

Cheat Sheet Guide to Create Your Own Strength Workout



The following guide will help you create an efficient, balanced, full body strength-training workout. While much more criteria goes into building a customized workout (and even more for a program) – fitness level, form, lifestyle, schedule, goals, motivation, etc. this will serve as a starting point to construct a solid workout. *As always, discuss any changes in your exercise program with your doctor before implementing.*

STEP 1: CHOOSE A FITTING MOBILITY WARM UP

At a bare minimum, it's crucial to activate the glutes, glute meds, core, lats, and lumbo-pelvic area. It's also important to mobilize any tight areas, including but not limited to the thoracic spin, hip flexors, and shoulders.

See these warm up examples on my channel [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

STEP 2: FILL IN 1-2 EXERCISES FROM THE FOLLOWING MOVEMENT 6 PATTERNS:

Knee dominant: _____

Knee dominant exercises are lower body movements that incorporate equal or more of a knee bend than a hip bend, and focus primarily on quadriceps contractions. Exercises include (not exhaustive:)

- All [squat variations](#)
- All [lunge variations](#)
- [Step up](#) variation

Pushing movement:_____

Pushing movements are upper body exercises where the concentric contraction occurs when the arms are extending and the shoulders are flexing.

- [Push up](#) variations
- [Chest press](#) variations
- [Overhead press](#) variations
- Shoulder raises or [flyes](#)
- Triceps extension variations

Hip hinging movement:_____

Hip hinges are lower body movements where the hinge in the hip is much deeper than the hinge in the knee and focus primarily on hamstring and gluteal contractions with a hip extension and/or knee flexion.

- All [deadlift](#) variations
- All [glute bridging](#) variations
- [Back extensions](#)
- [Hip thrusts](#)

Pulling movement:_____

Pulling movements are upper body exercises where the concentric contraction occurs when the biceps are flexing and/or the back (lats, rhomboids, teres, etc.) are flexing.

- All [rowing](#) variations
- All [chin up](#) variations
- All [pull up](#) variations
- [Biceps curl](#) variations

Anti-rotation movement:_____

The abs! A primary function of the abs is to resist rotation of the spine, which is exactly what this movement does. Think:

- [Planks](#) + [side planks](#)
- [Anti-rotation/palof press](#) variations
- Standing TRX anti-rotation pulls

Core flexion/rotation movement:_____

Ironically, another primary function of the core is *rotation*, as well as both lateral and sagittal flexion. Think:

- [Crunches](#) variations
- Seated and standing [twist](#) variations
- [Side bending](#) variations
- [Cable pulling](#) variations

**I also typically include at least one shoulder stability exercise to promote shoulder health, as it's the most vulnerable joint in the body. There are many shoulder stability exercises, but some of my favorites are Turkish get ups, windmills, halos, and reverse fly variations.*

STEP 3: DECIDE WHICH EXERCISES TO PRIORITIZE

What you prioritize will determine which exercises you place at the beginning of the workout. By rule of thumb, I typically suggest placing the most difficult movements at the beginning, after your warm up, as this will allow you to perform them when your energy is high. However, it's also important to consider which movement patterns and/or areas of the body you're most interested in working.

STEP 4: ADD ACCESSORY/VANITY EXERCISES IF DESIRED

I personally don't prioritize isolation exercises in my workouts nor in most of my clients workouts, as most of our compound exercises hit those muscles while getting a bigger bang for your buck. However, adding in some biceps curls, triceps extensions, hamstring curls, additional crunches, etc. can be fun at times! In my opinion, these times should be toward the end of your workout, after your bigger movements have been completed. Additionally, if your fitness level provides, you can add various 5-10 minute [finishers](#) to the end of your workouts.

These four steps will get you started well on your way to a solid strength workout.

Yes, there are several other factors that I consider while designing my clients and my strength workouts and programs, such as workout execution (goal of workout – i.e fat loss, strength, hypertrophy, etc.; sets, reps, rest times, tempo, rep schemes, etc,) but this guide will serve as a platform to build a workout that's balanced and efficient in terms of the key movements.