch on the upper back muscles.



Delts

Standing barbell press

Start by holding a barbell slightly wider than shoulder width grip at chest height. Press the bar up directly above your head. Carefully lower it to the starting position. Keep your glutes and core squeezed throughout this one to keep your spine safe and posture correct.



Seated dumbbell press

Take a seat on an upright bench and grab a pair of dumbbells. Start with them at the sides of your shoulders and press them up directly above your head, before carefully lowering them. Resist the urge to look at the dumbbells as you press them up, so keep your eyes facing forward at all times.



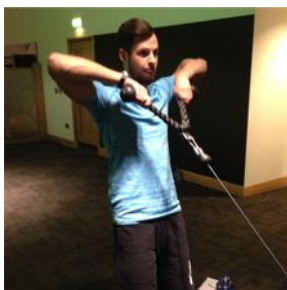
Seated barbell press

Take a seat on an upright bench and hold a barbell slightly wider than shoulder width grip at chest height. Press the bar up directly above your head. Carefully lower it to the starting position. Resist the urge to look at the bar as you press it up, so keep your eyes facing forward at all times.



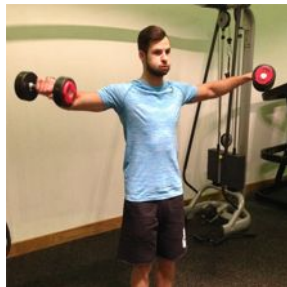
Cable upright row

Attach a rope to a cable pulley system on the low anchor point. Stand up tall and pull the rope up towards your lower chest. Keep your elbows up high, before lowering the rope to the starting position.



Standing dumbbell lateral raise

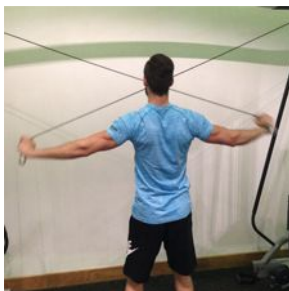
Hold a pair of dumbbells at your sides and keep a slight bend in the elbow. Raise them up until they're parallel with the floor. Focus on using the lateral head of the delts to complete the movement. Lower them back to your sides to complete the rep.



Reverse cable flye

This is a great exercise to focus on the posterior head of the delts. Set your cables to a high anchor point and cross your arms before grabbing the cables. With a slight bend in the elbow pull them down across your body to perform a reverse flye type movement. Think about squeezing your rear delts in the bottom part of the movement before returning to the start position.

Coaching cue - remember this is an exercise for the rear delts. So keep your upper back, traps and triceps out of the movement.

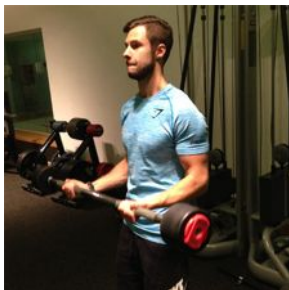


Biceps

Standing barbell curl

Stand tall and hold a barbell at arms length. Curl the bar to your shoulders, whilst keeping your elbows tucked in at your sides. Squeeze the biceps at the top, before lowering the bar to the starting position

Coaching cue - use the full range of motion with the barbell curl. Too many people don't go down the full way, so are really only doing half reps.



Incline dumbbell hammer curl

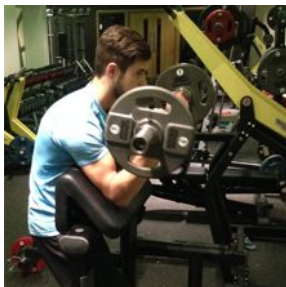
Set an incline bench to 45 degrees. Grab a pair of dumbbells with a neutral grip and curl them up to your shoulders. Return them under control to the starting position.

Coaching cue - keep the elbows pointing down at all times. In other words don't swing the dumbbells up and down.



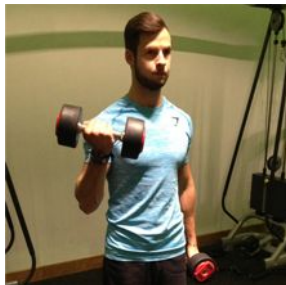
EZ bar preacher curl

Using a preacher bench grab an EZ bar shoulder width grip apart. Keeping the upper arms in contact with the pad at all times, curl the bar up to end range. After a brief squeeze of the biceps in the top position, slowly lower the bar to the starting position.



Alternating dumbbell curl

Stand tall and hold a pair of dumbbells at arms length. Curl a dumbbell to your shoulders, whilst keeping your elbow tucked in at your sides. Supinate the wrist and squeeze the biceps at the top, before lowering to the starting position. Repeat with the opposite arm.



Triceps

Parallel bar dips

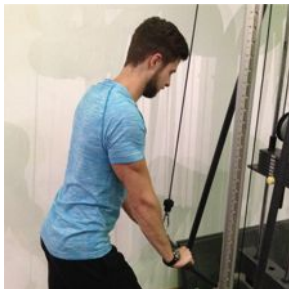
Using a set of parallel bars, drop your body down to end range. Press back up to the top position and keep your elbows slightly off lock in the top position to keep constant tension on the working muscles.

Coaching cue - keeping your torso upright will shift more emphasis onto the triceps. Screw your hands into the bars, to create external rotation torque. This will create stability in the shoulders.



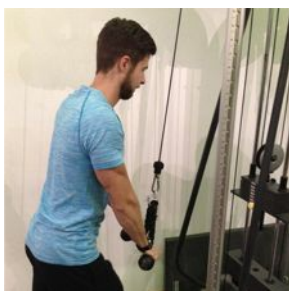
Straight bar press downs

Set an adjustable cable column to a high anchor point and attach a straight bar. Keeping the elbows tucked into your sides, extend the lower arm down to end range. Squeeze the triceps in the bottom position before lowering under control to the start position.



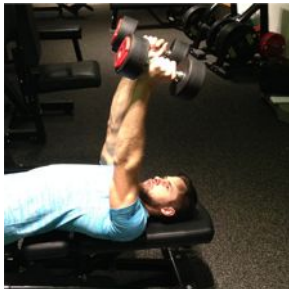
Rope press downs

Set an adjustable cable column to a high anchor point and attach a rope. Keeping the elbows tucked into your sides, extend the lower arm down to end range. Squeeze the triceps in the bottom position before lowering under control to the start position.



Dumbbell skull crushers

Lie on a flat bench and hold a pair of dumbbells with a parallel grip. Press them up above your chest, this will become your starting position. Keeping your upper arm fixed, slowly and carefully lower the dumbbells to the top of your skull. Do not let the dumbbells hit your head. Extend the elbow to return to the start position.

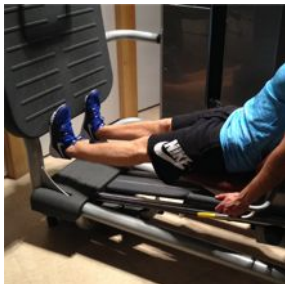


Calves

Calf press

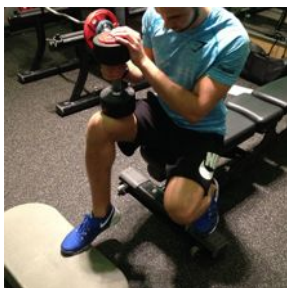
Set yourself up on a leg press machine and use your feet to press away from the plate.

Coaching cue - with all calf exercises, ensure you get a stretch in the bottom position and a squeeze at the top. This will make sure you recruit every fibre possible.



Seated calf raise

Take a seat on a bench, keep your knee bent at 90 degrees and place a dumbbell on your thigh. Flex and extend your ankle to move the weight. Use a small step to increase the range of motion. A seated calf raise machine will also work just fine.



Standing calf raise

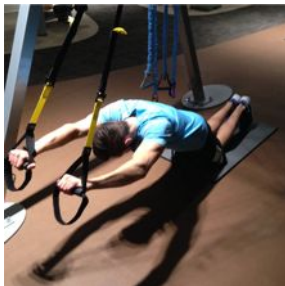
Drop one foot off the edge of a small step and hold a dumbbell on this side. Flex and extend your ankle to move your entire body up and down. Repeat for reps and then change sides. A standing calf raise machine will also work just fine.



Core

Suspension strap roll out

Set your straps to around knee height before beginning the exercise. From a kneeling position, firmly grip the handles and push your bum down so you're in line from knee, hip and shoulder. This is your starting position. Keep your glutes and core tight whilst extending your arms out in front of you. Ultimately what we're looking for is a straight line from knee, hip, shoulder, elbow and wrist in the bottom position. Reverse the movement so you end in the starting position. This exercise also works well with a loaded barbell or traditional ab wheel.



Hanging garhammer raise

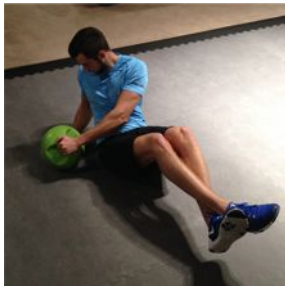
Hang from a pull up bar and begin with your hips and knees bent at 90 degrees. From this position curl your knees up to your chest and squeeze your abs before returning to the starting position. This is a great exercise for stimulating the lower abdominal region whilst minimising hip flexor recruitment.



Seated medicine ball twist

Sit on your bum with your knees slightly bent and lean back to a 45 degree angle. Hold a medicine ball and twist side to side. Lift your feet off the ground if you want to make the exercise more challenging.

Coaching cue - emphasise the twist. Imagine your chest is going to follow the ball all the way around as you twist, this will switch on the oblique muscles of the abs.



Standing cable twist

Using an adjustable cable station, set the pulley at around shoulder height. With feet shoulder width apart, stand side on to the stack and hold the handle at arms length with soft elbows. Twist around until you reach end range to work the oblique muscles of the abs and then return to the starting position. Perform all reps on one side before changing onto the other.





B = NUTRITION

The process of providing or obtaining the food
necessary for health and growth

The Seven Principles of Nutrition

You don't need a meal plan. For long term change and superior results, you need to be educated on the seven principles it takes to build a lean and muscular body. Don't get too caught up counting calories either. The macronutrient balance is more important than just eating as many calories as you can. If you use the principles below correctly, quality calories will follow automatically. The various formulas given for some of the principles aren't set in stone, but they will give you a strong starting point. Ensure you're abiding by the following principles.

Principle #1

Eat 4-6 medium meals/snacks a day

The evidence surrounding eating little and often is somewhat sketchy, but for whatever reason it seems to work for most people. The theory behind this principle makes sense. Digestion uses calories, so if you're regularly giving your digestive system work to do, you will keep your metabolic rate elevated. Eating often is also important for sustained energy levels as it helps keep blood sugar levels stable.

Principle #2

Drink 0.033L of water per KG of bodyweight per day

You're a wet, moving organism made up of around 70% water. The body's ability to digest, transport and absorb nutrients is directly related to your fluid intake. If your tissues become dehydrated they will dry up like desert sand, become sticky and prevent your body from moving in an optimal range. With dehydration comes a decrease in work capacity by up to 30%. Prevent this by consuming 0.033L of water per KG of bodyweight per day.

For a 75kg individual this would be:

$$0.033L \times 75 = 2.4L \text{ per day}$$

When you're not drinking water with food, it should be spiked with electrolytes to expedite absorption.

Principle #3

Remove sugar/processed foods from the diet

A good question to ask yourself before you put something in your mouth is "would this have existed 5000 years ago?" If the answer is no, you probably shouldn't eat it (excluding the supplements that we'll get onto later). Processed foods often contain high amounts of trans-fats, salt, sugar and preservatives. None of which are going to be a major contributor to your lean muscle goals. High sugar foods give a steep rise in blood sugar levels and a surge of insulin, followed by an energy crash. Consistent crashes in blood sugar and excess insulin will lead to weight gain and insulin resistance. For rapid gains in lean muscle and fat loss we need to use nutrition to our advantage and become sensitive to insulin.

What is insulin?

Insulin is a hormone made by the pancreas that allows your body to use glucose from carbohydrates in the food we eat. It is often described as the key that unlocks a cell to allow glucose to enter and be used as energy. Controlling carbohydrates and choosing the correct types will help us develop insulin sensitivity. This means the body won't have to produce as much for it to have an efficient effect.

Principle #4

Eat greens throughout the day

Vegetables and leafy greens should be consumed in abundance throughout the day. With every meal at least half of your plate should be covered with greens. They're high in fibre, low in calories and are an important source of many nutrients, including potassium, folic acid, vitamin A and vitamin C. Ensure your diet regularly contains the following:

- Broccoli
- Spinach
- Kale
- Garden peas
- Asparagus
- Cabbage
- Lettuce
- Green beans



Principle #5

Consume 2g of protein per KG of body weight per day

Protein plays a vital role in the body, especially when it comes to building and maintaining lean body mass. Proteins are complex substances, that are broken down into amino acids and rearranged into new proteins that your body needs. Protein is quite hard for the body to digest, meaning you'll feel fuller for longer. It also stimulates glucagon, a hormone that raises the levels of glucose in the bloodstream and helps you burn fat for fuel.

Aim for 2g of protein per KG of body weight per day. For a 75Kg male this would be:

$$2g \times 75 = 150g \text{ per day}$$

You can take this a step further and divide your daily goal by the amount of meals you eat to get an idea of how many grams each meal should contain. For example if you eat six small meals a day, 150g divided by six equals 25. Therefore, each meal should contain around 25g of protein.

Choose your protein sources from the following list:

- Chicken
- Eggs
- Turkey
- Salmon
- Tuna
- Swordfish
- Mackerel
- Sea bass
- Sardines
- Trout
- Prawns
- Crab
- Lobster
- Cod
- Beef
- Venison
- Buffalo
- Ostrich
- Zebra
- Whey protein shake



Principle #6

Consume 4g of carbohydrates per KG of body weight per day

Carbohydrates are your body's most important source of energy. We need energy for movement, growth and repair. Regardless of the type of carb you consume, whether it's a sweet potato or a bar of chocolate it all ends up as the same product - glucose (blood sugar). It just depends on the quality of the source as to how long it takes to get broken down into this product. You've already learned that simple sugars are bad news for blood sugar level control, so we should be looking to consume complex carbohydrates.

Skip carbs at breakfast

Carbs release serotonin, a calming neurotransmitter. Not a great way to start the day I'm sure you'll agree. Does the phrase "carb coma" ring any bells? Instead opt for a combination of protein and healthy fats at breakfast for a gradual rise in blood sugar. Given this information it would also make sense to back off on the carbs in the meal prior to your workout.

Aim for 4g of carbohydrates per KG of body weight per day. For a 75Kg male this would be:

$$4g \times 75 = 300g \text{ per day}$$

You can take this a step further and divide your daily goal by the amount of meals you eat to get an idea of how many grams each meal should contain. For example if you eat five small meals a day (excluding breakfast), 300g divided by five equals 60. Therefore, each meal should contain around 60g of carbohydrates.

Ensure your carb sources come from the following list:

- Sweet potato
- Yam
- Quinoa
- Brown rice
- Brown pasta
- White potato
- Blueberries
- Strawberries
- Raspberries
- Green vegetables

Principle #7

Consume 1g of fat per KG of bodyweight per day

Don't fear fat! Fats are needed in the body to help absorb various nutrients, nourish the nervous system, maintain cell structures and regulate hormone levels. Trans-fats should be avoided at all costs.

Aim for 1g of fat per KG of body weight per day. For a 75Kg male this would be:

$$1\text{g} \times 75 = 75\text{g per day}$$

You can again take this a step further and divide your daily goal by the amount of meals you eat to get an idea of how many grams each meal should contain. For example if you eat six small meals a day, 75g divided by six equals 12.5. Therefore, each meal should contain around 12.5g of fat.

Ensure your healthy fat sources include the following:

- Coconut oil
- Avocados
- Plain nuts
- Seeds
- Olive oil
- Hazelnut oil
- Avocado oil
- Flax oil



If you can hand on heart say you're abiding by the seven principles above and still not getting anywhere, either you're not training hard enough, or you're not consuming enough calories to put your body in a surplus/anabolic state. Try going for 6g of carbohydrates per KG of body weight per day and remember as you gain muscle you'll need to weigh yourself and put your new weight into the formulas to work out your daily macronutrient goals. It's recommended you do this process every four weeks.

Supplements

Once the seven principles of nutrition are understood and put into practice, it's time to incorporate supplements. Remember a supplement is only as good as your nutrition, but with that said the correct supplement protocol (especially around workout times) can produce exceedingly good quality sessions and promote rapid recovery. The bodybuilding and fat loss supplement market is a minefield of false advertising and fads. All of the supplements mentioned below are backed by science and produce results.

The peri-workout supplement protocol

The peri-workout supplement protocol simply means the supplements you take before, during and after your workout.

Pre-workout

Caffeine

How much:

5-10mg per KG of body weight (experiment depending on tolerance).

Function:

Caffeine fires up the adrenal glands and increases energy and focus for a session. A caffeine supplement or black coffee will both work just fine.

Intra-workout

Branched chain amino acids (BCAAs) in water

How much:

10-20g

Function:

BCAAs are made up of the amino acids leucine, isoleucine and valine. They are the building blocks of protein, so sipping on them during your session will help prevent catabolism. BCAAs also compete with the amino acid tryptophan, a precursor to the calming neurotransmitter serotonin. This means it will help prevent you from getting a sleepy slump during your session.

Post-workout shake

Whey isolate

How much:

0.5g for every KG of body weight

Function:

Protein is extremely important for the growth and maintenance of lean tissue. The protein in your post-workout shake will help switch on muscle protein synthesis.

Whey isolate is a very clean, fast digesting whey, making it ideal immediately after a training session.

Maltodextrin

How much:

1g for every KG of body weight

Function:

This polysaccharide produced from starch by partial hydrolysis is a fast digesting carbohydrate, making it perfect to consume immediately post-workout. It will spike insulin (the one time we want to do this) shuttling nutrients straight into your tired muscle cells and replenishing glycogen for a faster recovery. At this time insulin is your best friend and one of the body's most anabolic muscle-building hormones.

Creatine

How much:

5g

Function:

Creatine is a superb performance enhancing substance. Multiple studies confirm creatine can improve strength, the number of reps performed to fatigue and the ability to perform repeated sprints. When muscle cell creatine concentration goes up, water is drawn into the cell, filling it up like a balloon. This effect can boost the thickness of the fibres by up to 15%. Adding it into your post-workout shake is a good choice to help reload your stores.

Glutamine

How much:

100mg for every KG of bodyweight

Function:

Glutamine is a non-essential amino acid found in the muscle cells and blood. It is needed for cell growth, as well as serving as fuel for the immune system. During periods of heavy training, blood levels of glutamine drop, weakening the immune system and putting you at risk of infection. Various studies have shown that taking glutamine post-workout can speed up recovery, reduce muscle soreness and cut your risk of catching colds and other infections.

The best of the rest

Omega 3s

How much:

5-10g a day

Function:

Omega 3s contain the fatty acids EPA and DHA. Split your daily dose into two and take half with breakfast and half with a meal in the evening. They deliver some amazing health benefits such as:

Heart health

Joint health

Brain function

Bone health

Regulates your cholesterol triglyceride levels

Helps reduce post-exercise inflammation

Can decrease the stress hormone - cortisol

Improve insulin sensitivity

Speed up metabolism

Improves digestion

Healthy skin and hair



Casein protein

How much:

20-30g

Function:

Casein is a very slow digesting protein, making it ideal to take before bed. Theory has it, the slow digestion process will drip-feed your muscles with amino acids all through the night, keeping you in an anabolic state.

Multi-vitamin

How much:

Follow label guidelines

Function:

A good quality multi-vitamin will ensure your body is nourished with all the micronutrients it needs for recovery, growth and normal function. Take with a meal, preferably breakfast.



C = RECOVERY

A return to a normal state of health, mind or strength

Active Recovery

With the correct exercise and nutritional protocol in place, there's one last thing you need to get in check to see maximal results. Your ability to recover is largely dependant on your nutritional status and hours of sleep you've had. So at the very least you should be abiding by the seven principles of nutrition and getting 8-9 hours of sleep per night.

Types of recovery

Tissue repair - Microscopic tissue damage from exercise is repaired. Explaining how this process happens is beyond the scope of this manual, but you should know that it is through this process the muscle tissues grow back bigger and stronger (hypertrophy).

Function restoration - Joints and tissues return to a state of optimal function. Healthy tissues should slide and glide over each other (known as sliding surface function). This keeps the body moving in an optimal range.

Muscle recovery - Muscles return to normal length and state.

Psychological recovery - Head is strong, focused and motivation to train remains on a high.

CNS recovery - Central nervous system makes a full recovery. Heavy, intense weight training sessions can be quite fatiguing for the central nervous system.

In order to maximise recovery I've put together The Active Recovery Diary. It's a weekly schedule that will take no more than ten minutes of your day, but your returns on investment from that ten minutes will be huge. Perform the various tasks whenever you can - pre-workout, post-workout, in the garden, at work, at home in the evening in front of the TV etc. The daily tasks are designed to speed up all of the main types of recovery, not only from exercise, but from everyday life as well. Across the week, you'll address all the common areas of the body that tend to get glued up. Before we look at the diary, let's take a look at the mobility work guidelines you need to understand and follow.

Mobility Work Guidelines

What is SMR and how does it work?

Self myofascial release (SMR) is the process of applying pressure with a various mobility tool to a selected area of soft tissue. To newcomers this may seem slightly odd, but it's one of the most effective ways of improving and restoring muscle range and function. It's successful due to a number of reasons:

Alleviates trigger points - A tender area of tissue, or trigger point as it's sometimes referred to, is a micro-spasm caused by over stimulation to the muscle spindle in that area. When you apply external pressure to the area it stimulates a number of receptors throughout the muscle, fascia and connective tissues. When these receptors are stimulated, they communicate with the central nervous system which provides an 'overriding' message to the trigger point that signals it to release.

Improves sliding surface function - Your muscles should slide and glide over each other. Over time they can become glued up preventing your body from moving effectively. SMR drills will help iron out this matted up tissue.

Corrects muscle imbalances - As well as helping our muscles to relax and move better, SMR also helps provide optimal length-tension relationships.

Blood flow - SMR drills will encourage fresh blood flow to the area of tissue you're working on. This will help flush out post-exercise waste products and bring a wide range of nutrients for a faster recovery.

Spend at least two minutes on each drill

To see change from a mobility drill, spend at least two minutes performing the movement. Take your time exploring your target zone, moving through the tissue at around one inch per second. If you come across any hotspots, focus your attention on that area.

Learn to distinguish between discomfort and pain

The majority of the drills presented in this section are going to be uncomfortable. Even more so if it's a particular hotspot for you. The good news is over time they will become easier. With that said it's important that you learn to distinguish between discomfort and pain. These drills are meant to be releasing tissue, not breaking it down and causing more damage.

Get creative

If you're unable to get hold of any of the tools recommended in this section, feel free to improvise. A tennis ball works well as a massage ball. Or how about a rolling pin for a foam roller. There's plenty of household objects that can become effective mobility tools.

Breathe deep

Breathing deeply will help your muscles relax into the mobility drill. It will also oxygenate the blood that's rushing to the area you're mobilising.

Practice good positions

When performing a mobility drill, pay attention to your posture. Ensure you keep the spine in neutral, core braced and head in line. The more you make good posture a habit whilst training, the more likely it'll stick during everyday life.

Make it a habit

It doesn't matter what time of the day or location you perform the mobility drills laid out in this manual, just make sure it becomes a regular habit. Just ten minutes per day is all it takes to see results. Before you know it you'll be recovering faster, moving easier and standing with improved posture. Like with all things fitness related, consistency is key.

Active Recovery Tools

Before you begin, you'll need the following recovery tools (or creative substitutes) available:

A: Foam roller

B: Massage ball

C: Floss band

D: Epsom salts



The Active Recovery Diary

Monday

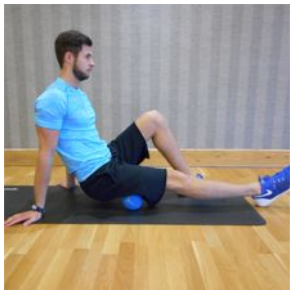
T-spine global extension with overhead reach

The thoracic spine is a pretty common area to get stiff. If you do plenty of heavy chest pressing in the gym, spend your day bolted to an office chair at work or both, your spine slowly rounds forward into a kyphotic C shape. This drill will create a large global extension through the T-spine and as a result improve posture, thoracic mobility and shoulder positioning. The overhead reach will help improve arm and shoulder positioning on vertical push exercises. To begin, place the roller at the base of the ribcage. With your feet and butt firmly on the ground reach all the way over your head and relax into it. Spend at least two minutes in this position.



Massage ball hamstring SMR

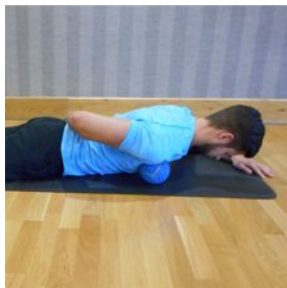
The hamstrings are responsible for two very important jobs - knee flexion and hip extension. Tightness in the hamstrings, if not taken care of, can cause knee pain and lower back pain. Spend two minutes with your massage ball working into the hamstrings. Instead of just working up and down the length of the muscle, try working across the tissues laterally to really shear the fibres apart. Pay particular attention to the high hamstring/glute tie in.



Tuesday

Massage ball chest SMR

Tightness across the chest and anterior shoulder complex will drag the scapula forward to create poor posture and pain. Once again this area tends to get pretty glued up from extended periods of sitting and heavy chest pressing in the gym. Lying prone on the floor place one arm behind your back and get your massage ball stuck into the upper pec. Starting from the inside of the pectoral muscle, take at least two minutes to peel away all the chest fibres, working laterally until you reach the chest/shoulder tie in. When you can feel some change, switch sides.



Calf stretch

Improved ankle range will allow you to sit down lower into a deep squat, so it's a top priority area to address if you want optimal squatting mechanics. Drop one leg off the back of a small step and apply some pressure to that leg. Again, spend at least two minutes per calf. A great test/re-test with this one is to sit on your butt with legs straight and dorsiflex your ankle (point it towards you). Don't be surprised if you gain another inch of range after performing the drill.



Wednesday

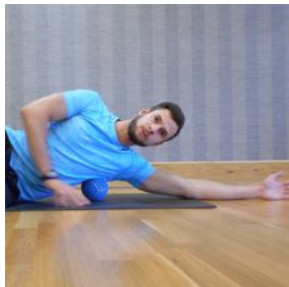
Wall hip opener

This drill captures the tissues of the anterior hip and quadriceps. Sitting for extended periods will result in a tight hip flexor complex that will rock the pelvis forward, moving it into an anterior tilt. This changes our posture and places a great deal of pressure on the lumbar spine. Your goal is to get your knee as close to the corner of the wall as you can before sitting up into the stretch. Two minutes per leg will see some change in the tissues, but if you work a desk job go for 4-6 minutes per leg.



Massage ball lat SMR

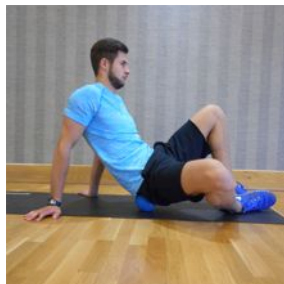
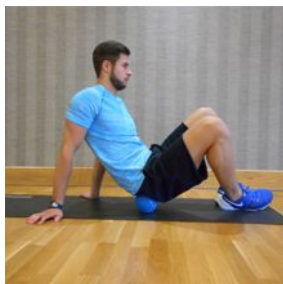
The lats are often a neglected area when it comes to performing mobility work. Tight lats are bad news as they can affect scapula movement and internally rotate the shoulders creating poor posture, just like a tight chest can. You often see people hanging from pull-up bars to stretch the lats, but this is a waste of time. Gripping the bar to hold your weight prevents the lats from switching off and relaxing. This massage ball SMR drill is a much more effective way to see some change in the lat muscles.



Thursday

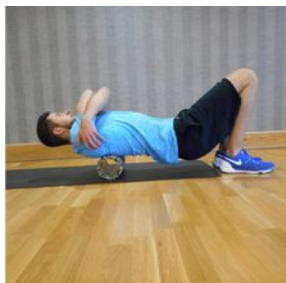
Massage ball glute SMR

Optimal hip function is crucial for stability, power and injury prevention upstream and downstream of the hips. Spending some time with a massage ball driven into your backside is decently uncomfortable, but can work wonders to restore optimal hip function. Spend two minutes exploring around the entire glute muscle. If you find a hotspot, sit on it, breathe deep and slowly drop your knee to the ground, before bringing it back up again. This contract/relax technique will floss the matted up fibres through the ball and allow you to sink into deeper layers of tissue.



T-spine roll

More T-spine work?! Didn't we do this on Monday? We did indeed. For most the thoracic spine really is a hotspot, regardless of your training experience. So it's worth giving a little more attention to over the week. For this one, take your foam roller of choice and place it on the spine at the bottom of the ribcage. Lift your butt of the ground and hug your body to really open up the scapula. This allows you to capture more tissues either side of the spine. Then very slowly work up to shoulder height before coming back down to where you started. Try not to stiffen up, visually think of your T-spine trying to get around the roller.



Friday

Floss band work

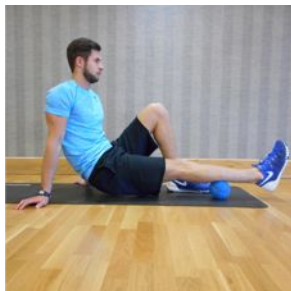
Wrap a joint or tight hotspot with a floss band for two minutes. Wrapping a floss band nice and tight around a limb will create compression forces. This helps restore and improve sliding surface function to the underlying banded tissues as well as create a flexion-gaping force at the joints. This can help restore normal range of motion in the tissues and joints. Once the band is removed the tissues will flood with fresh blood bringing nutrients to the area for an improved recovery. One of the biggest advantages of using this banded mobilisation technique is you can closely mobilise the movement you want to improve. For example, wrapping your knee joint and sitting down into a deep squat position will really help improve knee range on the squat. Hotspots for floss band work could be - knee, quads, hamstrings, elbow, ankle or calf.



Saturday

Massage ball calf SMR

Getting stuck into your calves with a massage ball will provide a little more focused pressure. Really direct your attention to the lower calf and heel cord area. Releasing this area will improve ankle range, important for deep squats and lunges. Try creating some cross friction and rolling side to side as well as up and down. And remember - two minutes per calf.



Quads foam roll

Tightness in the quads and hip flexor complex isn't ideal. It can cause pain upstream and downstream, so be prepared for altered knee and hip mechanics. With your foam roller start just above the knee and slowly roll up two inches, back down one inch, back up two inches and back down one inch. Repeat this process until you've stripped out the entire quad and hip flexor region before changing sides. Focus a little more attention to any hotspots that you may discover on your journey.



Sunday

Epsom salt bath

Get ready to relax and recharge after a tough week by taking a hot bath with 300-400 grams of Epsom salts. The salts are made from a combination of magnesium and sulphate. Being high in magnesium, a mineral that can become depleted through heavy training, makes it a great way to get a boost if you're deficient. Amongst many other processes, magnesium is necessary for the body to bind serotonin, a mood enhancing chemical within the brain creating a relaxed feeling of well-being. Epsom salt baths can also help flush out toxins, easing muscle aches and pains. It would be wise to take your bath in the evening, which will help calm you down and give you a better night's sleep. It's amazing benefits have made it popular with everyone from doctors to athletes to personal trainers.

Mobility shortcomings

For the majority Sunday is a day of rest, where not much happens. If you get a spare ten minutes today, take some time to address some mobility shortcomings you may have. For example, your quads may feel super tight from your last workout, so pick an SMR drill or stretch and get stuck in. It can work wonders for your recovery going into the following week.

Tomorrow is Monday, are you ready to go again? Good. Let's go!

FAQs

I can't train on the days suggested on the workout diary, does it matter?
No. In an ideal world you would, but if you can't just do what you can. As long as you get all of your sessions in for that week.

What time of the day should I train?

Whenever you can/feel best. If you're adding in interval sprints, ideally you'd do them in the morning and your weights sessions late afternoon/evening.

Can you build muscle with a push/pull split?

Yes. Contrary to popular belief you don't always have to train with a body part split to build muscle. If you look at the total amount of reps and sets performed for each muscle group per week it works out as a similar amount of volume as using a body part split. The volume just accumulates over the week. A push/pull split will increase the frequency a muscle is trained, and remember the more you can stimulate muscle growth the more you will grow.

Why am I finding the workouts too easy?

The sets, reps, rests and tempos have all been programmed to support the goals of the training phase you're in. If you're finding the sessions too easy, make sure you're lifting a heavy enough weight that allows you to complete the desired number of reps, but no more and be super strict with the tempos.

Where can I buy the recommended supplements from?

Myprotein will have all products you need. For an exclusive discount type this link into your browser: <http://tidd.ly/6f725f0>

Then use the following codes at the checkout:

15% off for new customers: ABCFIT3

8% off for existing customers: ABCFIT

I'm really struggling with the nutrition side of things, any words of advice?

Proper planning and meal prep is everything. Go food shopping once a week and prep meals the night before to take to work etc. Buy yourself a cooler bag to conveniently transport your meals. In my experience, the more successful clients keep a food diary. You can use one of these fancy apps that works out your macro values for you, or just use a good old pen and paper. Anything that will make you more accountable.

How strict do I need to be with the protein, carb and fat nutrition principles formulas?

Its worth remembering the formulas are only a guide. Everyone is different in the way they respond to macronutrients, particularly carbs, but the formulas given make a great starting point.

Can I have a cheat meal?

A cheat meal can work wonders for continued motivation and keeping your metabolic rate firing. Your cheat meal should still contain a protein source, something like a lean beef burger with fries will work. The amount of times you cheat should be based on your current body fat levels. A good method to abide by when it comes to cheating is as follows:

25% - never

15-25% - once every 4-5 weeks

10-15% - once every 2 weeks

5-10% - once a week

How can I improve my sleep quality?

8-9 hours of sleep per night is vital for improved recovery and performance. If you struggle with sleep try these practical tips:

Optimise your sleeping environment - Turn your bedroom into a batcave. Keep it cool, dark and turn off all electronic distractions such as phones, TV's and radios etc.

Have a curfew - A good nights sleep is essentially a good habit. Having a specified time to be in bed by every night will reinforce this. Discipline yourself.

Avoid stimulants in the evenings - Nothing upsets your natural sleep cycle like a big dose of caffeine in the evening. Eliminate all teas, coffees and other stimulant/high caffeinated drinks after 4pm.

Empty the tank before bed - Another guaranteed way to upset your natural sleep cycle is to be waking up countless times during the night to have a wee. Whilst drinking more water is highly encouraged, be sensible by tapering off your intake as the day wears on, and go to the toilet before going to bed.

I've finished the programme, what now?

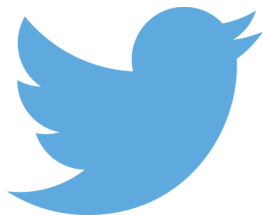
You can start it over. Look to lift more than your first cycle. Or keep your eyes open for more workouts on the ABC Fit website.

Enjoyed The Programme?

Share your experiences and results with us on...



www.facebook.com/abcfrit3



[@abcfrit3](https://twitter.com/abcfrit3)



[@abcfrit3](https://www.instagram.com/abcfrit3)

[#12WEEKLMP](https://www.instagram.com/abcfrit3)



The 3-Step Fitness Solutions Project

ABC was created by Aaron Breckell. Aaron's passion for health and fitness was first ignited at the age of 18, when he entered the gym at 6ft and 54kg. Exercise, nutrition and recovery not only changed his body, his entire life changed for the better too. Since it all started he has modelled for various supplement and underwear companies and was successfully shortlisted down to the final six in the Maximuscle Body of the Year contest 2010. With over five years fitness industry experience, Aaron has worked with a wide array of clientele including CEO's, doctors and competitive athletes. This is his way of easily sharing with you the information it takes to achieve the fitness success you truly deserve.

