

Strength Training for Beginners — Workbook

This workbook mirrors the four course modules and gives you hands-on exercises, tracking sheets, and templates to build and run your first real strength program. Complete each section alongside the corresponding module — do not wait until the course is finished. Filling in real numbers from your own sessions is what turns theory into lasting habit.

How Strength Works — Physiology and Principles

Lock in the science before you lift: audit your recovery habits and set concrete protein and sleep targets you will hold for the next 4 weeks.

Exercise: Personal Adaptation Audit

Before your first session, answer these questions honestly. Revisit them at the end of Week 4 to see how much has changed. Specific, truthful answers reveal your biggest recovery gap — that gap is where most of your early progress will come from.

- How many hours of sleep do you average per night right now? What time do you typically fall asleep and wake up?

- Estimate your current daily protein intake in grams. How did you arrive at that number — tracking, guessing, or intuition?

- On a scale of 1–10, rate your current daily stress level and describe the main source. How does stress affect your energy in the gym?

- Have you trained with weights before? If yes, describe your longest consistent stretch (weeks) and why it ended.

Worksheet: Recovery Baseline and Week-1 Targets

Fill in your current baseline and set a 4-week target for each recovery variable. Use your bodyweight in kg to calculate protein targets. Targets should be realistic improvements — not ideal numbers you will abandon.

Bodyweight (kg) _____
Protein target: $1.6 \text{ g/kg} = \underline{\quad} \text{ g/day}$ (minimum); $2.2 \text{ g/kg} = \underline{\quad} \text{ g/day}$ (upper)

Current average sleep (hours/night)

Sleep target (hours/night)

Consistent bed time target

Consistent wake time target

Planned creatine dose (g/day): yes / no

Primary protein sources (list 3 you will eat daily)

Checklist: Week-1 Recovery Habit Checklist

- Hit protein target (within 10 g) on at least 5 of 7 days this week
- Log actual sleep hours each morning for 7 consecutive days
- Maintain consistent bed time within 30 minutes every night
- Take creatine monohydrate 3–5 g daily (or write why you are skipping it)
- Distribute protein across at least 3 meals — no single meal above 50 g
- Remove one specific sleep friction (phone out of bedroom, blackout blind, etc.)

Exercise: Progressive Overload Planning

Choose your three main lifts for the program (typically squat, bench press, deadlift or RDL). For each, estimate your current best set of 5 clean reps, then calculate your planned weekly load increase. This becomes your 4-week loading roadmap.

- For each of your three main lifts, what weight can you complete 5 clean reps with today (honest estimate — err low)?
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- Using the 2.5 kg/session rule for upper body and 5 kg/session for lower body, what do you project your working weight to be in 4 weeks on each lift?
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- What is your plan if you fail to hit all reps in a session — repeat the weight, reduce it, or something else?
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The Big Five Compound Lifts — Technique Masterclass

Use these exercises and checklists during and after your first technique sessions to self-assess form and prioritise the corrections that matter most.

Exercise: Lift Technique Self-Assessment

Film yourself performing 3 reps of each lift from the side and from behind. Watch the footage immediately after. For each lift, answer the prompts below. Be brutally honest — this is your starting point, not your judgement.

- Squat: did your knees cave, heels rise, or torso collapse forward? Which of the five errors from the module were most visible?
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- Romanian deadlift: could you feel the hamstring stretch at the bottom? Did the bar stay close to your legs throughout the descent?
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- Bench press: were your scapulae retracted and depressed throughout the press, or did your shoulders round forward at the top?
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- Lat pulldown: did you initiate by depressing the scapulae before bending the elbows, or did you lead with the biceps?
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Worksheet: Lift-by-Lift Correction Tracker

After each of your first four sessions, record the primary error you identified on film for each lift and the cue or drill you will use next session to address it. One error per lift per session — do not try to fix everything at once.

Session date

Squat — primary error observed

Squat — correction cue or drill for next session

Hip hinge — primary error observed

Hip hinge — correction cue or drill

Bench press — primary error observed

Bench press — correction cue or drill

Pull — primary error observed

Pull — correction cue or drill

Overall technique rating this session (1–5)

Checklist: Pre-Lift Technique Checklist (use before every working set)

- Squat: feet set, toes 15–30 degrees out, brace taken before unrack
- Squat: knees track over toes throughout descent — no caving
- Deadlift/RDL: bar over mid-foot, hips back not down, back neutral
- Bench: scapulae retracted and depressed onto bench before unrack
- Bench: elbows at 45–75 degrees from torso — not flared to 90
- Pulldown: scapulae depressed first, then elbows drive down to back pockets
- All lifts: full breath brace before each rep, exhale at top two-thirds of ascent

Building Your First Program — Design, Tracking, and Deloads

Write your actual 4-week program, set up your training log, and schedule your first deload before you need it.

Exercise: Write Your 4-Week Program

Using the A/B template from the module, write out your personal program below. Fill in the specific exercises, starting weights, and set-rep targets for each slot. Keep it simple — changing exercises mid-block is one of the most common beginner mistakes.

- Session A: list your chosen exercise for each of the 6 slots (squat, hinge, push, pull, accessory x2, carry) with starting weight and sets x reps

- Session B: same 6 slots — note where you are substituting overhead press for bench and conventional deadlift for RDL

- What day of the week is your Week 1 Day 1? Write out the full 4-week calendar with A and B labels and your planned rest days

Worksheet: Weekly Program Design Sheet

Complete one row per training day. Include the session label, each exercise, the planned sets x reps x weight, and the actual weight you used. This becomes your permanent log and the basis for next-week load decisions.

Date

Session (A or B)

Slot 1 exercise and planned sets x reps x kg

Slot 1 actual weight used and reps completed

Slot 2 exercise and planned sets x reps x kg

Slot 2 actual weight used and reps completed

Slot 3 exercise and planned sets x reps x kg

Slot 3 actual weight used and reps completed

Slot 4 exercise and planned sets x reps x kg

Slot 4 actual weight used and reps completed

Slot 5–6 accessories and carry — notes

Overall RPE for session (1–10)

Sleep last night (hours)

Notes / errors / how you felt

Checklist: Deload Decision Checklist (review at end of Week 3 and Week 4)

- Have you missed any prescribed reps in the last 3 consecutive sessions on the same lift?
- Is your bar speed noticeably slower on your warm-up sets compared to Week 1?
- Have you slept fewer than 6.5 hours on 3 or more nights in the past week?
- Rate your motivation to train this week: if it is 4/10 or below, schedule the deload
- Do you have any joint pain that has persisted for more than 5 days?
- If 2 or more boxes above are checked — take the deload now, do not wait for Week 5

Exercise: Plateau Diagnosis Protocol

If a lift stalls for 2 consecutive sessions, use this protocol before reducing weight. Answer each question in order and stop when you find the cause.

- Review your last 3 sleep logs: have you averaged less than 7 hours? If yes, sleep is the primary variable — fix that before changing programming.
- Review your last 5 sessions' RPE for that lift: are they trending toward 9–10 on sets that used to feel like 7–8? If yes, fatigue accumulation — take a reactive deload.

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- Review your technique notes: has your form degraded on that lift? If yes, reduce weight 10% and rebuild technique before adding load.
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Gym Literacy, Safety, and Injury Prevention

Set up your warm-up protocol, triage any existing aches, and build the environmental habits that make showing up automatic.

Exercise: Personal Warm-Up Design

Using the RAMP framework from the module, write your personal 10-minute warm-up sequence below. It should be specific — exact exercises, reps, and duration — so you can run it without thinking. Test it before your first working session.

- Raise phase (3 min): which cardio machine will you use and at what intensity? Is it available at your gym during your training time?
 - Activate phase (4 min): which 4 activation exercises from the module address your specific weak links (glutes, scapulae, ankles)?
 - Mobilise phase (3 min): which 3 mobility drills address your tightest areas — hips, thoracic spine, or ankles?
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Worksheet: Pain and Discomfort Triage Log

Any time you experience pain above a 2/10 during training, log it here. This is your early-warning system. Patterns in the log tell you what to address before it becomes a real injury.

Date

Body region affected (knee, lower back, shoulder, wrist, etc.)

Exercise and set it occurred on

Pain intensity (1–10)

Type of pain (sharp, dull ache, burning, referred)

Traffic light colour (green / yellow / red)

Action taken (trained through, modified, stopped)

Resolved by next session? (yes / no)

Follow-up note

Checklist: Weekly Consistency and Environment Checklist

- Gym bag packed and placed by the door the night before each session
- All three training sessions added to calendar as hard blocks this week
- Warm-up protocol written on phone or paper and taken to the gym
- Equipment needed (shoes, chalk or straps if applicable) confirmed in bag

- [] Film at least one set per main lift this week for technique review
- [] Log every set in your chosen log (app, spreadsheet, or notebook) before leaving the gym floor
- [] Review last session's log before the current session starts — know what weight to put on the bar

Your Action Plan

1. Calculate your protein target today (1.6–2.2 g per kg bodyweight) and plan tomorrow's meals around it before your first session
2. Set a fixed bed time and wake time and stick to it for the next 7 days — log actual sleep hours each morning
3. Film yourself performing 3 reps of the squat and RDL with light weight before your first working session; identify one correction per lift
4. Write your Session A and Session B exercise selection and starting weights into the Program Design Sheet before Week 1 Day 1
5. Schedule all 12 training sessions for the next 4 weeks in your calendar with session label (A or B) and mark your Week 5 deload
6. Download or print the Training Log template from the workbook and bring it to your first session — log every set that day
7. Perform the full RAMP warm-up before your first session and time it; refine the sequence if it exceeds 12 minutes
8. Apply the two-rep rule strictly: only add weight when you complete all prescribed reps with at least 2 reps in reserve
9. At the end of Week 3, run through the Deload Decision Checklist and schedule your deload if 2 or more boxes are checked
10. At the end of Week 4, compare your working weights to your Week 1 starting weights and calculate percentage improvement on each lift

