A strength and conditioning guide

FOR INSURGENTS

Inhabit.Body

"Our bodies are a mystery to us. Our health is out of our hands."

Stress is on the rise, and so too are feelings of resentment, depression and worries about the future. To help us "cope" with our state, health gurus try to convince us that it's all in our head - stress, we're told, is simply an emotion that we need to suppress or will away through curated thoughts and applied mindfulness.

Yet we feel stress every day, and not just as an emotion but also physically: as fatigue, pain and inflammation. The conditions of our hellworld are set up to hold us in this state - driving in large killing machines across the city, we spend our days slaving away, only to return home exhausted and still drowning under the weight of financial responsibilities. Stress is not just "in our heads," it's real and this chronic underlying state of perpetual stress makes us feel like we're headed towards death without ever having lived.

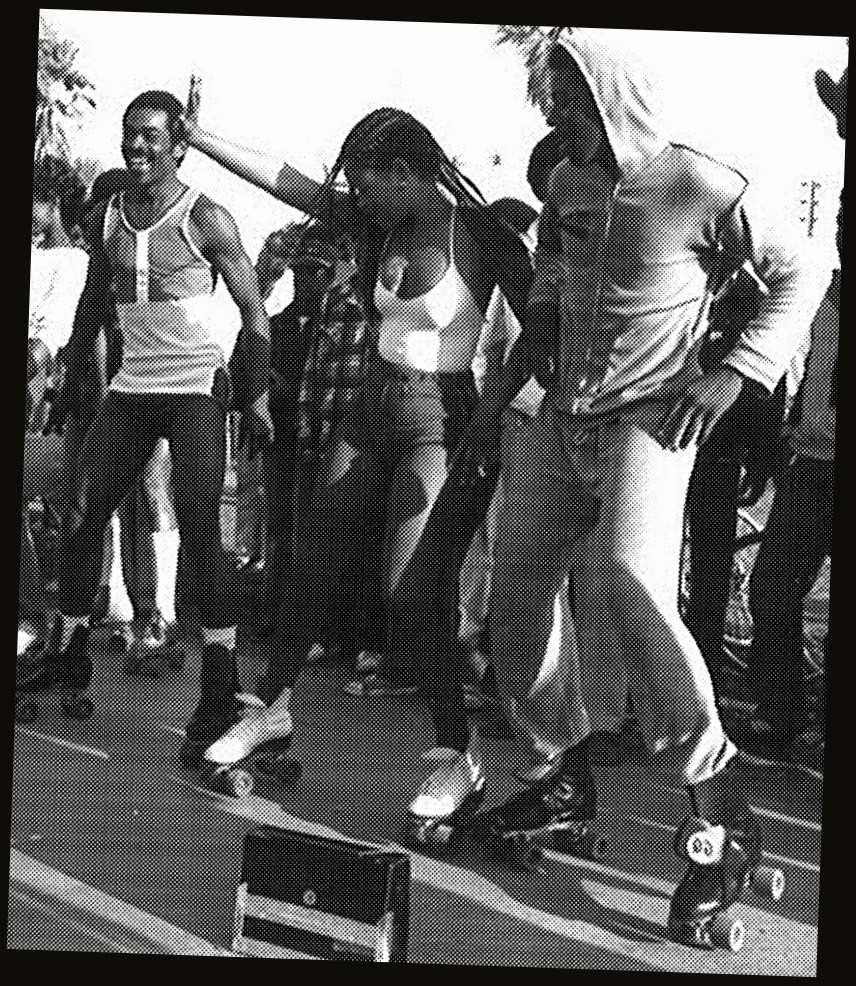
Maybe the worst part, however, is how this distortion of stress robs us of the physiological advantages that stress, paired with rest, help to develop: making us stronger, protecting us against real threats and most importantly, letting us experience life, including its most dangerous and exhilarating dimensions. In this sense, it's wrong to say that fitness training is a way to eliminate stress. Instead, we might argue that strength and conditioning offer us a way to truly begin to inhabit our own bodies, curtailing the excess of stress forced on us by hellworld and mobilizing the remainder in a way that we have some marginal control over. This fitness guide is a practical contribution to the discussion of how to do this and, in the process, how to inhabit our bodies and build our collective capacity to become stronger.

Written for insurgents, this guide is a starting point for the beginner but may also be helpful for the seasoned gym-goers and even athletes. These are methods that I have seen practiced everywhere from high levels of sports to overworked patients experiencing chronic pain. It is not meant to make you an elite athlete, but rather to help you become stronger and more confident in your body and the environment around you. Obviously, building basic physical capacities is also helpful when order begins to break down and we once again meet each other in the street. But this isn't a field book for training those antifa supersoldiers we've all heard so much about. It's a sort of minimum program, aimed at constructing a base of physical power from which you can build.

Although hellworld keeps us from knowing our physical potential and the world to come is too much of an unknown to be able to properly prepare, we still have the ability to win small battles within ourselves and amongst the people around us. If we invest in collective gym spaces, we create a place to learn about ourselves, meet one another and begin to reclaim our bodies together. To become our strongest, we need people to be there with us, to support us, motivate us and offer constructive feedback. Emotional strength helps to build physical strength, and vice versa. Our individual and collective strength will largely depend on each other.

Ultimately, through the process of experimentation with our breath and movement, we become better equipped to handle new challenges, uncertainty and chaos. And when we add physical strength to an already solid structure, our bodies become more capable weapons on the road to becoming ungovernable.

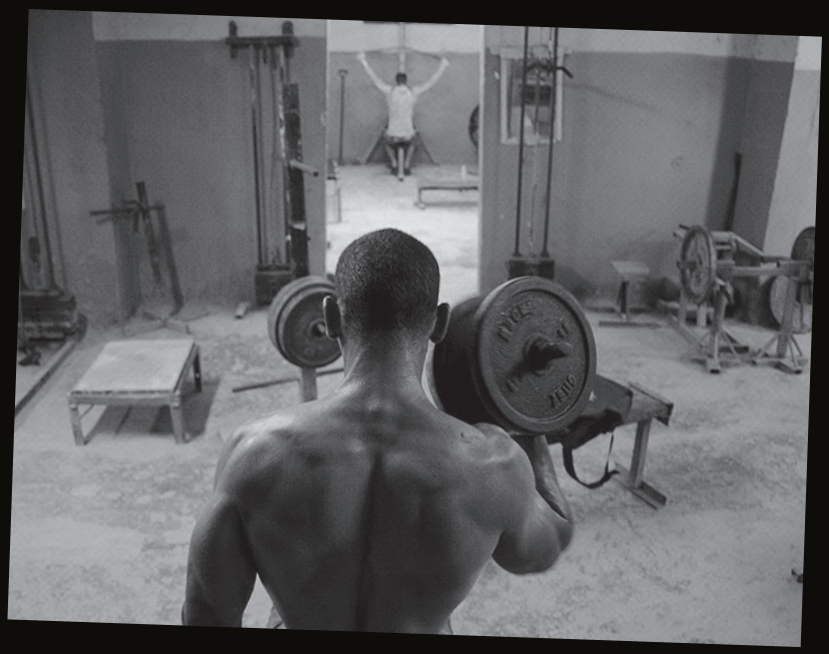
"Finally, we reach the edge—we feel the danger of freedom, the embrace of living together, the miraculous and the unknown—and know: this is life."



Inhabit your body.

For the bro Sean, whose courage, raw honesty
and squat game we should all strive for.
Love, Mila P

TRAINING: THE BASICS



By learning fundamental movement patterns and applying load progressively, getting strong is both simple and doesn't require a lotof time or resources.

First, a few things to consider:

- Fundamentals are Everything

Incredible gains can be accomplished with just a few of the fundamental movements highlighted in this guide. Learn these basic movements, work towards the never-ending process of mastery and, if so desired, sprinkle in flashy shit down the road.

- Prioritize Recovery

Lifting heavy puts a tremendous amount of stress on the body. Prioritize recovery in the 24-48hrs after a hard day at the gym and you'll better see the rewards of hard work (see section on recovery).

- Be Patient and think long-term

Building a strong base of technique, movement and strength is a lifelong process. Start slow, keep expectations low, set modest goals and be patient with progress. Learning about your body is a slow process - taking your time and staying consistent will pay huge dividends in the future.

- Enjoy Yourself

Do what feels good, create flow and rhythm through movement and have fun along the way. Enjoyment is just as important as progress.

MOVEMENT

At some point, 80% of us will be cursed with chronic pain in our back, shoulders or hips. In this world, wherever we are--work, school, prison or at play--our bodies are held hostage in conditions that set us up for a life of aches and pains.

Enormous amounts of research have been conducted on chronic pain, with often confusing and conflicting results. Overall, it seems that the condition is one in which social, emotional and physical ailments all converge, producing a general feeling of incapacity that has both clear physical symptoms and distinct mental and emotional dimensions. Sometimes it is localized (i.e. lower back pain), but even then the condition is often difficult to pin down. More often, it is a non-local ache that extends over an entire region of the body.

One thing that does consistently challenge chronic pain, however, is the practice of new, more expansive movement patterns. Unfortunately, trying to alter our movement patterns is a daily uphill battle and all the conditions of modern society are set up for us to fail. I say this only to caution people - there is no perfect solution. However, one way for us to mitigate some of the misery and potentially even prevent chronic pain is to learn new ways to move through the world.

The movements in this section are just a starting point - one framework that we can use to learn and talk about our bodies together and in the process, become stronger. Practice learning to breathe, develop a strong core and mobilize joints through a full range of motion. Get to know your body in new ways, start to reclaim what you can of it and when you're ready: add load.

"However, one way for us to mitigate some of the misery and potentially even prevent chronic pain is to learn new ways to move through the world. "

THE BREATH

Held down by the anxiety and dread of daily life, we often move through the world in a state of activation: our heart rate elevated and muscles tense, we rely on rapid and shallow breaths into our chest for oxygen. Though there may not be an imminent danger in front of us, our body interprets these physiological and emotional signals as if there is one - activating our sympathetic nervous system (the "fight or flight" response), accelerating the output from adrenal glands and increasing cortisol levels, blood pressure and heart rate.

Besides causing us chronic inflammation and numerous physical and mental health problems, an overactive sympathetic nervous system challenges our ability to move, think clearly and emotionally cope with what is in front of us.

Really, the only way out is to destroy the suffocating hellworld that subjects us to this perpetual excess of stress. But first, we have to learn to breathe.

Breathing is the most readily available tool we have to control our nervous system and activate the parasympathetic response (the "rest and digest" response). By slowing our breath and breathing into our diaphragm (the muscle beneath our lungs that ideally expands as we inhale), we can lower our heart rate and stress levels, decrease chronic inflammation and quiet down parts of the brain.

Through the breath alone, so much is possible.

DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING

To breathe diaphragmatically, focus on expanding outward 360 degrees through the entire abdominal wall (including your back) as you breathe-in. Unlike how many of us breathe "normally", this type of breathing will involve much less movement in the upper chest and a lot more from around the stomach and lower back. While standing, place one hand on your chest and another on your belly. As you breathe in, your belly should expand gently against your hand as if you're inflating a balloon. The belly should deflate and return to normal as you breathe out.

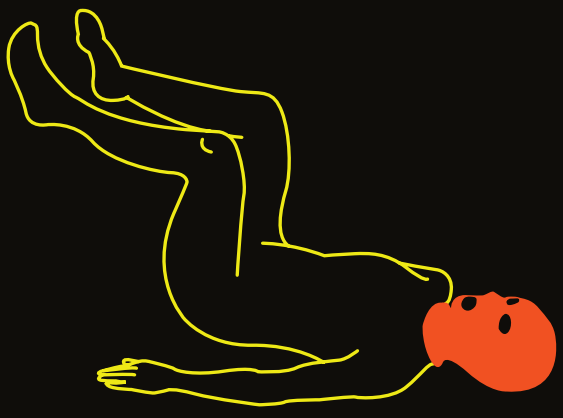
Now try to experience the same sensation while holding your hands on your obliques (these are the muscles on the side of your torso). See if you can expand towards the side as you inhale. To continue to feel the breath expand 360 degrees around your stomach, try these exercises:

Crocodile Breathing

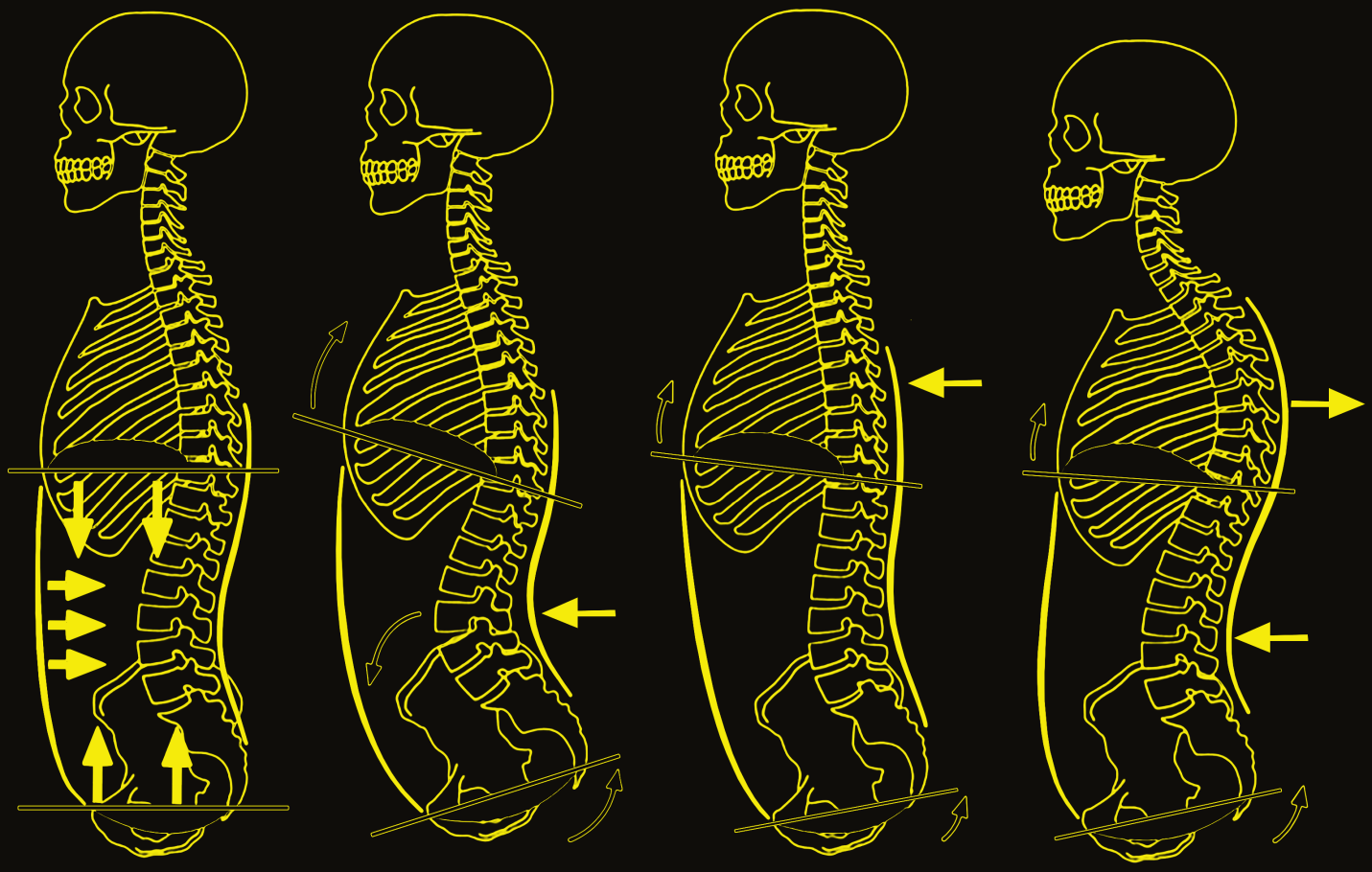
Lay on your stomach with both hands underneath your forehead. As you breathe in, feel your stomach press into the ground and lower-back raise up. See if you can fill your lower belly, then slowly expand into the chest and upper back. Try breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth, exhaling longer than what feels natural and until you have no more air to release.

90/90 Breathing

Switch over to your back and try breathing with your knees bent and feet against the wall. Work on pressing your back into the floor as you breathe in while also expanding outward towards the obliques and front of the belly. Remember you want to breathe out in a full cylinder (360°). As you exhale, work on maintaining pressure into the floor - the abdominals should begin to engage. Press the rib cage down so that it doesn't flare and tilt the pelvis back so more of your back presses into the floor. The outward tension you're creating in this position is called bracing.



POSTURE



Many of us also move through the world with shoulders tense and curled in, head leaned forward and pelvis tilt forward, a classic defensive posture. Similar to chest breathing, this position reinforces our body's response to a perceived threat, protecting our internal organs from danger but, in doing so, limiting their ability to function efficiently. While there is nothing inherently bad about this position, prolonged periods spent in it can negatively affect our ability to breathe and maintain the integrity of the spine in order to prevent injuries.

When we lift (and some argue as we complete daily tasks), we want to be especially mindful of the positioning of our spine. By stacking our diaphragm and pelvic floor parallel to one another (as seen on the far left), we can better breathe and create pressure in order to sustain heavy loads. For many, achieving this position will involve engaging the glutes in order to help tilt the pelvis back and extend the hips as well as pulling the rib cage back to avoid it flaring forward.

Maintaining or even practicing this position can be hard for many people, but through a variety of abdominal and glute exercises (see the next section), it can become easier over time. Additionally, when we add in load (as in a weighted squat), we can further reinforce this posture - creating a strong and solid foundation on which we can navigate the world more confidently.

INTRA-ABDOMINAL PRESSURE

Once you've developed your breath and posture, you are better prepared to brace, or create "intra-abdominal pressure" - a crucial factor when lifting heavy weights. This involves the engagement of muscles throughout the abdominal area, back and hips. To feel this instinctually, pretend you are getting wacked really hard in the belly, notice how you immediately create outward tension in preparation for the hit.

To create pressure:

- Start with posture from a standing position - stacking the diaphragm over the pelvic floor. Careful not to lift your chest too high or stick your butt out.

- Next, take in a diaphragmatic breath, expanding your abdominals in a full 360 degrees, with a focus on the back and obliques. While you are exhaling, think about maintaining tension through the entire abdominal wall.

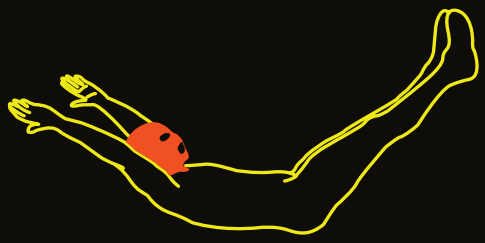
- The goal is a perfectly shaped cylindrical belly, not aesthetics. No matter your size, there shouldn't be any obvious signs of muscle definition (i.e. don't pose as if you're sucking in or trying to flex your abs for a photo).

Once you're ready, attempt to incorporate bracing into various movements: try to squat, lift something off the ground and overhead or practice carrying and moving a heavy object. You can still practice breathing while maintaining pressure. When you start lifting heavier, you will want to hold your breath in order to create as much intra-abdominal pressure as possible - a lifting belt is useful in this case.

ADDITIONAL CORE TRAINING

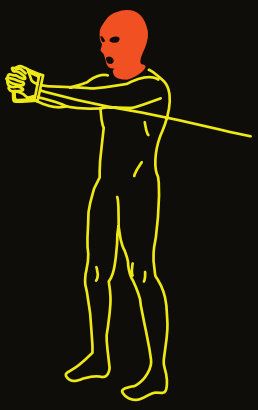
Here are some core exercises that when done slow, controlled and with proper technique are extremely effective in improving your ability to brace for a heavy lift and/or sustain your posture throughout the day.

Dead Bug



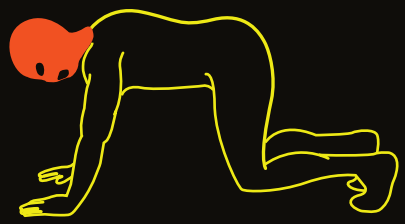
Hollow Body Holds

Anti-rotational Exercise
Good for throwing and maintaining balance when getting shoved by a cop

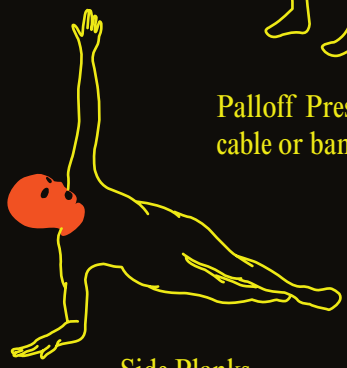


Palloff Press with cable or band

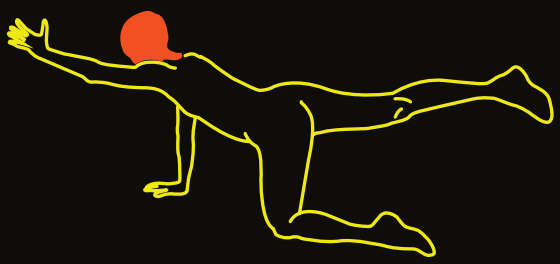
Ab Wheel



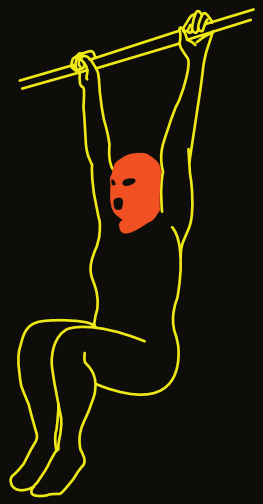
Bear Crawl



Side Planks



Bird Dog



Hanging L-Sit (Knees Bent)
Good for turnstile jumping

Stir-the-pot

MOBILITY

Along with developing a solid foundation of core stability, practicing good range of motion throughout your joints will go a long way in improving your movement patterns and getting you through the world with less pain.

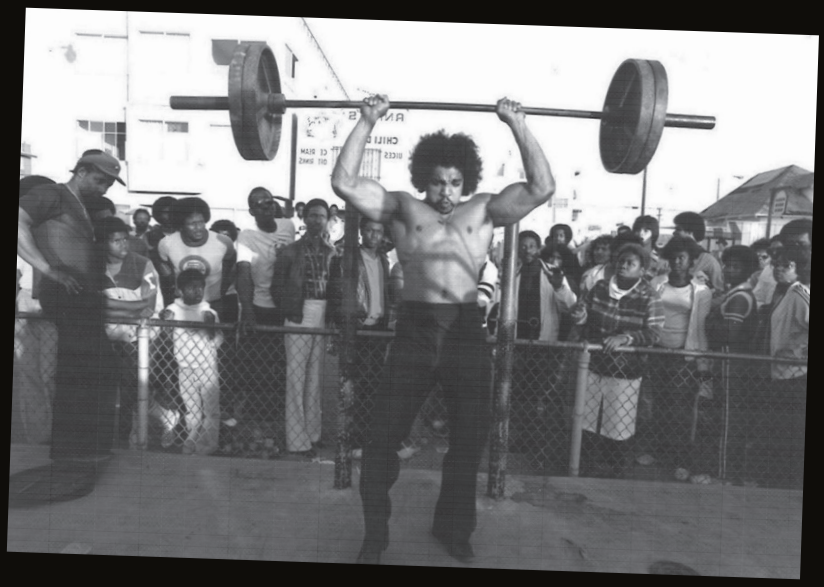
Most mobility problems vary from person to person and cannot be covered in much detail here. However, it is worth mentioning that unless you strive to be a yogi or gymnast, you don't need to be super flexible*.
And the only mobility** you'll need is what is necessary to complete a given task. Basically, there is no standard of mobility except for the one that allows you to feel good and accomplish tasks efficiently and withoutpain.

Furthermore, a lot of mobility issues are often tied to instability in the lower-back and can be self-correcting through movement. Get good at breathing and creating stability through your core. From there, relaxing the hips and shoulders to move them through their full range of motion will become a lot easier. Eventually, through movement and strength training, you will learn that a lot of mobility issues are tied to unnecessary stiffness and as you understand where and when to create tension, relaxing the areas around the joints becomes much easier.

Flexibility: the ability of a muscle or muscle groups to lengthen passively through a range of motion.

Mobility: the ability of a joint to move actively through a range of motion.

STRENGTH TRAINING



In the weight room, where gains have numeric value and are visible in the mirror, it's easy to see how a healthy dose of stress sets the stage for growth. This is best demonstrated by the strength training concept of progressive overload: the simple idea that in order for muscles to grow and adapt to new loads, the body has to be forced to a stress level beyond what it has recently experienced.

In the case of strength training, for example, stress (i.e. a heavy enough load) will literally leave muscle tissues damaged until the body begins the equally important process of recovery that allows muscles to repair and eventually grow stronger. However, with too much stress or not enough recovery, we may end up laying the groundwork for injuries, illness or burnout. Therefore, we are careful to start small and to introduce stress gradually.

LINEAR PROGRESSION

There are a variety of ways to introduce stress to our system, but for simplicity, I am going to focus on one of the more reliable, efficient and time tested techniques of the "linear progression". The name is arguably misleading: only early on will progress be linear and, like anything, you'll eventually experience regular ebb and flow. This is okay. Rest, reset to a lighter weight, clean up technique, if needed, and work your way back up. Setbacks are not only guaranteed but are a crucial part of the process.

Regardless of if you have an athletic background or not, you can get pretty far and build a solid base from which to maintain just on a linear progression alone. They are an incredibly efficient way to train and a lot can be accomplished in just a couple 90-minute sessions weekly.

By no means, however, is this the only way to get strong. If you find another way that you like more, go with it! And if you later want to progress to higher levels of powerlifting or other forms of strength training, you'll likely want to seek out intermediate programs.

Here is an example of what a regular session may look like:

- General warm up (10-15mins)

Based on your individual needs and to help you prepare for a heavy session. Likely a mix of light cardio, mobility, breathing and core work and maybe some self-myofascial release with a foam roller or lacrosse ball

- Specific warm up for each lift

Start these with the bar, practice the movement then slowly work your way up to the weight you're attempting for your main set. Do these lifts with intention: slow, controlled and with good technique in mind.

- Main Set

3 sets of 5 reps with approximately 3 minutes rest between each set. Start lighter than you think necessary and add weight as you can handle. Early on most lifts should feel challenging yet manageable - you want to be able to create some stress but still be able to maintain good form. Once you have gone pretty far on this, and start to fail/hit a plateau, you can consider looking into other programs or resetting and training form before continuing to progress with more weight.

EQUIPMENT

If you're able, I recommend doing primary lifts with a barbell and plates because of the ease with which you can add weight incrementally and reach heavier loads. On lifts that are harder to progress (mainly upper body), you can even acquire fractional plates (.5-1.25lbs) and make as little as 1lb jumps week-to-week. If you don't have a barbell set-up, a lot can still be accomplished with other implements including kettlebells, dumbbells, sand-bags and really any heavy object you can get your hands on. The main drawback of equipment other than barbells is the large jumps in between weight so you may want to search out other programs.

SAMPLE BEGINNER 3-DAY LP

MONDAY	WEDNESDAY	FRIDAY
Overhead Press	Bench Press	Push-ups
Back Squat	Deadlift	Front Squat
Chin-ups	Barbell Row	Pull-Ups

SAMPLE BEGINNER 2-DAY LP

MONDAY	THURSDAY
Back Squat	Deadlift
Overhead Press	Bench Press
Chin-Ups	Pull-Ups

If you do not have the time to commit to a classic linear progression or don't yet have access to equipment, do an exercise from each of the categories below. Hinge, squat, push, pull and carry are five fundamental patterns that will all have incredible practical application to other areas of your life. These are all patterns that should be learned, practiced regularly and progressed with reps and/or load. Many of these can be done with a variety of weights or heavy objects.

	HINGE	SQUAT	PUSH	PULL	CARRY
Examples Bodyweight	• Glute Bridge • Single Leg RDL • Hip thrust	• Bodyweight Squat • Cossak Squat • Split Squat	• Push up • Dips • Handstand	• Pull-ups • Bodyweight row	
Loaded	• Deadlift • Kettlebell Swing • Good morning	• Back Squat • Goblet Squat • Front Squat	• Sled Push • Bench Press • Overhead Press • Upside down kettlebell press	• Sled Pulls • Bent-over rows • Lat pull-down • Bird/Dog Rows	• Farmers Carries • Bear Hug Carries • Suitcase Carries • Waiter Carry

STEAL THESE BOOKS FOR YOUR COLLECTIVE GYM LIBRARY:

The Complete Strength Training Guide by Greg Nuckols (available free online)

Intervention: Course Corrections for the Athlete and Trainer by Dan John

Back Mechanic by Stuart McGill

Starting Strength and Practical Programming by Mark Rippetoe

Scientific Principles of Strength Training (from Juggernaut Strength)

AEROBIC CONDITIONING

Aerobic conditioning is a great way to build practical skills and challenge your body in different ways. If your goal is to get stronger, however, you'll want to prioritize low-intensity cardio rather than interval training so as not to interfere with recovery. This is not to mention the fact that lifting weights alone will also help build your general aerobic capacity. End your lifting sessions with one or two of these or do them independently on non-recovery days.

- Sled Pushes/Pulls
- Carries (see examples above)
- Long walks/hikes with or without a pack
- Cycling
- Dance

If you are strength training 2 days/week or less and have time, these are great higher-intensity ways to build aerobic capacity. Just like lifting, however, these activities may require their own recovery period afterwards:

- Sprints and multi-directional speed training
- Playing sports with friends
- Martial Arts/Combatives training
- Kettlebell Swings

RECOVERY

Just as important as a heavy lifting session is the time you spend between, resting and refueling. If you aren't recovered enough before going into a heavy or intense workout, you are setting the stage for injury or, at best, you're not going to get any stronger. Time for recovery, however, can be challenging for a lot of us to find, in which case I recommend cutting down on the intensity or load of your workouts.

If you do have the time for recovery, here are a few tips:

SLEEP

I know it feels like this world doesn't want us to sleep but if you have the luxury of an undisturbed 8-9 hours every night, do what you can to take advantage of it and practice good sleep hygiene: avoid blue light before bed, keep the temperature low and the room dark and emptied of electronics. Attempt to fall asleep and wake up at similar times each day and if you struggle to sleep, do mobility and crocodile breaths (see past section on breathing) before bed.

EAT

I normally avoid the topic of nutrition. Not because it isn't important or that I don't care - I love nutrition and I consider it a primary element of my training and general well-being. However, nutrition is a loaded subject and one that can look very different from person-to-person depending on dietary needs, access to certain foods and general beliefs about what is "healthy"and what's not.

My only advice is that if you want to get strong, make sure to eat enough food. An active person, especially one trying to build muscle, will need a lot more calories than a person with a sedentary lifestyle. If you're able to enjoy a more diverse diet, here are a couple things to keep in mind:

Macronutrients (carbs/protein/fats): Make sure you are getting enough of them while prioritizing protein (0.8-1.2g/1lb bodyweight) to help build and restore muscle. I personally prefer to buy grass-fed meat in bulk, however, vegan sources work as well (though some argue that plant-based protein sources are less bioavailable). You'll likely also want carbs (I like white rice and potatoes) as well as plenty of fats (olive/avocado/coconut oil, butter, eggs, etc) throughout the day.

Micronutrients: Eat a wide variety of vegetables, especially the green, leafy kind. If you are adventurous also include fungi, organ meat, bone broth, seaweed, sardines, shellfish, beets, sauerkraut and wild berries in your diet for added vitamins and minerals.

Stay hydrated.

MOVE

Try to avoid being still for too long. Do movements that feel good but don't get your heart rate up too high: i.e. take walks, train your core, doyoga, mobility drills or dance. The actual activity is not important as long as you go into your next session feeling loose and prepared for a hard workout.

ADDITIONAL MOVEMENTS

With a solid base of strength, not only does moving through the world become a bit easier but so does your ability to generate power and execute potential movements involved in street activities. To continue to develop skills and to keep your body moving often and in different ways, consider adding in these activities:

- Jumping

Used to develop explosive power, jumps can be used for both the upper (i.e. push up to box jump) and lower body. Also, try doing them in different directions and on one foot for added agility training.

- Throwing

Also used to develop explosive power but in the upper body, try variations of medicine ball throws.

- Get-Ups

Turkish get-ups, combat get-ups, crossed-leg sit-to-stand, etc. Learn a variety of ways to get off the ground.

- Unilateral Exercises

Humans are largely asymmetrical but training limbs individually can help create a bit more balance side-to-side.

- Strongman

Practice moving and picking up large, awkwardly shaped objects like (cop) cars and boulders.

- Build things, fix things, garden, cook

Get shit done while moving around and squatting up/down.

- Parkour, gymnastics, yoga, play, etc.

“All our efforts are failures until they’re not.”
- Noel Ignatiev

inhabit.body@protonmail.com