

Starting Over Strength Program or Beginning Strength Program by Coach David Alexander

“Stronger people are harder to kill and more useful in general” Mark Rippetoe

This is the program that I used to get back into shape after taking 2 years off from all training and exercise to study economics/history/politics and investing. I was a fat lump of goo after sitting on the couch in front of a computer/book/kindle for 2 years while stuffing my face with all sorts of processed junk foods. I just could not get myself to go back to “exercising” or “working out”. The following program is a “strength training” program. Read the “Top Articles” at the end of this program to find out why “strength training”, especially for the not so young anymore generation, is far superior to other forms of training. You should also eat for performance by reading my kindle book (only .99 cents) [DAVID'S DIET: Lose Weight Fast—No Exercise Required! One man's very opinionated opinion on diet and exercise](#). Do this program 3 days a week for 3 months and then get back to me. It works; I and everyone I train are living proof.



I train from Mark Rippetoe's Starting Strength program and technique. If you would like more information on Mark Rippetoe and Starting Strength visit his

website at <http://startingstrength.com/>. At the very least, read the “Top Articles” that I added to the end of this program. PLEASE! PLEASE! PLEASE! Forget everything that you have EVER heard in the gym, magazines or on T.V.!!! If you want the Truth, you MUST EDUCATE YOURSELF!!! Start with this article:

The Truth: http://startingstrength.com/articles/truth_steel.pdf

IMPORTANT! IMPORTANT!! IMPORTANT!!! If you do not learn how to do a proper squat, please do not attempt this program. Most “Personal Trainers” will not know how to do a proper squat! If you cannot figure it out by watching the video below, then find a real strength coach in your area. If you cannot find a competent strength coach, then feel free to visit me for a few hours on San Juan Island and I'll show you the proper form for all the lifts.

Video for proper squat form: <http://stronglifts.com/free-video-how-to-squat-with-proper-form/>

Workout A

Squat 3x5

Bench Press 3x5

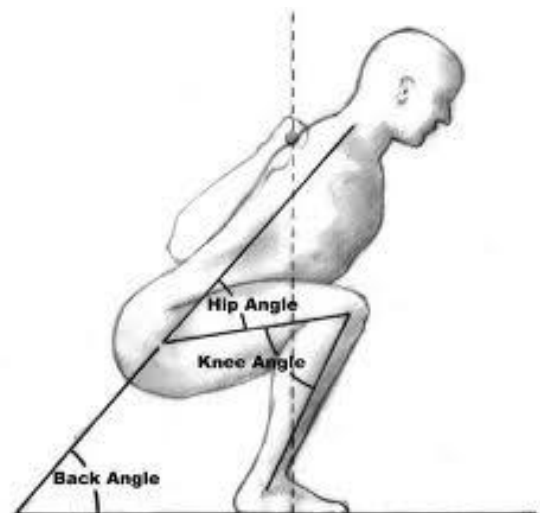
Power Cleans (5x3), Row (3x5) or Chin-ups (palms facing yourself): 3 sets to failure or add weight if completing more than 15 reps.

Workout B

Squat 3x5

Press 3x5

Deadlift 1x5 (work your way up to 1 heavy set of 5 reps)



-Programming Example: Monday do workout A, Wed. do workout B, Friday do workout A, Monday do workout B, Wed. do workout A, Friday do workout B, and so on and so on... For at least 12 weeks.

-How to log your work: Weight x Reps x Sets

-All of the weight, reps and sets prior to your work set are considered your **warm up**. Do NOT burn yourself out doing warm ups to the point that you are too fatigued to complete your work set.

EXAMPLE (your weights will be different)

Monday (example)

1/1/2012

Squat

45 x 5 x 3 (45 pounds x 5 reps x 3 sets)

65 x 5 (65 pounds x 5 reps for only 1 set)

95 x 5

115 x 3

135 x 2

155 x 5 x 3 (This is your work set of 155 pounds x 5 reps x 3 sets)

Bench Press (Since your body is thoroughly warmed up by squats, your warm up does not need to be that intense. You just need to feel the weight as it increases to your work set.)

45 x 10 (45 pounds by 10 reps)

65 x 5

95 x 2

115 x 1

135 x 5 x 3 (This is your work set of 135 pounds x 5 reps x 3 sets)

Power Cleans (power cleans are typically done 5 sets of 3 reps per set)

45 x 3

95 x 3

115 x 1

135 x 3 x 5 (This is your work set of 135 pounds x 3 reps x 5 sets)

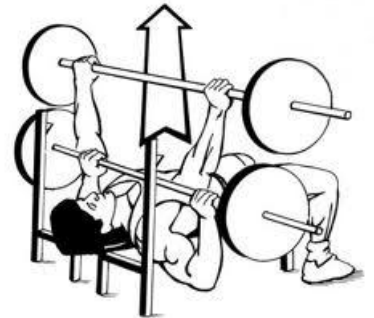
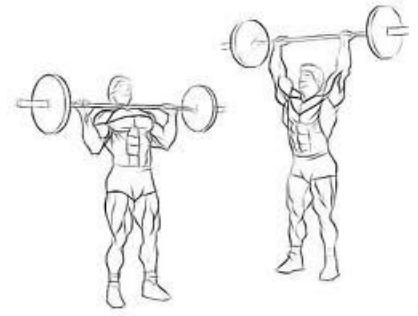
-How much weight should I add from workout to workout?

For young males that weigh between 150-200 lbs., deadlifts can move up 15-20 lbs. per workout, squats 10-15 lbs., with continued steady progress for 3-4 weeks before slowing down to half that rate. Bench presses, presses, and cleans can move up 5-10 lbs. per workout, with progress on these exercises slowing down to 2.5-5 lbs. per workout after only 2-3 weeks.

Older men and Women make progress on the squat and the deadlift at about the same rate, adjusted for bodyweight, but much slower on the press, the bench press, cleans, and assistance exercises.

– Mark Rippetoe, Practical Programming, Pg. 122

1. If you get all 3 sets of 5 with proper technique, then move the weight up as described above.
2. If you get all 3 sets of 5 with proper technique, but bar speed was exceedingly slow on the last few reps (i.e. you busted a nut trying to complete your reps), then you may end up stalling if you add the full amount. Err on the side of "lower". i.e. don't add 20 lbs to the deadlift, add 15. Don't add 10 lbs to the press, add 5 (or even 2.5), etc. and proceed cautiously. Cautiously means



adding less weight rather than more. There is no consequence for adding too little weight, but adding too much could stall progress for weeks.

3. If you get the first 2 sets of 5 with proper technique, but you only get 4 reps on the 3rd, then determine if it was a "recovery deficit" (4 hours sleep last night/skipped meals, etc.) or a "technique deficit" (body wasn't tight during presses, leaned forward too much in squat, etc.). If the strength or technique deficit was an anomaly and/or is easily correctable, then you can probably add the normal amount of weight as described above. If the weight just felt dog heavy, then add only a bit more, or even keep the weight the same for the next workout. Better to get your 5/5/5 next workout then get a 5/5/3 or a 5/4/4 with a heavier weight.

4. If you get at least 12 or 13 of the reps total (i.e. 5/4/4 or 5/4/3 or 4/4/4) then keep the weight the same for the next workout.

If you get something strange like 5/5/2 or 5/3/4 on your 3 sets, then you probably just need to be more mindful of rest periods. Best to use 3-5 minutes between pressing, cleaning and rowing work sets and up to 7 for squats and deadlifts if necessary. For now, use a little too much rest rather than too little rest. In the beginning, when weights are lighter, a two minute rest in between sets should be sufficient. As the weight increases, so should the rest between sets.

If you can't get at least the first set of 5, or if you are missing 2 or more reps each on the 2nd and 3rd sets, then you are using too much weight, assuming you recently started training.

If you had been making progress, but then all of sudden, you have 3 workouts in a row where you can't add weight to the bar for an exercise and get your 5/5/5, then you will need to perform a de-load. Ask your Coach.

The First Workout

In order for sustained linear progress to occur care must be taken in determining the proper starting weights for each of the lifts. The process of determining starting weight takes place during the first two workouts and it is from there that progress begins. It is helpful for the trainee to be familiar with proper form prior to the first workout, especially if lifting without the aid of a coach, so careful reading and some light practice (such as with a broomstick or pvc pipe) would be helpful.

CHECK YOUR EGO AND START LIGHTER THAN YOU THINK YOU SHOULD!

The First Workout (contd.)

During the very first workout a general warm-up performed walking on a treadmill is all that is necessary. The first set of squats begins at 45 lbs (an empty barbell) and a set of five is performed. If this is completed easily with the trainee's best form, ten pounds are added to the bar for the next set. If bar speed does not slow and form does not break down, ten more pounds are added to the bar and another set is performed. This process continues until either form begins to falter or the bar speed slows more than the preceding sets, whichever comes first. This is the trainee's starting weight. Once this occurs the trainee rests and performs two more sets at this weight, for a total of three sets of five reps (3x5) at the starting weight. For the squat, a typical starting weight is in the neighborhood of 85 lbs. for a young male.

The bench press is the next lift to be performed and the process of adding weight until form breaks down or bar speed slows is repeated. Again, once this weight has been found two additional sets are performed for three sets at the starting weight.

Starting weight for the deadlift is similar but because it is done for one set, once the starting weight is determined no further deadlift sets are performed. Also, the deadlift must start from a standardized height. If bumper plates are not available to the trainee and a deadlift of 135 lbs. is too heavy, other plates may be stacked under the bar to elevate it to the proper height. After the deadlift weight is established the first workout is done and the trainee takes the next day for rest and recovery.

The Second Workout

The second workout marks the first step of linear progression. A general warm-up is done and then the trainee will warm up independently for the squat. After the warm-up the work sets are then done. Because the squat weight was established during the previous workout, 10 lbs are added to the previous day's working weight, so a trainee who squatted 85 lbs. is now squatting 95 lbs.

The press weight is established next, beginning again with an empty bar and continuing until form becomes problematic or bar speed slows, and two more sets are done at that weight.

The power clean weight is determined last. Because it is crucial to learn the lifts properly in the beginning, the power clean should be undertaken only after the initial pull of the deadlift can be executed reasonably well. If the trainee can perform the first portion of the deadlift properly -- moving the bar from the ground to the middle of the thigh -- he should establish his power clean form at the end of the second day. This is done, again, by beginning with an empty bar and performing sets until the weight alters form. The power clean is usually done for five sets of three reps, but it might be helpful for the trainee to begin with three sets of five reps (as with the squat, bench press, and press) to get uninterrupted practice while the weight is low. After two or three sessions of power cleans the 5x3 scheme should be employed. Don't be concerned if you don't progress beyond an empty barbell for the first few workouts while technique is still being articulated. It is much safer to express incorrect technique with 45 lbs., rather than incorrect form with 55 or 65 or 75 lbs. Likewise it is much easier to correct technique with 45 lbs. than it is with a heavier weight.

The Chin-Up in terms of establishing starting points is both the easiest and the hardest because many novices cannot perform them at all. The easy approach for someone who can do them is to perform them to failure for three sets. For someone who cannot do any, a combination of kipping chin-ups, jumping chin-ups or negatives (where one lowers themselves slowly but does not pull himself back up) can be utilized until full chin-ups can be performed. For a simple exercise, however, a novice lifter must be wary of a fact of progression: if you are gaining weight but your chin-up numbers are staying the same, you are becoming stronger. Aside from a mandate that progression must occur, there are very few hard and fast rules for chin-ups and the trainee is encouraged to actively experiment to find what works.

How should I breathe during each of the exercises?

For all of the lifts, you'll be performing what is called The Valsalva Maneuver (<http://www.projectdeliverance.com/breathing.htm>).

Basically it means filling up your lungs with air and holding your breath. Rip's favorite analogy for this is, imagine your car runs out of gas on the freeway. You get out, put the car in neutral and get ready to push. Before this first big push you'd naturally take a deep breath of air and PUUSSH while keeping that air locked deep in your lungs. Can you imagine this same scenario while breathing "normally?" Using the Valsalva Maneuver will increase stability throughout your body aka "give you a tight core".



Here are the basic rules of thumb:

Squats: breathe at the top, hold breath while doing the rep and then breathe between every rep.

Bench: breathe at full extension, hold breath while doing as many repetitions as is comfortable, and breathe when you need to when the bar is at full extension.

Deadlifts: breathe before pulling the weight, hold breath while doing the rep and then breathe between reps.

Press: Presses are a little more individual. For the first rep, breathe at the bottom and then extend the weight overhead, hold breath while doing as many repetitions as is comfortable, and breathe when you need to, either when the bar is locked out at full overhead extension or while racked on the shoulders. Experiment with which position suits you best.

Power Cleans: same as deadlift.

My doctor says that it'll stunt my growth. Is this true?

Yes, it is true, weight training in youths causes the stunting of the youth's growth...if, by "stunting of growth", you mean "will help the youth develop thicker, denser, stronger bones, muscles and connective tissue."

Or put another way, NO, it won't.

Weight training will not stunt your growth. This myth arises from a few poorly conceived, poorly conducted studies which demonstrated that some young weight trainees suffered from fractures "related" to weight training.

What they neglected to mention is that almost all cases were the results of unsupervised, excessive loading and poor technique.

So essentially, these studies demonstrated that using too much weight and poor technique can cause injuries in adolescents... just like it does in adults.

As long as the training is supervised by a competent (And preferably knowledgeable and sensible) adult, incidences of injury are very infrequent when compared to other youth sports, such as football, soccer, basketball and track and field.

How do I know if I've "officially stalled" and need to reset?

Simply put, 3 strikes and you're out. We all have off days so if you find yourself missing a rep or two (i.e. 200 x 5/5/4) and you suspect it was due to lack of sleep, eating, dog died, etc., add weight normally to the following workout. Less than 5 reps in first set, or, 3 or more missed reps in all 3 sets (i.e. 200 x 4/4/4) is considered a "missed attempt." Keep the weight the same for the following workout. At this point you have 2 more chances to get all your reps. If you get your reps on either of the two following workouts, keep progressing from there. This might also be a signal that you need to start taking smaller jumps (5 lbs. vs. 10 lbs.) or you need to micro load (2.5 lbs. vs. 5 lbs.)

If you miss all three attempts it's time for a minor reset. Go talk to your Coach.

RECOVERY = EAT, SLEEP, REDUCE STRESS DO THE WORK AND YOU WILL GET STRONGER EVERY WEEK!

Resources:

<http://www.Startingstrength.com>

http://startingstrength.wikia.com/wiki/Starting_Strength_Wiki

TOP ARTICLES

The Truth: http://startingstrength.com/articles/truth_steel.pdf

How to Build Muscle: <http://stronglifts.com/how-to-build-muscle-mass-guide/>

Barbell Medicine: http://startingstrength.com/articles/barbell_medicine_sullivan.pdf

A Woman's Training Perspective: http://startingstrength.com/articles/training_perspective_gillian.pdf

Youngsters Need Strength Too by Bill Starr: http://startingstrength.com/articles/young_strength_starr.pdf

Squat and Knee Pain Myths: http://www.charlespoliquin.com/ArticlesMultimedia/Articles/Article/388/8_Stupid_Myths_about_Squatting.aspx

(If you want super strong knees or to decrease the knee pain you have, then do proper squats to build up the muscles around your knees and you will have stronger knees and less pain!)

Appropriate Conditioning for athletes (if you don't need endurance, then don't train for it!...and most sports do not require endurance.)

http://startingstrength.com/articles/appropriate_conditioning_sheaffer.pdf

More "Must Read" Articles here: <http://coachztraining.wordpress.com/must-read-articles/>

Visit my new site: RapeProof.com: [How to defeat a rapist and survive a violent attack.](http://RapeProof.com)

For the lawyers: Use at your own risk! Check with a competent doctor (that also strength trains) before attempting this program!

Feel free to share this program with whomever you want, but you must leave all links and not change anything!

Coach David Alexander



TOM WOODS'S
LIBERTY CLASSROOM