

Novice Program 1 - "The Triad" - Week 3 & 4

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

Incline DB Press - 3x8 - Standard dumbbell incline press. Use a lighter weight for a few sets until you find a solid weight. Then do 3 sets of 8 with it. **I want good, clean form.** That means **shoulders stay squared, feet stay on the floor.** Rest up to 2 minutes between sets.

Week 4 - Increase the weight over what you used in week 3.

3 total work sets

Chest Supported Row - 3x10 - As usual, do a few sets to get your form dialed in and to find today's working weight. I want a wide grip. Row with your lats on this movement, that means **pull through the elbows** not through the hands. Starting at the bottom, **push your chest out as you begin to draw your elbows back.** Shoulders draw back and down, scapula squeezing together and downward. When you **find the peak contraction in your lats, stop**

the row and start the descent. Get a **light stretch in the lats at the bottom**, but not so much that you end up folded over the pad. **Squeeze the handles hard.** It may be difficult to breathe during the work sets, so find a breathing cadence that works for you. Rest up to two minutes between sets.

Week 4 - Use the same weight for 3x12.

3 total work sets

Seated DB Cleans - 3x12 - Grab a pair of dumbbells and sit on the end of a bench. This movement is intended to work the rear delts and the upper back. Initiate the movement by **pulling your shoulder blades up and back** and bringing your elbows to the side at 90 degrees to the sides of your torso, then **bring the dumbbells to head level** while keeping your elbows at 90 degrees. **This movement is done somewhat explosively**, but remember to keep good control of the weight. Rest 60 seconds between sets.

Week 4 - Use the same weight for 3x15.

3 total work sets

Seated Cable Shrugs - 3x15 - Setup on the seated row. Use a bar that allows for a slightly wider than shoulder width grip. Palms down, or palms facing, either way works. Sit on the bench and engage the cable so that you are leaning backwards about sixty degrees relative from your back to the pad. Keep your **back arched, chest up and out, but your head forward a bit, facing the pulley**. I want you to contract your upper middle back to draw the handle towards you, squeeze hard for a split second at the top, and then relax. It is important that you recognize the difference between just shrugging the weight up, and shrugging the weight up and back. Up and back, contracting from middle traps down to lower traps, is what we want. Rest 60 seconds between sets.

Week 4 - Reduce the rest period from 60 seconds to 30 seconds.

3 total work sets

DB Curls - 3x8 - Standard dumbbell curls. You can do them simultaneously or alternating, your preference. I want crisp form, that means **squared shoulders** and **absolutely no swinging**. Grip the dumbbells as tightly as you can, and **squeeze your biceps for a split second at the top** of the movement. **Control the descent.**

Week 4 - 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. Choose a different exercise from the previous week.

Lower Body Day 1 - 12 work sets

BB Squat - 3x6 - 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 6 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 6 reps. Your working weight should be a little heavier than the weight you used last week for 8 reps. Rest up to 2 minutes between sets.

Week 4 - Use the same weight for 3x8.

3 total work sets

BB Stiff Leg Deadlift - 3x8 - Keep your belt on for this one. When you do these today, I want you to stick your glutes as far back as possible. So when you start the movement, you're going to push your hips back, bend the knees slightly, and continue pushing the glutes back to the end of your range of motion. **Keep your back straight and your shoulders squared**. Stretch at the bottom for a split second, then squeeze and come back up. **Squeeze your glutes as hard as you can at the top of the lift**. Rest 90 seconds between sets.

Week 4 - Use the same weight for 3x10.

3 total work sets

DB Walking Lunges - 3x10 - Holding dumbbells at your sides, take them for a ride. **Keep your hips square with your torso**, don't let them rotate with the leg that is stepping forward. The leading leg is doing the work here, you want to **focus on the quadriceps** of the leading leg pushing you up from the lunging position. Rest up to 2 minutes between sets.

Week 4 - Reduce the rest period from up to 2 minutes to 60 seconds.

3 total work sets

Leg Press - 3x12 - Setup in the leg press with your feet close together and on the lower middle of the foot plate. This will hit your quads with the brunt of the weight. **Grip the handles tight**, keep your **back and your lats tight** during the movement. **Pull yourself into the seat with the handles**. Bring your knees back to the end of your range of motion and then drive the plate back up until just before lock out, then back down. **Keep control of the sled**, don't just let off the gas. Keep the movement up and down completely deliberate. **You control the weight, it does not control you**. Rest up to 2 minutes between sets.

Week 4 - Increase the weight over what you used in week 3.

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 Bench Press - sets of 6 to form loss - Standard flat 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**. The same form rules apply. Feet stay on the floor, shoulders stay squared. Rest up to 2 minutes between sets.

Example:

135lbs x6

185lbs x6 - begin to feel the weight

195lbs x6 - feel it more

205lbs x6 - got all 6 reps with good form

215lbs x6 - form breaks down at rep 5, shut it down.

Week 4 - Increase the weight over what you used in week 3, or get more reps with the same weight used in week 3 before shutting down.

3 total work sets

Meadows Rows - 3x10 - These are setup similar to the one arm barbell row. The key difference is that you are standing perpendicular to the load end of the bar, instead of parallel. You'll be gripping the end of the loading sleeve instead of the bar itself. Remember that this lift is done strictly, with no excessive body movement. Rest 60 seconds between work sets after completing both sides. Here is a video showing you a few different methods to setup this movement: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QrB4QO1E_AU

Week 4 - Increase the working weight over what you used in week 3.

3 total work sets

Incline Bench RDR - 3x10 - You're going to lay face down on an incline bench and do dumbbell rear delt raises. Experiment with palms facing in or palms facing down to see which better activates your rear delts. Remember to keep your arms as straight as possible. Rest 60 seconds between sets.

Week 4 - Use the same weight as week 3 for 3x12.

3 total work sets

DB Pull Overs - 3x10 - Lay on a bench for these, not across it. Holding a dumbbell with both hands, by its end and **keeping your arms as straight as possible**, I want you to lower it backwards towards the ground. Make sure to **control the descent** of the dumbbell. Lower it until you reach the end of the range of motion, allow it to **stretch for a moment**, and then raise it back up just until it comes into your field of vision, then lower it again. Rest 60 seconds between sets.

Week 4 - Use the same weight for 3x12.

3 total work sets

BB Lateral Raises - 3x8 - A twist on a classic. Stick a barbell in a corner as you would for Meadows rows or one arm BB rows. Now you're going to hold the free end of the bar by the sleeve with your right hand, while the corner end extends out to your right. Position your body so that your right hand is in front of your left hip. Next up, you're going to raise the bar to the end of your range of motion. It will move in an arc starting out kind of like a front raise and move across your body ending up at head level out to the side. Maintain a controlled descent. Rest 60 seconds between work sets after completing both sides.

Week 4 - Use the same weight for 3x10.

3 total work sets

Rope Extensions (Facing Away) - 3x12 - These are similar to the cable extensions you did last week. Setup the same way, facing away from the pulley. You're going to bend at the waist and let the rope stretch your triceps and pull your arm lower arms back behind your head. Keep your elbows out to the sides and your arms parallel to the ground, palms down towards the ground through the entire movement. The cable moves in a mostly straight line in this variation, rather than in an arc like it would with the straight bar handle. Flex hard for a split second at the top, and stretch for a split second in the stretch position. Rest 60 seconds between sets.

Week 4 - Reduce the rest period from 60 seconds to 30 seconds.

3 total work sets

Abdominals - Today's ab movement will be pulldown abs. Setup facing away from the stack, grab the rope handle, and use your abdominals to curl your body downward against the weight. Pause for a split second at the bottom, then come back up. 4 sets of 10-15.

Lower Body Day 2 - 12 work sets

Leg Press - 3x12 - Set your feet up higher than mid line on the foot plate and with a wide stance, toes pointed out a bit to be in line with your knees. This will target your hips, hams, and glutes, with a lesser impact on your quads.

Grip the handles tight, keep your **back and your lats tight** during the movement. **Pull yourself into the seat with the handles**. Bring your knees back to the end of your range of motion and then drive the plate back up until just before lock out, then back down. **Keep control of the sled**, don't just let off the gas. Keep the movement up and down completely deliberate. **You control the weight, it does not control you**. Rest up to 2 minutes between sets.

Week 4 - Increase the weight over what you used in week 3.

3 total work sets

BB Squat - 3x10 - Don't forget to wear your belt. 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 10 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 10 reps. Your working weight should be a little heavier than the weight you used last week for 8 reps. Rest up to 2 minutes between sets.

Week 4 - Use the same weight for 3x12.

3 total work sets

DB Split Squats - 3x12 - Holding dumbbells at your sides, position yourself facing away from a bench. Placing one leg behind you on the bench, with the top of the foot contacting the bench surface, squat down as deeply as possible. Remember to **keep your hips square to your torso**, and to **keep your torso upright** as much as possible. The standing leg should be doing the bulk of the work. Rest 60 seconds between sets.

Week 4 - Reduce the rest period from 60 seconds to 30 seconds.

3 total work sets

DB Stiff Legged Deadlift - 3x10 - Belt up. Standard stiff legged deadlifts here, dumbbells instead of a barbell.

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. Rest 60 seconds between sets.

Week 4 - Use the same weight as in week 3 for 3x12.

3 total work sets

Donkey/Leg Press Calf Raises - 3x30 - If you don't have a donkey calf machine, do these in the leg press. 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.