

12-WEEK STRENGTH TRAINING PLAN FOR RUNNERS

Beginner-friendly • Two strength sessions per week • Three progressive phases

DURATION	FREQUENCY	SESSION LENGTH
12 weeks	2 days / week	35-50 minutes

BUILD STRENGTH. KEEP RUNNING.

A printable companion to the complete beginner runner strength guide at thefitnessphantom.com. The goal is to build lower-body strength, stability, and confidence while keeping enough energy for regular runs.

How to use this plan

- Warm up with 5–10 minutes of light cardio and dynamic mobility.
- Leave 2–4 repetitions in reserve on most sets; do not train to failure.
- Allow at least 48 hours between strength sessions. Adjust around hard runs and long runs.
- Rest 1–2 minutes between lighter sets and 2–3 minutes for challenging exercises.
- If running fatigue increases, maintain weights or reduce lower-body sets.

PHASE	WEEKS	FOCUS
Foundation	1–4	Learn movements and establish consistency
Strength	5–8	Increase resistance and selected sets
Strength + power	9–12	Lift a little heavier; optional low pogo jumps

PHASE 1 | WEEKS 1-4

Learn Before You Load

Day 1 - Lower Body and Core

Exercise	Sets	Reps/Time	Rest
Goblet Squat	2	10-12	1-2 minutes
DB Romanian Deadlift	2	8-10	1.5-2 minutes
Reverse Lunge	2	8 per leg	1-2 minutes
Standing Calf Raise	2	12-15	1-2 minutes
Front Plank	2	20-30 seconds	45-90 seconds

Day 2 - Full Body and Stability

Exercise	Sets	Reps	Rest
Low Step-up	2	10 per side	45-60 seconds
Dumbbell Bench Press	2	10-12	1.5-2 minutes
Seated Cable Row	2	12-15	1.5-2 minutes
Glute Bridge	2	12-15	60-90 seconds
Seated Calf Raise	2	12-15	1-2 minutes
Dead Bug	2	8 per side	60-90 seconds

Weekly progression

- Week 1: Learn movements with light weights; keep 3-4 reps in reserve.
- Week 2: Practice controlled repetitions and good technique.
- Week 3: Add repetitions or a small amount of weight when ready.
- Week 4: Maintain technique; reduce sets if fatigue affects running.

PHASE 2 | WEEKS 5-8

Build Strength Gradually

Day 1 - Lower Body Strength

Exercise	Sets	Reps/Time	Rest
Goblet Squat	3	10-12	1-2 minutes
Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift	3	8-10	1.5-2 minutes
Reverse Lunge	2	8 per leg	1-2 minutes
Standing Calf Raise	3	12-15	1-2 minutes
Front Plank	2	30-40 seconds	45-90 seconds

Day 2 - Full Body Strength

Exercise	Sets	Reps	Rest
Dumbbell Step-up	3	8 per leg	1-2 minutes
Dumbbell Bench Press	2	8-10	1.5-2 minutes
Lat Pulldown	2	10	1.5-2 minutes
Dumbbell Glute Bridge	3	10	60-90 seconds
Seated Calf Raise	3	12	60-90 seconds
Dead Bug	2	10/side	60-90 seconds

Weekly progression

- Week 5: Start with slightly heavier weights while keeping good form.
- Week 6: Increase resistance when all repetitions feel controlled.
- Week 7: Progress if recovery allows; avoid excessive fatigue.
- Week 8: Reduce sets by about 30-40% to support recovery.

PHASE 3 | WEEKS 9-12

Get Stronger Without Unnecessary Volume

Day 1 - Lower Body Strength

Exercise	Sets	Reps/Time	Rest
<u>Goblet Squat</u>	3	8-10	1-2 minutes
<u>Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift</u>	3	6-8	1.5-2 minutes
<u>Reverse Lunge</u>	2	8 per leg	1-2 minutes
<u>Standing Calf Raise</u>	3	12-15	1-2 minutes
<u>Front Plank</u>	3	30-45 seconds	45-90 seconds

Day 2 - Full Body and Power

Exercise	Sets	Reps	Rest
<u>Low Pogo Jump</u> (Optional)	2	8-10	60-90 seconds
<u>Dumbbell Step-up</u>	3	8 per side	45-60 seconds
<u>Dumbbell Bench Press</u>	3	8-10	1.5-2 minutes
<u>Seated Cable Row</u>	2	10	1.5-2 minutes
<u>Dumbbell Glute Bridge</u>	3	8-10	60-90 seconds
<u>Seated Calf Raise</u>	3	10-12	60-90 seconds
<u>Dead Bug</u>	2	10 per side	60-90 seconds

Weekly progression

- Week 9: Use slightly heavier weights while keeping each rep controlled.
- Week 10: Progress resistance if technique and recovery remain good.
- Week 11: Use challenging weights without training to failure.
- Week 12: Reduce total sets by about 30-40% and assess progress.

Optional pogo jumps: keep jumps low, land softly, and skip them if uncomfortable. Controlled calf raises are an alternative.

SAMPLE WEEKLY RUN + STRENGTH SCHEDULE

For someone already accustomed to running four days per week. Beginners running 2–3 days should keep their existing frequency.

DAY	SESSION
Monday	Easy run + Strength Workout 1
Tuesday	Rest or light mobility
Wednesday	Tempo run or intervals
Thursday	Easy run + Strength Workout 2
Friday	Rest
Saturday	Long easy run
Sunday	Rest or walking

Adjust for your running goals

- If your legs are tired, remove one set from squats, lunges, or step-ups.
- During high-mileage weeks, maintain current strength loads rather than forcing increases.
- Skip optional jumps when tired or uncomfortable.
- If Thursday lifting affects Saturday's long run, lighten the workout or move it.
- Keep a training log to track sets, reps, weight, and how running feels.

PROGRESS TRACKER

WEEK	DAY 1 DONE	DAY 2 DONE	NOTES / LOADS
1	☐	☐	
2	☐	☐	
3	☐	☐	
4	☐	☐	
5	☐	☐	
6	☐	☐	
7	☐	☐	
8	☐	☐	
9	☐	☐	

WEEK	DAY 1 DONE	DAY 2 DONE	NOTES / LOADS
10	☐	☐	
11	☐	☐	
12	☐	☐	

Learn more: thefitnessphantom.com

This printable workout plan is educational and is not a substitute for individualized medical or coaching advice. Stop or modify exercises that cause pain.

CLICKABLE EXERCISE LIBRARY

Tap any exercise to open its demonstration or training guide.

Goblet Squat	OPEN
DB Romanian Deadlift	OPEN
Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift	OPEN
Reverse Lunge	OPEN
Standing Calf Raise	OPEN
Front Plank	OPEN
Low Step-up	OPEN
Dumbbell Step-up	OPEN
Dumbbell Bench Press	OPEN
Seated Cable Row	OPEN
Glute Bridge	OPEN
Dumbbell Glute Bridge	OPEN
Seated Calf Raise	OPEN
Dead Bug	OPEN
Lat Pulldown	OPEN
Low Pogo Jump	OPEN

MORE RUNNER-FRIENDLY RESOURCES

[Dumbbell leg exercise guide](#)

[Single-leg hamstring exercises](#)

[Bodyweight exercise library](#)