



INSPIRES
FITNESS

BASICS PROGRAM



LIFT FOR LIFE.

LET'S GET BACK TO BASICS.

If the goal is bigger muscles, stronger movements, longer, healthier lives, or some combination of all three, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that the fundamentals are where it counts.

Don't Complicate It.

***Big compound movements with a focus on consistent progression.
That's it.***

In the ***InSpires Fitness Basics Program***, progression is the foundation of everything. Your body changes when it is asked to do a little more over time: more *weight*, more *repetitions*, better *control*, or more *total work*. That steady increase is what signals the body to build strength, muscle, and resilience.

When people get ***stuck***, it's rarely because their program is missing a secret exercise or advanced technique. It's usually because they've lost sight of the simple goal of improving performance from week to week. Overcomplication distracts from that goal. Endless variations, constant program changes, and chasing small optimizations make it harder to track progress and easier to abandon ***consistency***.

The ***Basics Program*** removes those distractions so your focus stays where it belongs: ***getting stronger, improving your lifts, and repeating that process*** for as long as you train.

THE BUILDING BLOCKS

Frequency: (Page 3)

How many days per week?

Volume: (Page 3)

How much total work for each muscle/movement? Sets x Reps x Weight.

Duration: (Page 3 & 11)

How long does the program last?

Progression: (Page 7)

What do I focus on to improve?

Exercise Selection: (Page 4-6)

What movements for each muscle?

Intensity: (Page 3)

How much weight relative to my maximum strength for each exercise?

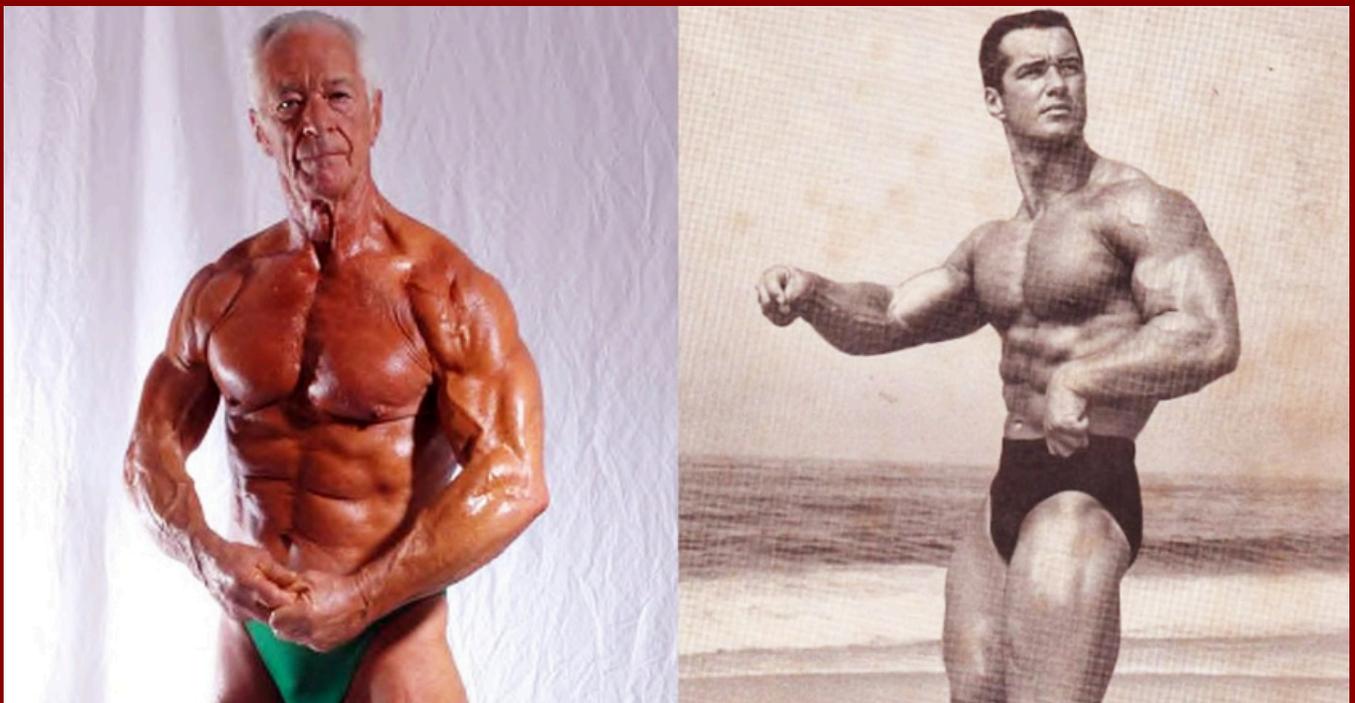
Experience Level: (Page 3)

Novice, Intermediate, or Advanced?

Weekly Templates: (Pages 8-10)

Sample training splits - 2x, 3x, 4x, etc.

Chet Yorton - "The Father of Natural Bodybuilding"



Chet is a prime example of what disciplined, natural training and long-term consistency can accomplish. Known for defeating Arnold Schwarzenegger at the 1966 NABBA Mr. Universe, Yorton built an elite physique without relying on shortcuts, focusing instead on hard training, simple exercises, and a healthy lifestyle. He proved that dedication to the basics over time can produce exceptional results.

Frequency: *How many days per week?*

Frequency refers to how often you train each week. For most people, 3–4 days per week is more than enough, but the key is not worrying about the “perfect split” and finding a schedule you can repeat consistently for years. A program that fits your life will always outperform a perfect schedule you can’t maintain. For this program, you can choose ANY schedule from 1 to 7 days per week! (see Pages 8-10).

Volume: *How much total work for each muscle or movement?*

Volume refers to the total amount of work performed during training. It is typically calculated as sets multiplied by reps multiplied by weight. While volume matters, it doesn’t need to be excessive. In this program, we will focus on somewhere between 2-5 sets of 5-20 reps at a moderate-to-intense weight for each movement (depending on the category of exercise selection; see Pages 4-6).

Intensity: *How much weight relative to maximum strength?*

Intensity refers to how heavy the weight is relative to your maximum strength. In practical terms, it’s how challenging a set feels. Most productive training happens when the weight is heavy enough to require focus and effort, but not so heavy that form breaks down or recovery suffers. Training should feel challenging but sustainable, allowing you to come back stronger the next session. 1-2 reps from failure is a start.

Duration: *How long does the program last?*

Many programs last 8–12 weeks, but the fundamentals of training do not expire. The InSpires Fitness Basics Program is designed to be run for an entire year or longer, allowing you to experience what true consistency can accomplish. Instead of constantly switching programs, the goal is to stay with the basics and focus on gradual improvement over time.

Experience Level: *Novice, Intermediate, or Advanced?*

Your experience level determines how quickly you can progress. Beginners often improve rapidly because almost any consistent training provides a new stimulus. Intermediate lifters progress more gradually and benefit from structured progression and recovery. Advanced lifters require more precise programming. Regardless of experience, the fundamentals remain the same: train consistently, perform the basics well, and improve over time.

EXERCISE SELECTION

Movement Categories in the InSpires Fitness Basics Program

Strength training becomes much easier to understand when exercises are grouped by their purpose. In this program, movements are divided into three categories: **primary**, **secondary**, and **tertiary**. Each category plays a different role in helping you build strength, muscle, and long-term joint health. The primary movements drive the majority of your progress, secondary movements reinforce them, and tertiary movements help build supporting muscles and resilience.

Primary Movements (Main Lifts) - 2-6 sets of 3-10 reps

Primary movements are the foundation of the program. These exercises train large muscle groups, allow the most weight to be lifted, and produce the greatest strength and muscle adaptations. They are the lifts you will focus on improving over time.

Primary movements in this program include:

Vertical Pull

- Chin-Up / Pull-Up

Vertical Push

- Overhead Press

Horizontal Push

- Bench Press

Horizontal Pull

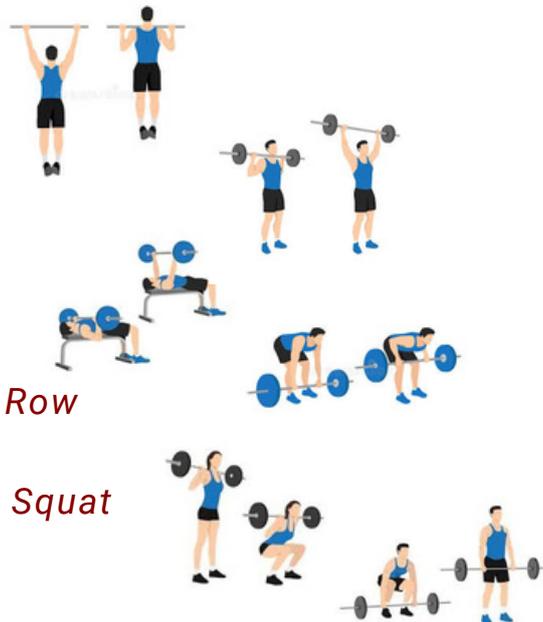
- Barbell Row / Seal Row

Squat Pattern

- Back Squat / Front Squat

Hip Hinge Pattern

- Deadlift



These lifts are where progression matters most. If these movements steadily improve over months and years, your overall strength and physique will follow.

Secondary Movements (Supplementary Lifts) - 2-4 sets of 6-12 reps

Secondary movements support the primary lifts by strengthening similar muscles and movement patterns while using slightly different angles or loading strategies. These exercises help reinforce technique, build additional muscle, and reduce weak points.

Examples include:

Vertical Pull

- Lat Pulldown*
- Assisted Chin-Up

Vertical Push

- Dumbbell Shoulder Press
- Seated Overhead Press

Horizontal Push

- Incline Bench Press
- Dumbbell Bench Press
- Dips

Horizontal Pull

- Seated Cable Row
- Chest-Supported Row

Squat Pattern

- Bulgarian Split Squat
- Leg Press*
- Goblet Squat

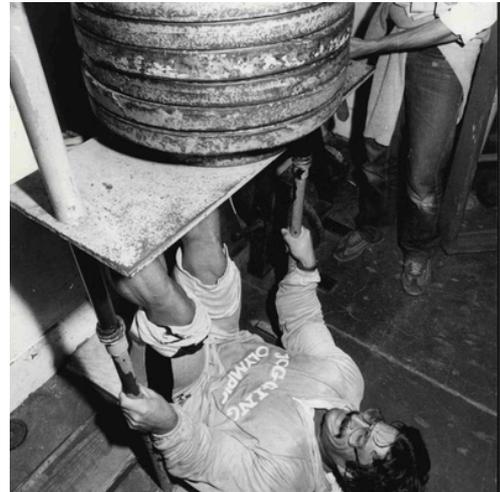
Hip Hinge

- Romanian Deadlift
- Hip Thrust
- Glute Bridge



Ed Corney hitting a set of lat pull downs assisted by Arnold (left)

Mike Mentzer blasting the vertical leg press machine (right)



Secondary movements help build strength in the same patterns as the primary lifts while allowing for more variety and controlled fatigue.

Tertiary Movements (Accessory Lifts) - 1-3 sets of 8-20 reps

Tertiary movements are smaller accessory exercises that target individual muscle groups. These movements help improve muscular balance, support joint health, and develop areas that may not receive enough stimulus from the primary lifts alone.

Examples include:

Arms

- *Bicep Curls*
- *Tricep Extensions**

Shoulders

- *Lateral Raises*
- *Rear Delt Flyes*

Legs

- *Leg Curls**
- *Leg Extensions*
- *Calf Raises*

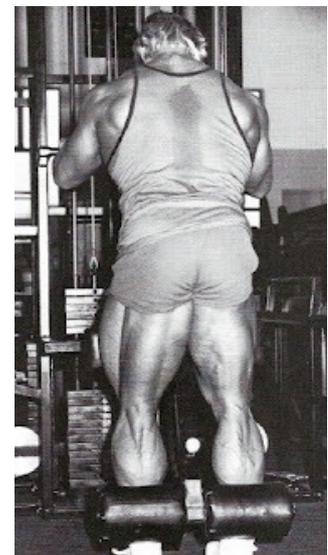
Core

- *Hanging Leg Raises*
- *Reverse Hyperextensions*
- *Cable Crunches*



Tom Platz showing off his overwhelming leg development on a single leg hamstring curl (right)

Jay Cutler hitting a set of cable tricep push downs (left)



Accessory work should support the main lifts without distracting from them. These exercises are useful tools, but they should never replace the primary movements that drive the majority of progress.

The Big Picture

In the InSpires Fitness Basics Program, the goal is simple:

- *Focus on improving the primary lifts*
- *Use secondary lifts to build strength in the same patterns*
- *Use tertiary lifts to support balance and longevity*

When you prioritize the fundamentals and improve them consistently, everything else falls into place.

PROGRESSION

Progression: The Engine of Success

The single most important principle in any strength training program is progression. Exercises, sets, reps, and workout splits all matter, but none of them produce results unless something gradually improves over time. Your body adapts to stress. If the training stimulus stays the same forever, your body has no reason to change. Progress happens when you ask your muscles to do slightly more than they have done before, then allow them to recover and adapt.

This is why progression matters more than program complexity. Many people jump from program to program searching for something new, when the real solution is far simpler: take the same foundational exercises and improve them gradually over time. More strength, more work capacity, and better performance in the gym will almost always lead to more muscle and better overall fitness.

In this program, progression is simple and structured through a method known as Triple Progression.

Triple progression means that we have three different ways to progress an exercise over time:

- 1. Increase Repetitions***
- 2. Increase Sets***
- 3. Increase Weight***

Rather than forcing weight increases every week, this system allows progress to happen naturally while maintaining good form and sustainable recovery.

Step 1: Increase Reps

Example: Week 1 (3 sets x 6), Week 2 (3 sets x 7), Week 3 (3 sets x 8)

Step 2: Increase Sets

Example: Week 5 (4 sets x 8). Do this when you can no longer add reps or when you reach the top end of the recommended rep range for the exercise.

Step 1: Increase Reps

Add 5–10 pounds and return to the lower end of the rep range.

Example: Week 6 (4 sets x 6 reps)

From here, the progression cycle begins again as you work your way back toward the top of the rep range. Small jumps = BIG improvements over time.



WEEKLY TEMPLATES

1 Day Per Week (Full Body)

Day 1

Squat – 3 × 8 @ 185 lb

Bench Press – 3 × 8 @ 155 lb

Row – 3 × 10 @ 135 lb

Overhead Press – 3 × 8 @ 95 lb

Chin-Ups – 3 × 6 (bodyweight)

Deadlift – 3 × 5 @ 225 lb

For the busy ones who can only squeeze in one gym day. Increase reps, sets, or weight each week!

2 Days Per Week (Full Body)

Day 1

Squat – 4 × 6 @ 195 lb

Bench Press – 4 × 6 @ 165 lb

Row – 3 × 10 @ 135 lb

Leg Curls – 3 × 10

Day 2

Deadlift – 4 × 5 @ 235 lb

Overhead Press – 4 × 6 @ 100 lb

Chin-Ups – 3 × 8 @ 20 lb

Leg Extensions – 3 × 10

Alternating movement patterns, same basic progression.

3 Days Per Week (Push / Pull / Legs)

Day 1

Bench Press – 4 × 6 @ 165 lb

Dips – 4 × 10 @ 20 lb

Tricep Extensions – 3 × 12

Day 2

Deadlift – 3 × 5 @ 235 lb

Row – 4 × 6 @ 100 lb

Chin-Ups – 3 × 10

*DISCLAIMER: These are just examples. Pick what works best for you and stick to it!



WEEKLY TEMPLATES

3 Days Per Week (Push / Pull / Legs) Cont.

Day 3

Squat – 3 × 8 @ 185 lb

Leg Press – 3 × 18

Leg Extension – 3 × 12

4 Days Per Week (Upper / Lower)

Day 1 – Lower

Squat – 4 × 6 @ 195 lb

Romanian Deadlift – 3 × 8 @ 185 lb

Calf Raises – 3 × 12

Day 2 – Upper

Bench Press – 4 × 6 @ 165 lb

Row – 4 × 8 @ 145 lb

Overhead Press – 3 × 8 @ 95 lb

Chin-Ups – 3 × 6

Day 3 – Lower

Deadlift – 4 × 5 @ 235 lb

Leg Press – 3 × 8 @ 185 lb

Leg Curl – 3 × 10

Day 4 – Upper

Bench Press – 3 × 8 @ 155 lb

Row – 3 × 10 @ 135 lb

Overhead Press – 3 × 8 @ 95 lb

Chin-Ups – 3 × 6

5 Days Per Week (Body-Part Split / “Bro Split”)

Day 1 – Chest

Bench Press – 4 × 6 @ 185 lb

Dips – 3 × 8 @ 25 lb

Day 2 – Back

Rows – 4 × 6 @ 185 lb

Chin-Ups – 3 × 8 @ 20 lb

Day 3 – Legs (Quads)

Squat – 4 × 8 @ 225 lb

Leg Extensions – 3 × 10

*DISCLAIMER: These are just examples. Pick what works best for you and stick to it!



WEEKLY TEMPLATES

5 Days Per Week (Body-Part Split / "Bro Split") Cont.

Day 4 – Shoulders/Arms

Press – 4 × 6 @ 135 lb

Tricep Extensions / Curls – 3 × 12

Day 5 – Legs (Hamstrings)

Deadlift – 4 × 5 @ 235 lb

Leg Curls – 4 × 12

6 Days Per Week (Push / Pull / Legs)

Day 1 – Push

Bench Press – 4 × 6 @ 165 lb

Overhead Press – 3 × 8 @ 95 lb

Day 2 – Pull

Row – 4 × 8 @ 145 lb

Chin-Ups – 4 × 6

Day 3 – Legs

Squat – 4 × 6 @ 195 lb

Deadlift – 3 × 5 @ 225 lb

Day 4 – Push

Dumbbell Bench Press – 3 × 8

Dumbbell Overhead Press – 3 × 8

Day 5 – Pull

Seated Cable Row – 3 × 10

Lat Pulldown – 3 × 6

Day 6 – Legs

Front Squat – 3 × 8 @ 145 lb

Romanian Deadlift – 3 × 8 @ 185 lb

7 Days Per Week (Daily Practice)

Day 1: Squat – 5 × 5 @ 195 lb

Day 2: Bench Press – 5 × 5 @ 165 lb

Day 3: Row – 5 × 8 @ 145 lb

Day 4: Deadlift – 5 × 5 @ 235 lb

Day 5: Overhead Press – 5 × 6 @ 100 lb

Day 6: Chin-Ups – 5 × 6

Day 7: Light Accessories – 3 × 12 each

*DISCLAIMER: These are just examples. Pick what works best for you and stick to it!



BONUS: 365 DAY BASICS CHALLENGE

“Simplicity is the key to brilliance” - Bruce Lee

On the topic of fitness, truer words have rarely been spoken. The **longer** you train, the **more** that truth reveals itself. Real progress in the gym rarely comes from complicated programs, endless exercise variations, or chasing the newest trend. It comes from doing the **basic** lifts, improving them slowly, and showing up again and again.

That’s the **challenge** of the *InSpires Fitness Basics Program*: commit to running it for one full year: 365 days of consistent training. Program hopping and shiny object syndrome will either derail you after a month or they will become a thing of the past. If you give the basics a full year of focused effort, you’ll discover something most lifters never do;

Brilliance in the gym isn’t complicated at all, it’s simply the result of disciplined consistency. *Do you have what it takes?*

If so, **SHOW IT!**

Post your progress as you make your way through with hashtag **#IFBASICS** or **#ifbasics**

Tag us @inspiresfitness and we will showcase you on our page!

