

12 WEEK PHUL WORKOUT ROUTINE FOR STRENGTH AND MUSCLE GAIN

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Being a fitness enthusiast and instructor, I enjoy trying various workout programs. Till now, I've followed [push-pull-legs \(PPL\)](#), full-body, bro-split, [circuit training](#), and PHUL workout routine.

Every training split helped me stay firm and in shape. However, PHUL was slightly more helpful for increasing strength and size.

The PHUL, or Power Hypertrophy Upper Lower, is a [famous strength training split](#) that combines powerlifting and bodybuilding elements and helps promote strength and muscle hypertrophy.

It involves training [four times a week](#) – two upper body and two lower-body days per week.

It also includes performing a combination of heavy [compound lifts for increasing strength](#) and moderate to high rep range isolation exercises for muscle gain.

In this article, I've shared an ultimate, easy-to-follow, and effective PHUL workout program that will allow you to train in an organized way and help you achieve a firm and aesthetic physique.

If you're looking for a balanced training program to stimulate strength and size, you can follow this plan.

Program Summary

Routine Type	PHUL Split
Program Duration	12 Weeks
Program Goal	Build Strength and Muscle Mass
Training Level	Intermediate
Sessions/week	Four (Two sessions each for upper and lower body)
Duration/session	75-90 minutes
Target Gender	Male and Female
Suitable Age Group	18-35 Years

Workout Instructions

Rest between sets: You can take 3 to 4 minutes of rest between sets when training for strength and 1 to 3 minutes between hypertrophy sets.

Warm-up: It's always best to start your training with 5-10 minutes of low-impact dynamic cardio workout. Your warm-up must involve exercises that are relevant to the muscle group you want to train. For example, if you want to hit your legs, you should perform leg swings, stationary bicycling, and lower body foam roller mobility drills. And for the upper body, you can do shoulder rolling, banded pull-apart, arms circle, dive-bomber pushups, pull-ups, **overhead presses**, mountain climbing, pushups, and jumping jacks.

Here is a list of a few exercises (other than the ones outlined above) you can use to prepare your muscles for resistance exercises:

- Upper Body Foam Rolling
- Treadmill
- **Superman Pull**
- Lunge to Front Kicks
- Inchworm
- **Bear Crawl**
- Burpees
- Squat Jumps
- High Knees

- Cat Cow

Progressive Overload: If you want to **build strength and size**, you should constantly increase the load, number of reps/sets or intensity to challenge your muscles. Studies suggest **progressively challenging your muscles** helps promote strength and hypertrophy over time.

AMRAP – It means you’ll have to perform as many reps as possible in every set.

Adjustment: Creating a workout program that suits all isn’t possible. So, it is best to adjust the exercises and number of reps and sets depending on your fitness level and needs.

Pre and Post Workout Meals: Pay attention to these most important meals, if possible, especially the post-workout ones. Consuming decent protein, moderate carbs, and little fat can help you build muscle faster.

Crucial tip: Stay focused, do not rush, and avoid wasting time between exercises.

Schedule

Week 1-4-7-10

- **Monday:** Upper Body
- **Tuesday:** Lower Body
- **Thursday:** Upper Body
- **Friday:** Lower Body

Monday – Upper Body (Hypertrophy)

Superset	Target Muscles	Sets	Reps
Front Lat Pulldown + Incline DB Press	Back and Chest	3	20, 15, 12
Seated Cable Rowing + Incline Cable Fly	Back and Chest	3	20, 15, 12
Lateral Delt Raises + Cable Triceps Extension	Shoulder and Triceps	3	15, 12, 10

Rear Delt Fly + Barbell Biceps Curl	Shoulder and Biceps	3	15, 12, 10
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Tuesday – Lower Body (Hypertrophy)

Exercise	Target Muscles	Sets	Reps
DB Front Squat	Quad	3	20, 15, 12
Leg Press	Quad	3	20, 15, 12
Front Lunges	Lower Body	2	10/leg
Dumbbell RDL	Hamstring	3	12, 10, 8
Calf Raises	Calf	3	20, 15, 12
Hanging Knee Raise	Abs	2	10-15
H2L Cable Chop	Oblique	2	10/side
Forearm Plank	Abs	1	1-min

Thursday – Upper Body (Strength)

Exercise	Targeted Muscles	Sets	Reps
Flat Bench Press	Chest	4	10, 8, 6, 4
Bent-Over Row	Back	4	10, 8, 6, 4
Military Press	Shoulder	3	6-8
Narrow T-Bar Row	Back	3	6-8
Weighted Dip	Chest and Triceps	2	AMRAP
Weighted Chin-up	Biceps and Back	2	AMRAP

Friday – Lower Body (Strength)

Exercises	Target Muscles	Sets	Reps
Back Squat	Quad	6	10, 8, 6, 4, 2
Hip Thrust	Glutes	4	12, 10, 8, 6
Leg Extension	Quad	3	15, 12, 10
Leg Curl	Hamstring	3	15, 12, 10
15-min Ab Workout	Core	–	–

Week 2-5-8-11

- **Monday:** Upper Body

- **Tuesday:** Lower Body
- **Thursday:** Upper Body
- **Friday:** Lower Body

Monday – Upper Body (Hypertrophy)

Superset	Target Muscles	Sets	Reps
V Grip Lat Pulldown + Incline DB Bench Press	Back and Chest	3	20, 15, 12
Seated Cable Rowing + Seated Pec Deck Fly	Back and Chest	3	20, 15, 12
Lateral Delt Raises + Pullover	Shoulder and Chest	3	15, 12, 10
Rear Delt Fly + Shrug	Shoulder and Trap	3	15, 12, 10

Tuesday – Lower Body (Hypertrophy)

Exercise	Target Muscles	Sets	Reps
Landmine Squat	Lower Body	3	20, 15, 12
Hack Squat	Lower Body	3	20, 15, 12
Bulgarian Split Squat	Lower Body	2	10/leg
Feet-Elevated Glute Bridge	Ham and Glute	3	10/leg
Hanging Side Knee Raise	Oblique	2	10/side
Decline Crunches	Abs	2	10-15
Ab Wheel Rollout	Core	2	6-8

Thursday – Upper Body (Strength)

Exercise	Targeted Muscles	Sets	Reps
Conventional Deadlift	Full Body	4	10, 8, 6, 4
Flat Bench Press	Chest	4	10, 8, 6, 4
Narrow T-Bar Row	Back	3	6-8
Military Press	Shoulder	3	6-8
Weighted Dip	Chest and Triceps	2	AMRAP
Weighted Chin-up	Biceps and Back	2	AMRAP

Friday – Lower Body (Strength)

Exercises	Target Muscles	Sets	Reps
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Back Squat	Quad	6	10, 8, 6, 4, 2
Hip Thrust	Glutes	4	12, 10, 8, 6
Leg Press	Quad	4	10, 8, 6, 4
Leg Curl	Hamstring	3	15, 12, 10
15-min Ab Workout	Core	–	–

Week 3-6-9-12

- **Monday:** Upper Body
- **Tuesday:** Lower Body
- **Thursday:** Upper Body
- **Friday:** Lower Body

Monday – Upper Body (Hypertrophy)

Superset	Target Muscles	Sets	Reps
Standing Lat Pullover + Seated Pec Deck Fly	Back and Chest	3	20, 15, 12
Seated Cable Rowing + Incline Cable Fly	Back and Chest	3	20, 15, 12
Incline IYT Raises + Cable Triceps Extension	Shoulder and Triceps	3	12, 10, 10
Face pull + Preacher/Cable Curl	Shoulder and Biceps	3	15, 12, 10

Tuesday – Lower Body (Hypertrophy)

Exercise	Target Muscles	Sets	Reps
Dumbbell Pop Squat	Lower Body	3	15, 12, 10
Dumbbell Step Up	Lower Body	2	10/leg
Lateral Squat	Lower Body	2	10/leg
Cable Pull Through	Ham and Glute	3	15, 12, 10
Calf Raises	Calves	3	20, 15, 12
Cable Reverse Crunches	Core	2	10-12
Plank DB Drag	Core	2	10/side
Lying Windshield Wiper	Core	2	6/side

Thursday – Upper Body (Strength)

Exercise	Targeted Muscles	Sets	Reps
Conventional Deadlift	Full Body	4	10, 8, 6, 4
Flat Bench Press	Chest	4	10, 8, 6, 4
One-arm DB Row	Back	3	6-8/arm
Military Press	Shoulder	3	6-8
Weighted Dip	Chest and Triceps	2	AMRAP
Weighted Chin-up	Biceps and Back	2	AMRAP

Friday – Lower Body (Strength)

Exercises	Target Muscles	Sets	Reps
Back Squat	Quad	6	10, 8, 6, 4, 2
Hip Thrust	Glutes	4	12, 10, 8, 6
Leg Press	Quad	4	10, 8, 6, 4
Leg Curl	Hamstring	3	15, 12, 10
15-min Ab Workout	Core	–	–

If you want to reduce training frequency, follow this [three-day upper lower split](#).

And once you decide the challenge yourself with higher frequency training, follow this ultimate [5 day split to train upper and lower body separately](#).

Recommended Macros for Muscle Building

Diet plays an essential role in repairing and healing muscles and increasing muscle growth.

Your diet must include key nutrients, such as protein (highly important), carbs, fats, and fiber.

For your information, one gram of protein and carb has 4 calories, while 1 gram of fat contains 9 calories.

You should take the following amount of nutrients according to an article published by the National Institute of Health:²

- **Protein** – You need to consume sufficient protein 1.6–2.2 g/kg/day with optimal amounts of 0.40–0.55 g/kg per meal and distributed evenly throughout the day (3–6 meals), including within 1–2 hours pre and post-training.
- **Fats** – You can take fats in moderate amounts, like 0.5–1.5 g/kg/day.
- **Carbohydrates:** You can consume sufficient amounts of carbs, such as 3–5 g/kg/day, to support energy demands from resistance exercise.

Other than the above nutrients, Creatine monohydrate (3–5 g/day), caffeine (5–6 mg/kg), beta-alanine (3–5 g/day), and citrulline malate (8 g/day) might yield ergogenic effects that can be beneficial for bodybuilders – study suggested.

Key Tips for Maximizing Your Workout Plan and Achieving Optimal Results

1. Pre-Workout Meal

A good pre-workout meal sets the foundation for an effective workout session. The pre-workout meal helps you perform better during the workout and supports muscle-building.

You should have your meal 30 minutes to 2 hours before the training, depending on what kind of food you consume.

Examples of pre-workout foods include:

1. [Protein Shake](#)
2. Chicken Salad
3. [Dried Fruits](#)
4. Oatmeal

5. [Energy Bars](#)
6. Peanut Butter and Toast
7. Yogurt with Fruit/Granola
8. Fruit Smoothies
9. Eggs

2. Workout When You Feel Energetic

Working out when you feel active lets you put your 100 percent into the workout. It could be morning, afternoon, or evening.

3. Keep yourself hydrated during the workout

Several studies have shown keeping yourself hydrated during the workout is essential to prevent injuries and uneasiness and enhance performance. So, it is best to drink water when you feel hypohydration.

4. Post-Workout stretching and cool down

Most people often miss post-workout stretching, but many athletes and coaches recommend doing this. It may have a positive impact on your training because it helps reduce muscle soreness.

5. Post-workout Meal

The post-workout meal plays a crucial role in building muscles. You can have a great workout session, but if you don't consume protein and carbs after the workout, your muscles might not grow.

That's why you should have a great meal after the resistance training to maximize your results. There's no scientific evidence that taking a post-workout meal just after the workout elicits better results. Still, it is good to take your meal as soon as you finish the workout.

I suggest consuming at least 40-50 grams of protein and one gram of carbs per kg of your body weight for optimal results (it is only an example; a nutritionist can help you better in this case).

Examples of Post-Workout Meals:

- Protein shakes and banana.
- Oatmeal with yogurt, almonds, and berries.
- Chicken burrito with salad and cheese.
- Grilled chicken with roasted vegetables and rice.
- Egg omelet with avocado on whole grain toast.
- Salmon with sweet potato.
- Whole grain crackers with cheese and fruit.

6. Make Progress

Increase the load, the number of reps and sets, and the session duration as you progress further. Pushing your limit to a certain extent may help you build muscle faster.

7. Creator note

You can make any changes you want in this program. For example, you can increase and decrease repetitions, sets, interval time, and the daily workout duration. You can also replace any exercise you don't like.

Recommended Brands:

1. [Performix](#) (Supplement)
2. [Beyond Body](#) (Book)
3. [Amazon](#) (Supplement)
4. [Bulk Extreme](#) (Supplement)
5. [Mass Extreme](#) (Supplement)

Helpful Resouces:

- [20 Best Dumbbell Pull Exercises](#)
- [Dumbbell Push Exercises](#)
- [Top 10 Barbell Pull Exercises](#)

- [8 Best Barbell Push Exercises](#)
- [Compound Exercises List](#)
- [Isolation Exercises List](#)
- [30 Best Gym Exercises for Abs](#)

Related Workout Programs

- [8 Week Arm and Shoulder Workout Routine](#)
- [8 Week Chest and Back Workout Plan](#)
- [The Best Legs and Abs Workout](#)
- [Leg and Shoulder Workout Program](#)
- [6-Day Gym Workout Plan](#)
- [Push Pull Legs 5-Day Split for Strength and Size](#)
- [8 Week Muscle Building Workout Plan](#)
- [6-Week Hypertrophy Program for Ultimate Gains](#)

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