

4-DAY POWERLIFTING SPLIT

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12-Week Intermediate Strength & 1RM Progression Program

FREQUENCY
4 Days/Week

DURATION
12 Weeks

LEVEL
Intermediate

GOAL
Max 1RM Strength

WHO IS THIS PROGRAM FOR?

Ideal Candidates:

- Intermediate lifters with 6–12+ months of consistent resistance training.
- Lifters familiar with proper squat, bench press, and deadlift technique.
- Aspirants focused on maximizing strength in the big three lifts.
- Those who can commit to a 4-day training split with proper recovery.

Not Suitable For:

- Complete beginners still learning fundamental movement patterns.
- Lifters unable to maintain structured weekly consistency.
- Athletes seeking high-volume bodybuilding splits without strength focus.

WEEKLY TRAINING SCHEDULE & FREQUENCY

DAY	MAIN LIFTS	ACCESSORIES
Monday	Back Squat, Bench Press	Romanian Deadlift, Chest-Supported Row, Lateral Raise, Ab Wheel
Tuesday	Deadlift, Paused Deadlift	Pull-Up, Cable Row, DB Curl, Hanging Knee Raise
Wednesday	REST — Recovery & Mobility	
Thursday	Paused Bench Press, Paused Squat	Close-Grip Bench, Bulgarian Split Squat, Lat Pulldown, Triceps Pushdown
Friday	REST — Recovery & Nutrition	
Saturday	Deficit Deadlift, Bench Press (Volume)	Leg Press, Chest-Supported Row, Cable Triceps Extension, Plank
Sunday	REST — Recovery & Preparation	

Weekly Frequency Snapshot: Squat: 2x | Bench Press: 3x | Deadlift: 2x | Upper Back: 3x | Triceps: 2-3x | Core: 2x.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE & GUIDELINES

Phases, Autoregulation, and Warm-up Protocols

THE FOUR TRAINING PHASES

- **Phase 1 (Weeks 1–3 Accumulation, Week 4 Deload):** Build technique, work capacity, and muscle. Keep working sets at RPE 7–8. Avoid failure on main lifts. Reduce volume/intensity on Week 4.
- **Phase 2 (Weeks 5–7 Strength, Week 8 Deload):** Increase loading from roughly 77.5% to 82.5% of Training Max while lowering reps. Reduce intensity in Week 8 for recovery.
- **Phase 3 (Weeks 9–11 Intensification):** Heavier competition-lift work at 82.5–90% 1RM with reduced overall volume. Sets run at RPE 8–9.
- **Phase 4 (Week 12 Taper & Test):** Drop fatigue and test new 1RM maximums safely.

INTENSITY & RPE GUIDELINES

Always base percentages on your current estimated 1RM, not an outdated personal record. Use RPE (Rate of Perceived Exertion) to modulate load when daily fatigue fluctuates.

RPE	APPROXIMATE RIR (REPS IN RESERVE)	TRAINING GUIDANCE
6	4+ reps	Easy warm-up or speed work
7	3 reps	Moderate working weight, crisp velocity
8	2 reps	Standard working intensity
9	1 rep	Heavy intensification set
10	0 reps / Max effort	Absolute limit / Testing only

WARM-UP PROTOCOL (MANDATORY)

1. **General Warm-Up (5–7 mins):** Light cardio (brisk walking, cycling, rowing) to raise core body temperature.
2. **Dynamic Mobility (3–5 mins):** Bodyweight squats, lunges, hip circles, arm circles, or band pull-aparts.
3. **Specific Warm-Up Sets:** Progressively heavier warm-up ramps for your first main lift (e.g., Empty bar → 40% → 50% → 60% → 65% of 1RM).

WORKOUTS: DAY 1 & DAY 2

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Squat + Bench & Deadlift Focus Sessions

DAY 1 – SQUAT & BENCH PRESS PRIMARY

1. Back Squat

Warm-up: Empty bar × 8-10, 40% × 5, 50% × 3, 60% × 2, 65% × 1

Progression: Wk 1-3: 4×5 @ 70–75% | Wk 4: 3×5 @ 60% (Deload) | Wk 5-7: 4×4 @ 77.5–82.5% | Wk 8: 3×4 @ 62.5% | Wk 9-10: 4×3 @ 82.5–85% | Wk 11: 3×2 @ 87.5–90%

2. Bench Press

Warm-up: Bar × 10, 40% × 5, 50% × 3, 60% × 1-2, 65% × 1

Progression: Wk 1-3: 4×6 @ 70–75% | Wk 4: 3×5 @ 60% (Deload) | Wk 5-7: 4×5 @ 77.5–82.5% | Wk 8: 3×5 @ 62.5% | Wk 9-10: 4×4 @ 82.5–85% | Wk 11: 3×3 @ 87.5%

Day 1 Accessory Lifts

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	RPE
Romanian Deadlift	3	6–8	7–8
Chest-Supported Row	3	8–12	7–8
Dumbbell Lateral Raise	3	10–15	7–8
Ab Wheel Rollout	3	8–15	7–8

DAY 2 – DEADLIFT & PAUSED DEADLIFT

1. Conventional or Sumo Deadlift

Warm-up: 40% × 5, 50% × 3, 60% × 2, 65% × 1

Progression: Wk 1-3: 4×4 @ 70–75% | Wk 4: 3×3 @ 60% | Wk 5-7: 4×3 @ 77.5–82.5% | Wk 8: 3×3 @ 62.5% | Wk 9: 3×3 @ 82.5% | Wk 10: 3×2 @ 85% | Wk 11: 3×1-2 @ 87.5–90%

2. Paused Deadlift (2-inch deficit or mid-shin pause)

Progression: Wk 1-3: 2 sets × 4-5 reps @ 60–65% | Wk 4: 1×4 @ 55-60% | Wk 5-7: 2×4-5 @ 65-72.5% | Wk 9-11: 2×3-4 @ 67.5–75%

Day 2 Accessory Lifts

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	RPE
Pull-Ups / Chin-Ups	3	6–10	7–8
Seated Cable Row	3	8–12	7–8
Dumbbell Bicep Curl	3	8–12	7–8
Hanging Knee Raise	3	10–15	—

WORKOUTS: DAY 3 & DAY 4

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Paused Variations & Volume Bench Sessions

DAY 3 – PAUSED BENCH PRESS & PAUSED SQUAT

1. Paused Bench Press (1-sec pause on chest)

Progression: Wk 1-3: 5×4 @ 72.5–77.5% | Wk 4: 3×4 @ 60% | Wk 5-7: 5×3 @ 77.5–82.5% | Wk 8: 3×3 @ 62.5% | Wk 9: 4×3 @ 82.5% | Wk 10: 4×2 @ 85% | Wk 11: 3×2 @ 87.5–90%

2. Paused Squat (2-sec pause in the hole)

Progression: Wk 1-3: 3×4-6 @ 65–70% | Wk 4: 2-3×4 @ 55-60% | Wk 5-7: 3×4-6 @ 67.5–72.5% | Wk 9-11: 3×4-5 @ 70–75%

Day 3 Accessory Lifts

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	RPE
Close-Grip Bench Press	3	6–8	7–8
Bulgarian Split Squat	3	8–10 / leg	7–8
Lat Pulldown	3	8–12	7–8
Rope Triceps Pushdown	3	10–15	7–8

DAY 4 – DEFICIT DEADLIFT & BENCH VOLUME

1. Deficit Deadlift (1-inch deficit)

Progression: Wk 1-3: 3×5 @ 60-67.5% | Wk 4: 2×5 @ 55-60% | Wk 5-7: 3×4 @ 65-72.5% | Wk 9-11: 3×3 @ 67.5-75%

2. Bench Press Volume

Progression: Wk 1-3: 4×8 @ 65–70% | Wk 4: 3×6 @ 60% | Wk 5-7: 4×6 @ 70–75% | Wk 9: 3×5 @ 75% | Wk 10: 3×5 @ 77.5% | Wk 11: 3×4 @ 80%

Day 4 Accessory Lifts

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	RPE
Leg Press	3	8–12	7–8
Chest-Supported Row	3	8–12	7–8
Cable Triceps Extension	3	10–15	7–8
Weighted Plank	3	30–60 sec	Controlled

12-WEEK PROGRESSION & FAQs

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Master Loading Schedule, Taper Week & Expert Guidance

MASTER 12-WEEK MAIN LIFTS PROGRESSION

WK	SQUAT INTENSITY	BENCH INTENSITY	DEADLIFT INTENSITY
1	4 × 5 @ 70%	4 × 6 @ 70%	4 × 4 @ 70%
2	4 × 5 @ 72.5%	4 × 6 @ 72.5%	4 × 4 @ 72.5%
3	4 × 5 @ 75%	4 × 6 @ 75%	4 × 4 @ 75%
4	DELOAD WEEK (Reduce volume & weight to 60%)		
5	4 × 4 @ 77.5%	4 × 5 @ 77.5%	4 × 3 @ 77.5%
6	4 × 4 @ 80%	4 × 5 @ 80%	4 × 3 @ 80%
7	4 × 4 @ 82.5%	4 × 5 @ 82.5%	4 × 3 @ 82.5%
8	DELOAD WEEK (Reduce volume & weight to 62.5%)		
9	4 × 3 @ 82.5%	4 × 3 @ 82.5%	3 × 2 @ 82.5%
10	4 × 3 @ 85%	4 × 3 @ 85%	3 × 2 @ 85%
11	3 × 2 @ 87.5%	3 × 2 @ 87.5%	3 × 1–2 @ 87.5–90%
12	TAPER & 1RM TEST (Mon: Squat/Bench 2×3@60% Tue: Deadlift 2×2@60% Sat: 1RM Test)		

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Should I test my 1RM every week? No! Weekly 1RM testing causes excessive fatigue. Reserve true max testing exclusively for Week 12.

What if I miss a workout? Skip that session or shift it to a rest day depending on recovery capacity. Do not try to cram missed sessions.

Can I add bodybuilding exercises? Keep additional volume minimal. The program already includes targeted upper back, arm, and core accessories.