

# Novice Program 1 - "the Triad" - Week 5 & 6

## 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 - 3x8** - Standard dumbbell bench 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 6 - Use the same weight as week 5 but for 3x10.**

*3 total work sets*

**Smith Machine Bent Over Rows - 3x6** - Put that belt on. Set up in the smith machine. Grab the bar 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, nor 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 6 - Increase the weight over what you used in week 5.**

*3 total work sets*

**Bent Over RDR - 3x12** - 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 your torso, if you're too high or too low you won't be activating the rear deltoid. Rest 60 seconds between sets.

**Week 6 - Reduce the rest period from 60 seconds to 30 seconds.**

*3 total work sets*

**One Arm DB Rows - 3x10** - Standard one arm DB rows. Support your body on a bench or other structure with the non working arm. I don't want any excessive body flopping to get the weight up, **your upper body should stay mostly static** during the row. When executing the row, **pull with your elbow** as opposed to pulling with your hand. Drive that **elbow up and back, keeping it tight to your body**. At the bottom, allow the weight to stretch your lat somewhat, but do not completely let off the gas and allow your shoulder to roll forward. Rest 60 seconds between work sets after finishing both sides.

**Week 6 - Increase the weight used over week 5.**

*3 total work sets*

**Seated Smith Machine OHP - 3x10** - Set up the back supported seat in the smith machine. You want the path of the bar to intersect with the top of your forehead. That is the stopping point for the lift. Trying to go down further will create a headache. Use a pinkies on the rings grip here. **Bring the weight down with control, stop just off your forehead for a split second, then explosively drive the bar back up**. Stop for a split second at the top of the lift before descending again. Rest 60 seconds between sets.

**Week 6 - Use the same weight as week 5 for 3x12.**

*3 total work sets*

**Hammer Curl - 3x12** - Holding dumbbells with **your palms facing** each other, you're going to curl the weight upwards to the end of your range, and then **lower it with control**. You can alternate arms or do them simultaneously. **Avoid swinging the weight**. Allow each dumbbell to come to a complete stop before initiating the next rep. **Keep your elbows in** tight to your body. Rest 60 seconds between sets.

**Week 6 - Reduce the rest period from 60 seconds to 30 seconds.**

*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 1 - 12 work sets**

**BB Squat - sets of 8 to form loss** - Belt up. We're doing the basic barbell squat here. Start at a lighter weight to get your form dialed in and take gradual jumps upwards until your form starts to break down. Take the depth to parallel or just above. **Keep the descent controlled**, no "dive bombing" allowed. Rest up to 3 minutes between sets.

**Week 6 - Increase the weight used over week 5, or increase the number of reps you squeeze out in the last set before shutdown.**

*3 total work sets*

**Leg Press - 3x10** - We're going to use your strongest foot position for this. Do a few warm up sets to find a good

position and to establish a working weight. The rest of the leg press rules apply as normal. **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 6 - Use the same weight for 3x12.**

*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 6 - Use a bit more weight on these than you did in week 5.**

*3 total work sets*

**DB Stiff Legged Deadlift - 3x15** - Throw your belt on. 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 6 - Reduce the rest period from 60 seconds to 30 seconds.**

*3 total work sets*

**Standing calf raises - 4x25** - 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

**Incline Bench Press - sets of 8 to form loss** - Standard incline 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. **Per usual, no total failure. When you start to lose your form, shut it down**. The usual form rules apply. Feet stay on the floor, shoulders stay squared. Rest up to 2 minutes between sets.

**Week 6 - Increase the weight you get to in the final set over what you used in week 5, or increase the number of reps you squeeze out with the same weight you used in week 5.**

*3 total work sets*

**One Arm DB Rows - sets of 10 to form loss** - Start out at a lighter weight to get your form solid, then take gradual jumps in weight until your form breaks towards the end of the set. I don't want any excessive body flopping to get the weight up, **your upper body should stay mostly static** during the row. When executing the row, **pull with your elbow** as opposed to pulling with your hand. Drive that **elbow up and back, keeping it tight to your body**. At the bottom, allow the weight to stretch your lat somewhat, but do not completely let off the gas and allow your shoulder to round forward. Rest up to 2 minutes between sets after completing both sides.

Example:

55lbs x10

75lbs x10 - begin to feel the weight

80lbs x10 - feel it more

85lbs x10 - got all 10 reps with good form

90lbs x10 - shoulder rounds forward at rep 7, shut it down.

**Week 6 - Increase the weight you get to in the final set over what you used in week 5, or increase the number of reps you squeeze out with the same weight you used in week 5.**

*3 total work sets*

**Chest Supported High Row - 3x10** - 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 6 - Use the same weight as week 5 for 3x12.**

*3 total work sets*

**Medium 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 6 - Increase the weight over what you used in week 5.**

*3 total work sets*

**BB Front Raise - 3x10** - Simply take a straight bar and raise it to eye level. Focus on keeping the work in the front deltoids, rather than allowing it to be picked up by the traps and upper back. Rest 60 seconds between sets.

**Week 6 - Use the same weight as week 5 for 3x12.**

*3 total work sets*

**Dips Between benches - 3 sets to form loss** - Setup between two benches (or a bench and something suitable to put your feet upon). Supporting yourself on your hands, with your feet on the opposite supporting structure, you're going to bend elbows and lower yourself towards the ground to the end of your range of motion. **Keep your head up and your chest high**, don't let your body round forward during the movement. Rest 60 seconds between sets.

**Week 6 - Reduce the rest period from 60 seconds to 30 seconds between sets. I hope we can still be friends after.**

*3 total work sets*

**Abdominals** - Today's ab movement will be decline situps, but I want you to hold a dumbbell across your upper chest today, 4 sets of 15-25 reps.

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

**Seated Leg 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 6 - Reduce the rest period from 60 seconds to 30 seconds between sets.**

*3 total work sets*

**Smith Machine Squats - 3x10** - Put your belt on here. 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 6 - Use the same weight for 3x12.**

*3 total work sets*

**Leg Extensions - 3x20** - 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 6 - Increase the weight over what you were able to handle in week 5.***

*3 total work sets*

**BB Stiff Legged Deadlift - 3x10** - Put your belt back on. 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 6 - Use the same weight as week 5, but this time I want 3x15.***

*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.