STRENGTH TRAINING PLAN

Four-day split with compound exercises for strength gains

Building strength requires a structured training plan, sound exercise technique and a gradual increase in training load over time. Appropriate intensity, sufficient rest between sets and recovery are particularly important for heavy compound lifts.

This four-day split combines heavy compound exercises with supporting movements. It focuses on maximal strength, physical stability and steady progress. It is primarily intended for lifters with training experience. Choose loads that allow controlled repetitions with good technique.

DAY 1 – CHEST AND TRICEPS

Exercise	Sets × reps
Barbell bench press	5 × 5
Incline bench press	4 × 6
Parallel bar dips	4 × 6–8
Close-grip bench press	3 × 6–8

Training focus: Develop pressing strength while strengthening the chest, triceps and supporting shoulder muscles.

DAY 2 – BACK AND BICEPS

Exercise	Sets × reps
Conventional deadlift	5 × 5
Pull-ups	4 × 6
Barbell rows	4 × 6
Barbell curls	3 × 8

Training focus: Improve pulling strength and strengthen the back. During deadlifts, maintain a stable trunk position and controlled movement.

DAY 3 – LEGS AND LOWER BODY

Exercise	Sets × reps
Barbell squats	5 × 5
Leg press	4 × 8
Romanian deadlift	4 × 6
Standing calf raises	4 × 12

Training focus: Develop leg strength and strengthen the thighs, glutes and calves, with additional trunk stabilisation.

DAY 4 – SHOULDERS AND CORE

Exercise	Sets × reps
Barbell shoulder press	5 × 5
Dumbbell lateral raises	4 × 10
Bent-over lateral raises	3 × 10
Plank	3 × 60 seconds

Training focus: Develop shoulder strength, strengthen the lateral and rear deltoids, and improve core stability.

IMPORTANT TRAINING GUIDELINES

Warm-up:

Begin each session with approximately 5–10 minutes of light activity and specific warm-up sets before heavy compound lifts.

Progressive overload:

Increase the weight gradually once you can complete all prescribed repetitions with good technique and control.

Rest between sets:

Rest periods of 2–5 minutes are often appropriate for heavy compound exercises; shorter breaks may be sufficient for accessory exercises.

Protein intake:

For many adults who train regularly, approximately 1.4–2.0 g of protein per kg of body weight per day is a useful guide.

Sleep:

Most adults are advised to aim for around 7–9 hours of sleep per night.

Recovery:

Allow enough time for recovery. Deadlifts, squats and other heavy compound lifts can create substantial overall fatigue.

Training log:

Record the weights, repetitions and progress to help assess your development.

STRENGTH GAINS AND MUSCLE GROWTH

Strength gains and muscle growth are closely linked, but they place different demands on training. Maximal-strength training often emphasises heavier loads, lower repetition ranges and longer rest periods. Adaptations of the nervous system also play an important role. Muscle-building programmes can use a wider range of repetitions. Training load, volume and recovery all matter. The two approaches can complement each other.

TRAINING VOLUME AND STRENGTH TRAINING

Alongside training intensity, the number of working sets influences physical adaptation. Appropriate training volume depends on experience, recovery capacity and goals. For further information, see our scientific article on training volume.

CONCLUSION – DEVELOPING LONG-TERM STRENGTH

A structured four-day split can provide a strong foundation for targeted strength gains. Good technique, gradual progression and sufficient recovery are essential. Long-term progress comes from consistent training, patience and carefully planned increases in workload.

Further reading: Bodybuilding · Mass Building Training Plan · Recovery

TRAINING LOG – DAY 1 – CHEST AND TRICEPS

Date: _____ Body weight (optional): _____ Notes: _____

For each exercise, record the weight used and the repetitions completed in each set. For the plank, record the time held.

Exercise / target	Set 1	Set 2	Set 3	Set 4	Set 5
Barbell bench press 5 × 5	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Incline bench press 4 × 6	_____	_____	_____	_____	
Parallel bar dips 4 × 6–8	_____	_____	_____	_____	
Close-grip bench press 3 × 6–8	_____	_____	_____		

How did the session feel? _____

What would I like to improve next time? _____

_____

_____

Next planned session: _____

TRAINING LOG – DAY 2 – BACK AND BICEPS

Date: _____ Body weight (optional): _____ Notes: _____

For each exercise, record the weight used and the repetitions completed in each set. For the plank, record the time held.

Exercise / target	Set 1	Set 2	Set 3	Set 4	Set 5
Conventional deadlift 5 × 5	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Pull-ups 4 × 6	_____	_____	_____	_____	
Barbell rows 4 × 6	_____	_____	_____	_____	
Barbell curls 3 × 8	_____	_____	_____		

How did the session feel? _____

What would I like to improve next time? _____

_____

_____

Next planned session: _____

TRAINING LOG – DAY 3 – LEGS AND LOWER BODY

Date: _____ Body weight (optional): _____ Notes: _____

For each exercise, record the weight used and the repetitions completed in each set. For the plank, record the time held.

Exercise / target	Set 1	Set 2	Set 3	Set 4	Set 5
Barbell squats 5 × 5	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Leg press 4 × 8	_____	_____	_____	_____	
Romanian deadlift 4 × 6	_____	_____	_____	_____	
Standing calf raises 4 × 12	_____	_____	_____	_____	

How did the session feel? _____

What would I like to improve next time? _____

_____

_____

Next planned session: _____

TRAINING LOG – DAY 4 – SHOULDERS AND CORE

Date: _____ Body weight (optional): _____ Notes: _____

For each exercise, record the weight used and the repetitions completed in each set. For the plank, record the time held.

Exercise / target	Set 1	Set 2	Set 3	Set 4	Set 5
Barbell shoulder press 5 × 5	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Dumbbell lateral raises 4 × 10	_____	_____	_____	_____	
Bent-over lateral raises 3 × 10	_____	_____	_____		
Plank 3 × 60 seconds	_____	_____	_____		

How did the session feel? _____

What would I like to improve next time? _____

_____

_____

Next planned session: _____