

✓ Week 01 - Task Paralysis

✓ Week 02 - The Boom-Bust Trap

✓ Week 03 - Environment Design

Week 04 - Earned Progression

WEEK 04 - EXERCISE SERIES

YOU'VE EARNED THIS

*Or: What it looks like when a person who now works out
decides to work out a little harder.*



WEEK 01 - TASK PARALYSIS

You have a start sequence. Two ridiculous steps, hands in the right place. Still use it. Always will.



WEEK 02 - THE BOOM-BUST TRAP

You set a ceiling and stopped on time. Consistency over intensity. Three workouts beats one heroic one.



WEEK 03 - ENVIRONMENT DESIGN

You removed friction before you needed motivation.
Your environment does the heavy lifting now.

Look at what you've built over three weeks. A start sequence. A ceiling rule. An environment that works for you instead of against you. Those aren't tips you read once and forgot — **those are skills you practiced, and practicing them changed something real.**

Which means you're not the same person who sat on the couch in Week 01 unable to find their shoes. That person was just trying to start. **You are now someone who starts.** And someone who starts gets to ask a different question: not "how do I begin?" but "how do I grow?"

THE PROGRESSION PRINCIPLE

The body adapts to stress. What challenged you in Week 01 is now your warm-up. That's not a problem — **it's evidence that something worked.** This week you will choose one dimension to expand: more time, more distance, or more resistance. Not all three. One.

The rule from Week 02 still applies: *you set the ceiling in advance.* The ceiling is simply a little higher now — because you've earned a higher ceiling. This is not the boom talking. This is deliberate, planned growth. There's

a difference, and you know the difference by now.

EARNED

Before you choose your progression — one honest question

"Over the last three weeks, did my body feel like it was being appropriately challenged — or has each session started to feel comfortable?"

If comfortable: you are ready to progress. Pick one dimension below and add *one modest increment* this week.

If still challenging: *stay exactly where you are*. Repeating Week 03's protocol with more consistency is a legitimate and correct answer. Progression means moving when your body is ready, not when the calendar says so.

CHOOSE ONE DIMENSION TO EXPAND



OPTION A

Add Time

Extend your workout ceiling by five minutes. Same exercises, same



OPTION B

Add Distance

If you walk, run, bike, or swim — add one modest increment to your



OPTION C

Add Resistance

Add a small amount of weight, or move to a harder variation of

intensity, slightly longer container.

15 min → 20 min
or 20 min → 25 min

route or distance.

1 mile → 1.25 miles
or 2 blocks → 4 blocks

your current movement.

Pushups → incline pushups
or +5 lbs on any lift

YOUR STEPS THIS WEEK

1

THE SETUP – SAME AS ALWAYS

Run your Week 03 environment. Nothing changes here.

Clothes visible. Playlist ready. Space clear. Note written. Phone on Do Not Disturb. You built this system and it works. Don't touch it. The only thing changing this week is one number inside a system that already functions.

Strong foundations don't get renovated. They get built on.

👉 The night before: lay out gear, flip the sticky note to this week's movement, reset the space. Three minutes. You know this.

🕒 3 min the night before

2

THE DECLARATION

Name your one progression before you start. Say it out loud.

Before the timer is set, state your choice: *"I'm adding five minutes this week"* or *"I'm walking one extra block."*

Saying it out loud is not theater — it's a commitment your ADHD brain heard itself make and is therefore more likely to honor. It also draws a line between deliberate progression and impulsive going-too-hard.

This was planned. This is different.

🦋 Standing in your movement space. Both feet planted. Voice out loud, even quietly. Then set the new ceiling on the timer.

 30 seconds

3

THE WORKOUT

Work at the same sustainable pace. The increment does the work — not the intensity.

Your pace from Week 02 and 03 was right. Zone 2 — short sentences, not gasping. The added time, distance, or resistance is the variable. Everything else stays the same. If you find yourself working significantly harder to complete the progression, scale back. A modest increment done well is more valuable than an ambitious one that leaves you dreading next time.

🦋 Same check-in as before: hand to chest briefly every few minutes. Breathing steady? Keep going. Struggling to speak? Ease up.

 your new ceiling

4

THE LOG — ONE MORE WORD

Add a second word to your log this week: how did the progression feel?

How did the progression feel?

You've been logging one word since Week 02. This week, add a second: one for how you felt, one for how the new increment felt. "*Good. Hard.*" "*Tired. Doable.*" "*Proud. Weird.*" Over time this two-word record becomes a honest map of your capacity — which is far more useful than any fitness app.

👉 Phone in notes app. Date, two words. Done in 90 seconds.

🕒 90 seconds

5

THE HONEST CHECK-IN AFTER THREE WORKOUTS

At the end of the week: was the progression right-sized?

Look at your three two-word logs. Were the second words mostly positive — "manageable," "good," "fine"? The increment was right. Were they mostly hard in an unpleasant way — "wiped," "too much," "dread"? Scale back one notch next round. **The goal is never to max out. The goal is to keep showing up.** An increment you can sustain for eight weeks is infinitely more valuable than one you abandon after two.

👉 This one requires only a quiet minute and your notes app. No hands required — just honesty.

🕒 2 minutes

A WORD ABOUT REST — AND WHY IT'S PART OF THE WORK

This is not a consolation prize. This is how the body actually grows.

REST

Over four weeks you've asked your nervous system, your muscles, and your habits to do something genuinely difficult. You've earned the right to hear something that most fitness culture will never tell you honestly: **rest is not the absence of progress. It is where progress is made.**

The body does not grow during the workout. It grows in the hours afterward — during sleep, during stillness, during the quiet that follows effort. A deliberate recovery day is not a day you failed to exercise. It is a day you are *completing the cycle* that exercise began. Elite athletes don't skip rest days because they're undisciplined. They protect them because they understand the science.

What a planned recovery day actually looks like:



A slow walk — not for fitness, for blood flow and mental reset. Twenty minutes, no timer, no ceiling.



More water than usual. Your muscles have been doing work and the repair process is thirsty.



Sleep prioritized. This is not laziness. This is the most productive thing your body can do after four weeks of new stimulus.



Five minutes of deliberate stillness — seated, eyes closed, breathing slowly. Your nervous system has been in activation mode. Give it permission to downregulate.



Read your four weeks of one-word (now two-word) logs. Notice what changed. That record is yours.

Self-care is not a soft word. In the context of a body that has been training, rest is precision maintenance — the same way you wouldn't run a car engine without oil changes and expect it to last. You have been working hard. Taking care of what you've built is the intelligent, disciplined choice.

FOUR WEEKS. SERIES
COMPLETE.

You started unable to begin. You ended knowing how to grow.

That is not a small distance to travel.



The skills from these four weeks — breaking paralysis, setting a ceiling, designing your environment, and progressing deliberately — do not expire at the end of the series. They are yours. The person who showed up to Week 01 was trying to figure out how to start. The person finishing Week 04 knows how to keep going. Bring both of them to our next session.

— Brian Jaeger, MA, CRC, LMHC



This week's reflection (bring it to session)

Which of the four weeks made the biggest difference for you — and which one surprised you most? Also: what does your two-word log from this week tell you about where you are right now?





The week's target, simply stated

Three workouts. One chosen progression. Two words logged after each one. One planned recovery day — honored without guilt.

That's the full picture.

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