MCNICOL
STRENGTH
Solutions

THE BASE

WEEK ONE

12-Week Upper / Lower Program

BEGINNER · INTERMEDIATE · ADVANCED

The first week, free. Yours to keep and yours to share.

From The Base Set

START HERE

Week one of a twelve week program. Everything you need for the next seven days is in here.

Pick your level from the three that follow. Beginner if you are starting out or coming back after a long break. Intermediate if you are comfortable with a barbell. Advanced if your technique is solid on every main lift. Not sure? Take the level below the one you think you are.

The shape of it

Four sessions a week: Upper A, Lower A, Upper B, Lower B. A rest day between each is ideal, but any order that gets four sessions in beats a perfect plan you do not follow.

How to pick your weights

There are no percentages in this program and you do not need to know your one rep max. Every set is set by RPE, which is simply how hard the set felt out of ten.

RPE 6 means you had about four solid reps left. RPE 7, three left. RPE 8, two. RPE 9, one. You should not see RPE 10 anywhere in here.

Week one asks for RPE 6 on your main lift. It should feel easy, and you should finish thinking you could have done more. Do it anyway. The early weeks are what make the later ones survivable.

Write down what you actually lifted in the Load, Reps and RPE boxes. Look at last week before you pick this week's weight. That log is the whole progression system.

Your main lifts

Each level uses its own six. They are named on the pages that follow.

Before you start

This program is general information, not individual medical or health advice. If you have an injury, a medical condition, or you are unsure whether it suits you, get cleared by a qualified professional first.

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WEEK 1 · BEGINNER

01 FOUNDATION | Groove the pattern. It should feel too easy, and that is the point.

UPPER A	Sets	Reps	Target	Load	Reps	RPE
Dumbbell Bench Press	3	8	RPE 6			
Lat Pulldown	3	8-10	RPE 7-8			
Seated DB Shoulder Press	2	10	RPE 7			
Chest-Supported Row	2	10-12	RPE 7-8			
Dumbbell Curl	2	12	RPE 8			
Triceps Pushdown	2	12-15	RPE 8			

LOWER A	Sets	Reps	Target	Load	Reps	RPE
Goblet Squat	3	8	RPE 6			
Romanian Deadlift	2	8-10	RPE 7-8			
Walking Lunge (each leg)	2	10	RPE 7			
Seated or Lying Leg Curl	2	12	RPE 8			
Plank	2	45 sec	Hold			
Calf Raise	2	15	RPE 8			

UPPER B	Sets	Reps	Target	Load	Reps	RPE
Seated DB Shoulder Press	3	8	RPE 6			
Chest-Supported Row	3	8-10	RPE 7-8			
Dumbbell Bench Press	2	10	RPE 7			
Lat Pulldown	2	10-12	RPE 7-8			
Lateral Raise	2	15	RPE 8			
Face Pull	2	15	RPE 7			

LOWER B	Sets	Reps	Target	Load	Reps	RPE
Trap Bar Deadlift	3	8	RPE 6			
Leg Press or Hack Squat	2	10	RPE 7-8			
Bulgarian Split Squat (each leg)	2	8	RPE 7			
Leg Extension	2	12-15	RPE 8			
Hanging Knee Raise	2	12	RPE 8			
Back Extension	2	12	RPE 7			

Load, Reps and RPE are yours to fill in. Write it down as you go.

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WEEK 1 · INTERMEDIATE

01 FOUNDATION | Groove the pattern. It should feel too easy, and that is the point.

UPPER A	Sets	Reps	Target	Load	Reps	RPE
Barbell Bench Press	4	8	RPE 6			
Assisted Chin-Up	4	8-10	RPE 7-8			
Standing Barbell Overhead Press	3	10	RPE 7			
Barbell Bent-Over Row	3	10-12	RPE 7-8			
Dumbbell Curl	3	12	RPE 8			
Triceps Pushdown	3	12-15	RPE 8			

LOWER A	Sets	Reps	Target	Load	Reps	RPE
Back Squat	4	8	RPE 6			
Romanian Deadlift	3	8-10	RPE 7-8			
Walking Lunge (each leg)	3	10	RPE 7			
Seated or Lying Leg Curl	3	12	RPE 8			
Plank	3	45 sec	Hold			
Calf Raise	3	15	RPE 8			

UPPER B	Sets	Reps	Target	Load	Reps	RPE
Standing Barbell Overhead Press	4	8	RPE 6			
Barbell Bent-Over Row	4	8-10	RPE 7-8			
Barbell Bench Press	3	10	RPE 7			
Assisted Chin-Up	3	10-12	RPE 7-8			
Lateral Raise	3	15	RPE 8			
Face Pull	3	15	RPE 7			

LOWER B	Sets	Reps	Target	Load	Reps	RPE
Conventional Deadlift	4	8	RPE 6			
Leg Press or Hack Squat	3	10	RPE 7-8			
Bulgarian Split Squat (each leg)	3	8	RPE 7			
Leg Extension	3	12-15	RPE 8			
Hanging Knee Raise	3	12	RPE 8			
Back Extension	3	12	RPE 7			

Load, Reps and RPE are yours to fill in. Write it down as you go.

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WEEK 1 · ADVANCED

01 FOUNDATION | Groove the pattern. It should feel too easy, and that is the point.

UPPER A	Sets	Reps	Target	Load	Reps	RPE
Pause Bench Press (1s)	5	8	RPE 6			
Chin-Up (add weight at 8 reps)	4	8-10	RPE 7-8			
Z-Press	3	10	RPE 7			
Pendlay Row	3	10-12	RPE 7-8			
Dumbbell Curl	3	12	RPE 8			
Triceps Pushdown	3	12-15	RPE 8			

LOWER A	Sets	Reps	Target	Load	Reps	RPE
Pause Back Squat (2s)	5	8	RPE 6			
Romanian Deadlift	3	8-10	RPE 7-8			
Walking Lunge (each leg)	3	10	RPE 7			
Seated or Lying Leg Curl	3	12	RPE 8			
Plank	3	45 sec	Hold			
Calf Raise	3	15	RPE 8			

UPPER B	Sets	Reps	Target	Load	Reps	RPE
Z-Press	5	8	RPE 6			
Pendlay Row	4	8-10	RPE 7-8			
Pause Bench Press (1s)	3	10	RPE 7			
Chin-Up (add weight at 8 reps)	3	10-12	RPE 7-8			
Lateral Raise	3	15	RPE 8			
Face Pull	3	15	RPE 7			

LOWER B	Sets	Reps	Target	Load	Reps	RPE
Deficit Deadlift (25mm)	5	8	RPE 6			
Leg Press or Hack Squat	3	10	RPE 7-8			
Bulgarian Split Squat (each leg)	3	8	RPE 7			
Leg Extension	3	12-15	RPE 8			
Hanging Knee Raise	3	12	RPE 8			
Back Extension	3	12	RPE 7			

Load, Reps and RPE are yours to fill in. Write it down as you go.

LIKED IT? THERE ARE ELEVEN MORE WEEKS.

The Base Set picks up exactly where this leaves off.

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The Base is the full twelve weeks in all three levels, one page per week, printed and ready to go. Four blocks: Foundation, Accumulation, Intensification and Realisation, with a deload at week nine and a peak at week twelve.

PLUS, the Build Your Own Base Program is the same twelve weeks as a spreadsheet. Choose your compound lifts, enter a recent set for each, and every weight is worked out for you.

It is $55 AUD, one payment, and it is yours forever.

strengthsolutions.netlify.app

And if you would rather have something built specifically around you, that is what I do. In person here in Adelaide, or online wherever you are.

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