

12-Week Bodyweight Workout Routine for Beginners

A progressive, no-equipment plan to build foundational strength, improve fitness, and prepare your body for harder resistance training.

DURATION	FREQUENCY	SESSION
12 Weeks	3-5 Days/Week	30-45 Minutes
LEVEL	EQUIPMENT	GOAL
Beginner	Bodyweight Only	Strength + Fitness

Designed by Murshid Akram | TheFitnessPhantom.com

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Program Overview

This 12-week plan starts with three full-body workouts per week, progresses to a four-day upper-lower split, and finishes with a five-day hybrid phase that adds cardio and mobility. The gradual increase in frequency gives beginners time to learn movement patterns and build work capacity before doing more weekly training.

How the 12 Weeks Progress

PHASE	WEEKS	SCHEDULE	FOCUS
1	1-4	3 full-body days	Technique, foundational strength, movement confidence
2	5-8	4 upper/lower days	More volume and targeted upper/lower work
3	9-12	5 mixed sessions	Strength, cardio, mobility, and higher work capacity

Before You Train

Start each workout with 2-5 minutes of easy movement and dynamic warm-up drills. Use movements such as arm swings, leg swings, cat-cow, glute bridges, deep squats, and a short round of jumping jacks. [See The Fitness Phantom dynamic warm-up guide.](#)

Beginner Effort Guide

Most sets should feel challenging but controlled. Stop with roughly 2-3 good reps still possible. If your form starts breaking down, end the set even if you have not reached the top of the rep range. Rest about 30-90 seconds as listed, and take a little longer if your breathing or technique needs it.

Progression Rule

When you can complete every set at the top of the rep range with clean form, progress by adding 1-2 reps, an extra set where appropriate, a slower lowering phase, a longer pause, or a slightly harder variation. Change only one variable at a time.

Phase 1 - Weeks 1-4

Full-Body Foundation - 3 Days/Week

Train on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, or use any three non-consecutive days. Focus on smooth reps, consistent depth, and learning each movement.

Monday - Full Body

Exercise	Target Muscles	Sets x Reps
Basic Squat	Quads & Glutes	4 x 15-20
Kneeling Push-up	Chest & Triceps	3 x 10-12
Superman Row	Back & Shoulders	4 x 10-12
Shoulder Taps	Abs & Shoulders	3 x 10/side
Glute Bridge	Glutes & Hamstrings	3 x 12-15
Reverse Crunches	Abdominals	3 x 10-12

Wednesday - Full Body

Exercise	Target Muscles	Sets x Reps
Wall Sit	Quads & Glutes	10 x 10 sec
Front Lunges	Legs & Glutes	3 x 10/leg
Incline Push-up	Chest & Delts	3 x 10-12
Prone IYT Raises	Back & Shoulders	3 x 8-10
Plank Triceps Extension	Triceps & Abs	3 x 8-10
Mountain Climber	Abs & Shoulders	3 x 15 sec
Standard Push-up	Chest & Triceps	3 x 8-10

Phase 1 - Weeks 1-4

Full-Body Foundation - Continued

Friday - Full Body

Exercise	Target Muscles	Sets x Reps
Frog Squat	Quads & Hamstrings	4 x 15
Hindu Push-up	Chest & Delts	3 x 8-10
Superman with Shoulder Rotation	Lats & Traps	3 x 5-6
Bear Crawl	Full Body	3 x 10-12
Diamond Push-up	Triceps & Pecs	3 x 10-12
Calf Raise	Calves	3 x 20-25
Forearm Plank	Abdominals	3 x 45 sec

Phase 1 Checklist

- Keep at least one rest day between full-body sessions.
- Use knee or incline push-ups whenever full push-ups are too difficult.
- For squats and lunges, hold a stable surface if balance is limiting you.
- Repeat Weeks 1-4 with the same structure and aim for cleaner reps or small rep increases each week.

Phase 2 - Weeks 5-8

Upper-Lower Split - 4 Days/Week

Schedule: Monday upper, Tuesday lower, Thursday upper, Friday lower. Wednesday and the weekend are recovery days.

Monday - Upper Body

Exercise	Target Muscles	Sets x Reps Rest
Negative Push-up	Chest & Triceps	3 x 6-8 30 sec
Superman Row	Back	4 x 10-12 30 sec
Floor Dips	Triceps & Abs	3 x 10-12 45 sec
Decline Push-up	Shoulders & Triceps	3 x 10-12 60 sec
Bodyweight Rear Delt Raise	Back & Shoulders	3 x 8-10 60 sec
Scapular Push-up	Back & Shoulders	3 x 8-10 60 sec

Tuesday - Lower Body

Exercise	Target Muscles	Sets x Reps Rest
Air Squat	Quads & Glutes	4 x 15-20 60 sec
Reverse Lunge	Quads & Glutes	3 x 10/leg 30 sec
Single-Leg Hamstring Bridge	Glutes & Hamstrings	3 x 10/leg 30 sec
Glute Kickback	Glutes & Hamstrings	3 x 10/side 30 sec
Single-Leg Calf Raise	Calves	4 x 10/leg 30 sec

Phase 2 - Weeks 5-8

Upper-Lower Split - Continued

Thursday - Upper Body

Exercise	Target Muscles	Sets x Reps Rest
Close-Grip Push-up	Triceps & Chest	3-4 x 10-12 60 sec
Renegade Row (bodyweight)	Back & Abs	3-4 x 6/side 60 sec
Lying Prone IYT Raises	Back & Shoulders	3-4 x 6-8 45 sec
Archer Push-up	Chest & Shoulders	2-3 x 6/side 45 sec
Sphinx Push-up	Triceps	3-4 x 8-10 60 sec
Superman w/ External Arm Rotation	Back & Shoulders	3-4 x 8-12 60 sec
Pike Push-up	Shoulders	3-4 x 6-8 90 sec

Friday - Lower Body

Exercise	Target Muscles	Sets x Reps Rest
Frog Squat	Quads & Hamstrings	3-4 x 10-12 60 sec
Sumo Squat	Quads & Glutes	3-4 x 10-12 60 sec
Glute Bridge	Glutes & Hamstrings	3-4 x 10-12 60 sec
Hamstring March	Hamstrings & Glutes	2-3 x 10/leg 30 sec
Frog Pump	Glutes & Lower Back	2-3 x 10-12 45 sec
Donkey Calf Raise	Calves	3-4 x 15-20 45 sec

Phase 3 - Weeks 9-12

Hybrid Split - 5 Days/Week

This final phase combines three resistance-focused days with one cardio session and one mobility session. Thursday and Sunday are rest days.

Monday - Chest, Arms & Back

Exercise	Target Muscles	Sets x Reps Rest
Incline Push-up	Chest	3-4 x 10-15 45 sec
Standard Push-up	Chest	3-4 x 10-15 60 sec
Superman Row	Back	3-4 x 10-15 30 sec
Scapular Push-up	Back	3-4 x 10-12 60 sec
Sphinx Push-up	Triceps	3-4 x 10-12 60 sec
Floor Dips	Triceps	3-4 x 10-12 60 sec

Tuesday - Legs, Shoulders & Abs

Exercise	Target Muscles	Sets x Reps Rest
Deep Bodyweight Squat	Quadriceps	2-3 x 15-20 45 sec
Front Lunges	Lower Body	2-3 x 10/leg 60 sec
Single-Leg Bridge	Glutes	2-3 x 10/leg 30 sec
Plie Squat Calf Raise	Quads & Calves	3-4 x 10-12 60 sec
Decline Push-up	Shoulders	2-3 x 8-12 60 sec
Bodyweight Lateral Raise	Shoulders	3-4 x 10/side 60 sec
Lying Reverse Fly	Shoulders	2-3 x 8-12 30 sec
Leg Raises	Abdominals	3-4 x 8-12 30 sec
Sit-ups	Abdominals	3-4 x 8-12 60 sec

Phase 3 - Weeks 9-12

Cardio, Full Body & Mobility

Wednesday - Bodyweight Cardio

Exercise	Focus	Sets x Reps Rest
Jumping Jacks	Cardio	3 x 15 sec 15 sec
Mountain Climber	Core + Cardio	3 x 15 sec 15 sec
Burpees	Full Body	4 x 6-8 45 sec
Shoulder Taps	Core & Shoulders	4 x 10/side 15 sec
Alternating Heel Tap	Abdominals	3 x 10/side 15 sec
Reverse Crunches	Abdominals	3 x 10-12 15 sec
Front Plank	Abdominals	3 x 45 sec 30 sec

Friday - Full Body

Exercise	Target Muscles	Sets x Reps Rest
Supported Bulgarian Split Squat	Thighs & Glutes	4 x 8/side 45 sec
Basic Push-up	Chest & Shoulders	4 x 10-20 60 sec
Lying IYT Raises	Back & Delts	3 x 8-10 60 sec
Single-Leg Deadlift	Hamstrings	3 x 10/side 45 sec
Reverse Crunches	Abdominals	3 x 15-20 45 sec
Side Plank	Obliques	2 x 30 sec/side none

Saturday - Mobility Training

Movement	Primary Area	Activity
Cat-Cow	Spine & Torso	5 sec/rep
Downward Dog	Posterior Chain	15 sec
Knee Hug	Hips & Glutes	15 sec/side
Pigeon Pose	Hips & Glutes	15 sec/side
Runner's Lunge	Hips & Quads	15 sec/side

Perform 4-5 relaxed rounds. Mobility work should feel controlled, not forced or painful.

How to Get the Most From This Program

1. Prioritize form over numbers.

The rep targets are guides, not tests. Use a regression when needed and stop a set when you can no longer keep the same movement quality.

2. Progress gradually.

Try to improve only one thing at a time: one or two extra reps, a slightly longer hold, slower eccentrics, or a harder variation. You do not need to make every workout harder.

3. Recover like a beginner.

Sleep well, eat enough protein and calories for your goal, and keep rest days easy. Mild muscle soreness can happen, but joint pain or sharp pain is a reason to stop and reassess the exercise.

4. Scale difficult movements.

If push-ups are too hard, use wall, incline, or kneeling versions. If lunges or single-leg work challenge your balance, hold a chair or wall. Build control first, then remove assistance.

5. Repeat weeks when needed.

There is no downside to spending an extra week in a phase if you are still learning the exercises or recovering poorly. Progress is better when the next phase feels manageable.

What to Do After Week 12

If you can complete the final phase comfortably, move to a more challenging bodyweight split or begin resistance training. [Try the 4-day bodyweight workout routine](#) as a natural next step.

Important Note

This program is general fitness information, not individualized medical advice. If you have an injury, medical condition, or unusual symptoms during exercise, get appropriate professional guidance before continuing.

Source & Brand

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