



5x5 PROGRAM

STRENGTH & MUSCLE — TIME-TESTED COMPOUND SYSTEM

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Simple, Efficient, Brutally Effective: 5 Sets of 5 Reps.

Five-by-five training is a simple, efficient, time-tested program for gaining strength and muscle using compound lifts. And it's really as simple as the name says: 5 sets of 5 reps.

There have been many different versions of 5x5 over the decades, each one focused on a different set of core lifts and a different schedule. This is just one approach. If another one works for you, you can swap lifts to fit your needs.

No matter how you do it, this classic program is designed to hit all your muscles hard three times per week, and allow enough time in between to optimize growth and recovery. It was designed to build strength, but you'll likely see an increase in muscle mass, as well. It is truly a **"best of both worlds"** program where you can just take **70-80 percent of your 1RM, do the work, and keep progressing.**

THE SCHEDULE — 3 DAYS / WEEK

The 5x5 program only has two main workouts (A and B) — you'll switch between them and do **three workouts a week**. Example: Week 1 = A/B/A, Week 2 = B/A/B. You'll be lifting hard and putting in serious volume, so you'll need the rest of the days to recover. **Monday-Wednesday-Friday** or **Tuesday-Thursday-Saturday** works perfectly. On off days, active recovery or light cardio only — recovery is the highest priority for progress.

WORKOUT A

EXERCISE	SETS x REPS	% 1RM / NOTES
Squat	5 x 5	Primary leg strength — depth to parallel, 70-80% 1RM
Bench Press	5 x 5	Primary push — retract scapula, 70-80% 1RM
Barbell Row	5 x 5	Horizontal pull — hinge 45°, pull to lower ribs

Optional Accessories: Triceps (Pushdowns / Extensions), Abs (Hanging Leg Raises / Cable Crunch) — 2-3 sets of 10-12 reps after main lifts if you want extra volume.

WORKOUT B

EXERCISE	SETS x REPS	% 1RM / NOTES
Front Squat	5 x 5	Quad-dominant variation — upright torso, clean grip or cross grip
Overhead Press	5 x 5	Vertical push — core braced, full lockout, 70-80% 1RM
Deadlift	5 x 5	1 or 3 or 5 sets of 5 — can go heavier if doing fewer sets, keep conservative if 5x5
Pull-Up (weighted if necessary)	5 x 5	Vertical pull — add weight when you hit 5x5 bodyweight

Optional Accessories: Biceps (Curls / Hammer Curls), Abs — 2-3 sets of 10-12 reps after main lifts if you want extra volume.

WORKOUT C (Week 1 A/B/A Rotation)

EXERCISE	SETS x REPS	% 1RM / NOTES
Squat	5 x 5	Repeat Workout A — Week 1 you do A/B/A, Week 2 you do B/A/B
Bench Press	5 x 5	Same as Workout A — progressive overload each session
Barbell Row	5 x 5	Same as Workout A

Optional Accessories: Triceps, Abs — 2-3 sets of 10-12 reps after main lifts if you want extra volume.

HOW TO PROGRESS & EXECUTE

- **Do 5 sets of 5 reps of each big exercise.** Some people prefer to only do 1 or 3 sets of 5 for deadlifts so they can perform them with heavier weight. Others do 5 sets of 5, but keep the weights conservative — both work.
- **Take at least one day off between workouts.** Mon-Wed-Fri or Tue-Thu-Sat.
- **On off days, do active recovery or light cardio** (walk, bike, mobility), but don't do any other lifting. You won't need to! Recovery is highest priority.
- **If you want more volume,** just include the optional accessory moves in the three weekly workouts.
- **Progress:** When you hit 5x5 on a lift, add 5 lbs upper body / 10 lbs lower body next session. If you miss reps, repeat weight next time.
- **Warm-up:** 5 min cardio + 2-3 ramp sets (Bar x10, 50% x5, 70% x3) before work sets at 70-80%.

COACHING NOTES FROM INVICTUS

- **70-80% is the sweet spot:** Heavy enough to build strength, light enough to recover 3x/week.
- **Form > Ego:** 5x5 exposes bad form fast — film your sets.
- **Track every set:** Log A/B/A vs B/A/B rotation.
- **After 8-12 weeks on 5x5,** move to our 5-Day PPL/Upper-Lower Hybrid or 12-Week Progressive Overload at invictussports.org for new stimulus.



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Educational use only. Consult physician before beginning. Use spotter for squat/bench.