

The Total Coach – Deload Guide

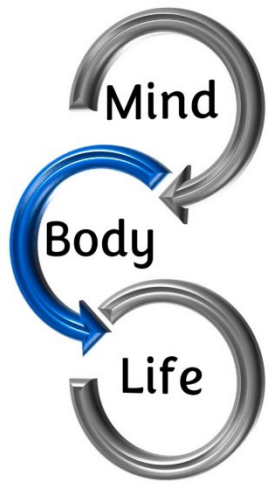
- *What is a deload week.*
- *Why should you deload.*
- *When to deload.*
- *How to deload.*

So, you hit the gym with 100% intensity day after day, week and week or even month after month! You see awesome gains. You get stronger, you get faster, you get bigger. Then BANG!, you hit a plateau or you pick up an injury and feel constantly exhausted. These are all signs of potentially overtraining and the need for a “deload week”

What is a deload week.

A deload week is be a planned week of training where you still exercise, but with either a reduced volume, reduced intensity or complete change of exercise.

I say planned, as these should be used to prevent overtraining and injury and scheduled in as part of your overall long term phased training plan.



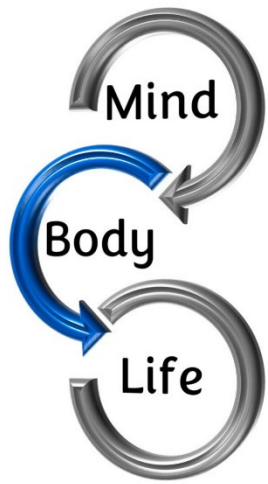
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Why should you deload.

The *Essentials of Strength Training and Conditioning* explain the purpose of a deload week as an opportunity “to prepare the body for the increased demand of the next phase or period,” and to mitigate the risk of overtraining. A deload week gives your body AND mind much needed active recovery and a reset, ready for the next phase of your training. It allows your ligaments and joints additional recovery time, as these recover at a slower rate to muscle.

You should return from a deload week well-rested, stronger and refocused ready smash through that plateau and restart your progression.



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When to deload.

When you deload or how frequently you deload will depend on several factors including training style, training level, your goals, and age. Some examples are as follows;

➤ **3 Weeks on/1 Week off**

The 3 weeks on, 1 week off deload schedule is where you give everything you've got for each training session over the course of 3 weeks, deload for 1 week prior to restarting. This usually requires significant high intensity for the initial 3 weeks to justify the more frequent deload periods.

➤ **Every 6-8 Weeks (my preferred option)**

Add your deload week after a block of 6-8 weeks of progressive training.

➤ **Every 12-16 Weeks**

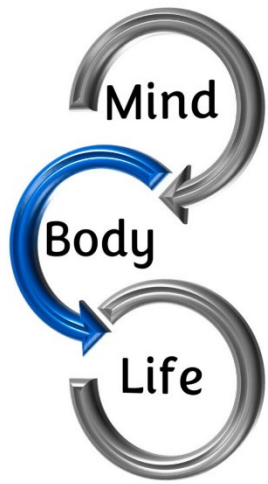
See the trend???

➤ **0-3 Times Per Year**

There are a few well trained athletes that can perform perfectly well on minimal deload and recovery weeks although these tend to be in the professional arena with access to tailored nutritional, training and recovery support and facilities available to them.

NOTE: *Understand your body.* If none of the above, feel right and you simply think you need a rest due to drop in performance, sickness etc. you probably need a deload week.

These are not hard and fast rules. KNOW YOUR BODY



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How to deload.

As a guide, there are three different forms of deloading that can be employed;

➤ ***Reducing the Load/Intensity (My personal preference).***

This deload week will consist of the same exercises with the same volume (number of exercises, sets and reps) but you reduce the weight used by 10-25%. A by-product of this is that it allows you to really ‘nail’ the form on the exercises.

➤ ***Reducing the Volume.***

This deload week, you will do the opposite to the above, keeping the weight the same but reducing the sets down by 25-50%.

➤ ***Complete change of Exercise.***

This deload week is usual for people who are more concerned about general health and involves completely changing up the form of exercise, such as swapping out weight training for a lower intensity bodyweight circuit, mobility focused workouts, swimming, running or another unrelated exercise to your usual routine. Still performed at a lower intensity.