

Muscle building

Upper/Lower Muscle Building Program

Four workouts a week, alternating upper and lower body. Each muscle is trained twice a week with enough volume to grow, and the plan builds to a peak before a deload.

Length	Sessions	Time per session	Level	Equipment
8 weeks	4 a week	60 min	Intermediate	Full gym

How the program works

- Train four days a week, for example Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.
- Take most sets to 1–2 reps short of failure. The last set of isolation exercises can go to failure.
- Use double progression: add reps within the range first, then add weight.
- Rest 2–3 minutes on the first two exercises and 60–90 seconds on the rest.
- Control the lowering phase of every rep, taking about two seconds.

A typical week

Monday	Upper body
Tuesday	Lower body
Wednesday	Rest
Thursday	Upper body
Friday	Lower body
Saturday	Rest or light activity
Sunday	Rest

The sessions

Upper A: heavier

60 min

Exercise	Sets	Reps or time	Rest
Barbell bench press	4	6–8	2–3 min
Barbell row	4	6–8	2–3 min
Seated dumbbell shoulder press	3	8–10	90 s
Lat pulldown	3	10–12	90 s
EZ-bar curl	2	10–12	60 s
Triceps pushdown	2	10–12	60 s

Lower A: heavier

60 min

Exercise	Sets	Reps or time	Rest
Back squat	4	6–8	3 min
Romanian deadlift	3	8–10	2 min
Leg press	3	10–12	90 s
Lying leg curl	3	10–12	60 s
Standing calf raise	3	10–15	60 s

Upper B: more volume

60 min

Exercise	Sets	Reps or time	Rest
Incline dumbbell press	3	8–12	2 min
Pull-up or assisted pull-up	3	6–10	2 min
Seated cable row	3	10–12	90 s
Lateral raise	3	12–15	60 s
Pec deck or cable fly	2	12–15	60 s
Hammer curl	2	10–12	60 s
Overhead triceps extension	2	10–12	60 s

Lower B: more volume

60 min

Exercise	Sets	Reps or time	Rest
Deadlift or trap bar deadlift	3	5–6	3 min
Bulgarian split squat	3	8–10 per leg	90 s
Hip thrust	3	8–12	90 s
Leg extension	3	12–15	60 s
Seated calf raise	3	12–15	60 s
Hanging knee raise	3	10–15	60 s

How to progress

Weeks

1–3

Base

Sets as written. Start about 2–3 reps short of failure and focus on control and full range of motion.

Weeks

4–6

Build

Add one set to the first two exercises of every workout. Push most sets to 1–2 reps short of failure.

Week

7

Peak

Keep the extra sets and try to beat your week 6 weight or reps on every exercise.

Week

8

Deload

Go back to week 1 sets with about 10% less weight. Recover fully, then start the next cycle a little heavier.

Training log

Write down what you did each session, for example 60 × 5 for 60 kg for five reps. Seeing the numbers go up is the best motivation there is, and it tells you when to add weight or speed.

Upper A: heavier, weeks 1–8

Exercise	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
Barbell bench press 4 sets of 6–8								
Barbell row 4 sets of 6–8								
Seated dumbbell shoulder press 3 sets of 8–10								
Lat pulldown 3 sets of 10–12								
EZ-bar curl 2 sets of 10–12								
Triceps pushdown 2 sets of 10–12								

Lower A: heavier, weeks 1–8

Exercise	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
Back squat 4 sets of 6–8								
Romanian deadlift 3 sets of 8–10								
Leg press 3 sets of 10–12								
Lying leg curl 3 sets of 10–12								
Standing calf raise 3 sets of 10–15								

Upper B: more volume, weeks 1–8

Exercise	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
Incline dumbbell press 3 sets of 8–12								
Pull-up or assisted pull-up 3 sets of 6–10								
Seated cable row 3 sets of 10–12								
Lateral raise 3 sets of 12–15								
Pec deck or cable fly 2 sets of 12–15								
Hammer curl 2 sets of 10–12								
Overhead triceps extension 2 sets of 10–12								

Lower B: more volume, weeks 1–8

Exercise	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
Deadlift or trap bar deadlift 3 sets of 5–6								
Bulgarian split squat 3 sets of 8–10 per leg								
Hip thrust 3 sets of 8–12								
Leg extension 3 sets of 12–15								
Seated calf raise 3 sets of 12–15								
Hanging knee raise 3 sets of 10–15								

Find the full guide, your personal numbers and more free programs at musclecalc.com/programs/upper-lower-muscle-building
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