



# ELEMENTS

PERSONAL TRAINING

— *A BEGINNERS GUIDE TO* —  
**WEIGHT TRAINING**

By Elliott Upton

## *A BEGINNERS GUIDE TO WEIGHT TRAINING*

Weight training is one of the most beneficial forms of exercise you can do, although for many of you who may not have done it before, it could be a daunting task trying to figure out where to start and how to progress.

Spending 10 minutes reading this guide should give you the foundation knowledge you need to understand the concepts of weight training and how to apply them without overwhelming yourself with complicated details.

So lets get to it...

### *WHAT IS WEIGHT TRAINING?*

Weight training is simply defined as a form of training where you perform certain movements against resistance. Usually in the form of barbells, Dumbbells or Machines.



### *WHY IS IT SO EFFECTIVE AS A FORM OF EXERCISE?*

It burns fat... Fast

It increases your metabolic rate so you burn more fat when you rest

It makes you stronger

It lowers blood pressure

It improves hormonal health

It improves your respiratory system

It improves bone health

It improves brain health

It improves heart health

It lowers your risk of injury

It helps you move better for longer

It slows down the aging process

It improves your moods

It improves your self confidence

It's not skill specific, getting stronger will make you better at almost everything

It reduces your risk of most chronic diseases

I could go on but I'm sure that you get the picture if you got this far ;)

## WHAT ARE THE FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS THAT I SHOULD GET TO GRIPS WITH AND NEVER FORGET?

### Concept 1 - Keep it simple

Too many newbies at the gym over complicate things, especially since social media took over. Your exercise selection should be simple, your rep schemes should be simple, your programs should be simple and you should stay on each one a lot longer than you probably think.

Too much variation is unnecessary and often ineffective.

### Concept 2 - Exercise selection

There is no right and wrong here but as a general rule for best results, you want to focus 80% of your time on the major lifts and prioritize getting better at these, both technically and through increased weight over time.

These major lifts are as follows;

- Squat
- Deadlift
- Hip Thrust
- Pull ups
- Rows
- Overhead press
- Bench press



So essentially you are trying to get absolutely awesome at these seven lifts, they are all quite technical and take a lot of time to perfect so be patient. Other exercises can be added in over time but focus on getting better at these to start with.

Too many people throw in way too much fluff and variation and end up neglecting the movements that matter.

### Concept 3 - Progressive overload (don't forget this one)

This is one that I see so many people neglect because it requires a structure and the motivation to track your workouts. The concept of progressive overload simply means that you should be aiming to lift a little more or progress on your lifts session by session in some way.

The simplest way to do this is to add a little bit more weight to the bar each time you train or add some additional reps up to a point. This won't always feel, or actually be possible session by session. However, over time it should be your number one aim.

When you lose sight of chasing that progression, your results will start to slip.

## Concept 4 - Set and Rep Schemes (what each rep scheme means)

Should you train with Light weights and high reps, or heavy weights and low reps? The answer... Always train as heavy as you safely can based on the rep numbers you are doing. Training intentionally light doesn't get you anywhere.

Essentially, the heavier the weight you are lifting the less reps you will be able to get with it and vice versa. There are some basic rep parameters outlined below which offer a more focused path to a particular goal, whether that be strength, Hypertrophy (gaining muscle size), or greater endurance.

If getting stronger is your primary focus - do 2-6 reps per set with weights as heavy as you can safely manage this rep range with.

If getting Bigger muscles is your primary focus - do 6-12 reps per set with weights as heavy as you can safely manage this rep range with.

If increasing your endurance is your primary focus - do 12+ reps per set with weights as heavy as you can safely manage this rep range with.

It's important to note here though that there are crossovers between these ranges. Lifting 2-6 reps or 16+ reps will also cause hypertrophy, lifting 6-12 reps will also make you stronger and improve your endurance for example.

Training with varying rep ranges as heavy as you are able to do so for that given rep range is the key to great all round results. I would advise for beginners that you stick to rep ranges between 8 and 12. This offers a safe range to lift heavy with enough repetitions to create good movement patterns and work on your form.

Over time, when your form has improved through repetition you can start working towards the lower rep ranges where you will be able to lift the heavier weights more safely.

## *SETS*

As a general rule, the more reps you do in a set, the less sets you should do and vice versa. So for example, if you are only doing three reps per set with a big heavy weight, you may do five sets.

But if you were doing sets of 25 reps, you may only do one or two sets.

You can play around with this initially to see what feels good, as you get more advanced this becomes relevant to overall "load volume" but you don't need to worry about that when you are just starting out.



## *TRAINING SPLITS*

A "training split" can be defined as the way you split your training days up into certain muscle groups. The best way to do this can vary on a number of things;

1. Training age - The number of years you have been training. The more experienced you are, the higher your tolerance for repeated stimulus or overall training volume.
2. Goal - Different goals will require different amounts of training volume, load, and therefore recovery between sessions.
3. Genetics and ability to recover - Your genetics play a huge part in what type of training structure will benefit you the most based on your ability to recover.
4. Type of training - The heavier you train, the more recovery you will need between sessions.

### *MY FAVORITE TRAINING SPLIT FOR BEGINNERS - GERMAN BODY COMPOSITION*

Number of sessions per week: 3

Type of session: Full body

Approximate volume per session: 6 to 8 sets per muscle group per workout

### *MY FAVORITE TRAINING SPLIT FOR INTERMEDIATE TO ADVANCED - PUSH, PULL*

Number of sessions per week: 4, (Push, pull, Rest, push, pull, rest, rest, Repeat)

Type of session: Push/Pull full body

Approximate volume per session: 9-12 sets per muscle group per workout

### *MY FAVORITE TRAINING SPLIT FOR ADVANCED - PUSH, PULL, LEGS*

Number of sessions per week: 5, (Push, pull, Rest, Legs, Push, Rest, Pull, legs, Repeat)

Type of session: Upper push, Upper pull, Legs

Approximate volume per session: 9-12 sets per muscle group per workout

It's important to note that one size does not fit all and there are many more ways to split your workouts. These are the ones that I have found to be most effective for clients over the last few decades from a general training point of view.

What I would say is this, try to do as little as possible to get the result you want. If you can train 3 days per week and get your desired result then do so, allow the extra time to live your life, spend time with your family and do other activities.

It's easy to fall into the trap of training too much, recovering too little and getting nowhere.

Remember, you grow when you rest! All you are doing in the gym is creating damage, if you are constantly digging that hole allowing no time to fill it back in, you will get nowhere.



## *FINAL NOTES*

1. Focus on proper form above all else, learn the movements, practice them until they are perfect and then start chasing weight.
2. Have a training structure and keep a record of your weights and progress, this will allow you to follow the principle of progressive overload correctly.
3. Don't rush from program to program, be consistent on one program only making small variations if needed. Most programs can remain effective for months at a time with only minimal adjustment.
4. Train to improve performance and to improve strength, not to burn calories.
5. Again, you grow when you rest, not when you train. Don't neglect your rest.

GOOD LUCK  
AND TAG ME

@elliottupton  
in your post workout selfies,  
or better yet, videos of your session.



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