



# OFF-SEASON

STRENGTH & CONDITIONING

# FOR RUGBY

 RUCK SCIENCE

# INTRODUCTION

For many players, the off-season brings a welcome rest from the demands of competitive rugby. It's a time to recover from a tough and hopefully successful season, allow all those accumulated injuries to heal, and generally enjoy some time off from what is arguably one of the most demanding sports in the world. Pre-season training is months away so where's the harm in taking a well-earned training sabbatical?

However, weeks have a nasty habit of turning into months very quickly and, before you know it, the rugby season will be just around the corner, and that means pre-season training!

Pre-season training will get you match-fit but, unless you have done your off-season "homework," you are going to suffer in the process. Pre-season training typically lasts 12-weeks but the off-season can last anywhere up to 24-weeks, and that's a lot of wasted time if you make the mistake of leaving training on the back burner.

Of course, at the end of the season, you SHOULD take a break from training but try to limit yourself to just four weeks off. Don't be completely idle during that time otherwise getting back into shape will be much harder than it needs to be. Instead, have one week of very passive rest during which you do as little physical activity as possible, and then enjoy some active recovery for the next three weeks. Hike, swim, jog, do some light weight training, and just get your body moving. This will ensure that, when you start your off-season training, you aren't crippled with delayed onset muscle soreness and don't have a ton of excess body fat to shift.

The off-season itself is all about GPP = short for general physical preparedness. During this time, your training is mainly non-rugby specific but, instead, is designed to prepare your body for pre-season training.

# During the off season, your training aims should include



## REHAB AND PRE-HAB

Fix and prevent injuries through the performance of specially selected strengthening and stretching exercises



## AEROBIC AND ANAEROBIC FITNESS

With the emphasis on moderate intensity and moderate duration



## BASIC STRENGTH

Developing a solid base of full-body strength on which the pre-season phase of training can build



## FUNCTIONAL HYPERTROPHY

Increasing size to add useable bodyweight and forging some "armor" to protect from impacts

# WHY THIS PROGRAM?

Many rugby players see the off-season as an opportunity to become gym-junkies and bulk up using bodybuilding-style workouts, and while bodybuilding techniques ARE useful, they are not necessarily the best choice for most rugby players.

In bodybuilding, competitors are judged on how they look as opposed to how they perform. It is possible to make a muscle very big using light to moderate weights and moderate to high reps. This will produce muscle hypertrophy but will have much less of an impact on strength and performance.

In contrast, rugby players should be less concerned with “show,” and more concerned with “go.” Big, pretty-looking muscles are fine for the beach but, on the pitch, if you cannot put that muscle size to good use, they are little more than dead weight.

For that reason, rugby players should not follow a bodybuilding-type program but one that is more specific to the sport of rugby – like the one in this book! You WILL still see muscle growth, but it will be a byproduct of training rather than the main training aim.

Assuming you take a four-week break after the end of the season, your off-season training should last 16-20 weeks. Use this time to make sure you are fit enough and strong enough to enter pre-season training in good condition and ready to work hard. If you don't, you may well find yourself playing “catch up” for the first half of pre-season training.

**Pre-season training should hone your fitness to a well-defined edge, but the off-season training is where you build the foundation. Remember, the wider the base of the pyramid, the higher the peak can be!**



Hena Uhila  
**UTAH WARRIORS**

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**WARM UP AND COOL  
DOWN ROUTINES**

# WHAT MAKES A GOOD WARMUP?

Every good workout starts with an appropriate warm-up and ends with a thorough cool down. Warming up properly can reduce your risk of injury and facilitate a good workout while cooling down properly is the first step toward full and speedy recovery.

## Warming up should achieve several things:

1. Increase core temperature
2. Increase oxygenated blood flow to working muscles
3. Increase functional flexibility
4. Improve joint mobility
5. Increase nervous system activation
6. Decrease neural inhibition
7. Increase mental focus

## A good warm up should contain several different elements...

- a. Pulse raiser
- b. Joint mobility
- c. Dynamic stretches
- d. Movement prep
- e. Ramped practice sets

Although this might look like a lot of work, a good warm up shouldn't take much more than 10 to 15-minutes and could save you months of lost time by reducing your risk of injury.

Let's examine each of these elements...

## **a. PULSE RAISER**

The pulse raiser is the part of the warm up that gets you warm. Usually comprising of a few minutes of progressive cardio, the pulse raiser elevates your heart and breathing rate, increases your core temperature, and pumps oxygenated blood into your muscles.

This helps buffer them against the effect of lactic acid. Warm muscles flex and contract more easily so – all in all – the pulse raiser is pretty important. However, five minutes or so is all that is needed. After all, you are trying to warm up and not wear yourself out. Do not be tempted to turn your pulse raiser into a cardio workout.

## **b. JOINT MOBILITY**

Your joints are made up from two bones that come together to form a union. For these bones to articulate smoothly, they need to be properly lubricated. Your joints are lubricated with synovial fluid which is produced on demand.

Joint mobility exercises take the target joint through a small but then increasing to a large range of movement to maximize synovial fluid production.

Good examples include shoulder shrugs, shoulder rolls, arm circles, wrist rolls, shallow knee bends, ankle circles and waist twists.

Mobility exercises should leave your joints feeling fluid and loose. Do one exercise for each major joint – 10 to 20 reps per exercise should suffice.





## c. DYNAMIC STRETCHES

When it comes to stretching, most people think of the static variety where stretches are held for a predetermined length of time. This type of stretch is fine in a cool down but not ideal for warm ups. For starters, static stretching tends to cause muscle relaxation which can inhibit force production. Also, static stretches tend to cause your temperature to fall.

In contrast, dynamic stretches, which hardly look like stretches at all, involve lots of movement which helps to keep your temperature elevated and don't cause muscle relaxation.

Dynamic stretches can often look like joint mobility exercises and frequently overlap as they are very similar. Shallow progressing to deeper lunges, squats to overhead reaches, forward leg swings, side bends, and lunges with a twist are all examples of dynamic stretches. You should only need three to five dynamic stretches to prepare your major muscles for the workout to come. Ten reps of each should be sufficient. Do not perform dynamic stretches too quickly so they become ballistic stretches. Ballistic stretches are more likely to cause injury.

Is it ever okay to do static stretches as part of a warm up? Yes. If a tight muscle makes a particular exercise difficult, you can stretch it off using static stretches. For example, if tight hip flexors make squats and lunges difficult, or tight pecs prevent you from pulling the bar to your chest during barbell rows, deactivate these troublesome muscles with targeted static stretching. This does, however, require a good working knowledge of muscles and movements.

## **d. MOVEMENT PREP**

Inactivity can lead to inhibited muscles. Sitting down all day can “turn off” your glutes for example, and hunching over a computer can do the same thing to your upper back. Movement prep exercises are designed to wake up specific muscles to ensure they are firing properly e.g. hip bridges for glutes, and band pull aparts for the upper back. Movement prep exercises should be selected according to your needs and what workout you are about to do. For example, if you are about to embark on a leg workout, you would focus on prepping your leg and lower back muscles.

## **e. RAMPED PRACTICE SETS**

To ensure your technique is solid and to ease gradually into your main workout, ramp up to your intensity levels gradually. For example, perform several light sets of your chosen exercise or progress from fast jogging to running prior to sprinting. This provides the perfect opportunity to assess your energy levels and adjust your workout up or down depending on how you feel.

Jumping straight into an intense workout, even after warming up, will make it feel harder than it needs to. This can cause you to lose confidence and may mean you fail to perform at your best.

# HOW LONG SHOULD YOUR WARM UP BE?

The answer to this is – it depends. Cold weather, advancing age, an intense workout, a long period of inactivity beforehand; these factors would suggest a longer warm up is required.

If, however, you have an easy workout planned, are young and have just been active, or it's warm, a shorter warm up should suffice.

Adjust the length of your warm-up so that, when it is done, you feel as though you are ready to start your main session. Take as long as necessary but no longer; there is no need to waste your valuable energy.

Warming up should never be rushed; it could be the difference between a good workout or getting injured. Warm ups not only prepare your muscles and joints for exercise but your brain too. Use your warm up as an opportunity to get in the zone so you can concentrate fully on the workout to follow.

With this information, you should be able to create your own warm up routines but to help you on your way, here is a general strength and conditioning warm-up that will get the job done.



# TYPICAL WARM UP LENGTHS

1. **5-10 minutes of progressive cardio** – start easy, increase intensity gradually so that, by the end, you are warm and slightly out of breath. Good choices include running, rowing, and jumping rope.
2. **Joint mobility exercises** – 10-15 reps of these exercises:
  - Neck rolls
  - Shoulder shrugs
  - Arm circles
  - Waist twists
  - Side bends
  - High knee marching
  - Squats
  - Lunges
3. **Dynamic stretches** – 10-15 reps of the following exercises:
  - Forward straight leg kicks
  - Prisoner good mornings (hip hinge with hands on head)
  - Standing chest press and row
  - Lunge with twist
  - Standing overhead press and pull down
4. **Foam rolling** – foam roll any areas you feel need extra attention including:
  - Outer thigh – iliotibial band
  - Hamstrings
  - Quadriceps
  - Calves
  - Thoracic spine
  - Lats
5. **Movement prep and ramped sets** – will be detailed in each workout

# COOLING DOWN

The cool down is designed to return your body to its pre-exercise state so that recovery can begin. This generally involves two main components:

- 1. Pulse lowerer**
- 2. Static stretching plus foam rolling**

## 1. THE PULSE LOWERER

Exercise can cause something called blood pooling. Blood accumulates in your working muscles and needs to be encouraged to leave in a timely fashion once your workout is completed. Blood pooling may contribute to post-exercise muscle soreness and it also makes sense to try and provide your hard-worked muscles with freshly oxygenated blood to enhance your recovery.

The pulse lowerer involves a few minutes of light cardio during which the intensity is gradually reduced. For example, if you were using a treadmill, simply run for a few minutes before slowing down into a jog and finally a walk. You can cool down on any piece of cardio equipment – it's simply a matter of personal choice.

## 2. STATIC STRETCHES

Exercise can cause a phenomenon called adaptive shortening. This describes how a muscle will tighten up unless it is moved through its fullest possible range of movement. For example, most cardio exercises do not take your limbs through very large ranges of movement. Cycling, running and stepping all use relatively small ranges of movement and may, therefore, cause adaptive shortening. The same is true of many strength training exercises. Over time, this could lead to reduced flexibility and muscle tightness.


To remedy this, it is important to spend a few moments stretching your major muscles after exercise.

To perform a static stretch, ease into a stretched position and exhale. Relax for a few seconds. You should feel the tension drop out of the muscles being stretched. At this point, stretch a little further. Continue this sequence for 30 to 60 seconds and then move onto another stretch.

Focus on your major muscles, especially those that were used during your workout. The most commonly tight muscles are the hamstrings, hip flexors and chest so make sure you stretch these. Do not bounce or force any of your stretches as this may lead to injury. Stretch gently and methodically and back off if you experience any pain. Try to work logically through your muscles, either from top to bottom or vice versa, to ensure you don't miss anything out. Spend extra time on any muscle that feels tight.

Once you have finished stretching, it can be useful to do more foam rolling on any areas that are habitually tight or sore.

**Warming up and cooling down are undeniably time-consuming but if you want to train at your best, recovery fully between sessions, and reduce your risk of injury, they are vital components of any workout.**



# RECOVERY STRATEGIES

If you want to train hard and often, you need to recover fully between sessions. Recovery can be left to “just happen” by resting or, if you are serious about recovery, there are several strategies that you can use to enhance and speed up the recovery processes.

As you’ll see in the next chapter, two days per week have been put aside especially for recovery. While these are rest days from training, they are also days where you can enhance recovery by taking a more active role.

There are several strategies you can use to enhance recovery, and it’s up to you to choose the ones that fit your lifestyle and circumstances best. However, on the designated recovery days, taking an active role in recovery will allow you to train harder and get more benefit from the workouts.

Our rugby recovery strategies include...

# 1. CONTRAST TEMPERATURE THERAPY

This method increases micro blood flow which speeds up the removal of waste products from your muscles while increasing blood flow. This can be done in several ways including alternating hot and cold showers and using hot and cold pads on specific areas of your body. Use cold for one minute followed by heat for one minute and alternate three to five times. Always end on heat.

## 2. CRYOTHERAPY

This describes a range of therapies designed to lower tissue temperature, often by using ice or cold water baths. Cryotherapy reduces inflammation, muscle soreness, and pain to increase recovery. Cryotherapy is popular in rugby, however, it's far from relaxing or enjoyable and is something many players dread!

There are several different protocols available to use. It very much depends on what facilities you have available.

Good options include:

- Full body immersion in a bath full of cold water and ice
- Lower body immersion in a trash can full of cold water and ice
- A cryotherapy chamber
- Massage using a block of ice
- Immersion in a cold river, lake or the sea
- Rolling in snow
- Ice packs placed on specific areas of the body e.g. the thighs or lower back



### 3. MASSAGE

Massage increases blood flow and the removal of waste products from your muscles and can also help reduce muscle tension all of which facilitate recovery. There are different types of massage available including deep tissue-type sports massage to more superficial and relaxing Swedish massage. Massage is best done by a trained masseuse, but you can also do it yourself although you will be limited to working on your legs.



### 4. SELF MYOFASCIAL RELEASE

SMR is a sort of massage therapy that aims to break down adhesions within your muscles and fascia, often using tools such as foam rollers and lacrosse balls.

There are dozens of foam rolling exercises you can try, but the following provides an ideal starting point for post-training recovery. Start off with light pressure and increase as you warm up. Prepare your muscles for foam rolling with some light cardio and mobility exercises.

## KINDS OF SMR

**ITB** – the iliotibial band, ITB for short, is a band of fibrous tissue that runs up the outside of your upper leg from your knee to your hip. If allowed to become tight, the ITB can cause a lot of pain and discomfort.

Lie on your side and place the roller under your lowermost leg. Bend your upper leg and place your foot on the floor to take some of your weight. Roll up and down the roller from the outside of your knee to the outside of your hip. If you experience any “hot spots” of localized pain or tension, stop and focus on them for a few seconds. Spend an equal amount of time on both legs. Once you are more comfortable with the pressure of the roller, place your legs together to increase the weight on your roller and the depth of your massage.

**Hamstrings** – sit up straight with your legs extended and your hands on the floor either side of your hips. Position the roller behind your knees. Using your arms to move you, roll up and down, so the roller goes from the back of your knees to just below your butt. Cross your legs and do one hamstring at a time for a deeper treatment.

**Quadriceps** – Lie on your front and rest on your elbows. Place the roller under your thighs. Using your arms to push you, roll up and down from your knees to your thighs. To go deeper, cross your legs and roll one leg at a time.

**Glutes** – sit on your roller with your legs bent and feet flat on the floor. Cross your right ankle over your left knee. Roll your butt back and forth under your butt and shift your weight from side to side. Once you’ve done one “cheek,” switch legs and repeat.

**Upper back and thoracic spine** – lie on your back with your legs bent. Place the roller under your shoulders, a few inches below your neck. Roll the roller slowly down your upper back to until it is roughly level with your lower ribs. Do not roll down to your lower back. Don’t worry about a feeling or hearing a few clicks; this is just your vertebrae moving back into the correct position. This should happen less often as you become used to the exercise. Roll back up to your shoulders and repeat.

Once you have made two or three passes up and down your thoracic spine, position the roller behind your shoulders, lie back and let the weight of your upper body extend your thoracic spine. Hold this position for 30 to 60 seconds before gently rolling onto your side, getting onto your hands and knees, and carefully standing up. If you’ve done it right, you should now feel taller and more upright.

## 5. LIGHT RECOVERY GYM, BODYWEIGHT WORKOUT

while the last thing you may feel like doing on a designated rest day is more training, a light workout can help enhance recovery if, for no other reason, it gets you up and moving which will increase blood flow and reduce delayed onset muscle soreness.

A brisk walk, an easy bodyweight circuit, or a 50/50 gym session (half the volume, half the weight) can all help facilitate recovery. However, make sure that you don't turn an easy recovery workout into a more demanding training session that ends up taking more out of you than it puts back in.

## 6. COMPRESSION CLOTHING

Wearing compression clothing between workouts may enhance recovery by increasing tissue temperature which can help ease aches and pains and increase mobility and flexibility while reducing the onset of DOMS.

Compression clothing should be worn continuously for best results - during everyday activities and even during sleep. The best compression clothing is snug but not so tight it cuts off circulation and is also breathable. Needless to say, compression clothing may be impractical during hot weather but is perfect for wintertime.

## 7. STRETCHING

Stretching should be part of your cool down, but it can also help facilitate recovery when you do it on your rest days. While stretching sore, stiff muscles may be uncomfortable initially, doing so will speed up recovery, restore range of motion, and help reduce DOMs.

As rugby is a full body activity, you need to stretch all your major muscles. Prepare your muscles for stretching by performing a few minutes of light cardio, foam rolling, or doing it after a recovery workout.

When you stretch a muscle, you reach the natural end of your muscle's elasticity – called the point of bind or POB for short. If you stay at the POB for 15 seconds or so, you will feel your muscles relax slightly, and you should then be able to move into a deeper stretch. This happens more readily if you a) relax mentally as well as physically and b) do not hold your breath.

Continue extending the POB as many times as you can until you reach your real end of range. Once you are there, hold for a further 15 to 30 seconds to maximize your flexibility training.

To recap:

- Move into POB and hold for 10-15 seconds
- As you feel your muscles relax, move a little deeper to new POB
- Keep your body relaxed and breath steadily
- Repeat steps one to three a couple more times until you reach your true flexibility limit
- Hold this final position for 15 to 30 seconds
- Slowly ease out of the stretch

As with all types of stretching, do not force the stretch and if you feel any burning or shaking back off and use a less extreme POB.

**With seven recovery strategies to choose from, you should be able to find one or two that you can use on designated rest days. Do not underestimate the value of taking a more active role in recovery; the faster and more completely you recover between workouts, the harder you'll be able to train, and the more effective your workouts will be.**



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# THE PROGRAM

# OFF-SEASON

## STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING TRAINING PROGRAM

This program is built around full body workouts. Full body workouts make the most of your training time, work your body in a very sports specific way, and train your main muscle groups three times a week which is considered optimal for developing size and strength simultaneously. Rugby is, after all, a full body sport, so it makes sense to train this way.

This is in marked contrast to most bodybuilding routines where different muscles are worked on different days.

Your off-season training is broken down into four-week blocks. There are three of them. Block one is designed to ease you back into training while block two and three can be alternated until pre-season training arrives i.e.:

**Block one** – introduction/breaking in period

**Block two**

**Block three**

**Block two**

**Block three**

**Preseason training**

Each week follows the same basic structure:

**Monday** – full body strength training

**Tuesday** – conditioning

**Wednesday** – full body strength training

**Thursday** – rest and rehab/prehab

**Friday** – conditioning

**Saturday** – full body strength training

**Sunday** – rest and prehab

# TRAINING NOTES

While many of the terms and principles of this workout may be familiar to you, some may be new. This section contains notes so that you can follow the programs more easily.

**Load prescription** – many strength training workouts prescribe training load as a percentage of your one-repetition maximum or 1RM; this one does not. At this stage of training, after a layoff, your strength will be down, and it's not the time to test for your 1RM.

If you used a previously obtained 1RM, you might find that you overestimate your current level of strength. Also, players with a high percentage of slow twitch type 1 fibers can do more reps than players with more type 2b fast twitch fibers, so the entire concept of using 1RM percentages is somewhat flawed.

Instead, just use a weight that makes the final rep of each set challenging. If you can do more 1-2 more reps than prescribed, increase the weight slightly. If you are more than 1-2 reps below the prescribed rep count, lower the weight. It's also okay to change the weight from one set to the next to ensure you stay in the rep "sweet spot" e.g. for a workout specifying 8 reps per set:

Set one – 25 kg, 9 reps (one rep over)

Set two – 25 kg, 8 reps (perfect!)

Set three – 25 kg, 7 reps (one rep under and feeling tired)

Set four – 22.5kg, 8 reps (perfect)

**AMRAP** – this stands for As Many Reps As Possible and simply means you keep on pumping out the reps until you fail. If you are doing several AMRAP sets, you'll find that, as fatigue sets in, the number of reps you can do per set drops. This is normal. Just strive to do as many reps as you can.



**RPE** – this stands for Rating of perceived exertion and is a notional scale of exercise intensity. Assuming ten out of ten is maximum effort and one out of ten is equal to sitting and resting, most conditioning workouts should take place somewhere between 5-9.

In this training plan, we have used RPE instead of a % of maximum heart rate in case you do not have access to a heart rate monitor.

## RPE DESCRIPTION

**0-1** No Exertion - Inactive

**2-3** Light Exertion - Used for warm-ups, cool downs and stretching

**4-5** Medium Exertion - Breathing and heart rate a little faster, feeling warmer

**6-7** Moderate Exertion - Breathing hard, sweating, harder to talk

**8-9** Hard Exertion - Breathing very hard, can only say a few words

**10** Hardest Exertion - Cannot keep up the pace for long, cannot speak. Your limit!

**Finisher** – each strength training workout ends with a short, but sharp conditioning finisher called a Tabata. This is a type of interval training. Work as hard as you can at the prescribed exercise for 20 seconds, rest for 10 seconds, and repeat seven more times to total four minutes. Feel free to change the exercises but, for best results, use similar ones such as:

- Exercise bike sprints
- Sprints out of doors
- Rower sprints
- Heavy bag work
- Sledgehammer swings
- Medicine ball slams



# BLOCK 1

4 weeks | 24 sessions

# BLOCK 1 - Week 1

This preparatory block is designed to ease you into this phase of training and introduce you to the methods and systems that you'll be using over the coming 12 weeks.

## **Monday - Full body strength training**

Warm up - use the supplied warm up in chapter two or one of your own devising.

Movement prep - bodyweight squats + band around knees and cable face pulls 3 sets 15-20 reps

1. Paused squats - 3 sets of 8 reps, 120 sec recovery between sets
2. Romanian deadlift - 3 sets 10 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
3. Barbell bench press - 3 sets 8 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
4. Chin-ups - 3 sets of AMRAP, 90 seconds recovery between sets
5. DB shoulder complex (front raise/side raise/overhead press) - 3 sets of 10 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
6. 3-way plank combo (side/front/side) - 3 sets of 30-45 sec, 60-sec recovery between sets
7. Finisher: Tabata jump rope - 8 sets of 20 sec, 10 sec recovery between sets

## **Tuesday - conditioning**

After a warm-up, row or run 5,000 at an easy pace - RPE 5/6

## **Wednesday - full body strength training**

Warm up - use the supplied warm up in chapter two or one of your own devising.

Movement prep - supine hip bridge 'w' band around knees + standing wall angels 3 sets 15-20reps

1. Rack deadlifts - 3 sets of 8 reps, 120 sec recovery between sets
2. Lunges - 3 sets 10 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
3. Standing overhead press - 3 sets 8 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
4. Single arm dumbbell rows - 3 sets of 8 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
5. Push-ups - 3 sets of AMRAP, 90 sec recovery between sets
6. Get-ups - 3 sets of 4 reps, 60-sec between sets
7. Finisher: Tabata burpees - 8 sets of 20 sec, 10 sec recovery between sets

## **Thursday - rest and rehab/prehab**

Choose one or more recovery strategies from chapter three

## **Friday - conditioning**

After a warm-up, row or run 5,000 at an easy pace - RPE 5/6

## **Saturday - full body strength training**

Same workout as Monday

## **Sunday - rest and prehab**

# BLOCK 1 - Week 2

Try to use heavier weights, perform more reps, or shorter rests between sets to increase the difficulty of your workouts.

## **Monday - full body strength training**

Warm up - use the supplied warm up in chapter two or one of your own devising.

Movement prep - supine hip bridge with band 'w' knees and standing wall angels 3 sets 15-20 reps

1. Rack deadlifts - 3 sets of 8 reps, 120 sec recovery between sets
2. Lunges - 3 sets 10 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
3. Standing overhead press - 3 sets 8 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
4. Single arm dumbbell rows - 3 sets of 8 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
5. Push-ups - 3 sets of AMRAP, 90 sec recovery between sets
6. Get-ups - 3 sets of 4 reps, 60-sec between sets
7. Finisher: Tabata kettlebell swings - 8 sets of 20 sec, 10 sec recovery between sets

## **Tuesday - conditioning**

After a warm-up, row or run 5,000 at an easy pace - RPE 5/6

## **Wednesday - Full body strength training**

Warm up - use the supplied warm up in chapter two or one of your own devising.

Movement prep - bodyweight squats 'w' band around knees and cable face pulls 3 sets 15-20 reps

1. Paused squats - 3 sets of 8 reps, 120 sec recovery between sets
2. Romanian deadlift - 3 sets 10 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
3. Barbell bench press - 3 sets 8 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
4. Chin-ups - 3 sets of AMRAP, 90 seconds recovery between sets
5. DB shoulder complex (front raise/side raise/overhead press) - 3 sets of 10 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
6. 3-way plank combo (side/front/side) - 3 sets of 30-45 sec, 60-sec recovery between sets
7. Finisher: Tabata jump rope - 8 sets of 20 sec, 10 sec recovery between sets

## **Thursday - rest and rehab/prehab**

Choose one or more recovery strategies from chapter three

## **Friday - conditioning**

After a warm-up, row or run 5,000 at an easy pace - RPE 5/6

## **Saturday - full body strength training**

Same workout as Monday

## **Sunday - rest and prehab**

# BLOCK 1 - Week 3

Try to use heavier weights, perform more reps, or shorter rests between sets to increase the difficulty of your workouts. There is also a slight increase in training volume.

## Monday - Full body strength training

Warm up - use the supplied warm up in chapter two or one of your own devising.

Movement prep - bodyweight squats 'w' band around knees and cable face pulls 3 sets 15-20 reps

1. Paused squats - 4 sets of 8 reps, 120 sec recovery between sets
2. Romanian deadlift - 4 sets 10 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
3. Barbell bench press - 4 sets 8 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
4. Chin-ups - 4 sets of AMRAP, 90 sec recovery between sets
5. DB shoulder complex (front raise/side raise/overhead press) - 4 sets of 10 reps, 90 sec recovery
6. 3-way plank combo (side/front/side) - 4 sets of 30-45 sec, 60-sec recovery between sets
7. Finisher: Tabata burpees - 8 sets of 20 seconds, 10 sec recovery between sets

## Tuesday - conditioning

After a warm-up, row or run 6,000 at an easy pace - RPE 5/6

## Wednesday - full body strength training

Warm up - use the supplied warm up in chapter two or one of your own devising.

Movement prep - supine hip bridge 'w' band around knees + standing wall angels 3 sets 20 reps

1. Rack deadlifts - 4 sets of 8 reps, 120 sec recovery between sets
2. Lunges - 4 sets 10 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
3. Standing overhead press - 4 sets 8 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
4. Single arm dumbbell rows - 4 sets of 8 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
5. Push-ups - 4 sets of AMRAP, 90 sec recovery between sets
6. Get-ups - 4 sets of 4 reps, 60-sec between sets
7. Finisher: Tabata kettlebell swings - 8 sets of 20 sec, 10 sec recovery between sets

## Thursday - rest and rehab/prehab

Choose one or more recovery strategies from chapter three

## Friday - conditioning

After a warm-up, row or run 6,000 at an easy pace - RPE 5/6

## Saturday - full body strength training

Same workout as Monday

## Sunday - rest and prehab

# BLOCK 1 - Week 4

This week incorporates a slight reduction in training volume while training intensity remains high. This should boost recovery so that you start the next phase of training feeling fresh and well-rested.

## Monday - full body strength training

Warm up - use the supplied warm up in chapter two or one of your own devising.

Movement prep - supine hip bridge 'w' band around knees + standing wall angels 3 sets 20 reps

1. Rack deadlifts - 2 sets of 8 reps, 120 sec recovery between sets
2. Lunges - 2 sets 10 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
3. Standing overhead press - 2 sets 8 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
4. Single arm dumbbell rows - 2 sets of 8 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
5. Push-ups - 2 sets of AMRAP, 90 sec recovery between sets
6. Get-ups - 2 sets of 4 reps, 60-sec between sets
7. Finisher: Tabata jump rope - 8 sets of 20 sec, 10 sec recovery between sets

## Tuesday - conditioning

After a warm-up, row or run 4,000 at an easy pace - RPE 5/6

## Wednesday - Full body strength training

Warm up - use the supplied warm up in chapter two or one of your own devising.

Movement prep - bodyweight squats 'w' band around knees and cable face pulls 3 sets 15-20 reps

1. Paused squats - 2 sets of 8 reps, 120 sec recovery between sets
2. Romanian deadlift - 2 sets 10 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
3. Barbell bench press - 2 sets 8 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
4. Chin-ups - 2 sets of AMRAP, 90 sec recovery between sets
5. DB shoulder complex (front raise/side raise/overhead press) - 2 sets of 10 reps, 90 sec recovery
6. 3-way plank combo (side/front/side) - 2 sets of 30-45 sec, 60-sec recovery between sets
7. Finisher: Tabata burpees - 8 sets of 20 sec, 10 sec recovery between sets

## Thursday - rest and rehab/prehab

Choose one or more recovery strategies from chapter three

## Friday - conditioning

After a warm-up, row or run 4,000 at an easy pace - RPE 5/6

## Saturday - full body strength training

Same workout as Monday

## Sunday - rest and prehab



# BLOCK 2

4 weeks | 24 sessions

# BLOCK 2 – Week 1

This second block of training is designed to continue your momentum from block one while introducing some new exercises and increasing training intensity and volume.

## **Monday – Full body strength training**

Warm up – use the supplied warm up in chapter two or one of your own devising.

Movement prep – bodyweight squats 'w' band around knees and cable face pulls 3 sets 20 reps

1. Back squats – 3 sets of 5 reps, 180 sec recovery between sets
2. Romanian deadlift – 3 sets 8 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
3. Paused bench press – 3 sets 5 reps, 180 sec recovery between sets
4. Weighted chin-ups – 3 sets of 5, 120 sec recovery between sets
5. Barbell Cuban press – 3 sets of 8 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
6. Pot stirrers – 3 sets of 30-45-sec
7. Finisher: Tabata kettlebell swings – 8 sets of 20 sec, 10 sec recovery between sets

## **Tuesday – conditioning**

After a warm-up, row or run 3 x 1,000 meters at a moderate pace – RPE 7/8

## **Wednesday – full body strength training**

Warm up – use the supplied warm up in chapter two or one of your own devising.

Movement prep – supine hip bridge 'w' band around knees + standing wall angels 3 sets 20 reps

1. Deficit deadlifts – 3 sets of 5 reps, 180 sec recovery between sets
2. Rear foot elevated split squats – 3 sets 10 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
3. Standing overhead press – 3 sets 5 reps, 12 sec recovery between sets
4. Seated cable rows – 3 sets of 8 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
5. Parallel bar dips – 3 sets of AMRAP, 90 sec recovery between sets
6. Ab wheel roll outs – 3 sets of 10 reps, 60-sec between sets
7. Finisher: Tabata jump rope – 8 sets of 20 sec, 10 seconds recovery between sets

## **Thursday – rest and rehab/prehab**

Choose one or more recovery strategies from chapter three

## **Friday – conditioning**

After a warm-up, row or run 7,000 at an easy pace – RPE 5/6

## **Saturday – full body strength training**

Same workout as Monday

## **Sunday – rest and prehab**



# BLOCK 2 – Week 2

Try to use heavier weights, perform more reps, or shorter rests between sets to increase the difficulty of your workouts. There is also a slight increase in training volume.

## **Monday – Full body strength training**

Warm up – use the supplied warm up in chapter two or one of your own devising.

Movement prep – supine hip bridge 'w' band around knees + standing wall angels 3 sets 20 reps

1. Deficit deadlifts – 3 sets of 5 reps, 180 sec recovery between sets
2. Rear foot elevated split squats – 3 sets 10 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
3. Standing overhead press – 3 sets 5 reps, 12 sec recovery between sets
4. Seated cable rows – 3 sets of 8 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
5. Parallel bar dips – 3 sets of AMRAP, 90 sec recovery between sets
6. Ab wheel roll outs – 3 sets of 10 reps, 60-sec between sets
7. Finisher: Tabata burpees – 8 sets of 20 sec, 10 seconds recovery between sets

## **Tuesday – conditioning**

After a warm-up, row or run 3 x 1,000 meters at a moderate pace – RPE 6/7

## **Wednesday – full body strength training**

Warm up – use the supplied warm up in chapter two or one of your own devising.

Movement prep – bodyweight squats 'w' band around knees and cable face pulls 3 sets 20 reps

1. Back squats – 3 sets of 5 reps, 180 sec recovery between sets
2. Romanian deadlift – 3 sets 8 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
3. Paused bench press – 3 sets 5 reps, 180 sec recovery between sets
4. Weighted chin-ups – 3 sets of 5, 120 sec recovery between sets
5. Barbell Cuban press – 3 sets of 8 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
6. Pot stirrers – 3 sets of 30-45-sec
7. Finisher: Tabata kettlebell swings – 8 sets of 20 sec, 10 seconds recovery between sets

## **Thursday – rest and rehab/prehab**

Choose one or more recovery strategies from chapter three

## **Friday – conditioning**

After a warm-up, row or run 7,000 at an easy pace – RPE 5/6

## **Saturday – full body strength training**

Same workout as Monday

## **Sunday – rest and prehab**

# BLOCK 2 – Week 3

Try to use heavier weights, perform more reps, or shorter rests between sets to increase the difficulty of your workouts. There is also a slight increase in training volume.

## Monday – Full body strength training

Warm up – use the supplied warm up in chapter two or one of your own devising.

Movement prep – bodyweight squats 'w' band around knees and cable face pulls 3 sets 20 reps

1. Back squats – 4 sets of 5 reps, 180 sec recovery between sets
2. Romanian deadlift – 4 sets 8 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
3. Paused bench press – 4 sets 5 reps, 180 sec recovery between sets
4. Weighted chin-ups – 4 sets of 5, 120 sec recovery between sets
5. Barbell Cuban press – 4 sets of 8 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
6. Pot stirrers – 3 sets of 30-45-sec
7. Finisher: Tabata jump rope – 8 sets of 20 sec, 10 sec recovery between sets

## Tuesday – conditioning

After a warm-up, row or run 4 x 1,000 meters at a moderate pace – RPE 6/7

## Wednesday – full body strength training

Warm up – use the supplied warm up in chapter two or one of your own devising.

Movement prep – supine hip bridge 'w' band around knees + standing wall angels 3 sets 20 reps

1. Deficit deadlifts – 4 sets of 5 reps, 180 sec recovery between sets
2. Rear foot elevated split squats – 4 sets 10 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
3. Standing overhead press – 4 sets 5 reps, 12 sec recovery between sets
4. Seated cable rows – 4 sets of 8 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
5. Parallel bar dips – 4 sets of AMRAP, 90 sec recovery between sets
6. Ab wheel roll outs – 4 sets of 10 reps, 60-sec between sets
7. Finisher: Tabata burpees – 8 sets of 20 sec, 10 sec recovery between sets

## Thursday – rest and rehab/prehab

Choose one or more recovery strategies from chapter three

## Friday – conditioning

After a warm-up, row or run 7,000 at an easy pace – RPE 5/6

## Saturday – full body strength training

Same workout as Monday

## Sunday – rest and prehab

# BLOCK 2 – Week 4

This week incorporates a slight reduction in training volume while training intensity remains high. This should boost recovery so that you start the next phase of training feeling fresh and well-rested.

## Monday – Full body strength training

Warm up – use the supplied warm up in chapter two or one of your own devising.

Movement prep – supine hip bridge 'w' band around knees + standing wall angels 3 sets 20 reps

1. Deficit deadlifts – 2 sets of 5 reps, 180 sec recovery between sets
2. Rear foot elevated split squats – 2 sets 10 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
3. Standing overhead press – 2 sets 5 reps, 12 sec recovery between sets
4. Seated cable rows – 3 sets of 8 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
5. Parallel bar dips – 3 sets of AMRAP, 90 sec recovery between sets
6. Ab wheel roll outs – 3 sets of 10 reps, 60-sec between sets
7. Finisher: Tabata kettlebell swings – 8 sets of 20 sec, 10 seconds recovery between sets

## Tuesday – conditioning

After a warm-up, row or run 3 x 1,000 meters at a moderate pace – RPE 6/7

## Wednesday – full body strength training

Warm up – use the supplied warm up in chapter two or one of your own devising.

Movement prep – bodyweight squats 'w' band around knees + cable face pulls 3 sets 20 reps

1. Back squats – 2 sets of 5 reps, 180 sec recovery between sets
2. Romanian deadlift – 2 sets 8 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
3. Paused bench press – 2 sets 5 reps, 180 sec recovery between sets
4. Weighted chin-ups – 2 sets of 5, 120 sec recovery between sets
5. Barbell Cuban press – 2 sets of 8 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
6. Pot stirrers – 2 sets of 30-45-sec
7. Finisher: Tabata jump rope – 8 sets of 20 sec, 10 seconds recovery between sets

## Thursday – rest and rehab/prehab

Choose one or more recovery strategies from chapter three

## Friday – conditioning

After a warm-up, row or run 7,000 at an easy pace – RPE 5/6

## Saturday – full body strength training

Same workout as Monday

## Sunday – rest and prehab



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# BLOCK 3

4 weeks | 24 sessions

# BLOCK 3 – Week 1

This third block of training is designed to continue your momentum from block one while introducing some new exercises and increasing training intensity and volume.

## **Monday – Full body strength training**

Warm up – use the supplied warm up in chapter two or one of your own devising.

Movement prep – bodyweight squats 'w' band around knees + cable face pulls 3 sets 20 reps

1. Front squats – 4 sets of 3 reps, 180 sec recovery between sets
2. Hang cleans – 4 sets 3 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
3. Floor press – 4 sets 3 reps, 180 sec recovery between sets
4. Weighted chin-ups – 4 sets of 3, 120 sec recovery between sets
5. Bus drivers – 4 sets of 15 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
6. Hanging leg raises – 4 sets of 30-45-sec
7. Finisher: Tabata burpees – 8 sets of 20 sec, 10 sec recovery between sets

## **Tuesday – conditioning**

After a warm-up, row or run 4 x 750 meters at a fast pace – RPE 8/9

## **Wednesday – full body strength training**

Warm up – use the supplied warm up in chapter two or one of your own devising.

Movement prep – supine hip bridge 'w' band around knees + standing wall angels 3 sets 20 reps

1. Deadlifts – 4 sets of 3 reps, 180 sec recovery between sets
2. Step-ups – 4 sets 12 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
3. Push press – 4 sets 3 reps, 12 sec recovery between sets
4. Lat pull downs – 4 sets of 8 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
5. Incline dumbbell bench press – 4 sets of 8 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
6. Russian twists – 4 sets of 12 reps, 60-sec between sets
7. Finisher: Tabata kettlebell swings – 8 sets of 20 sec, 10 sec recovery between sets

## **Thursday – rest and rehab/prehab**

Choose one or more recovery strategies from chapter three

## **Friday – conditioning**

After a warm-up, row or run 10,000 at an easy pace – RPE 5/6

## **Saturday – full body strength training**

Same workout as Monday

## **Sunday – rest and prehab**

# BLOCK 3 - Week 2

Try to use heavier weights, perform more reps, or shorter rests between sets to increase the difficulty of your workouts. There is also a slight increase in training volume.

## **Monday - Full body strength training**

Movement prep - supine hip bridge 'w' band around knees + standing wall angels 3 sets 20 reps

1. Deadlifts - 4 sets of 3 reps, 180 sec recovery between sets
2. Step-ups - 4 sets 12 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
3. Push press - 4 sets 3 reps, 12 sec recovery between sets
4. Lat pull downs - 4 sets of 8 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
5. Incline dumbbell bench press - 4 sets of 8 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
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## **Tuesday - conditioning**

After a warm-up, row or run 4 x 750 meters at a fast pace - RPE 8/9

## **Wednesday - full body strength training**

Warm up - use the supplied warm up in chapter two or one of your own devising.

Movement prep - bodyweight squats 'w' band around knees + cable face pulls 3 sets 20 reps

1. Front squats - 4 sets of 3 reps, 180 sec recovery between sets
2. Hang cleans - 4 sets 3 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
3. Floor press - 4 sets 3 reps, 180 sec recovery between sets
4. Weighted chin-ups - 4 sets of 3, 120 sec recovery between sets
5. Bus drivers - 4 sets of 15 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
6. Hanging leg raises - 4 sets of 30-45-sec
7. Finisher: Tabata burpees - 8 sets of 20 sec, 10 sec recovery between sets

## **Thursday - rest and rehab/prehab**

Choose one or more recovery strategies from chapter three

## **Friday - conditioning**

After a warm-up, row or run 10,000 at an easy pace - RPE 5/6

## **Saturday - full body strength training**

Same workout as Monday

## **Sunday - rest and prehab**

# BLOCK 3 – Week 3

Try to use heavier weights, perform more reps, or shorter rests between sets to increase the difficulty of your workouts. There is also a slight increase in training volume.

## **Monday – Full body strength training**

Warm up – use the supplied warm up in chapter two or one of your own devising.

Movement prep – bodyweight squats 'w' band around knees + cable face pulls 3 sets 20 reps

1. Front squats – 5 sets of 3 reps, 180 sec recovery between sets
2. Hang cleans – 5 sets 3 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
3. Floor press – 5 sets 3 reps, 180 sec recovery between sets
4. Weighted chin-ups – 5 sets of 3, 120 sec recovery between sets
5. Bus drivers – 5 sets of 15 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
6. Hanging leg raises – 5 sets of 30-45-sec
7. Finisher: Tabata kettlebell swings – 8 sets of 20 sec, 10 sec recovery between sets

## **Tuesday – conditioning**

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## **Wednesday – full body strength training**

Warm up – use the supplied warm up in chapter two or one of your own devising.

Movement prep – supine hip bridge 'w' band around knees + standing wall angels 3 15-20 reps

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3. Push press – 5 sets 3 reps, 12 sec recovery between sets
4. Lat pull downs – 5 sets of 8 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
5. Incline dumbbell bench press – 5 sets of 8 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
6. Russian twists – 5 sets of 12 reps, 60-sec between sets
7. Finisher: Tabata jump rope – 8 sets of 20 sec, 10 sec recovery between sets

## **Thursday – rest and rehab/prehab**

Choose one or more recovery strategies from chapter three

## **Friday – conditioning**

After a warm-up, row or run 10,000 at an easy pace – RPE 5/6

## **Saturday – full body strength training**

Same workout as Monday

## **Sunday – rest and prehab**



# BLOCK 3 – Week 4

This week incorporates a slight reduction in training volume while training intensity remains high. This should boost recovery so that you start the next phase of training feeling fresh and well-rested.

## **Monday – Full body strength training**

Movement prep – supine hip bridge ‘w’ band around knees + standing wall angels 3 sets 20 reps

1. Deadlifts – 2 sets of 3 reps, 180 sec recovery between sets
2. Step-ups – 2 sets 12 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
3. Push press – 2 sets 3 reps, 12 sec recovery between sets
4. Lat pull downs – 2 sets of 8 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
5. Incline dumbbell bench press – 2 sets of 8 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
6. Russian twists – 2 sets of 12 reps, 60-sec between sets
7. Finisher: Tabata burpees – 8 sets of 20 sec, 10 seconds recovery between sets

## **Tuesday – conditioning**

After a warm-up, row or run 3 x 750 meters at a fast pace – RPE 8/9

## **Wednesday – full body strength training**

Warm up – use the supplied warm up in chapter two or one of your own devising.

Movement prep – bodyweight squats ‘w’ band around knees + cable face pulls 3 sets 20 reps

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5. Bus drivers – 2 sets of 15 reps, 90 sec recovery between sets
6. Hanging leg raises – 2 sets of 30-45-sec
7. Finisher: Tabata kettlebell swings – 8 sets of 20 sec, 10 sec recovery between sets

## **Thursday – rest and rehab/prehab**

Choose one or more recovery strategies from chapter three

## **Friday – conditioning**

After a warm-up, row or run 10,000 at an easy pace – RPE 5/6

## **Saturday – full body strength training**

Same workout as Monday

## **Sunday – rest and prehab**



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