

# Novice Program 1 - "The Triad " - Week 1 & 2

## Gym equipment

This program is designed with the novice lifter in mind. The goal of this program is to familiarize the lifter with the basic mechanics of the training movements, establishing and reinforcing good form. The exercise form is fundamental to the training process, reinforcing good movement patterns to avoid potential imbalances, and to develop the mind-muscle connection ensuring that the intended target muscles are being stimulated.

The word "triad," means "a group of three closely related persons or things." The theme of this program is the exploration of the foundational trinity of physical training: Intensity, Volume, and Density. Also known as "weight, reps, and rest." During the course of this program you will be trying to improve one of these facets of your training from one training week to the next. You will perform a week of training, then repeat that week making improvements where possible. Like exercise form, this concept of small improvements within the triad is a keystone for continued progress. Remember, progress is not always linear. Sometimes progress towards one goal is best made by pursuing another.

You are encouraged to use a belt where directed. If you do not currently own a belt and would like to purchase one, we recommend the [EliteFTS P2 Premium 6.5mm Belt](#).

## What you need to know

Starting with week 1, every other week you will establish a baseline for that week's movements. The following week you will push progression in the same movements using one of these three progression metrics.

### (WEIGHT)

Use more weight than the last time. If the goal is straight sets (3x10), then you want to use more weight for your work sets than you did last week. If the goal is "sets of X up," then your goal is to reach a higher end weight before your form breaks down.

### (REPS)

Do more reps than you did last week with the same working weight.

### (REST)

Rest for a shorter period of time between sets. If you rested 60 seconds between sets last week, shoot for 45 or 30 this week.

## The Split

This program is built with flexibility in mind. There is no "right," or "wrong," way to split up these days. You can follow any of the following examples, or you can come up with whatever will best fit your schedule availability.

**Leftside Style** - Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Sunday

**The "I want my weekends"** - Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

**The Corporate Plan** - Saturday, Sunday, whichever two other days you can fit, whenever you can fit them.

While this program is intended to run for 12 weeks, for those of you who can only dedicate three days a week or less to training, you can simply run the days in alternating succession as follows:

### Week 1

Week 1 Upper 1, Week 1 Lower 1, Week 1 Upper 2

### Week 2

Week 1 Lower 2, Week 2 Upper 1, Week 2 Lower 1, ETC

## Upper Body Day 1 - 18 work sets

**DB Bench Press - sets of 8 to form loss** - Standard dumbbell bench press. Start with a low weight and work your way up in weight until your form starts to break down towards the end of the set. **I do not want total failure.** Rest up to 2 minutes between sets.

Example:

55lbs x8

75lbs x8 - begin to feel the weight

80lbs x8 - feel it more

85lbs x8 - got all 8 reps with good form

90lbs x8 - form breaks down at rep 6, shut it down.

***Week 2 - Try to hit a higher end weight before you shut it down, or get a few more reps with the last weight you used last week.***

*3 total work sets*

**BB Bent Over Rows - 3x8** - Wear a belt. Grab a barbell and row it into the area between the navel and waistline. **Remember to keep your back straight.** That means lower back is not rounded and shoulders are squared and tight, not rounded forward. When you bend, do not bend over completely parallel to the ground. **No excessive hopping, torso flopping, or leg popping to get the weight up.** Rest up to 2 minutes between sets.

***Week 2 - Use the same weight for 3x10.***

*3 total work sets*

**Rear Delt Machine - 3x10** - We'll be using the palms down handles for this. Set the seat height so that when the handles are in hand the arms are parallel to the ground. Make sure you **sit up straight**, no slouching forward. The **rotation needs to come from the shoulder joint, not from the upper middle back.** Arms need to be as straight as possible. Keep the **shoulders back and the chest up.** Pause for a split second at the top of the movement. Rest 60 seconds between sets.

***Week 2 - Use the same weight for 3x12.***

*3 total work sets*

**Chest Supported High Row - 3x12** - We'll be using the chest supported row machine here. Use the wide grip handles. You won't need much weight for this. Keeping your **elbows up**, row the lever arm up to the end of your range of motion, and then back down. **Do not let off the gas completely at the bottom and allow the lever arm to stretch your shoulders forward.** You should feel this in the **upper middle back and the rhomboids.** Do not excessively arch your back to lift the weight. That means that your torso stays in contact with the pad. **If your chest comes up completely off the pad, the weight is too heavy.** Upper chest can come up somewhat as your scapula depress at the top, but that's it. Rest 60 seconds between sets.

***Week 2 - Reduce the rest period to 30 seconds between sets.***

*3 total work sets*

**BB Overhead Press - 3x8** - Belt up. Using a "pinkies on the rings" grip, press a barbell overhead. Lower the bar to ear level again and repeat. Remember to **engage your glutes and your lats to stabilize your torso.** Remember this is a shoulder movement, so I want **no excessive leaning backwards**, as that turns it into an incline chest press and puts your lower back at risk. Try to keep your eyes facing forward rather than looking upwards, as this will minimize backward lean and keep your shoulders in the game. Rest up to 2 minutes between sets.

***Week 2 - Increase the weight from what you used in Week 1.***

*3 total work sets*

**BB Curl - 3x8** - Grab a barbell. Standing upright with your **shoulders squared**, curl the barbell upwards to the end of your range of motion, then **lower it with control.** Remember, **do not let your shoulders round** forward. **Squeeze the barbell as tightly as you can** for the duration of the set. **Do not swing the weight.** Whole body curls do not build biceps. Rest 60 seconds between sets.

***Week 2 - Use the same weight for 3x10.***

*3 total work sets*

**Abdominals** - Pick one exercise from the following to hit lower abs:

- Hanging Leg Raises
- Leg raises with your elbows supported on pad
- Leg raises on a decline board/bench
- V ups

Pick an exercise from the list and do 4 sets of 15-25 reps.

## **Lower Body Day 1 - 12 work sets**

**BB Squat - 3x8** - Strap your belt on. We're doing the basic barbell squat here. Do a few feeder sets to find a good working weight, then stick with that weight for 3 sets of 8 reps. Take the depth to parallel or just above. **Keep the**

descent controlled, no "dive bombing" allowed. Form is of maximal importance, **do not use a working weight that prevents you from keeping good form** for all 8 reps. Rest up to 2 minutes between sets.

*Week 2 - Use the same weight for 3x10.*

*3 total work sets*

**Lying Leg Curls - 3x12** - First we will setup the machine. Ideally, the knee needs to be in the same plane as the hinge of the lever arm, so adjust the ankle pad until this is the case. Now, do a set or two to allow you to find a solid weight, and then knock out the required reps. **Squeeze for a split second at the top**, and allow the stack to settle for a split second at the bottom. **No stack bouncing**. Nobody likes a stack bouncer. **Keep your hips and the front of your thighs and torso grounded to the pad**. If they start coming off, then the weight is too heavy and you are recruiting other groups to lift it. If there are handles, squeeze them hard. Rest 60 seconds between sets.

*Week 2 - Reduce the rest from 60 seconds to 30 seconds between sets.*

*3 total work sets*

**Leg Extensions - 3x10** - Setup the machine correctly. Adjust the seatback so that your knee is in the same plane as the hinge, and your lower leg moves in the same arc as the lever arm. Adjust the shin pad so that it sits just above your ankle. Do a set or two to find an appropriate working weight. For the work set, **squeeze for a second at the top of the movement**. Again, no stack bouncing. **Let the weight settle for a split second at the bottom**. Kick up hard against the weight, but do not allow your upper legs or body to come unglued from the seat. If there are handles, squeeze them hard. Rest 60 seconds between sets.

*Week 2 - Use the same weight for 3x12.*

*3 total work sets*

**BB Stiff Legged Deadlift - 3x10** - Wear a belt. Standard stiff legged deadlifts here. **Allow your knees to bend some**, do not keep them locked. I want you to **focus on the stretch** at the bottom. **Maintain a solid arch** in your back, do not allow the lower back to round. We want the pressure in the glutes and hamstrings. So **descend with control**, get a good stretch, then come back up and **flex your glutes at the top** of the lift. Then repeat for 9 more reps. Rest for 90 seconds between sets.

*Week 2 - Use the same weight for 3x12.*

*3 total work sets*

**Standing calf raises - 4x20** - Do plenty of warm up sets. Use a full range of motion. Squeeze hard for a split second at the top of the movement, and stretch for a split second at the bottom. Rest 60 seconds between sets.

## Upper Body Day 2 - 18 work sets

**BB Incline Bench Press - 3x8** - Take a few feeder sets to get to a weight that feels good for 8 reps. **Maintain control and good form**. Do not work to total failure. Rest up to 2 minutes between sets.

*Week 2 - Increase the working weight over what you used in week 1.*

*3 total work sets*

**One Arm Barbell Row - 3x8** - Brace one end of a barbell in a corner. Now, stand beside the other end of the barbell, bend down and grab the bar just below the loading sleeve with one hand. **Keeping your back straight and shoulders squared, row the bar upwards driving the elbow up and back and keeping it in tight to the body**. Load the bar with 25lb plates or smaller to keep from artificially shortening the range of motion by colliding plates to chest. You can also **experiment with your foot placement**, and find what works best for you. Just remember to **keep your back straight and don't let the shoulder of the working arm roll forwards**. Rest up to 60 seconds between work sets after completing both sides.

*Week 2 - Use the same weight for 3x10.*

*3 total work sets*

**DB Bent Over RDR - 3x12** - You can wear a belt here, but not required. It's time for some rear delt work. Grab a pair of dumbbells. You're going to bend at the waist while maintaining a **straight back**, no rounding. **Keep your shoulders square**, and don't let them round over either. Now simply raise your arms to the sides to the end of your range of motion. Remember to keep your arms at 90 degrees in relation to the sides of your torso, if you're too high or too low you won't be activating the rear deltoid. Rest 60 seconds between sets.

*Week 2 - Reduce the rest period from 60 seconds to 30 seconds.*

*3 total work sets*

**Wide Grip Pulldowns - 3x12** - Do a set or two to find a good working weight. I want **your torso static** the movement, **no excessive leaning backwards** to lift the weight. Keep **your chest up**, your **back arched**, your **head back looking at the pulley**. Pull the weight down to **below the chin**, hold for a split second and squeeze, then allow the weight to come up. **Keep control when letting the bar come up**, don't just let go. Pull down with **control and authority**, feel the squeeze and the motion in your lats and in your shoulder blades. Rest 60 seconds between sets.

*Week 2 - Increase the weight over what you used in week 1.*

*3 total work sets*

**DB Side Laterals - 3x10** - Now the lateral deltoids. **Keep your head back** during these to minimize trap recruitment, we want the lateral delts doing the work. **Keep your arms as straight as possible** and just raise the dumbbells straight out to side to around ear level. Rest 60 seconds between sets.

*Week 2 - Use the same weight for 3x12.*

*3 total work sets*

**Cable Tricep Extensions (Facing Away) - 3x12** - Use the straight handle for these. You're going to grab the handle and bend forward at the waist. Extend your arms out in front of your body, and then allow your elbows to bend and the cable to pull the handle back behind your head to the end of the range of motion. **Get a nice stretch in the triceps in the bent arm position, and a solid squeeze in the extended position**. Keep your **shoulders tight and static**. The motion comes solely from the triceps, no assisting with the shoulders, torso, or chest. Rest 60 seconds between sets.

*Week 2 - Reduce the rest period from 60 seconds to 30 seconds.*

*3 total work sets*

**Abdominals** - Today's ab movement will be decline situps, 4 sets of 15-25 reps.

## **Lower Body Day 2 - 12 work sets**

**5 Minute HIT Warmup** - Do a 5 minute high intensity interval session to warm up your legs and get some blood flowing. Use a 10 second sprint/50 second recovery interval.

**Hack Squat 3x12** - Setup in the machine facing away from the pad. Plant your feet shoulder width apart or slightly wider, toes in the vicinity of the edge of the platform and pointed slightly out. Do a set or two with a light weight to dial in your form and foot position, and to find a good working weight. **Keep your back arched** into the pad, **don't let your pelvis tuck at the bottom** of the movement. **Do not allow your knees to buckle inward, drive them out on the ascent**. Go down as deep as you can without allowing your pelvis to tuck under. **Keep your head pushed into the pad, and your hands squeezing the handles**. Rest up to 2 minutes between sets.

*Week 2 - Reduce the rest period from up to 2 minutes to 60 seconds.*

*3 total work sets*

**Deadlift - sets of 5 until form loss** - Throw your belt on for this one. Start with a light weight to get your form in check. Feet close to shoulder width apart, bend your knees and bend down, grab the bar. Keeping your **back straight** and without allowing any significant rounding of any part of your back, pull the weight up and into your body until you are standing up straight. Then, **with control, lower the weight and allow it to come to a complete stop** before starting the next rep. No bouncing the plates off the ground. I want good, solid form here. Work up in weight until you begin to lose your ability to keep good form, then shut it down. Rest up to 3 minutes between work sets.

*Week 2 - Increase the weight over what you used in week 1.*

*3 total work sets*

**Smith Machine Squats - 3x15** - You can wear your belt here, especially if your back is feeling fatigued. Setup in

the Smith machine facing in the same direction as the safety hooks. Do a set or two to find a good working weight, and to dial in your form and foot position. Plant your feet slightly in front of you, slightly wider than shoulder width apart, and toes pointed slightly out. Make adjustments from there. **Push yourself back into the bar.** On the descent, **keep your arch and push your hips back into the movement.** Descend as low as you can without tucking your pelvis, pause for a split second at the bottom while staying tight, then drive yourself back up hard. When your form is dialed in right **your body should move up and down like a piston** in an engine. Pump out your reps. Rest up to 2 minutes between sets.

***Week 2 - Increase the weight over what you used in week 1.***

*3 total work sets*

**Seated Hamstring Curls - 3x10** - Setup the machine properly first. Knees need to be in the same plane as the hinge, so adjust the seat back accordingly. The ankle pad needs to be at the level of your ankle, allowing your heel to hang over the edge. Sit down, and push the thigh pad down snug on your thighs. Do a set or two with low weight to find a good working weight. During the work sets I want you to **squeeze for a split second at the bottom** of the movement, and allow the motion to **stop for a split second at the top.** No stack bouncing. **Keep your back and glutes glued to the pad. If your lower back starts to arch off the pad excessively the weight is too heavy** and you are recruiting more muscle groups than just your hamstrings. **Release the thigh pad between sets.** Rest 60 seconds between sets.

***Week 2 - Use the same weight for 3x12.***

*3 total work sets*

**Seated Calf Raise - 4x20** - Do plenty of warm up sets. Use a full range of motion. Squeeze hard for a split second at the top of the movement, and stretch for a split second at the bottom. Rest 60 seconds between sets.