

**THE FITNESS
ATHLETE'S
GUIDE TO
BULKING FOR
STRENGTH**

*A 6-Week Program to Add Strength and
Mass for Functional Fitness Athletes*

By Andre Crews



1. Introduction: The Program

‘Tis the season to...get jacked!

Welcome to your bulking guide! The average American gains 3-8 lbs between Thanksgiving and the New Year. And as you might imagine (or know from experience), those 3-8 lbs are seldom made of muscle. So I partnered with BarBend to bring you a 6 week weightlifting, ass-kicking program to help you turn those extra calories into power producing mass!

How Many Sessions Per Week?

The program involves 5 days of workouts with 2 rest days each week. Athletes lift Monday-Wednesday, rest Thursday, lift Friday and Saturday, and rest Sunday. This schedule and order of workouts allows for maximum performance, adaptation, and decreased risk of injury. It is NOT recommended to do all 5 days in a row. But if you must based on your schedule, you may want to consider decreasing load / percentages to protect your body!

What Will This Program Do?

Yes, this is a hypertrophy-focused program! Through a combination of heavy lifting and high volume, athletes will add lean muscle mass and increase strength over the course of 6 weeks.

Like most linear strength programs, this program has athletes start at percentages that are very manageable to hit on a consistent basis (60-75%). Then athletes have the freedom to add weight each week by feel.

How Much Weight Should I Add Each Week?

My general rule of thumb is to add 5-10 lbs for leg exercises (squat and deadlift) and 2-5 lbs for upper body exercises (bench and overhead press) each week. The idea here is for each week to get slightly heavier but it should feel similar to the first week in terms of RPE (rate of perceived exertion). Think Milo of Croton and his calf.

Quick history lesson from Britannica: Milo led the Crotoniate army to victory against the Sybarites, won the wrestling championship in the Olympics 6 times, and was revered as one of the strongest athletes of his time. “According to legend, Milo trained by carrying a calf daily from its birth until it became a full-sized ox.”

So at the end of the 6 weeks, athletes will generally be moving up 25-50 more lbs on their leg exercises and 10-25 more lbs on their upper body exercises in their working sets. And if you can move 25 more lbs at what feels like 70%, you may have a similar feeling when you go to test your 1RM (though the increase may be less than 25 lbs).

Athletes will vacillate between heavier loaded low reps (1-5) and lighter loaded high reps (8-10). Heavy, low reps will yield Myofibrillar Hypertrophy, or the growth of contractile muscle fibers. Larger contractile fibers yield increased force which yields more strength and power. On the other side of gains, lighter loaded, high reps will yield increased muscle size but not necessarily increased strength. This is known as Sarcoplasmic Hypertrophy. Think bodybuilding style isolation movements like bicep curls! Athletes will train under both stimuli to get both bigger and stronger!

This program is modeled after one I wrote for myself and my training partners in 2015. I've done it twice (once in 2015 and again this past summer). And trust me. It works!

A Note on Conditioning

Keep in mind that your aerobic capacity may suffer a bit during the 6 weeks. But trust the process! Getting strong takes time. And take solace in the fact that your fitness won't completely die. According to a study from UC Berkeley, "well-trained runners, cyclists, or swimmers [who] abstain from all exercise, lose on average only a little more than half of their gains in aerobic conditioning in about three months."

I'm only asking for 6 weeks! They also note that "two or three short sessions a week of high-intensity interval training...can be a good way to maintain aerobic fitness." So fear not, my friends! Between the rower, assault bike, and weightlifting EMOMs sprinkled throughout this program, you'll maintain your aerobic capacity with minimal drop off!

Deloading and Testing

If you're interested in testing your 1RM after the 6 weeks, take a week to chill. Work out, move around, but keep the volume low and load moderate. This will give your body a chance to rest, recover, and get ready to lift heavy again.

Good luck and Get After It!

2. The Templates: Here's What To Do

Monday

Exercise	Load	Rounds	Repetitions
Back Squat	75% of 1RM	10	3
Strict Press	75% of 1RM	10	2
On above, rest 90 seconds between rounds			
Rowing Machine		8	20 seconds max effort, 20 seconds rest

Tuesday

Exercise	Load	Rounds	Repetitions
Front Squat	60% of 1RM	5	10
Dumbbell OH Press	AHAFA	5	10
On above, rest 90 seconds between rounds			
Airdyne or Bike		8	10 seconds max effort, 20 seconds rest

Wednesday

Exercise	Load	Rounds	Repetitions
Squat Clean and Jerk	70% of 1RM	30	1
On above, perform 1 rep Every Minute on the Minute (EMOM) for 30 Minutes			
Weighted Pull-ups	AHAFA	5	5
Weighted Dips	AHAFA	8	5
Rest 90-120 seconds between rounds			

Thursday

Rest or 20 minutes Airdyne at steady pace

Friday

Exercise	Load	Rounds	Repetitions
Deadlift	75% of 1RM	5	5
Rowing Machine		5	250 meters
On above, perform 5 deadlifts and 250 meter row as fast as possible. Rest exactly 2 minutes between rounds.			
Bench Press	75% of 1RM	10	3
Bent Over Single Arm DB Row	AHAFA	5	6
Forarm Plank		5	30-60 seconds
On above, rest 2 minutes between rounds. After 5 rounds of rows and planks finish the remaining 5 rounds of bench press.			

Saturday

Exercise	Load	Rounds	Repetitions
Barbell Bicep Curls	AHAFA	4	10
Single Leg Weighted Step Ups	AHAFA	5	10 (5 per leg)
Tricep Skull Crushers	AHAFA	4	10
Bulgarian Split Squats holding Dumbbells	AHAFA	4	10 (5 per leg)
Hollow Rocks		4	20

Perform these exercises back to back in a circuit.
This isn't for time but minimize rest.

Sunday

Full rest day. Meal prep, relax, Netflix and chill.

2. Sources

Sources

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Milo-of-Croton>

<http://www.healthguidance.org/entry/17490/1/Powerbuilding-and-the-Two-Types-of-Hypertrophy.html>

<http://www.berkeleywellness.com/fitness/exercise/article/exercise-detraining-effect>

