

Training Programs and Programing

For the reasons previously stated, the limits placed on training by facility availability, equipment and most importantly, time available to train, will greatly determine how the athlete's training plan will be laid out daily, weekly and monthly. Simplicity of the workout without too much variation of workout days and exercise changes, may also make it easier for athletes to be successful. The following examples of training variation attempts to walk the fine line of the ideal and the realistic, and of course what has been proven to work for novice, intermediate and advanced level lifters.

Novice Athlete Programs

The novice designation is for those athletes with a very limited strength training history. Novice training (especially younger novice) takes advantage of the rapid adaptation experienced by athletes who are new to strength training.

Novice lifters have had such limited exposure to training that their faster nervous system adaptation allows them to make substantial strength gains over a fairly short time. Most novice athletes can add weight to their lifts every workout and continue to make gains for several weeks or even months.

A novice lifter can usually benefit from a medium number of repetitions which straddles the line between hypertrophy and strength. Using fives to increase muscle while also driving the response needed for greater strength output and muscle group coordination seems to work well for novice lifters. Additionally, sets of five repetitions seem to help athletes maintain consistent form. Too many repetitions can cause the novice lifters newly developed form to break down, setting the stage for failing a lift or possible injury.

For the first time novice athlete, a good starting point is generally to begin with a very light weight or just bodyweight and work on form for a few workouts before starting a weight progression. You can then add weight and work up to what the lifter is able to do for five repetitions with at least one to two repetitions in reserve. The following suggested novice training routines take advantage of the novice lifters rapid adaptation phenomenon and equally fast gains in strength.



Suggested Novice Three Day Program – Week 1		
Workout A – Monday	Workout B – Wednesday	Workout A – Friday
Squat 3x5	Squat 3x5	Squat 3x5
Bench 3x5	Press 3x5	Bench 3x5
Deadlift 1x5	Deadlift 1x5 or Row/Chin-Ups 3/5	Deadlift 1x5

Note: This reads 3 sets of 5 repetitions. These “work sets” can be done as “sets across” with each set being the same weight or ascending sets with work sets increasing by a small amount from 1st through 3rd set.

Suggested Novice Three Day Program – Week 2		
Workout B - Monday	Workout A - Wednesday	Workout B - Friday
Squat 3x5	Squat 3x5	Squat 3x5
Press 3x5	Bench 3x5	Press 3x5
Deadlift 1x5 or Row/Chins 3x5	Deadlift 1x5	Deadlift 1x5 or Row/Chins 3x5

Considerations

- Workouts A and B are alternated M-W-F. The alternating workouts continue for the following week(s).
- As deadlifts become heavier, athletes can alternate workouts with rows or chin-ups. This may occur as early as four to six weeks into the program.
- Squats and deadlifts will initially jump 5kg a workout and taper off to 5 while bench and press will increase by 5 and decrease to 1.25kg increases



- For older novice athletes increases in weight per workout may need to be limited to **2.5kg** in the squat and deadlift and 1.25kg in the pressing movements at the start then reduce to smaller jumps between workouts (this will require 1.25kg plates).
- Doing consecutively heavy squats 3 times a week may be too much for some novice athletes (especially over age 50) and may respond best by incorporating a lighter squat day (80% to 90% of heavy squat days) on their middle day of the week and eventually only squatting 2 times a week. Older athletes should not allow for more than 5–10 % reduction if using a light day on squat.
- If the athletes gets stuck at a given weight they can reduce fatigue by lowering reps or sets or instead of doing 3 work sets do 1 work set and 2 back off sets. Progression can then continue with gradually adding volume through a second then third set then adding weight as appropriate.
- If athletes cannot perform the squat correctly, have them use dumbbell squats or bench squats as a gateway to competition squats.



Suggested Novice Two Day Programs

Another athlete training option is a two day program. This option may also be preferable for athletes who are active in other sports and/or only have two days a week to workout. This program requires at least 2 days rest between workout sessions.

Suggested Novice Two Day Program	
Monday	Thursday
Squat 3x5	Squat 3x5
Bench 3x5	Bench 3x5
Deadlift 1x5	Deadlift 1x5 (Chin-Ups or Rows 3x8-10)
Press 3x5	Press 3x5

Note that after several weeks of training with steadily increasing weights on the deadlift, more recovery may be needed. Chins or rows can be an effective alternative to one of the deadlift days in this case. Make sure these are actual chins and not the 'kipping' chins that use the legs and momentum to achieve more repetitions.

Remember that athletes will continue to add weight (even if it is a small increase) to each workout as long as they can.



Suggested Novice One Day Program

This workout can be used with much older athletes who are in a very low state of conditioning or and/or athletes who are very limited in time they can train. They may transition to other programs as time and conditioning allow.

Suggested Novice One Day Program

Any Day of Week

Squat 5x5 (Ascending Sets)

Bench 4x5 (Ascending Sets)

Deadlift 1x5, 1x5 (Back off set)

Press 3x5

Chin-Ups or Rows 3 x 8-10



It is recommended that athletes train for at least eight weeks in the novice program before entering competition. It is also recommended that no modifications to the training be made within the eight week period except for not training for at least two days prior to competition. This will allow the athlete to continue on the novice program after the competition or possibly transition into the Intermediate program as discussed below. If athletes choose to run another novice cycle with the adjustment suggested above, for the last three weeks, competition lifts might use three sets of three to better adapt to competition readiness.

