



STRENGTH TRAINING 101





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BEYOND BEFORE AND AFTER: STRENGTH TRAINING 101

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Strength Training 101! If you've made the decision to embark on a journey toward a stronger, fitter, and healthier you, you're in the right place. This comprehensive guide is designed to provide you with all the essential information you need to get started with the Beyond Before and After app!

Strength training is a powerful form of exercise that not only helps you build muscle and increase your physical strength but also offers a multitude of health benefits. From boosting metabolism and enhancing bone density to improving posture and promoting overall well-being, strength training is a vital component of any balanced fitness regimen.

In this guide, we'll cover the fundamental principles of strength training like progressive overload, tempo, and recovery; and I also break down the three "big lifts" (squat, deadlift, bench press) step-by-step for the lifestyle strength trainee.

I understand that starting a new fitness routine can be overwhelming, especially if you're new to the world of strength training. That's why we've designed this guide to be beginner-friendly and easy to follow, and have allowed ample space for your own notes to ensure you have a smooth and enjoyable experience throughout your fitness journey.

I have aimed in this guide to SIMPLIFY and STREAMLINE the essential components of strength training that you see scattered throughout multiple Instagram accounts and that you find through a Google search.

I wanted to put it in one place for you here. I hope it helps you and if you have any more questions, never hesitate to reach out!

Get ready to embrace the challenge and embrace the rewards as you embark on this incredible path to strength, confidence, and better health. Let's start building your foundation for a stronger tomorrow together!
#BeyondBeforeAndAfter

DISCLAIMER

The information provided in this guide to strength training for beginners is for general informational purposes only. It is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or another qualified healthcare provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition or before starting any exercise program. The author and publisher of this guide are not responsible for any injuries or damages that may occur as a result of following the exercises, techniques, or recommendations presented herein. Use this guide at your own risk and consult a fitness professional for personalized guidance.

PROGRESSIVE OVERLOAD

If we strength train the same way with the same weights for weeks, months, or even years, the body will adapt, and progress will be limited, and perhaps even stalled.

This is one why you could be going to the gym every day for years and still not have the physique you want.

In order to build the body we want, we need to stimulate the muscles each week by loading them more and more over time so that they are continually challenged in new ways.

This continual load is called progressive overload, and it stimulates muscle growth, aka. muscle hypertrophy.

WHY YOU NEED TO APPLY PROGRESSIVE OVERLOAD TO YOUR STRENGTH TRAINING

1. **Progressive overload helps with muscle hypertrophy, the process of building muscle fibre size.** As we age, the amount of muscle we have and its size declines if left unattended; therefore, we must focus on doing what we can to healthily stress the muscle fibres to help them grow. BUILDING muscle also helps give shape to our physique.
2. **Progressive overload challenges the central nervous system to adapt.** When we are requiring the body to adapt to new stressors, the central nervous system has to adapt and learn new things as well. In essence, we are teaching our body to do new things or try things it could not do before.

The central nervous system then gets sharper at understanding where our body is in space, and how to keep us safe in relation to it. This is an un-touted benefit of progressive overload, but to me, it is one of the most positive ways we use fitness to support positive aging and longevity!

HOW TO PROGRESSIVELY OVERLOAD YOUR STRENGTH TRAINING FORM

I always focus first with my clients on proper form.

Without proper form, the risk of injury increases, and much of the intended effect of the exercise is reduced.

For example, if a client cannot squat properly, they are not using as many muscle fibres as they could be, thus, inhibiting the desired effect of the squat. Good form will also translate into every part of their lives, providing additional mobility and strength both in and out of the gym.

Weight: Lifting more weight than the last session.

Tempo: Slowing the exercise down so that the muscle is challenged because of the increase of time under tension.

Sets: Lift the same weight but for more sets.

Reps: Lift the same weight but for more repetitions.

Pauses: You can add in a pause at the hardest part of the lift. For example: adding in a pause at the bottom of a squat.

Partials: You can also introduce partial ranges of motion. For example, if you are doing a bicep curl, do a full bicep curl and then release the lift down halfway, pause for 1s and then contract the bicep up again, then release all the way down. This would be considered 1.5 reps.

RPE & MUSCLE HYPERTROPHY

The **Rate of Perceived Exertion (RPE)** is a tool used to measure how hard an individual feels they are working during physical activity and, for our purposes here, strength training.

It is a subjective measure that relies on an individual's perception of their effort level rather than an objective measure of heart rate or oxygen consumption.

The RPE scale ranges from 0 to 10, with 0 being no exertion and 10 being maximal exertion.

An RPE of 5-6 is considered moderate-intensity exercise (warm-up range), while an RPE of 7-8 is considered vigorous-intensity exercise.

In strength training, in order to build muscle, we must work at an RPE 8-9 in each set because muscle needs to be aggressively challenged in order to GROW.

10	Maximal effort. Could not have done another rep
9.5	MIGHT have been able to do 1 more rep
9	Could do 1 more rep for sure
8.5	Could definitely do 1 more rep, maybe 2
8	Could do 2 more reps for sure
7.5	Could definitely do 2 more reps, maybe 3
7	Could do 3 more reps for sure
5-6	Warm up weights
1-4	These are irrelevant

How I explain this to my clients is that after warming up properly, we want to work at a level where we HONESTLY only have one or two more reps left in the tank. We stop just shy of pumping out the last two reserve reps.

If we are not working the muscles at that intensity, they will not be challenged enough to grow and take on the beautiful shape we all want.

MY NOTES:

TEMPO

You have probably heard this topic overcomplicated, but I am here to simplify it for you!!

A tempo marking indicates the speed at which you should be doing the movement, and WHERE to change speed or add a pause for a certain amount of time in a specified range of an exercise.

Why tempo is important in strength training is because it creates **time under tension** for a muscle or group of muscles. Time under tension is another way that we continually challenge and overload the muscles to make them stronger and to promote muscle hypertrophy.

I assume as I write this that you have watched, or are going to watch, the accompanying video in the Strength Training 101 section of the app.

If you haven't done so yet, and you don't yet know how to read tempo markings, go and do that now. I won't get into much detail here with regards to an explanation because it is much better and fulsomely explained in the video.

In the video, I simplify tempo really concisely for you.

And I ask you to remember this: **THIRD = HARD.**

Now go and watch the video and see how this relates to reading the tempo!

MY NOTES:

CARDIO

When we are in a fat-loss phase, cardio is a great method to assist in creating a caloric deficit.

However, you do not need to do hours upon hours of cardio to be in a deficit; in fact, I start most of my clients at only 15 minutes a day of cardio.

Because a healthy fat loss phase is executed as a marathon, not a sprint, we need to ensure that we retain as much muscle as possible and to keep hunger as low as possible while still being in a sustained caloric deficit.

We do this by eating as much as possible while still being in a caloric deficit, and doing as little cardio as possible while still losing 0.5lbs to 1.5lbs to 2lbs per week.

Dramatically increasing your cardio will not help you lose fat faster!

In fact, it could work against you.

How exactly?

- You'll make yourself so hungry that you'll end up overeating and falling off plan.
- You'll exhaust yourself, leaving you drained for your training or skipping it altogether because you are too tired.
- You can injure yourself by overstressing the muscles too quickly.

Just like decreasing the calories moderately to encourage the caloric deficit when we stall, I challenge you to start at the bare minimum of cardio needed and when your weightloss stalls, only increase the cardio by 5 mins per day. Sometimes the nudge your body needs is so small!

What kind of cardio should you do? The best kind of cardio you can do is the kind you love and enjoy. If you enjoy running or cycling, or swimming, then do that! If you enjoy it, the rate of consistency is much higher, and consistency matters most.

When should you do your cardio? Do it when you know you will do it consistently! For lifestyle clients, this is the solution that works best. Do it when you will most consistently do it because, again, consistency matters most!

MY NOTES:

STEPS & NEAT

N-E-A-T: Non-Exercise Activity Thermogenesis

This means the energy and calories you expend when you are not exercising. This is important because one of the things that can really slow down your progress is only getting movement during the time at the gym, and sitting the rest of the day.

This is often why coaches give you a step goal (typically 5-10k steps daily). And these step goals are outside of your cardio.

There are several ways you can get creative in getting your steps in whether it is going for a quick 5-10 minute walk, or while you are at work taking a walk around the office or to get water.

Steps are also essential to focus on even if you are not in a fat loss phase, to help you maintain the weight you have lost.

MY NOTES:

RECOVERY, SLEEP, STRESS MANAGEMENT

One of the most important parts of your journey is recovery. It is just as important as macro tracking, strength training or cardio.

No matter what phase you are in (fat loss, maintenance or build), your body is under stress.

You will actively disrupt your progress by not recovering properly, i.e not getting enough sleep, or poorly managing stress.

How, then, can you manage this?

For sleep, develop a good nighttime ritual and set yourself up for success. This also signals to the brain and body that you are getting ready for rest.

My nighttime ritual is to turn off my devices at 8 pm sharp, set up my meal 1 and coffee for the morning, brush my teeth and wash my face. I'm in bed reading by 8:30 pm, and then I'm fast asleep by 9 pm. I wake up at 4 am every morning, so this gives me a solid 7 hours every night, and I sleep really soundly.

For stress, find ways to help you manage your stress, whether that is meditating, walking, reading, playing with a pet, or spending intentional time with your spouse or child. Whatever you need to do to decompress and relax the body and mind.

Your recovery methods do not need to be extreme. It is all about small things throughout the day to help you both physically and mentally.

MY NOTES:

SQUATS & BRACE BREATH

Squat Cues for Lifting Efficiency and Injury Prevention:

- Walk up to the bar like you mean it!
- Get a straight body under the bar, a slight bend in the knees.
- Get the bar TIGHT on the back and tight glutes + tight core:
- Pop the bar off the rack:
- Take 2-3 confident steps back:
- “Kiss” the elbows behind the back:
- imagine that your upper back muscles are wrapping tightly inwards around the spine.

Brace breathe in:

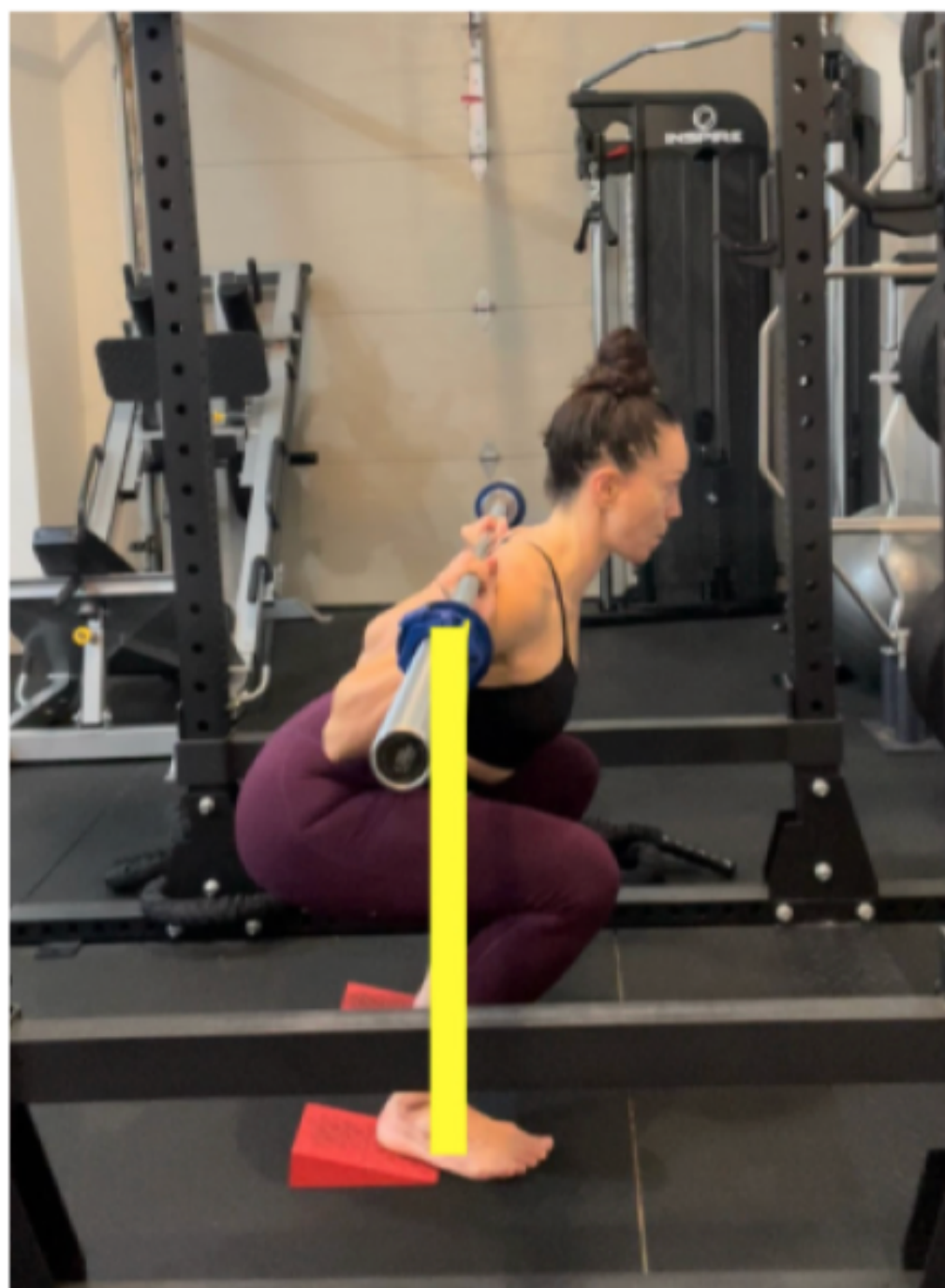
- Breathe 360 degrees
- As if your ribs are going to connect with your hips

Spread the floor with the feet:

- Squat in between your thighs, not TO the thighs:
- As you squat down, think about your body getting TIGHTER - like a spring getting coiled
- Pull the bar HARD into the back and actively push your back HARD into the bar:
 - Spread the feet with the floor as you ascend - making sure to keep the knees over the second toes > don't allow your knees to cave or fall inwards.

Stand up, reset your brace breath and your total body tightness and do your next rep!

Some tips about bar path: you will want to film yourself from the side view to ensure that you are starting correctly aligned > bar over the hips, knees, and ankles.



The bar path should be relatively straight up and down, and at the bottom position, the bar should be over your “shoelaces,” not over or in front of your toes.

DEADLIFT

Deadlift Cues for Lifting Efficiency and Injury Prevention:

- Stance: feet hip-width apart.
- Grab the bar on the outside of your legs; elbows connect to the outside of your knees
- Bar height should be mid-shin.
- The back should be at a 45-60 degree angle and be neutral (straight).
- Shoulders slightly over the bar - the bar should line up with the back of the armpit



- "Squeeze the armpits" to get the lats and upper back tight and hold onto that tightness HARD
- PUSH into the floor with the feet > Do NOT pull with the back.
- At the top position, think tight glutes and "head to the sky."

MY NOTES:

BENCH PRESS

Bench Press Cues for Lifting Efficiency and Injury Prevention:

- Lay on the bench and line up the bar with the bridge of the nose.
- Pull the shoulder blades together and down your back.
- Hand placement — grab the bar so that the wrists are stacked over the elbows when the bar is at your chest (the bottom position).
- Recommit to pulling the shoulder blades together and down your back; it will feel like a squeeze of the armpits!
- Push the feet into the floor. Press down and forward as if your big toes will pop out of the front of your shoes.
- The back will naturally arch in response to pulling the shoulder blades together and down your back, plus the drive through the feet into the floor.
- Breathe in and tighten the body; hold the breath, bar down.
- Push the bar up and think about PUSHING THE BACK INTO THE BENCH.
- Breath out.
- Reset the body tightness and the breath, and go again!



STRAPPED FOR TIME? CHANGE YOUR SESSION INTO A CIRCUIT

If you're occasionally strapped for time and can't do your entire training session as planned, you can easily switch it to a weight circuit! See the example below:

GLUTE & SHOULDER WORKOUT EXAMPLE FROM BLOCK 1 TRADITIONAL TRAINING SESSION: [WATCH HERE](#)

- **MARCHING BRIDGES**
 - 3 sets, 15 reps each side (30 total), 60s rest in between sets
- **BARBELL HIP THRUSTS**
 - 3 sets, 15 reps, Controlled tempo, 60s rest in between sets
- **PRONE (BELLY DOWN) FROG PUMPS**
 - 3 sets, 30 reps, Controlled tempo, 60s rest in between sets
- **ISOMETRIC HOLD LATERAL RAISES**
 - 3 sets, 15 reps each side, Controlled tempo, 60s rest in between sets
- **SUPERSET (3 sets)**
 - **A - SEATED BANDED HIP ABDUCTION**
 - 30 reps, controlled tempo, No rest, go directly onto B
 - **B - ARNOLD PRESSES**
 - 15 reps, 2011 tempo, 30s rest then got back to A

Done!

CIRCUIT VARIATION (25 MINS): [WATCH HERE](#)

Repeat this sequence 3 times with no rest in between exercises

- **MARCHING BRIDGES**
 - 15 reps each side, controlled tempo
- **BARBELL HIP THRUSTS**
 - 15 reps, controlled tempo
- **PRONE (BELLY DOWN) FROG PUMPS**
 - 15 reps, controlled tempo
- **ISOMETRIC HOLD LATERAL RAISES**
 - 15 reps each side, controlled tempo
- **SEATED BANDED HIP ABDUCTION**
 - 15 reps, controlled tempo
- **ARNOLD PRESSES**
 - 15 reps, controlled tempo

HOW TO GET BACK ON TRACK IF YOU FALL OFF!

What do you do when you fall off track?

The worst thing you can do is give up... consistency is not easy. So what you have to do is relate to falling off track differently.

I need you to make an agreement with yourself that those "F*** it" moments are done.

The way to stay consistent when things go wrong is to...

DO THE NEXT RIGHT THING

When you fall off your path or sidestep off of it (eat a box of cookies when two would have sufficed, skip a workout etc.), the way to get back on track is to simply DO THE NEXT RIGHT THING.

Giving up is a habit. But so is doing the next right thing when it feels less than perfect to do so.

This is the new habit we want to build and nurture.

I always say that I did my transformation one day, one workout, and one good choice at a time.

But boiled down even more, I built the habit of doing the next right thing over and over and over and over....

Change can happen immediately, and it comes in an instant if you make the empowered choice to DO THE NEXT RIGHT THING.

This is my step-by-step guide to getting back on track immediately:

1. Reframe 'failure.' I say to myself, "I'm not perfect. I sidestepped. What did I not plan, or prep? What did I learn?"
2. Was the sidestep just an honest mistake? If yes, then I show myself some compassion immediately. I didn't know. Mistakes are human. I am human. No shame in that. What did I learn?
3. Was the sidestep because I fell into old habits or I got lazy with my routines? If yes, then I hold myself accountable and revisit the promises I made to myself.
4. DO THE NEXT RIGHT THING: drink a glass of water, go for a walk, do a workout, and get right back on track. No waiting until Monday to start over.

You have to put one foot in front of the other toward the next right thing and break the habit of giving up!

MY NOTES:

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: PROGRESS OVER PERFECTION

We will never be perfect day to day, but we can commit to progressing over time.

I challenge you to give up the idea of perfection because it just isn't possible.

When we base our success on perfection, more often than not, we don't live up to it (how can we?!), which causes a down spiral of negative self-talk.

One thing that I find as a commonality amongst high-performing women on this journey is that they struggle with being incredibly hard on themselves.

The negative self-talk game is strong. I used to be like this too, until I read a book by Kristin Neff called Self-Compassion.

It taught me that being kind and gentle to myself is a stronger motivator than negative reinforcement. I didn't believe it at first, but it works - trust me on this one :)

WHY ARE WE SO HARD ON OURSELVES?

For far too long, we've believed that pushing ourselves relentlessly and beating ourselves up for our perceived flaws would somehow spur us on to achieve more and achieve that perfection we strive for.

But the truth is, this negative approach often leaves us drained, demotivated, and questioning our worth.

But what's motivating this negative self-talk?

In my experience, it is that:

- We watched our mothers or other female figures in our lives as children or adolescents berate themselves. This is a learned behaviour.
- We were highly criticized as children or grew up in chaotic households. We grew up internalizing this criticism and chaos, making it our own. Again, it is a learned behaviour.
- We have a low feeling of self-worth, and we berate ourselves because at least if we can't reach our goals, the harsh self-criticism makes us feel in control and like we still have "standards."

So how do we change this cycle and mindset?

A SHIFTING MINDSET

By shifting our mindset to one of self-compassion, we create a sustainable foundation for motivation. We tap into a wellspring of inner strength and resilience that fuels us on our path to success. We become our own cheerleaders, celebrating every milestone and appreciating the progress we make.

So, my dear friends, let's embrace self-compassion as a powerful motivator. Let's replace the harsh inner critic with a compassionate ally proud of the progress we are making.

As we shower ourselves with love and understanding, we'll find that our motivation soars, our dreams expand, and our spirits rise.

THANK YOU!



BEYOND
BEFORE AND AFTER