

PUSH/PULL

THE FOUR WEEK STRUCTURE

Two moves. Three days. A plan that still works on the week everything goes wrong.

BACK TO BASICS

WHAT'S INSIDE

01	START HERE	03
02	WHY PUSH AND PULL	04
03	YOUR WEEK	05
04	PICKING YOUR WEIGHT	06
05	CARRYING AN INJURY	07
06	HOW TO READ THE WORKOUTS	08
07	WARM UP AND FINISH	09
08	LEVEL ONE: FOUNDATION	10
09	LEVEL TWO: BUILD	11
10	LEVEL THREE: ADVANCED	12
11	SWAP IT OUT	13
12	YOUR LOG	14
13	FOOD, KEPT SIMPLE	15
14	THE RULES	16
15	QUESTIONS	17

READ THIS PART

This is four weeks of training, not a lecture. Pages 3 to 9 take about eight minutes to read. They decide whether the next four weeks work. Do not skip to the tables.

01

START HERE

You already know how to train. That was never the problem.

The problem is that your plan only works on a good week. A week where nothing runs late. Nobody needs you. You sleep well. You do not get many of those. Neither do I.

So the plan holds for eleven days. Then a bad Tuesday breaks it. You miss one session. Then two. Three weeks later you are starting again, a bit heavier and a lot more annoyed with yourself.

You do not have a discipline problem. You have a structure problem. Every promise you break to yourself teaches your brain that you are not reliable. Break enough of them and you stop believing anything you say.

This exists so you stop arguing with yourself. Two moves. Three days a week. The same session every time, so there is nothing left to decide when you walk in tired.



02

WHY PUSH AND PULL

Every upper body move is one of two things. You push weight away from you, or you pull it toward you.

Push is chest, shoulders and triceps. Bench, incline press, dips, flys.
Pull is back and biceps. Rows, pulldowns, pull ups, curls.

Putting them together is the whole point. While your chest works, your back rests. While your back works, your chest rests. You are never standing around waiting, and neither one suffers for it.

WHAT THAT BUYS YOU

- **Three days instead of five.** You get more done each hour, so you need fewer hours. Nothing else in this book matters more than that.
- **Shorter sessions.** Forty five minutes to an hour on Level One, a bit longer on the harder levels. Not ninety minutes of scrolling between sets.
- **Balance.** Most men who have trained on and off for years have a strong chest and a weak back. A weak back pulls your shoulders forward. Training both evenly fixes it without you thinking about it.
- **Skipping half of it gets hard.** When push and pull are in the same session, you cannot quietly drop back day for six weeks.

> **THE HONEST VERSION**
>
> Push and pull is not magic. No, and it is not the single best way to build muscle. It is the best way for a man with a job, a family and about four hours a week, which is why it is in your hands.

03

YOUR WEEK

Pick one of these two. Put it in your calendar now, with times, like a meeting you cannot move. Do not decide each morning how the week is going to go.

THREE DAYS. START HERE.

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
PUSH PULL	WALK 30 MIN	PUSH PULL	WALK 30 MIN	PUSH PULL	FREE	REST

The same session all three days. Same order. Same exercises. Repetition is the point. Doing a move over and over is how you get strong at it, and how you stop having to think about it.

FOUR DAYS. ONCE THREE FEELS EASY.

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
PUSH PULL	WALK OR LEGS	PUSH PULL	REST	PUSH PULL	WALK OR LEGS	PUSH PULL

Never two push pull sessions back to back. The same muscles work both days and they need a day in between. So the fourth session sits on Sunday, not Saturday.

> **THE RULE THAT MATTERS MOST**
>
> Never miss twice. Miss Monday and you had a bad day. Miss Monday and Wednesday and you have started quitting. If the week falls apart, do not write it off and wait for the next one. Do your next session on the next day you can, and carry on.

04

PICKING YOUR WEIGHT

DO NOT TEST A ONE REP MAX

Most programs start by telling you to find the heaviest weight you can lift one time. If you have not trained much in the last year, that is the fastest way to hurt yourself in week one and be done before you start. You do not need that number. Use the rep target instead.

Each level page names a percentage. Treat it as context, not homework. You never have to test your max to use this book.

Every set in this book has a rep target. Ten reps. Twelve. Fifteen. Your job is to pick a weight where the **last two reps are hard, but your form still looks clean.**

That is it. That is the whole method.

GETTING IT RIGHT IN WEEK ONE

1. Start lighter than you think. Week one is for finding your number, not for proving anything.
2. Finish the set. If you got all the reps and could have done five more, it was too light. Go up on the next set.
3. If your form broke before the last rep, it was too heavy. Come down. Nobody is watching.
4. Write the weight down. Your phone is fine. If you do not write it down you will guess next time, and guessing is how you stall.

WHEN TO ADD WEIGHT

When you hit the top of the rep range on **every set** of an exercise, and the last two reps are still hard, add the smallest weight you can next session. Usually 2.5 kg or 5 lb. Small and often beats big and rare.

IF YOU ARE COMING BACK AFTER TIME OFF

Your muscles get strong again faster than your joints and tendons do. That gap is where men get hurt. Spend the first two weeks under what you can do. You lose nothing, and you will still be training in month three.

05

CARRYING AN INJURY

Most men over thirty five are carrying something. A knee. A shoulder that never healed right. A lower back that goes out with no warning.

I have had a ruptured patella, knee surgery, high blood pressure and sleep apnea. I am not guessing here.

Most programs do one of two things with an injury. They ignore it and tell you to push through, which makes it worse every time. Or they tell you to rest it completely, and then everything around it gets weak until something bigger goes.

Both are wrong. You build around it.

- **Swap it, do not skip it.** If flat barbell bench hurts your shoulder, press dumbbells or use a machine. The movement matters. The bar is not.
- **Change the range before you change the exercise.** Often it is the top or bottom few inches that hurt, not the whole lift. Stop short of the part that hurts.
- **Sharp means stop. Dull is usually fine.** Burn and fatigue are the work. A sharp pain inside a joint is a warning. Learn the difference and respect it.
- **Build up what is around it.** A steady joint is a safe joint. Light weight and higher reps on the muscles around the problem will do more in six weeks than resting will.
- **Never load a bad day.** If a joint is already angry before you start, that is not the day to add weight to it.

WHERE THIS BOOK STOPS

A book cannot see your shoulder. This is general advice, not a diagnosis. If something has been hurting for more than a few weeks, or it wakes you at night, get someone to look at it properly. Train around it in the meantime. Do not stop.

06

HOW TO READ THE WORKOUTS

Every exercise has a number and a letter. **The number is the group. The letter is the order inside that group.**

Exercises with the same number are done back to back, with no rest in between. You rest only after the last one, then you start the group again.

> **WORKED EXAMPLE**
>
> **1A. Machine chest press. 10 reps.**
> **1B. Dumbbell bent over row. 15 reps.**
>
> Do 10 reps of the chest press. Walk straight over and do 15 reps of the row. Taking fifteen seconds to move between them is fine. Now rest 60 to 90 seconds. One round, done. Repeat until you have done all your sets, then move on to group 2.
>
> If two exercises have different numbers, they are separate. Finish all your sets of 1 before you start 2.

SETS AND REPS

4 × 10 means four sets of ten reps. The first number is always sets.

To failure means you keep going until you cannot do another rep with clean form. Only on machines, cables and dumbbells. **Never on a barbell without a spotter.**

REST

60 to 90 seconds between rounds. Set a timer. Left alone you will take three minutes and tell yourself it was one.

> **SHORT NAMES**
>
> **DB** Dumbbell · **BB** Barbell · **KB** Kettlebell · **MB** Medicine ball · **RB** Resistance band

07

WARM UP AND FINISH

BEFORE YOU LIFT. FIVE MINUTES.

The point is to get warm, not to get tired. If your warm up costs you reps in your first set, it was a workout.

- Arm circles and shoulder swings, forward and back, 30 seconds each
- Very light chest flys and rear delt flys, 15 reps each, barely any weight
- One minute plank
- Thirty seconds each of bicycle kicks, leg lifts and oblique twists

Then do one light set of your first exercise, at about half the weight you will work with. That set tells you how your shoulders feel today better than anything else will.

AFTER YOU LIFT. TEN MINUTES.

Leaving with a pump feels good. Leaving loose lets you train again on Wednesday.

Your shoulders do the most work in a push pull week. When your chest and back tighten around them, the joint gets pulled out of place over time. Stretch your chest in a doorway. Stretch your lats. Roll your upper back if you have a roller.

Then walk easy for five to ten minutes. Not a run. Just enough to bring your heart rate down before you get in the car.



> **ONE LAST THING**
>
> The men who keep training are not the ones who go hardest. They are the ones who still feel fine two days later. Warming up and cooling down buys you that.

08 · LEVEL ONE

FOUNDATION

Start here if you have not trained regularly in the last six months, or you have never followed a proper program. About 60% of your best effort. Three days a week.

Rest 60 to 90 seconds after each group. Exercises with the same number are done back to back.

	EXERCISE	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4
1A	Machine Chest Press	3 × 10	3 × 10	4 × 10	4 × 10
1B	DB Bent Over Row	3 × 15	3 × 15	4 × 15	4 × 15
2A	Cable Chest Fly	3 × 15	3 × 15	4 × 15	4 × 15
2B	Wide Grip Lat Pulldown	3 × 15	3 × 15	4 × 15	4 × 15
3A	Incline Barbell Press	3 × 15	3 × 15	4 × 15	4 × 15
3B	Close Grip Cable Row	3 × 15	3 × 15	4 × 15	4 × 15
4	DB Bent Over Fly	3 × 10	3 × 10	4 × 10	4 × 10

WHAT IS HAPPENING HERE

Weeks 1 and 2 are three sets. Weeks 3 and 4 are four. The weight does not have to change for this to get harder, and it should not change much in the first two weeks. Get the movement right first. The weight comes after.

09 · LEVEL TWO

BUILD

Move up when you have finished four clean weeks of Level One and every session felt under control. About 65 to 70% of your best effort.

Rest 60 to 90 seconds after each group. Exercises with the same number are done back to back.

	EXERCISE	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4
1A	Incline DB Press	4 × 10	4 × 12	5 × 10	5 × 10
1B	Machine Alternating Row	4 × 15	4 × 15	5 × 10	5 × 10
2A	Low Cable Fly	4 × 10	4 × 12	5 × 10	5 × 10
2B	Reverse Cable Fly	4 × 10	4 × 12	5 × 10	5 × 10
3	Barbell Row	4 × 15	4 × 15	5 × 10	5 × 10
4A	Landmine Press	4 × 10	4 × 10	4 × 12	5 × 10
4B	T-Bar Row	4 × 10	4 × 10	4 × 12	5 × 10
5A	Pull Up	4 × 10	4 × 10	4 × 12	5 × 10
5B	Barbell Chest Press	4 × 10	4 × 10	4 × 12	5 × 10

On pull ups: if you cannot do ten, use the assisted machine or a band. Do not swap them out. Getting to ten on your own is one of the clearest signs of progress in this book.



10 · LEVEL THREE

ADVANCED

Only use this if you have trained regularly for years and your form holds when you are tired. About 70 to 75% of your best effort. The most work in the book sits on this page.

Rest 60 to 90 seconds after each group. Exercises with the same number are done back to back.

	EXERCISE	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4
1	Barbell Deadlift	4 × 8	4 × 8	5 × 8	5 × 8
2	Incline DB Press	4 × 15	4 × 15	5 × 12	5 × 12
3A	Flat Bench Press	4 × 15	4 × 15	5 × 12	5 × 12
3B	Wide Grip Lat Pulldown	4 × 15	4 × 15	5 × 12	5 × 12
3C	Straight Arm Cable Pulldown	3 x fail	3 x fail	4 x fail	4 x fail
4A	Landmine Press (Alternating)	4 × 12	4 × 12	5 × 10	5 × 10
4B	Alternating T-Bar Row	4 × 12	4 × 12	5 × 10	5 × 10
5A	High Cable Fly	4 x fail	4 x fail	4 x fail	4 x fail
5B	Alternating DB Bent Over Row	4 x fail	4 x fail	4 x fail	4 x fail

TWO WARNINGS

The deadlift is eight reps while everything else is twelve to fifteen. We did that on purpose. It is the one lift where your form falls apart quietly as you tire, and your lower back pays for it. Reset your position every rep. The moment your back rounds, the set is over, whatever number you were on.

Never take a barbell to failure on your own. The failure sets here are cables and dumbbells for exactly that reason.

11

SWAP IT OUT

Not every gym has a landmine or a T-bar. That is not a reason to skip the session.

Match the direction, not the machine. Any press replaces a press. Any row replaces a row. Keep the reps the same.

IF YOU CANNOT DO	USE THIS INSTEAD
Landmine Press	Incline DB press, or single arm DB press
T-Bar Row	Single arm DB row, or close grip cable row
Machine Alternating Row	Single arm DB row
Machine Chest Press	DB bench press, flat or slight incline
Cable Chest Fly	DB fly on a flat or incline bench
Straight Arm Cable Pulldown	DB pullover
Wide Grip Lat Pulldown	Pull up, assisted or with a band
Pull Up	Assisted machine, band, or lat pulldown
Barbell Deadlift	DB Romanian deadlift, or a trap bar

ONE WARNING ABOUT SWAPPING

Swap because the equipment is missing or the movement hurts. Not because the exercise is hard. The hard ones are usually the reason the program works, and the man who swaps out every uncomfortable movement ends up doing a session built entirely from the easy ones.

12

YOUR LOG

Print this page, or copy it into your phone. Write the heaviest set you did for each exercise. In four weeks the numbers tell you the truth about whether this worked.

BODY WEIGHT	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4

EXERCISE	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4

SESSIONS KEPT

Twelve boxes. Four weeks, three sessions a week. Tick one every time you finish. No other number decides whether the rest of them move.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

13

FOOD, KEPT SIMPLE

You cannot train your way out of how you eat. Three sessions a week is about three hours. The other 165 hours decide most of it.

You do not need a meal plan to start. You need a protein number and a direction.

STARTING NUMBERS

BW is your body weight **in pounds**. If you work in kilograms, multiply by 2.2 first. **Goal weight** is the weight you want to be, not the weight you are now.

IF YOUR GOAL IS	PROTEIN	CARBS	FAT
Lose fat	1 g x goal weight	0.75 g x BW	0.4 g x BW
Build muscle	1 g x goal weight	1.5 g x BW	0.5 g x BW

Worked example. A 210 lb man who wants to be 185 lb: about 185 g protein, 158 g carbs and 84 g fat. Roughly 2,100 calories a day.

Protein is the same number whichever goal you pick. When you eat less, your body looks for energy somewhere, and it will take it out of your muscle unless protein is high. So protein is the last number you cut, never the first. Using your goal weight rather than your current weight keeps it sensible if you are carrying a lot to lose.

IF YOU ONLY CHANGE THREE THINGS

1. Hit your protein every day. This one number keeps your muscle while you lose fat, and keeps you full. Miss everything else and hit this.

2. Three liters of water. Start with 500 ml when you wake up, before coffee.

3. Eat slowly and stop at about 80% full. Your stomach takes fifteen to twenty minutes to tell your brain it is full. If you are still hungry ten minutes later, eat more. Most of the time you will not be.

Pick one goal for these four weeks. If you are new to training, coming back after a long break, or carrying a lot of fat, you can gain a little muscle while you lose fat. For everyone else it is one or the other, and chasing both usually gets you neither. For most men reading this, losing fat is the right first goal.

14

THE RULES

1 **Know the session before you walk in.** Read the page in the car, not at the rack. Men who decide inside the gym spend half the session deciding.

2 **Phone in the locker or on airplane mode.** Use it for your timer and your weights. Nothing else. This one change is worth more than any exercise swap in this book.

3 **Write down every weight.** In four weeks you should be able to look back and watch the numbers move. If you cannot see progress, you will not believe there is any.

4 **Never add weight at the cost of form.** Nobody in that room is impressed. The man you are lifting for is you in five years.

5 **Know when to stop.** There is a difference between a hard session and a session you should not have finished. Ego makes that call badly.

6 **Do not miss twice.** One missed session is a bad week. Two is the start of quitting.

7 **Sleep is part of the program.** You do not grow in the gym. You grow when you sleep. Seven hours minimum, and you already know if you are getting it.

FOUR WEEKS FROM TODAY

Twelve sessions. Nothing more than that. Not a new identity. Not a transformation. Twelve appointments you keep with yourself. Do that and the next four weeks are easier, because you will have proof that you do what you say.

15

QUESTIONS

CAN I REALLY GET RESULTS ON THREE DAYS A WEEK?

Yes, and that is the point of putting push and pull together. You get more done in each session, so three focused days beat five distracted ones. Four days is on page 5 when you want it.

THE GYM IS BUSY AND I CANNOT GET THE MACHINE.

Keep moving. Go to the next exercise in the group and come back, or use the closest thing to it. A cable fly instead of a machine fly changes nothing that matters. Standing and waiting does.

WHAT ABOUT LEGS?

This book is upper body. If you want a legs day, use one of the walking days. Tuesday on either week, or Saturday on the four day week. Do not bolt legs onto the end of a push pull session. You will do them badly and cut them first when you are tired.

WHY AM I NOT MAKING PROGRESS?

It is almost always one of three things. You are not eating the protein you think you are. You are not adding weight when the reps say you should. Or you are not really doing three sessions a week. Look at what you wrote down. The notebook is honest even when you are not.

HOW MUCH WATER?

Three liters a day. Start with 500 ml when you wake up, and take a liter through the session.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER FOUR WEEKS?

Run it again with heavier weight, or move up a level. Do not go looking for a new program. Changing the plan every month is why the last five years look the way they do.

Remember this

STRUCTURE EXISTS SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO ARGUE WITH YOURSELF.

MYRON JACKSON



BACK TO BASICS

WHEN YOU NEED MORE

This book gives you structure. It cannot see your bloodwork, your shoulder, your schedule, or the week you are about to have.

Most men who come to me have already tried. Gym memberships. Programs online. Meal plans. Some of it worked for a while. Most of it did not last. That was not a discipline problem. It was built for nobody in particular.

Back To Basics is built for one man at a time. We look at what is going on inside your body before we build anything. We work around the injuries you are carrying. And you are never doing it alone.

1. Apply. It takes about two minutes.
2. We look at it, and you book a call.
3. We decide together whether this is the right fit.

APPLY NOW

apply.joinbacktobasics.com

This guide is general fitness information, not medical advice. It is not a substitute for assessment or treatment by a qualified professional. Speak to your doctor before starting any exercise or nutrition program, especially if you have an existing injury or medical condition, kidney or liver problems, are taking medication, or have not exercised in some time. Stop and seek medical attention if you have chest pain, dizziness, or sharp joint pain. You train at your own risk. Copyright 2026 Back To Basics LLC. All rights reserved.