

PROGRAMMING YOUR WORKOUTS: THE MINI-GUIDE

This is your cheat sheet! It's a bite-size version of the [full guide](#), which breaks this down into much more detail. When designing your very own self-made workout plan, follow these steps in order.

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BE CLEAR ON YOUR PRIMARY GOAL

The details of your workouts should reflect what is most important to you now. Fat loss: Focus on calorie burn with higher rep range and shorter rest time. Muscle building: Focus on heavier weight, lower rep range, and longer rest time. Both require progressive overload.

CHOOSE A PLAN STRUCTURE

How many sessions/week and full body vs. splits.

- 2 days/week → Do full-body sessions
- 4+ days/week → Choose a split routine
- 3 days → your choice

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CHOOSE YOUR WORKOUT VARIABLES

These are the details to consider for the individual workout sessions. They include exercise selection, exercise order, #exercises/session, #sets/exercise, #reps/set, rest time. Remember: The lower your rep range, the heavier the weight needs to be.

CONSIDER DIFFERENT EXERCISE VARIATIONS

Whether you choose a machine (isolation exercise), cable, free weights (dumbbells, barbell), seated vs. standing, or single-limb variation → each has its own list of pros and cons. A good plan incorporates some of each.

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CHOOSE A WORKOUT STRUCTURE

This is the way we organize exercises within each session. Straight sets: Best for focus and when longer rest is recommended. Supersets: Saves time, increases calorie burn during the workout. Circuits: Fastest, most calorie burn during the workout.

DECIDE HOW LONG THE PHASE WILL BE

To make the most of progressive overload, stick with each phase (the same exercises) for 8-10 weeks. At that point, typically we have a deload week, then begin the next phase. You can create a chart like this [sample one](#) to help you organize your phases.

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CONSIDER CARDIO

Strength training is cardio when done right. If you're doing strength training at least 3 days/week and walking at least 7K steps/day (and more if you can), then additional dedicated cardio is often not necessary. If you do want to add cardio, HIITs are the most effective.

RESPECT REST AND RECOVERY

Remember that muscles grow in the day or two after the workout, as long as they are given the appropriate rest to let that happen. Wait 48+ hours before targeting the same muscle group(s) again. Schedule a deload week when needed. Active recovery on "off" days.

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