



THE BEGINNER GUIDE

THE BEGINNER GUIDE TO SCIENCE-BASED LIFTING

A simple way to build a plan you can actually repeat.

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|---|--|
| 01 How muscle growth works | 02 Frequency + weekly hard sets |
| 03 Effort, reps + rest | 04 How to choose your lifts |
| 05 Progression + a fictional log | 06 Recovery, mistakes + checklist |

by **@dr.mavion**, a med intern who lifts · DM **START** for this free guide

READ THIS FIRST

HOW MUSCLE GROWS.

New to the gym? Or starting again after years away? You do not need to know every training theory to make your next session useful.

A hard set gives muscle fibers a reason to adapt when it recruits them and puts high tension through them.

Making that effort repeatable, with consistent exercises and technique, lets you compare what changes over time.

1**Pick real gym days****2****Make a small,
repeatable plan****3****Track what happens****KEEP IN MIND**

This is general fitness education, not a personal program. Stop and see a clinician for pain, injury or a medical condition.

LESSON 01



TRAIN EACH MUSCLE OFTEN ENOUGH

About three full-body sessions a week is a practical beginner option, working the same major muscles across those sessions.

Two full-body sessions are another practical option when the schedule or preference calls for it.

Choose two or three days you can realistically repeat instead of forcing someone else's ideal calendar.

YOUR CHECK

Which days could you return to consistently? ____ / ____ / ____

TRY THIS

Write those days in your calendar. Start with the schedule you can actually keep.

LESSON 02

2

COUNT HARD SETS, NOT JUST EXERCISES

A hard working set brings the target muscle close to its current limit.

For a simple start, use one working set per chosen movement or muscle region, then adjust the amount of work as needed. With one direct working set for a muscle across three weekly sessions, that adds up to three weekly hard sets.

About three hard sets per muscle every 48 hours is a rough recovery reference, not a target everyone must hit.

For a priority muscle, nine to twelve hard sets per week can be around the high end; twenty near-failure sets is very high.

YOUR CHECK

One direct set for chest on Tuesday plus one on Friday = two direct chest sets that week. Write your own weekly count: _____

TRY THIS

Count direct working sets for the muscle you want to improve. Keep the starting number manageable before adding more.

LESSON 03

3

GET CLOSE TO FAILURE

A practical default is to stop when you think you could complete about one more good repetition.

This is one rep in reserve, or 1 RIR.

Losing your planned technique or range of motion is a task limit; actually being unable to finish the next rep is muscular failure.

You do not need to push every hard set to failed repetitions.

YOUR CHECK

At the end of your last working set, how many more clean reps did you think you had? _____

TRY THIS

Use the same motion each time and end the set with roughly one clean rep left.

LESSON 04

4

CHOOSE A WORKABLE REP RANGE

Practical, comfortable ranges run around four to twelve reps, depending on the movement and person.

For beginners using single hard sets, consider six or more reps instead of very heavy sets below six.

A range like eight to twelve gives you room to add repetitions before increasing the load.

Research also reports growth from roughly five to thirty reps taken to failure with matched set counts and frequency; this does not make every range equally practical.

YOUR CHECK

My selected exercise: _____. My workable rep range: _____ to _____.

TRY THIS

Pick a load you can control within your chosen range while ending near your effort target.

LESSON 05

5

REST UNTIL YOU CAN WORK HARD AGAIN

Wait until breathlessness, excessive pump and distracting discomfort no longer limit your next hard set.

A timer alone does not tell you whether you are ready.

Consider resting a little longer when your body feels ready but you are not mentally ready for another hard effort.

YOUR CHECK

What usually ends the set first: the target muscle, your breathing, or something else?

TRY THIS

Before your next set, ask: can I focus and work hard again with controlled reps?

LESSON 06



PICK REPEATABLE MOVEMENTS

For beginners, cover major muscles with manageable exercises before adding many highly specialized variations.

For chest, a machine press is one option. For back, consider a pulldown or row. For legs, a squat or leg press is an option when it fits you.

You can add a suitable hinge movement and other regions that matter to your goal without copying an advanced athlete's entire session.

When technique changes as the weight rises, adjust your setup so the movement stays comparable.

YOUR CHECK

A press: _____ A pull: _____ A leg movement: _____

TRY THIS

Keep a short menu of lifts you can set up the same way each visit.

PROGRESSIVE OVERLOAD

PROGRESS, STEP BY STEP.

Progressive overload means watching how your capacity changes at a repeatable task. It is a record you use, not a command to force bigger weights.

1. Choose a suitable exercise and keep the setup and range of motion consistent.
2. Pick a workable rep bracket, such as eight to twelve, and note your load, reps and effort.
3. On later sessions, work toward more clean reps within that bracket while keeping technique comparable.
4. Once you reach the upper end with comparable effort, try a small load increase and build reps up again.
5. If the equipment jump is too large, keep the load and progress reps instead.
6. Judge the pattern over one to three months, because a single lower-rep session does not prove you lost progress.

1**Same lift + form****2****More clean reps****3****Small load rise****KEEP IN MIND**

A better number is evidence of adaptation; forcing it with changed form does not produce the same comparison.

FILLED-IN TRAINING LOG

A FICTIONAL EXAMPLE

FICTIONAL ILLUSTRATION – NO REAL CLIENT OR PREDICTED RESULT

“I am tracking one chest-press work set in an 8–12-rep bracket, with about one good rep left.”

WEEK 1*Machine chest press · 20 kg × 8 reps · ~1 RIR***WEEK 2***Same setup · 20 kg × 10 reps · ~1 RIR***WEEK 3***Same setup · 20 kg × 12 reps · ~1 RIR***WEEK 4***Same setup · 22.5 kg × 8 reps · ~1 RIR*

The fictional lifter first adds clean reps at 20 kg, then makes a small load increase and returns to the lower end of the bracket.

Real logs can bounce around, so compare repeated sessions over time rather than expecting this exact sequence.

YOUR BLANK LOG

Date: ____ · Exercise: ____ · Load: ____ · Reps: ____ · Clean reps left: ____

LESSON 07

7

RECOVER SO YOU CAN REPEAT

A modest beginner routine does not automatically need a pre-planned deload week.

When performance stays flat and workload may be too fatiguing, reducing sets is one option to test before adding more.

If you are returning after a long break, start with fewer sets and more reps left in reserve than you previously used.

Prioritize a recoverable plan and enough sleep to function well over complicated recovery tricks. There is no universal sleep-hours cutoff.

A missed week does not mean you will see immediate muscle loss.

YOUR CHECK

Does my current workload feel repeatable, and is my log improving over time?
Yes / Not sure

TRY THIS

If fatigue builds, look at your sets and recent training log before adding more work.

A QUICK REALITY CHECK

SIX BEGINNER MISTAKES

Check any that sound familiar. Each has a clear next move.



01

Copying someone's advanced routine instead of adapting it to your own schedule and equipment.

Try: Choose a workable plan.



02

Training so rarely that your chosen muscles do not get repeatable weekly exposures.

Try: Put two or three realistic days in the calendar.



03

Starting with an excessive number of near-failure sets because more sounds better.

Try: Begin with a manageable dose.



04

Ending every working set very far from a hard effort.

Try: Estimate your clean reps in reserve.



05

Changing exercises or technique so often that your log stops being comparable.

Try: Repeat the movement and setup.



06

Rushing into the next set while breathless or distracted.

Try: Rest until ready.

KEEP THIS PAGE

YOUR ONE-PAGE CHECKLIST

Fill this out before your next gym week. One small plan you can repeat.

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------|--|
| ☐ | 01 | I chose two or three realistic full-body training days. |
| ☐ | 02 | I picked manageable exercises that cover the muscles I care about. |
| ☐ | 03 | I counted my direct hard working sets for each target muscle. |
| ☐ | 04 | I aim to finish working sets around one clean rep from failure. |
| ☐ | 05 | I chose a repeatable rep range and load. |
| ☐ | 06 | I let breathing and readiness recover between hard sets. |
| ☐ | 07 | I will log the exercise, load, reps and comparable technique. |
| ☐ | 08 | I will reassess recovery and progress before adding volume. |

MY NEXT GYM WEEK

My real training days

My first logged exercise

My rep bracket and current load

The one habit I will check next week

TRY THIS ON PAPER

WORKED EXAMPLE

A repeatable 2-day week

Fictional plan, not a client log. Use the same movements so you can compare sessions.

Tuesday	Machine chest press; wide-grip pulldown	One working set each. Record load, reps and clean reps left.
Friday	Repeat the same two movements	Use the same setup. Record the same details.
End of week	Review your two entries	Did the exercises feel stable? Keep or adjust next week.

Your turn: Copy this format. Choose your real days, foods or exercises. This is an example of the logging process, not a full workout prescription. The guide explains how to build the rest of your week.

1:1 COACHING • HOW IT WORKS

TIRED OF STARTING OVER?

You have trained before. When work gets busy, the plan slips. Then you are guessing again.

That does not mean you need better genes or a perfect week. You may need a plan built around your real week and a person who helps you review it. Here is the process I offer.

01 • PLAN

I build your training around your goal, equipment and schedule.

02 • LOG

You record sessions and your weekly check-in in the coaching app.

03 • REVIEW

We look at what happened. I revise the plan every four weeks, or sooner when needed.

WHAT YOU GET IN 16 WEEKS

- A personal training plan, exercise explanations and form feedback.
- Weekly check-ins, a kickoff call and a review call every four weeks.
- Training-focused meal plans and food guidance, plus group access.
- WhatsApp questions and form clips. Replies within 2-3 business days.

What support looks like: your plan → your workout log → your check-in → my feedback. You can see how the plan, session log, weekly check-in and coach feedback fit together.

A CLEAR NEXT STEP

COACHING THAT FITS **YOUR** **WEEK**

I'm **a med intern who lifts**. I coach training and fitness nutrition. I do not offer medical diagnosis or treatment. We work from your goals and your actual routine.

AVAILABILITY

I can confirm current coaching availability on our fit call.

YOUR FREE FIT CALL

We talk for about 30 minutes. You tell me your goal, your schedule and what you have tried. I explain the coaching process. We decide whether working together makes sense. No pressure.

DM me COACH on Instagram

@dr.mavion · I explain price and fit plainly in DMs or on a free call.

Progress varies. There are no promised physique results. Full written terms, including cancellation and refunds, are shared in writing before you pay.