

The Steps for Improvement Strength Building Program for First Year Lifters.

By Andrejs Lejietis

Thank you

First of all, thank you for downloading this program. This specific program was created with the intention of getting you as strong as possible in your first year of lifting. You can still use this program, even if you've been training for a few years assuming that you've used BS brosplit programs that haven't given you any results, it doesn't matter in the end when you start. Get ready to make quick and once in a lifetime gainz!

Linear progress

This is a 3 day a week "fullbody" program and the main movements will be the box squat, the close grip bench press and the deadlift which you will progress linearly.

How to do this? Start with a weight that you can comfortably do for the perscribed sets and reps without coming close to failure. Increase the weight everytime you perform the excersice by 2.5-5 kgs. **Example** - If you box squat 80kg for the sets and reps on Monday then increase the weight by 5kg for Wednesday so that you box squat 85kg for 3x5, and so forth. Eventually you WILL stall and you simply won't be strong enough to lift the weight, don't worry, in that case decrease the weight by 10kg and restart the progressive overload. This will give your body a chance to recover and you'll be back in no time to progressing linearly. **Important!** – Every 3 weeks, I want you to free squat on Wednesday! Work up to a good weight but don't fail!

Box Squat

Why the box squat instead of a free squat? I believe that the box squat is the best squat variation that will carry over to your regular squat. Remember, longevity is key, so it is important to use variations such as the box squat to stay safe. Look at Westside Barbell, even the guys who train raw swear by box squats and the importance of variations. The box squat will in most cases use less weight and will strengthen your posterior chain, this being the responsible muscle group for a big squat **AND** deadlift! It is also in most cases the muscle group that is the weakest in contrast to say, most peoples quads. This program (if followed correctly) will force you to strengthen your weak muscles (ex. hamstrings, low back, glutes etc) where most injuries tend to happen, in most cases the cause being undertraining of a certain weak muscle. It is also easier to learn! To see how a proper box squat should be executed, see the links provided below on the last page!

Coming to an end...

I want you to quit this program at some point when you are ready. When are you ready? Well if your progress slows down drastically and you restart the progressive overload on the main movements **many times** then it might be time to switch things up. I'd recommend looking into a conjugate style program.

FAQ Questions about the program, links and contact info can be found below.

The Program

Monday.

- Box Squat 3x5
- Close Grip Bench Press 3x6
- (Strict) Barbell Rows 3x6
- Good Mornings 3x5
- Overhead Dumbbell Tricep Extensions 3x15
- Bicep Dumbbell Curls 3x10
- Standing Ab Cable Crunch 3x1 min

Wednesday.

- Box Squat 3x5*
- Deadlift 2x6
- Weighted Pull-Ups 3x5
- Weighted Dips 3x5
- Seated Dumbbell Cleans. 3x8
- Tricep pushdowns 3x15
- Standing Ab Cable Crunch 3x1 min

Friday.

- Box Squat 3x5
- Close Grip Bench Press 3x6
- (Strict) Barbell Rows 3x6
- Good Mornings 3x5
- Overhead Dumbbell Tricep Extensions 3x15
- Bicep Dumbbell Curls 3x10
- Standing Ab Cable Crunch 3x1 min

* **Note - Important!** – Every 3 weeks, I want you to free squat on Wednesday instead of box squat! This will ensure that you maintain muscle memory and improve form on the free squat. Also, the sets and reps do **not** apply to your warmup sets.



FAQ About the program.

How do I warmup?

There is no "special warmup" needed. You can do some simple exercises like: "kettlebell swings", "glute bridges" but generally you can just stick to warmup sets. Start with the bar and add weight accordingly to your main weight and just take it from there.

How long should I rest in-between my sets?

Keep your rest periods short. Rest a maximum of 5 minutes on the main movements, 2 minutes on the accessory movements and no more in-between your sets. Over time you'll get used to short rest periods and you'll be able to handle more weight!

Can I free squat instead of box squat?

I strongly advise you to box squat, as I mentioned above, box squats work your entire posterior chain and strengthens your weak points (ex. hamstrings) that typically become undertrained when free squatting. You also use less weight (10-20kgs) on the box squat versus a free squat which A. puts less stress on your body considering that you'll be squatting every session (which would be very taxing if you only free squatted) and B. let's you recover faster in between sets making your workout faster. If you don't have access to a below parallel box to squat on or have anything close to that such as a bench, then yes, you can free squat but I strongly advise you to box squat otherwise.

How high should the box be?

Set it up where you are 2-4cm **below** parallel.

Does the box squat have to be wide stance?

Yes.

Can I change the exercises?

No, use these exercises provided. I chose these exercises because I know that they work. Since this is your first year lifting, it is extremely necessary to build a strong base and strengthen weak muscles that otherwise would get neglected. Trust the process and get strong!

I don't know how to perform (insert movement).

If it's a main movement that you have no experience doing, educate yo self! Watch some YouTube videos and send me a video of you performing the lift, **I'll personally give you tips and tell you what to tweak.** Don't jump in and start if you can't, for example box squat, take a week or two to get used to the movement. If it's a secondary/accessory movement then you can start the program but be cautious... make sure to use light weights and learn the movement along the way.

Who is this program made for?

I designed this program mainly for first year novice lifters who are able to make weakly gains. You can of course use this program and make great progress even if you've been training for a while, considering that you can still progress and add weight every week or session.

Do you do one on one coaching?

No I do not at the moment, but if you need help with form checks, I'll be glad to help!

What do you mean by 3x1 min?

That simply means that you do as many reps as possible (AMRAP) during the span of one minute. The amount does not matter, just do as many as you can and increase the weight as your core gets stronger.

Can I do sumo deadlifts?

Yes, that is up to you and what you prefer.

Can I use my belt, knee sleeves or wrist wraps?

No, you must learn how to brace properly so ditch the belt, you can start using a belt when you are done with this program. Knee sleeves or wrist wraps are not needed unless you have a good reason for them.

How often should I max out?

You should only max out when you are done with this program.

I want to powerlift, nobody one I know does box squats.

This is a general strength program that is made to carry over to your squat, bench and deadlift. When you are done with this program, you will see gains made on your SBD, don't get caught up in the mindset that you can only get strong by doing competition lifts. Just know that when you are done with this program you will have built a good base to continue however you want.

What do you recommend doing when I am done with this program?

I highly recommend that you look into the Westside Barbell Conjugate Method. In my opinion it is one of the best training methods out there.

Can I start fresh with no experience?

Yes but take about 2-3 weeks to learn how to do the movements and get some help with your form.

Can I bench with a wide grip?

No, use the close grip to really work on your triceps.

Can I change the days?

Yes, just as long as you keep it 3x week you'll be fine. If for example Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday fits your schedule better, then do it! However, make sure you always have at least one rest day in between your workouts.

Stretching, before or after workouts?

Don't do any static stretching before your workouts, if you have a mobility issue, I'd rather you do mobility exercises before your workout but as a general rule don't stretch before your workouts. Stretching can be beneficial after your workouts, I prefer to do it at home at random times but it's up to you how and when you do stretching exercises.

Can I run on the treadmill after the workout?

Yes, just make sure to recover properly before your next workout.

What would your number 1 tip be for me, who is running the program?

Since you are a new beginner lifter, (this goes for everyone as well) always try to improve your form, film your sets and try to find out small mistakes that you are making! This will not only make you lift more weight in the long-term but also make you a better lifter by developing an eye for improvement. The latter is important because it is an extremely good skill to develop and possess, not only for yourself but also for others! Always strive to improve.

Thank you

Once again, thank you for taking an interest in this program, I've put in hours of work to put it all together and mix and match the exercises to perfection. I hope you make amazing gains on this program! – Andrejs from Steps for Improvement.

Steps for Improvement 2020.

Andrejs Lejietis is not a doctor or physician and is not liable for any injuries sustained. Train at your own risk and decide yourself if you are able to perform the recommended program.

Contact - Stepsforimprovement@gmail.com

Useful links to Youtube videos I recommend you watch.

Box squat videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yX3SZuDgsxg&t=25s> Old Westside Barbell box Squat Tutorial.

<https://youtu.be/ACQizQOvLb8> Matt Wenning & Mark Bell on How to Box Squat.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SP2b1KnLIUw> Alphadestiny Ultimate Box Squat Tutorial.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1y-U8icpY_E&t=175s Silent Mike Box Squat Tutorial.

Deadlift videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wYREQkVtvEc> Untamed Strength 5 Step Deadlift Setup

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xxFpHWEi6UE> Ed Coan & Mark Bell on How to Conventional Deadlift

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aa0Y9y5ZAo4> Silent Mike & Mark Bell on How to Sumo Deadlift

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z7LdTekoZ94> George Leeman & Mark Bell on How to Deadlift

Bench Press Videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYKScL2sgCs> Untamed Strength How to Bench Press

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aFHQpOMDqKc> Alphadestiny 3 Fatal Bench Mistakes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Klgo4usxlkg> Matt Wenning How to Bench Press

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F5kB94frA5U> Mark Bell Ultimate Bench Press Tutorial

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Contact - Stepsforimprovement@gmail.com