



# THE BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO THE **GYM**

*EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW*



## So you're going to start working out

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First off, congratulations! By making this decision you've made a commitment to improve yourself; you've already surpassed many people who have never even considered hitting the gym. This is all well and good, but now you may be asking "what's next?" In this guide we'll

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cover everything including what to do before setting foot in the gym, what to do when you're there, and how to make the most of your workout after you've left!

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**People succeed because they know where they're going**

**-Earl Nightingale**

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## Before the Workout

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### I. Goals

Before you even set foot into your gym you need to make a plan. The people who see the most results from training are those who know what they're going to be doing before they begin their workout. How do you make this plan? The first step is simple; establish your **GOALS**. Try to establish 2-3 specific and attainable goals. For example if you want to lose weight don't just say "I want to lose weight". Ask yourself, do you want to lose weight? Or **will** you lose weight? Swapping "want" for "will" is a simple trick that can give you a slight mental edge when working to reach your goals.

Successful goals have specific values and a set time frame. A much better example of that weight loss goal would be "I will lose 10 pounds over the next 2 months". The most successful goals tend to be short term goals. While you may have an overlying long term goal, set short term target goals to keep track of your progress. Aim to keep

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the time frame for these goals under 2 months. Say your goal is to lose 60 pounds in a year; it's much more practical to set 6 separate short term goals of losing 10 pounds over 2 months than it is to say you'll lose 60 pounds in a year. Keeping goals with short time frames allows you to have a rapid goal turnover; this will give you another mental edge as you will constantly be attaining your goals and creating new ones. Make sure to write these goals down somewhere where you will see them often like on your fridge or phone. Here are some helpful rules for successful goal setting to Always remember.

1. **USE DETERMINED WORDS: I WILL > I WANT.**
2. **BE SPECIFIC - SET NUMERICAL VALUES TO DESCRIBE YOUR GOALS.**
3. **SET A TIME FRAME**
4. **KEEP YOUR GOALS IN THE SHORT TERM, <2 MONTHS**
5. **SET ATTAINABLE GOALS**

Using these steps try create 2-3 goals that you'll achieve through your training.

## The Plan

Now that you have set your goals it's time to create a plan to achieve them. No matter what your goal is, when starting to train there should be both a strength and endurance component to your workouts. This is crucial for overall health. Based on your goals there will be slight changes or additions to this core plan. The key here is to train at a level that is challenging, but still comfortable. During the "beginner" stage of training you'll see drastic results very quickly which are called "Beginner Gains". These are great to let you know you are improving but you must keep going as these are only temporary fixes. In the next section we'll describe one of our favorite workout programs for beginners and seasoned gym goers alike. Here are some other pieces of the plan that you may want to consider adding to your personal plan.

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### **1. USE A FOOD LOGGING APP**

Using a food logging app can be extremely helpful when trying to lose weight as well as put on muscle. We love "myfitnesspal" or which is a free app with paid upgrade abilities. This app lets you input your weight goals which include loss, maintenance and gain. It also gives you a suggested calorie intake as well as a breakdown of what portion of your diet each macronutrient (carbs, protein, fats) should make up.

### **2. FIND A TRAINING PARTNER**

Whether your partner has gym experience or is a complete beginner training with a friend adds elements of fun, accountability and safety to your workouts. By training with a partner you always have a spotter which is vital when learning your limits for certain lifts. A partner also gives you more confidence thus making you more likely to push yourself knowing that someone is there to spot you. Training with a friend tends to be more fun too; you have the ability to boost each other if someone is having an off day and the inherent competition will help motivate both of you to train harder. The key to remember is that a gym partner may have different levels of strength so make sure you push yourself while also attempting a weight or speed that is attainable.

### **3. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF WHAT YOUR GYM HAS TO OFFER**

Many gyms offer a variety of benefits for new members. These can include orientation on equipment, free training sessions, a nutrition consultation, a fitness assessment, and more. Take advantage of all of this; maybe you'll learn a new favorite exercise or how to use a strength machine you once thought was complicated. Whatever you learn will be beneficial and increase the overall effectiveness and safety of your training.

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## The Workout

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### **1. IF YOU'VE NEVER TRAINED BEFORE**

If you've never done any strength training before we recommend that you prepare yourself for training with free weights by using the isolation strength equipment you will likely find in your gym. These machines are great for people who haven't strength trained before. They isolate a particular muscle group and restrict your range of motion to one plane which reduces risk of injury. We suggest that at this stage you divide your workout into an upper body day and a lower body day. Complete 3 sets of 8 to 12 reps on each machine resting for about 30 seconds between sets. Try to increase the weight between each set; this will spark muscle growth. On rest days don't be completely sedentary; go for a walk, bike ride or other moderate physical activity. Make sure to stretch as before and after workouts, you will be pushing muscles that might be "out of shape" so it is important to keep them loose. The goal here is to build a base of strength that you can use to properly execute the free weight training program.

| Day 1      | Day 2 | Day 3      | Day 4 | Day 5      | Day 6 | Day 7      |
|------------|-------|------------|-------|------------|-------|------------|
| Upper body | rest  | Lower Body | rest  | Upper body | rest  | Lower body |

Once you've completed 2 weeks of this preparation program you're ready to start using some free weights in our beginner's workout program.

Now you're probably seeing some results from this prep program and may be wondering "why should I start with the free weight training?" When using free weights you activate more secondary muscles used for stabilization and balance. For example, let's

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compare the chest press machine vs. the barbell or dumbbell bench press. The chest press machine is an effective way to train your chest; why change? By using free weights you will activate not only your chest, but also your abdominals, triceps and back. This is due to the necessity to stabilize your body on the bench as well as the need to guide the weight through the proper range of motion. Essentially, free weights give you more 'bang for your buck' and also provide many more exercise options when the gym may be crowded.

### **THE STRENGTH SAGA'S BEGINNER TRAINING PROGRAM**

We offer 2 beginner training programs here depending on how often you want to workout. One program follows the same pattern as our preparation program with 4 training days divided into an upper and lower body split; the second program is more rigorous with 6 training days. We prefer the second program, but realize that it may be difficult to train 6 days a week. For both programs we recommend warming up with some moderate cardio and light stretching - about 10 minutes or more depending on your personal preference.

Disclosure: The following programs are suggestions, it is recommended to consult a doctor before starting any training program to make sure that you are physically ready for a training program. Be sure to consult your gym's staff to learn how to use all equipment in a safe manner.

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# WORKOUT

## 4 Training days

Sets 3 sets per exercise

Reps:

| Set # | Week 1  | Week 2  | Week 3 |
|-------|---------|---------|--------|
| Set 1 | 12 reps | 10 reps | 8 reps |
| Set 2 | 10 reps | 8 reps  | 6 reps |
| Set 3 | 8 reps  | 6 reps  | 4 reps |

Remember to increase weight as reps decrease. Last rep should be hard to complete.

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| <p><b><u>Monday - Upper body</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Barbell bench press</li> <li>2. Incline dumbbell bench press</li> <li>3. Rope push downs</li> <li>4. Preacher curls</li> <li>5. Dumbbell Flyes</li> <li>6. Dips (assisted or weighted if needed)</li> <li>7. Russian twists w/ knee raises</li> </ol> | <p><b><u>Friday - Upper body</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dumbbell bench press</li> <li>2. Dumbbell arnold press</li> <li>3. Bent over row</li> <li>4. Seated cable row</li> <li>5. Dumbbell tricep extension</li> <li>6. Lat pull-downs (wide grip)</li> <li>7. Chin-ups (assisted or weighted)</li> </ol> |
| <p><b><u>Wednesday - Lower body</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Barbell squats</li> <li>2. Dumbbell lunges</li> <li>3. Leg curls</li> <li>4. Leg extensions</li> <li>5. Decline sit-ups</li> <li>6. Planks (60-90 seconds)</li> </ol>  | <p><b><u>Saturday - Lower body</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Barbell front squats</li> <li>2. Walking lunges</li> <li>3. Deadlifts (trap bar)</li> <li>4. Leg Press</li> <li>5. Glute bridges</li> <li>6. Side bends</li> </ol>  |

\*\*If unsure about how to complete any of these exercises we recommend looking at the "Full Fitness:Exercise Workout Trainer" which is free in the app store, or feel free to contact us \*\*

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# WORKOUT

## 6 Training days

**Sets** 3 sets per exercise **Reps:**

| Set # | Week 1  | Week 2  | Week 3 |
|-------|---------|---------|--------|
| Set 1 | 12 reps | 10 reps | 8 reps |
| Set 2 | 10 reps | 8 reps  | 6 reps |
| Set 3 | 8 reps  | 6 reps  | 4 reps |

Remember to increase weight as reps decrease. Last rep should be hard to complete.

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| <p><b><u>Monday - Arms</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dumbbell curls</li> <li>Rope push-downs</li> <li>Dumbbell incline curls</li> <li>Dumbbell concentration curls</li> <li>Dumbbell tricep extension</li> <li>Dips (assisted or weighted if needed)</li> <li>Russian twists w/ knee raises</li> </ol> | <p><b><u>Thursday - Arms</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dumbbell curls</li> <li>Rope push-downs</li> <li>Dumbbell incline curls</li> <li>Dumbbell concentration curls</li> <li>Dumbbell tricep extension</li> <li>Assisted dips</li> <li>Russian twists w/ knee raises</li> </ol>  |
| <p><b><u>Tuesday - Chest and Back</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dumbbell bench press</li> <li>Seated cable row</li> <li>Dumbbell incline press</li> <li>Dumbbell flies</li> <li>Rear deltflyes</li> <li>Wide grip lat pull down</li> <li>Assisted chin ups</li> <li>Side bends</li> </ol>              | <p><b><u>Friday - Chest and Back</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dumbbell bench press</li> <li>Seated cable row</li> <li>Dumbbell incline press</li> <li>Hug</li> <li>Backwards hug</li> <li>Wide grip lat pull down</li> <li>Assisted chin ups</li> <li>Side bends</li> </ol>      |
| <p><b><u>Wednesday - Legs</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Squat (barbell/dumbbell/smith)</li> <li>One leg deadlift</li> <li>lunges (dumbbell/smith machine)</li> <li>Leg extension machine</li> <li>Leg curl machine</li> <li>Calf raise machine</li> <li>Decline sit ups</li> </ol>                     | <p><b><u>Saturday - Legs</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Squat (barbell/dumbbell/smith)</li> <li>One leg deadlift</li> <li>lunges (dumbbell/smith machine)</li> <li>Leg extension machine</li> <li>Leg curl machine</li> <li>Calf raise machine</li> <li>Decline sit ups</li> </ol> |

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## Post Workout

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Once you've completed your workout there are a few things to remember to maximize the results of your work.

### **1. CONSUME PROTEIN**

Studies have shown that there's about a 30 minute window after you've finished exercising where your body optimally processes protein and replenishes Glycogen (the fuel your muscles use). Whether you grab a protein shake or opt for a traditional meal try to maintain a 3:1 carb to protein ratio as this promotes optimal muscle recovery.

### **2. STAY LIMBER**

However amazing your workout was it's not an excuse to lay on the couch for the rest of the day. Not only is this behavior inherently unhealthy, but it will leave you extra achy and tense. Try to stay loose with some light stretching or leisurely activity spread throughout the time until your next workout.

### **3. REST**

You've just pushed your body to its limits and now you need to recover. Try to get 8 hours of sleep as this is when your body will complete most of the necessary "repairs" to get you up and active the next day.

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