

Intermediate Training Program

Cardio Guidelines (what to do on days off from your workouts): Nothing structured, but walking and movement are great. Any activity you enjoy that doesn't get your heart rate above ~150 beats per minute will be a good way to promote recovery. If able, set a goal to get a total of 45-60 min. of walking at a minimum. You can split this up however you prefer. You can also bike, row, jog, hike, play a sport, etc.

Try not to do any endurance activity where your heart rate is 120+ for over 60-90 min. Too much can hurt your recovery during this program. Basically, you should be able to talk in a complete sentence without getting too out of breath.

Strength Training (4x/week): You can split the workouts up however fits your schedule best as long as you aren't lifting three days in a row. The workouts are listed starting on page 3.

Warm up (general and specific)

The goal of the warm-up is simply to get your temperature up, move your joints through a full range of motion, and make sure all your muscles can be fully activated. You should not become tired from your warm-up. Depending on the ambient temperature and how you feel, you may need more or less warming up, so let your body temperature and overall readiness to perform guide your warm-ups.

Here's a structure for your **general warm-up** for each training session.

- ~5 minutes of low intensity cardio on an incline treadmill (brisk walking: no jogging), rower, elliptical, stairmaster, bike ergometer or crosstrainer. Do more if you're still cold afterwards. You should feel your body temperature increase, if you weren't sweating already because of the ambient temperature.

- 8-12 [Forward and backwards leg swings](#)

- 8-12 [Side-to-side leg swings](#)

- 8-12 [Arm circles forward and backward](#)

- 8-12 [Crossbody arm slaps](#)

- 8-12 [Bodyweight squat](#) or [Goblet squat](#)

- 8-12 glute bridges ([single leg](#) or [bilateral](#))

For the first 1-2 exercises of each workout, you should also perform a **specific warm-up** as follows.

Begin with no weight and move up in weight towards your work set in 1 to 3 sets of 3 to 10 reps. The higher the weight and the more technical the exercise, the more sets you'll need to warm up and the lower the reps on your warm-up sets should be. For example, for squats you'll likely need at least 2 sets of 5 reps with progressively more weight before you perform your first work set. For simple isolation exercises, you most likely won't need any warm-up, but if you feel better doing one, a single set of 12 reps with about half of your estimated working weight is often sufficient.

Don't fatigue yourself during your warm-up. Focus on technique and a smooth, explosive movement. The goal of the warm-up is to be able to perform your work sets safely with full ROM and maximal performance.

Workout execution

-Your repetition tempo/cadence should be intuitively geared towards maximal performance. Do not count. The concentric/muscle shortening portion of each exercise should be explosive. The eccentric/muscle lengthening portion of each exercise should be controlled, but don't slow it down more than necessary to retain control of the weight and safely explode back into the concentric. Don't pause between reps: you should make full use of the potentiating effect of the stretch-shortening cycle.

-With few exceptions, focus on external cues, i.e. your actual performance of the movement. Do not worry about internal cues when this isn't specifically needed, like which body part is going where or which muscle you feel most. Where you feel an exercise and which muscles experience high activation are very different things. Maximizing performance generally maximizes muscular adaptations.

-Always use full range of motion(!) There is no point in shortening your ROM to use heavier weights. By shortening your ROM to lift the weight anyway, you are sabotaging your own progress.

-All sets are 1 rep to failure unless otherwise stated: apply maximum effort, but don't perform any reps you won't complete with proper form and full ROM. As a reference, 0 reps to failure means complete momentary muscle failure. In other words: not being able to lift the weight in spite of giving it all you got.

-For unilateral exercises, always start with the weaker side and do the same number of reps with your stronger side so that the total training volume is equal for both sides. This ensures symmetrical muscular development.

-In between sets of the same exercise, rest 1 to 5 minutes, depending on when you feel ready to perform maximally again. You can go by feel here (autoregulation).

-Your total training session can take as long as you want or need.

Phase 1: Weeks 1-4

Workout A – Full Body

Exercise	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Comments	Rest
Back Squat or Front Squat	3x8	3x8	3x6-8	3-4x6	Neutral spine. Abs tight. Good video HERE on proper breathing and bracing.	1-3 m.
Chinups or Neutral Grip Chinups	2-3 x max	3 x max	3 x max	3 x max	If you cannot perform 3 reps, use a band as shown HERE and aim for 5-10 reps.	1-2 m.
Single Arm Dumbbell Arnold Press	2-3x8-10/s	3x8-10/s	3x8-10/s	3x8-10/s		1-2 m.
Lying Leg Curl	2x8-12	3x8-12	3x8-12	3x8-12	Keep glutes tight throughout.	60-90 s.
Alternating Dumbbell Curl	2x8-10/s	2x8-10/s	2x8-10/s	2x8-10/s	OPTIONAL.	60-90 s.
Dumbbell Unilateral Standing Calf Raise	2x10-12/s	2x10-12/s	2x10-12/s	2x10-12/s	OPTIONAL.	60-90 s.

Workout B – Full Body

Exercise	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Comments	Rest
Barbell Flat Bench Press or Barbell Incline Bench Press	3x6-8	3-4x6-8	3-4x4-6	3-4x4-6	You can also use dumbbells if you prefer.	1-3 m.
Single Arm Dumbbell Row	2-3x10/s	3x10/s	3x12/s	3x12/s	Make sure to squeeze shoulder blade back towards spine.	1-2 m.
Dumbbell Reverse Lunge or Rear Foot Elevated Dumbbell Split Squat	2-3x8/s	3x8/s	3x8-10/s	3x8-10/s		1-2 m.
Lat Prayer or Dumbbell Pullover	2-3x10-12	2-3x10-12	2-3x10-12	2-3x10-12	Focus on getting a stretch in your lats.	60-90 s.
One Arm Dumbbell Overhead Tricep Extension	2x10-12/s	2x10-12/s	2x12-15/s	2x12-15/s	OPTIONAL.	60-90 s.
Hanging Leg Raise or Lying Leg Raise	2 x max	2 x max	2 x max	2 x max	OPTIONAL.	60-90 s.

Workout C – Full Body

Exercise	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Comments	Rest
Barbell Deadlift or Barbell Romanian Deadlift	3x6-8	3x6-8	3x6-8	3x6-8	Neutral spine! Abs tight. Video HERE on proper breathing and bracing.	1-3 m.
Barbell Overhead Press or Dumbbell Overhead Press	2-3x8	3x6-8	3x6-8	3x6-8		1-2 m.
Overhand Lat Pulldown	2-3x8-10	3x8-10	3x8-10	3x10-12	Use wide grip as shown in video. 1.5x shoulder width.	1-2 m.
Pushup	2-3 x max	2-3 x max	2-3 x max	2-3 x max	Perform hands elevated as shown HERE if needed and aim for 5-8 reps.	60-90 s.
Face Pulls	2x12-15	2x12-15	2x12-15	2x12-15		60-90 s.
Dumbbell Hammer Curls or Sidelying Hip Raise	2x8-12 or 2x10-15/s	2x8-12 or 2x10-15/s	2x8-12 or 2x10-15/s	2x8-12 or 2x10-15/s	OPTIONAL. Your choice of bicep or glute work.	60-90 s.

Workout D – Full Body

Exercise	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Comments	Rest
Dumbbell Step Up or Barbell Hip Thrust	2-3x8/s or 2-3x10-12	3x8/s or 3x10-12	3x8-10/s or 3x10-12	3x8-10/s or 3x10-12	Perform 8-10 reps for step ups, or 10-12 reps if you choose hip thrust	1-2 m.
Supinated Barbell Bent Over Row	2-3x8-10	3x8-10	3x8-10	3x10-12		1-2 m.
Single Arm Dumbbell Bench Press	2-3x10-12/s	3x10-12/s	3x10-12/s	3x10-12/s	Abs tight. No rotation.	1-2 m.
Hip Extension, Nordic Ham Curls, or Glute Ham Raise	2x10-15 or 2x4-6	2-3x10-15 or 3x4-6	2-3x10-15 or 3x4-6	2-3x10-15 or 3x4-6	Perform 10-15 reps for hip extension, or 4-6 reps if you choose nordic ham curls or glute ham raise	60-90 s.
Butterfly Lateral Raise	2x9-12	2x9-12	2x9-12	2x9-12	Can be done with one arm or two arms at the same time.	60-90 s.
Core exercise of choice from those listed in comments.	2 challenging sets	2 challenging sets	2 challenging sets	2 challenging sets	Ab wheel rollout , swiss ball rollout , lying leg raise , hanging leg raise , plank , or side plank .	60-90 s.

Alternative exercises if equipment is limited:

Workout A

Back or Front Squat -> [Dumbbell Front Squat](#), [Goblet Squat](#) (DB or heavy object), [Banded Squat](#), or [Bodyweight Squat](#)
 Band Assisted Chinup or Lat Pulldown -> [Dumbbell Pullover](#), [Band Pulldown](#), [Towel Rows](#), or [Prone Y](#)
 Single Arm Dumbbell Arnold Press -> [Overhead Band Press](#), [Pike Pushup](#), or find a heavy object to use in place of a dumbbell
 Lying Leg Curl -> [Lying Dumbbell Leg Curl](#), [Nordic Ham Curls](#), [Banded Hip Extension](#), [Band Pullthrough](#), or [Glute Walkout](#)
 Alternating Dumbbell Curl -> [Band Curl](#)

Workout B

Barbell Bench Press -> [Dumbbell Bench Press](#), [Dumbbell Floor Press](#), Challenging Pushup variation (weighted, banded, single arm, feet elevated, etc.)
 Single Arm Dumbbell Row -> [Single Arm Band Row](#), [Towel Rows](#), [Prone T](#), or find a heavy object to use in place of a dumbbell
 Lat Prayer or Dumbbell Pullover -> [Band Lat Prayer](#)
 One Arm Dumbbell Overhead Tricep Extension -> [Overhead Band Tricep Extension](#) or [Close Grip Pushup](#)

Workout C

Barbell Deadlift or Barbell Romanian Deadlift -> [Dumbbell Sumo Deadlift](#), [Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift](#), [Single Leg Romanian Deadlift](#), or [Single Leg Hip Thrust](#)
 Barbell or Dumbbell Overhead Press -> [Overhead Band Press](#), [Pike Pushup](#), or find a heavyish object to use in place of a dumbbell
 Overhand Lat Pulldown -> [Dumbbell Pullover](#), [Band Pulldown](#), [Towel Rows](#), or [Prone Y](#)
 Face Pulls -> [Band Face Pulls](#) or [Brady Series](#)
 Dumbbell Hammer Curls -> [Band Hammer Curls](#)

Workout D

Supinated Barbell Bent Over Row -> [Dumbbell Bent Over Row](#), [Seated Band Row](#), [Towel Rows](#), or [Prone T](#)
Single Arm Dumbbell Bench Press -> [Single Arm Band Chest Press](#), [Single Arm Elevated Pushup](#), or [Pushup](#)
Hip Extension, Nordic Ham Curls, or Glute Ham Raise -> [Banded Hip Extension](#), [Band Pullthrough](#), or [Glute Walkout](#)
Lateral Raise -> [Band Lateral Raise](#) or [Bodyweight Lateral Raise](#)

Phase 2: Weeks 5-8

Workout A – Full Body

Exercise	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Comments	Rest
Back Squat or Front Squat	2x5	3-4x5	4x5	4-5x4	Neutral spine. Abs tight. Good video HERE on proper breathing and bracing.	1-3 m.
Chinups or Neutral Grip Chinups	2-3 x max	3 x max	3 x max	3 x max	If you cannot perform 3 reps, use a band as shown HERE and aim for 5-10 reps.	1-2 m.
Single Arm Dumbbell Push Press	2x8/s	3x8-10/s	3x8-10/s	3x8-10/s		1-2 m.
Single Leg Lying Leg Curl	2x8-10/s	3x8-10/s	3x10-12/s	3x10-12/s		60-90 s.
Barbell Curl or Dumbbell Curl	2x6-10	2x6-10	2x6-10	2x6-10	OPTIONAL.	60-90 s.
Dumbbell Unilateral Standing Calf Raise	2x10-12/s	2x10-12/s	2x10-12/s	2x10-12/s	OPTIONAL. Keep adding weight and/or reps as able.	60-90 s.

Workout B – Full Body

Exercise	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Comments	Rest
Barbell Flat Bench Press or Barbell Incline Bench Press	2x5	4x4-6	4x3-5	4x3-5	You can also use dumbbells if you prefer.	1-3 m.
Single Arm Dumbbell Deadstop Row	2-3x8-10/s	3x8-10/s	3x8-10/s	3x8-10/s	Make sure to squeeze shoulder blade back towards spine.	1-2 m.
Dumbbell Reverse Lunge or Rear Foot Elevated Dumbbell Split Squat	2-3x8/s	3x8/s	3x8-10/s	3x8-10/s	Keep adding weight and/or reps as able.	1-2 m.
Lat Prayer or Dumbbell Pullover	2-3x10-12	2-3x10-12	2-3x10-12	2-3x10-12	Focus on getting a stretch in your lats.	60-90 s.
Rolling Dumbbell Tricep Extensions	2x8-12	2x8-12	2x8-12	2x8-12	OPTIONAL.	60-90 s.
Hanging Leg Raise or Lying Leg Raise	2 x max	2 x max	2 x max	2 x max	OPTIONAL.	60-90 s.

Workout C – Full Body

Exercise	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Comments	Rest
Barbell Deadlift or Barbell Romanian Deadlift	2x6	2x5, 1x7-9	2x5, 1x7-9	2x5, 1x7-9	Neutral spine! Abs tight. Video HERE on proper breathing and bracing.	1-3 m.
Barbell Overhead Press or Dumbbell Overhead Press	2-3x6-8	2x5-7, 1x8-10	2x5-7, 1x8-10	2x5-7, 1x8-10	In weeks 6-8, the first two sets should be heavier.	1-2 m.
Overhand Lat Pulldown	2-3x8-10	2x6-8, 1x9-11	2x6-8, 1x9-11	2x6-8, 1x9-11	In weeks 6-8, the first two sets should be heavier.	1-2 m.
Pushup	2-3 x max	2-3 x max	2-3 x max	2-3 x max	Same as last phase. Increase reps and/or elevate feet to make it more challenging.	60-90 s.
Face Pulls	2x15-20	2x15-20	2x15-20	2x15-20	Higher reps this phase.	60-90 s.
Dumbbell Hammer Curls or Sidelying Hip Raise	2x8-12 or 2x10-15/s	2x8-12 or 2x10-15/s	2x8-12 or 2x10-15/s	2x8-12 or 2x10-15/s	OPTIONAL. Your choice of bicep or glute work.	60-90 s.

Workout D – Full Body

Exercise	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Comments	Rest
Dumbbell Step Up or Barbell Hip Thrust	2x8/s or 2x10-12	3x12/s or 3x12-15	3x10/s or 3x10-12	3x8/s or 3x8-10	Try and add load/weight each week.	1-2 m.
Barbell Bent Over Row	2-3x8-10	3x8-10	3x8-10	3x8-10	Perform as shown in the video with the bar touching the floor at the bottom.	1-2 m.
Alternating Dumbbell Bench Press	2-3x8-10/s	3x8-10/s	3x8-10/s	3x8-10/s	Abs tight. No rotation.	1-2 m.
Hip Extension, Nordic Ham Curls, or Glute Ham Raise	2x10-15 or 2x4-6	2-3x10-15 or 3x4-6	2-3x10-15 or 3x4-6	2-3x10-15 or 3x4-6	Try and increase reps and/or make exercise more challenging.	60-90 s.
Cable Lateral Raise or Dumbbell Lateral Raise	2x10-15	2x10-15	2x10-15	2x10-15	Add load and/or reps as able.	60-90 s.
Core exercise of choice from those listed in comments.	2 challenging sets	2 challenging sets	2 challenging sets	2 challenging sets	Ab wheel rollout , swiss ball rollout , lying leg raise , hanging leg raise , plank , or side plank .	60-90 s.

Alternative exercises if equipment is limited:

Workout A

Back or Front Squat -> [Dumbbell Front Squat](#), [Goblet Squat](#) (DB or heavy object), [Banded Squat](#), or [Bodyweight Squat](#)
Band Assisted Chinup or Lat Pulldown -> [Dumbbell Pullover](#), [Band Pulldown](#), [Towel Rows](#), or [Prone Y](#)
Single Arm Dumbbell Push Press -> [Overhead Band Press](#), [Pike Pushup](#), or find a heavy object to use in place of a dumbbell
Single Leg Lying Leg Curl -> [Lying Dumbbell Leg Curl](#), [Nordic Ham Curls](#), [Banded Hip Extension](#), [Band Pullthrough](#), or [Glute Walkout](#)
Barbell or Dumbbell Curl -> [Band Curl](#)

Workout B

Barbell Bench Press -> [Dumbbell Bench Press](#), [Dumbbell Floor Press](#), Challenging Pushup variation (weighted, banded, single arm, feet elevated, etc.)
Single Arm Dumbbell Deadstop Row -> [Single Arm Band Row](#), [Towel Rows](#), [Prone T](#), or find a heavy object to use in place of a dumbbell
Lat Prayer or Dumbbell Pullover -> [Band Lat Prayer](#)
Rolling Dumbbell Tricep Extensions -> [Overhead Band Tricep Extension](#) or [Close Grip Pushup](#)

Workout C

Barbell Deadlift or Barbell Romanian Deadlift -> [Dumbbell Sumo Deadlift](#), [Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift](#), [Single Leg Romanian Deadlift](#), or [Single Leg Hip Thrust](#)
Barbell or Dumbbell Overhead Press -> [Overhead Band Press](#), [Pike Pushup](#), or find a heavyish object to use in place of a dumbbell
Overhand Lat Pulldown -> [Dumbbell Pullover](#), [Band Pulldown](#), [Towel Rows](#), or [Prone Y](#)
Face Pulls -> [Band Face Pulls](#) or [Brady Series](#)
Dumbbell Hammer Curls -> [Band Hammer Curls](#)

Workout D

Barbell Bent Over Row -> [Dumbbell Bent Over Row](#), [Seated Band Row](#), [Towel Rows](#), or [Prone T](#)
Alternating Dumbbell Bench Press -> [Single Arm Band Chest Press](#), [Single Arm Elevated Pushup](#), or [Pushup](#)
Hip Extension, Nordic Ham Curls, or Glute Ham Raise -> [Banded Hip Extension](#), [Band Pullthrough](#), or [Glute Walkout](#)
Lateral Raise -> [Band Lateral Raise](#) or [Bodyweight Lateral Raise](#)

The Intermediate Program is an 8-week program that is written for trainees that have been performing resistance exercise consistently for at least 9-12 months, and is even appropriate for those who have several years of experience. The person should feel comfortable with their form in major movement patterns such as squats, deadlifts, overhead presses, weighted rows, etc. Otherwise, we recommend the Novice Program.

The Intermediate Program is divided into two 4-week phases. Both phases will have you training your full body 4 days a week. The advantage of this high frequency setup is that you can get in more total quality work across the week.

Technically, you can complete this program with just your bodyweight, bands, and a fairly heavy object such as a backpack, dumbbell, or kettlebell. However, it would be advantageous to have at least a few fairly heavy dumbbells and/or bands.

The full program utilizes a barbell, cable stack, and some other machines, but I give exercise substitutions if you will only have the limited equipment listed above.

The focus of the program will be on body recomposition and getting stronger across all major movement patterns such as squats, hip hinges, presses, pulls, and rows.

The first phase will start with a slightly higher volume, and in phase 2, you will push into lower reps with some of the "bigger" exercises and further intensify on the other accessory exercises.