MASS BUILDING: TARGETED TRAINING FOR GREATER MUSCLE MASS

Structured Training for Greater Muscle Growth

Targeted muscle growth requires regular strength training, sensible workout planning, and sufficient recovery. Controlled exercise technique, appropriate training weights, and gradual increases in workload are essential.

This 3-day mass-building training plan combines fundamental strength exercises with additional movements for different muscle groups. The goal is to target muscles effectively, improve physical performance, and support long-term gains in muscle mass.

The plan is particularly suitable for lifters with some previous strength-training experience. Choose weights that allow every repetition to be performed with proper technique and control.

MASS BUILDING – 3-DAY SPLIT FOR TARGETED MUSCLE GROWTH

DAY 1 – CHEST AND TRICEPS

Exercise	Sets	Repetitions
Barbell Bench Press	4	8–12
Incline Bench Press	3	8–12
Dumbbell Flyes	3	10–12
Parallel Bar Dips	3	8–12
Cable Triceps Pushdowns	3	10–12

Training focus: Targeted strengthening of the chest muscles and triceps. Combining pressing movements with additional isolation exercises provides different training stimuli for the muscles involved.

DAY 2 – BACK AND BICEPS

Exercise	Sets	Repetitions
Conventional Deadlift	4	6–10
Pull-Ups	4	8–12
Barbell Rows	3	8–12
Cable Lat Pulldowns	3	10–12
Barbell Curls	3	10–12

Training focus: Developing the back muscles and specifically strengthening the biceps. Deadlifts, rows, and pull-ups engage several muscle groups at once and support pulling strength.

DAY 3 – LEGS AND SHOULDERS

Exercise	Sets	Repetitions
Barbell Squats	4	8–12
Leg Press	3	10–12
Lunges	3	10 per leg
Barbell Shoulder Press	4	8–12
Dumbbell Lateral Raises	3	12–15

Training focus: Strengthening the leg and glute muscles while targeting the shoulders. Squats and lunges also help improve stability and body control.

IMPORTANT TRAINING RULES FOR EFFECTIVE MASS BUILDING

Warm-Up: Begin each session with approximately 5–10 minutes of light activity. Then prepare for heavy compound exercises with specific warm-up sets.

Progressive Overload: Gradually increase weights or repetitions when you can meet your current training targets with proper technique. You do not need to progress in every session.

Rest Between Sets: Rest periods of 2–3 minutes or longer may be useful for heavy compound exercises. For accessory exercises, 60–120 seconds is often sufficient.

Protein Intake: For many adults who regularly strength train, approximately 1.4–2.0 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight per day (0.64–0.91 grams per pound) is a useful guideline. Adequate energy intake also matters.

Sleep: Sufficient sleep supports physical recovery. Approximately 7–9 hours per night is recommended for most adults.

Recovery: Allow sufficient recovery time between sessions. One possible schedule is Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, leaving a rest day between workouts.

Adapting the Plan: The listed sets and repetitions are guidelines. Reduce training volume if needed, particularly if you have limited experience or are not recovering adequately between sessions.

HOW IMPORTANT IS TRAINING VOLUME FOR MUSCLE GROWTH?

Alongside training intensity, training volume plays an important role in building muscle. This is often assessed by the number of challenging training sets completed for each muscle group during a week.

However, the ideal number of sets is not the same for everyone. Training experience, individual capacity, training frequency, and recovery all influence how much training is appropriate.

In this 3-day split, each muscle group is generally trained directly on one day per week. A higher training frequency can also be beneficial when distributing weekly volume across several sessions.

Scientific article: How many sets per muscle group?

MASS BUILDING AND STRENGTH GAINS – WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

Muscle growth and strength gains are closely connected. Mass-building training focuses on increasing muscle size over time. Different repetition ranges and training weights can be used to achieve this.

By contrast, targeted maximal strength training often emphasizes heavier weights and lower repetition ranges. Both approaches can complement each other.

Further reading: Training Plan for Strength Gains

CONCLUSION – BUILD MUSCLE MASS OVER THE LONG TERM

A structured 3-day split can provide a good foundation for targeted muscle growth. Regular training, proper exercise technique, appropriate progression, and sufficient recovery are particularly important.

Successful mass building does not come from using the heaviest possible workloads, but from a sustainable long-term combination of training, nutrition, and recovery.

TRAINING LOG – DAY 1 – CHEST AND TRICEPS

Date: _____ Body weight (optional): _____

Record the repetitions and weights you actually complete. For bodyweight exercises, you can write “BW”.

Exercise	Set	Weight (lb/kg)	Reps	Notes
Barbell Bench Press	1	_____	_____	_____
	2	_____	_____	_____
	3	_____	_____	_____
	4	_____	_____	_____
Incline Bench Press	1	_____	_____	_____
	2	_____	_____	_____
	3	_____	_____	_____
Dumbbell Flyes	1	_____	_____	_____
	2	_____	_____	_____
	3	_____	_____	_____
Parallel Bar Dips	1	_____	_____	_____
	2	_____	_____	_____
	3	_____	_____	_____
Cable Triceps Pushdowns	1	_____	_____	_____
	2	_____	_____	_____
	3	_____	_____	_____

How you felt / progress / next adjustment:

_____

_____

TRAINING LOG – DAY 2 – BACK AND BICEPS

Date: _____ Body weight (optional): _____

Record the repetitions and weights you actually complete. For bodyweight exercises, you can write “BW”.

Exercise	Set	Weight (lb/kg)	Reps	Notes
Conventional Deadlift	1	_____	_____	_____
	2	_____	_____	_____
	3	_____	_____	_____
	4	_____	_____	_____
Pull-Ups	1	_____	_____	_____
	2	_____	_____	_____
	3	_____	_____	_____
	4	_____	_____	_____
Barbell Rows	1	_____	_____	_____
	2	_____	_____	_____
	3	_____	_____	_____
Cable Lat Pulldowns	1	_____	_____	_____
	2	_____	_____	_____
	3	_____	_____	_____
Barbell Curls	1	_____	_____	_____
	2	_____	_____	_____
	3	_____	_____	_____

How you felt / progress / next adjustment:

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TRAINING LOG – DAY 3 – LEGS AND SHOULDERS

Date: _____ Body weight (optional): _____

Record the repetitions and weights you actually complete. For bodyweight exercises, you can write “BW”.

Exercise	Set	Weight (lb/kg)	Reps	Notes
Barbell Squats	1	_____	_____	_____
	2	_____	_____	_____
	3	_____	_____	_____
	4	_____	_____	_____
Leg Press	1	_____	_____	_____
	2	_____	_____	_____
	3	_____	_____	_____
Lunges	1	_____	_____	_____
	2	_____	_____	_____
	3	_____	_____	_____
Barbell Shoulder Press	1	_____	_____	_____
	2	_____	_____	_____
	3	_____	_____	_____
	4	_____	_____	_____
Dumbbell Lateral Raises	1	_____	_____	_____
	2	_____	_____	_____
	3	_____	_____	_____

How you felt / progress / next adjustment:

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YOUR TRAINING PROGRESS

Weekly overview – record changes in training weights, repetitions, and recovery.

Week	Training days	Progress / observations
1	_____	_____
2	_____	_____
3	_____	_____
4	_____	_____
5	_____	_____
6	_____	_____
7	_____	_____
8	_____	_____

NOTES

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Further information: Bodybuilding · Muscle Growth · Recovery