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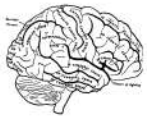

Use psychology for fitness

EZ Guidebook

to Resistance Training for General and Mental Health

VOLUME 1

Clayton Taylor, MA, NASM-CPT, Pn1

Strength training doesn't need to be complicated. This is a simple, effective guide to the foundations of thoughtful strength training for general and mental health.

Available via Zoom/Facetime and also in-person in the SF East Bay Area, CA

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Version 1.0.3, Published May 2026.

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Welcome to Thoughtful Movement & Fitness.

Thoughtful Movement & Fitness is an answer to the craziness of modern day stresses and pains that come from day-to-day life. Our bodies and brains have evolved for movement, yet our modern world often encourages and even enforces being sedentary, AKA moving very little.

TMF counters this by teaching students how to integrate movement into their daily lives in ways that improve quality of life in meaningful ways.

This EZ Guidebook Volume 1 teaches the basics of resistance training in a way that makes it accessible and useful to anyone interested in approaching movement and nutrition thoughtfully, one-step-at-a-time, over the course of their life.

Table of Contents

Part 1

INTRODUCTION TO THOUGHTFUL MOVEMENT & FITNESS

NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR: *Part 1 of this guidebook contains important information about the core concepts of Thoughtful Movement & Fitness training, including:*

- *how to stay safe*
- *how TMF works*
- *helpful terms and definitions*
- *introduction to movements*
- *introduction to the thoughtful framework*

QR CODES are available throughout this guidebook.
Use to learn more.

Completing Part 1 first is strongly recommended; the information presented here is critical to creating a safe and effective framework.

This EZ Guidebook is meant to be used practically and repeatedly over time. It is given to every Thoughtful Movement & Fitness student and represents the first 18 - 24 months of diligent and rigorous training, for most people.

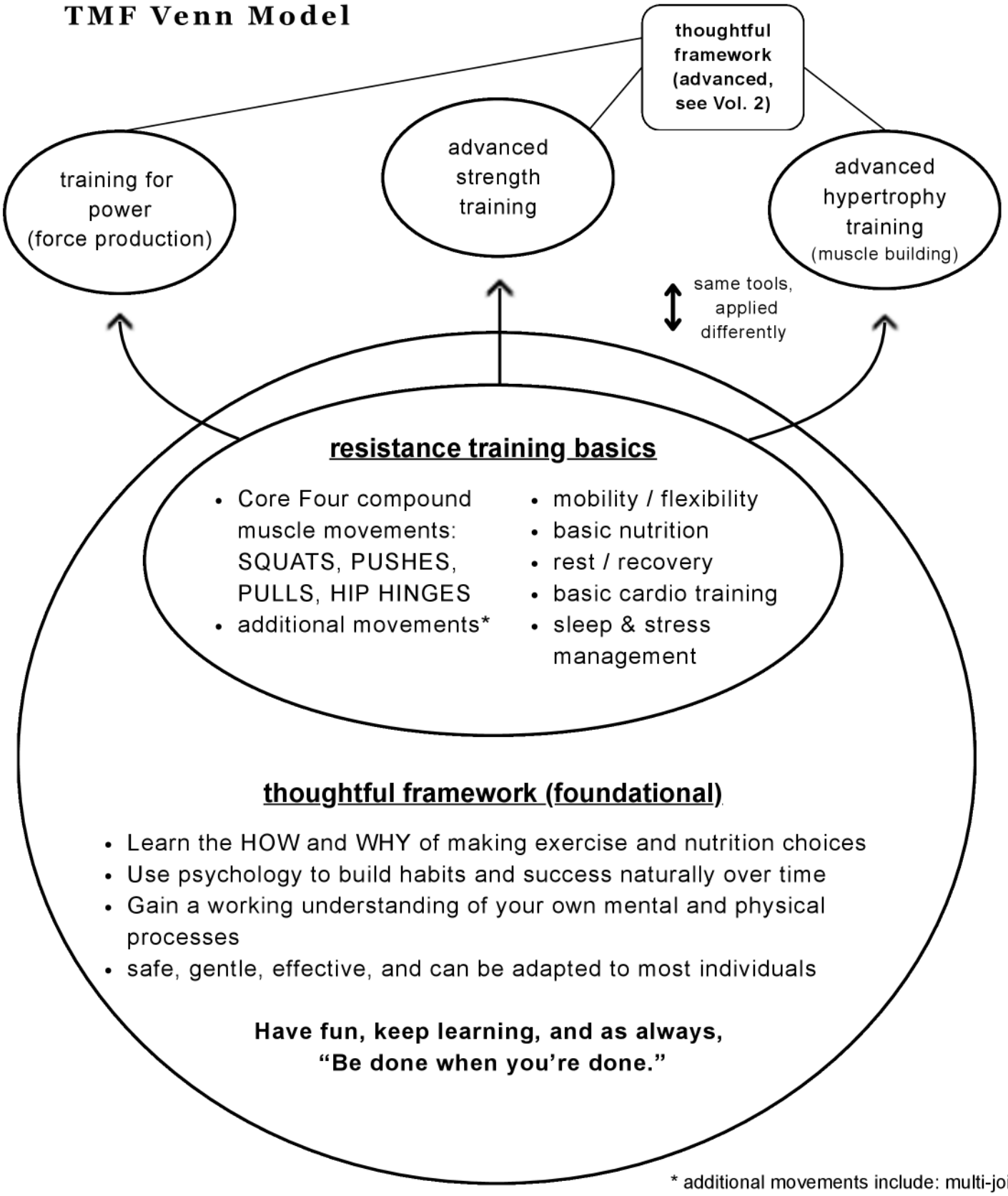
Always consult a physician prior to starting any kind of exercise program or framework.

The thoughtful framework offers a simple and effective approach to understanding exercise and how to manage your own movement and nutrition goals successfully. We do this by learning the basics of exercise and nutrition first, while paying attention to how we feel while we're doing it. Too often, conventional fitness and nutrition tells us to ignore bad feelings. The thoughtful framework flips this by focusing on using movement and nutrition to feel good.

Our bodies and our brains will tell us what is right and wrong for each of us as individuals. TMF students learn to listen to these cues and to move and eat in ways that naturally build towards their goals.

Each section of this guidebook is purposefully brief for ease-of-use. Because of this, much detail and discussion is left out. Reference sources and additional resources have been provided throughout the guidebook so that those who wish to learn more, may do so.

TMF Venn Model



* additional movements include: multi-joint, single-joint, isometric, transversal, varied directional load, progressive technique, etc..

Safety first, *always.*

Movement and exercise can lead to injury. We minimize this risk by putting safety first, *always*. We do this by learning proper form and execution while always paying attention to how we feel and adjusting accordingly.

Listen to your body, listen to your brain. If something feels off or wonky or uncomfortable or painful, carefully discontinue the movement and rest. Injury can require dedicated rest, rehabilitation, and sometimes medical intervention. Often though, injury can be avoided simply by paying attention and responding thoughtfully before a discomfort becomes a pain. TMF students learn how to do this with the phrase, "Be done when you're done."

This material, when practiced in full, is meant to reduce risk of injury while increasing quality of life in a variety of ways. *Always be sure that the space in which you're working out is safe and clear of potential hazards.*

Be done when you're done.
Listen to your body and respond appropriately.

Conventional fitness often tells us to ignore feeling bad for the sake of progress. The old, "no pain, no gain" mentality is objectively and scientifically incorrect. We can indeed 'make gains' without pain involved. TMF students learn to respect how they feel and discontinue movement when it's right for them. This is helpful for staying safe and for making exercise more enjoyable and repeatable.

At this foundational level it is more important to move with regularity than it is to move with intensity. Allowing workouts to be enjoyable without turning into misery can be critical to staying consistent and committed. Intensity can always be added later, once habits have begun to form.

To be done when you're done means that as soon as you feel like you want to be done with a movement, for any reason, that you choose to discontinue that movement. By choosing to always pursue feeling good, we're able to pursue both progress and safety simultaneously.

Helpful Terms and Definitions

The following is a brief list of basic terms for understanding exercise instruction. Follow links and QR codes to learn more.

REPS[1] (short for "repetitions"): the number of times a movement is performed start to finish. A squat that goes from a standing position, to a squatting position, and back up again to a standing position is considered one rep.

SETS[1]: a group of repetitions, example: 3x sets of 8-12 reps. Sets usually have rest periods before and after.

RANGE OF MOTION (ROM)[2]: the distance from the starting position to the ending position in a given movement. At this foundational level we perform all movements with a full range of motion.

DIRECTIONAL LOAD: the direction in which the weight is loaded onto the body. For example, a chest press pushes the resistance out from the body, whereas a pull movement pulls the resistance towards the body.

CORE ENGAGEMENT[3]: engaging the core muscles is critical for maintaining good technique. It feels kind of like flexing the tummy, but we want to be sure to engage all the muscles around the torso. Proper core engagement helps to create a strong core and flat back, stabilizing the body for movement.

WARMING UP[4]: it's important to ease your body into movement by warming up with less intense versions of the planned exercise[4]. Warming up helps prepare the body for movement and can help reduce the risk of injury. There are many ways to warm up[4] -- just make sure not to do resistance work without easing the body into the movements first.

BREATHING: when moving, allow yourself to breathe naturally. Expect to breathe harder as the body continues to move, especially as intensity increases. ***Bottom line: keep breathing!***

1. ***Beginner's guide to Reps*** **- Healthline, 2023.**
Written by Pedroja, C., Reviewed by Bubnis, D.
https://www.healthline.com/health/exercise-fitness/what-are-reps

2. **Shoenfeld, B. J., Grgic, J. (2020). Effects of range of motion on muscle development during resistance training interventions: A systematic review.** *Sage Open Medicine*. 2020;8. doi:10.1177/2050312120901559 https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6977096/

3. ***A Comprehensive Guide to Engaging Your Core* - Healthline, 2022** Written by Edwards, T. and Ward, S. https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/how-to-engage-your-core

4. ***How to Warm up Before Lifting Weights* - Men's Health, 2024** (non-gender-specific instruction) Written by Neudecker, K. https://www.menshealth.com/uk/building-muscle/train-smarter/a61803612/how-to-warm-up-before-lifting-weights/

Introduction to the 'Core Four' compound muscle movements: SQUATS, PUSHES, PULLS, HIP HINGES

The 'Core Four' compound muscle movements are: SQUATS, PUSHES, PULLS, and HIP HINGES. These four movements are the most practical resistance training movements for most people. These are the movements that allow us to move our bodies through the world. For example, we use squats to sit and stand, pushes and pulls to open doors, and hip hinges to bend down (ideally without actually bending the lower back, at least at this foundational level). Together, these movements create engagement across the entire body, which is ideal for exercise for a variety of reasons.

The Core Four compound muscle movements and their variations tend to be at the center of most, if not all, general resistance training programs based on exercise science. *See Table 4 in Selecting Resistance Training Exercises for Novices: A Delphi Study with Expert Consensus by Kompf, et al. (2022)*[5].

5. **Kompf J.M., Rhodes R.E., Lee S. (2022) Selecting Resistance Training Exercises for Novices: A Delphi Study with Expert Consensus.** *Am J Lifestyle Med*, *19*(3):437-449. doi: 10.1177/15598276221115662 https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11873903/

This volume focuses on bodyweight-level versions of each of the 'Core Four'.

The movements presented here are performed without weights. They are, however, foundational to conventional weight lifting. For example, a push up is essentially the same thing as a bench press, with differences in direction of movement and tools used. This idea holds true across all four of these foundational compound muscle movements.

One of the great things about practicing these movements with controlled, full ranges of motion, is that the movements themselves will stretch the muscles, meaning we are effectively stretching while performing the movements. There is nuance to this statement, but at this foundational level mobility and flexibility training is built into the lifting technique itself. Using the 'Core Four' compound muscle movements with proper form, control, and full range of motion covers basic flexibility, for most people.

Compound (multi-joint) vs isolation (single-joint) movements[6]

Most resistance movements fall into one of two categories: compound muscle movements or isolated muscle movements, also known as multi-joint movements and single-joint movements, respectively.

Compound muscle movements (aka multi-joint movements) utilize multiple muscle groups working together at once. For example, SQUATS use most all of the muscles and joints in the lower body, with an emphasis on the quadriceps (thigh muscles) and glutes, whereas...

Isolation muscle movements (aka single-joint movements) utilize primarily a single muscle and joint to create the movement. Biceps curls are an example of an isolation exercise, due to it's emphasis on one muscle and one joint (the biceps and the elbow).

Multi-joint movements typically include single-joint movements as part of their multi-joint execution. For example, pushups work the chest primarily, but also work the triceps (back of the upper arm). Multi-joint movements should be performed more often than isolation movements because they offer more value for time and effort spent, for most people.

6. **Single Vs. Multi-Joint Exercises – What They Are and When to Use Each - BarBend, 2024.**
Written by Boly, J., updated by Polish, A.
https://barbend.com/single-vs-multi-joint-exercises/

Core Four Compound Muscle Movements: SQUATS, PUSHES, PULLS, HIP HINGES (preview)

SQUATS:
bodyweight squats

PUSHES:
incline pushups

PULLS:
resistance band pulls

HIP HINGES:
Romanian Deadlifts (RDLs)

Movement instruction begins on page 16. For video instruction go to ThoughtfulMoveFit.com/resistance-training-basics

The thoughtful Framework

What are we doing and why are we doing it?

Exercise and nutrition can quickly become unnecessarily complex and overwhelming in this modern era of social media influence and information excess. Having a thoughtful framework simplifies the process of choosing the 'correct' movements and approach that is right for you. We start by learning the most effective movements for most people, then over time, we build on those skills with more variety and specificity. These 'Core Four' compound muscle movements (SQUATS, PUSHES, PULLS, HIP HINGES) should be around 80% - 100% of all resistance exercises performed at this level. As we learn to incorporate intensity and pursue feeling good, we will naturally increase challenge and variety while adding resistance (see TMF EZ Guidebook Volume 2) and additional exercises (see page 59).

A key part of building a thoughtful framework is to always be asking, **"What am I doing? And why am I doing it?"**. Having clear and meaningful answers to these questions is the only way to truly practice thoughtfully – if we can't answer these questions effectively, we should not be doing whatever behavior is in question, at least until we understand *why* we're choosing to do it. Doing this helps to keep us safe and focused on movements that actually build on each other in meaningful and practical ways.

Practical function & mobility

One of the primary benefits of approaching movement thoughtfully is that it lets us work on exercises that benefit our everyday lives. For example, by practicing bodyweight squats with full range of motion, the body will naturally create adaptations that allow us to get down lower to give the pooch a scritch or play with the kiddos. Learning how to properly use hip hinges in daily life can help us to avoid lower back pain, especially for those who need to bend over regularly.

Learning to use our bodies more effectively in the world is both more important than – and necessarily foundational to – exercising for conventional goals like weight loss and muscle gain.

Day-to-day exercises that we do should reflect the day-to-day challenges that we may encounter. These 'Core Four' movements create the most practically functional benefits for most people because they apply directly to these real-life challenges.

Progressive Approach

Managing challenge level, reps, and sets is *always* part of resistance training, no matter what. Lots of people pay trainers to do this for them, but at TMF we believe it's important that the individual learns how to do this for themself. In some ways, the hardest part of staying engaged in exercise long-term is simply being able to continue to make the necessary decisions day-in, day-out. For this reason, TMF students learn to manage their own challenge level, repetitions, and sets in ways that work for them, personally.

Creating appropriate challenge is the name of the game here. *We don't want the exercise to be so easy that it's boring, nor do we want it to be so difficult that we don't want to do it*.

Conventional weight lifting encourages us to always be pursuing **failure*** of any given movement or muscle set. This is the point in the workout when the individual will no longer be able to continue to do the movement safely and must discontinue the movement. We ALWAYS save enough energy to stay safe and in-control, but we also want to get close to this failure point often and repeatedly over time. Generally speaking, bringing our muscles to this near-failure point more often will create more progress over time, for most people.

Choosing the appropriate challenge level for yourself means choosing the amount of reps and sets that work for you, on a given day, without overdoing it. This guidebook offers examples of workout plans**, but it's up to you to listen to your body and your mind and choose the appropriate workout for any given day. Remember, the goal is to be willing to come back and do the movements repeatedly over a long period of time. Sometimes, this means going a little easier in a workout so that you don't burn out, either mentally or physically. ***Always choose rest <u>whenever</u> you feel like it.***

Volume 1 of the thoughtful framework is foundational and therefore focused on building general consistency, understanding, and capability. Volume 2 teaches students how to build on these things with more specialized versions of the techniques that focus on different outcomes, like hypertrophy (muscle building), power, advanced strength training, advanced mobility, etc..

*to learn about failure, continue on to page 14.
**Example workouts are available towards the end of this volume, see page 64.

Rest and Recovery

Rest and recovery are kinda the whole point.

When we lift, the goal is to create challenge to the point of near-failure repeatedly over time. This creates the stimulation necessary for growth and progress. But it doesn't just happen – our bodies need to get enough sleep, nutrients, and calories to build back stronger and more capable than they were previously.

When we rest and when we sleep our bodies utilize the energy and nutrients from the food we've eaten to recover. If we've fueled ourselves effectively, the muscles develop into a more robust and capable state than they had been in previously. These cycles of mechanical stimulation combined with recovery via rest and nutrition create the adaptations that make us stronger and more capable[7].

Importantly, rest and recovery are also useful for creating a healthy mindset and approach to the psychological aspects of training. The goal is to go far and long, not to go hard and fast (and potentially burn out). This idea of pacing ourselves is critical for supporting mental health, protecting ourselves from injury, and learning to not 'overdo' it. Burnout is very real, and rest and recovery are the only true solutions to it. This is especially true if injury is involved.

At this level, always incorporate rest between sets, as well[8] (see page 58 to learn more).

7. **Sousa, C.A., Zourdos, M.C., Storey, A.G., Helms, E.R. (2024). The importance of Recovery in Resistance Training Microcycle Construction.**
Journal of human kinetics, 91 (Spec Issue), 205-223.
https://doi.org/10.5114/jhk/186659
https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11057610/

8. ***Rest Between Sets: What's Right for Me?* - Healthline, 2021.**
Written by Edwards, T. Reviewed by Bubnis, D.
https://www.healthline.com/health/fitness/rest-between-sets

Playing with failure

Should I train to failure?[9]

The short answer is that it depends. It's value is highly dependent on the individual and their goals. For some, training to failure can create ideal conditions for desirable physiological results. For others, training to failure can be the very thing that keeps them from making progress.

Training to failure as an advanced technique is discussed in the TMF EZ Guidebook Volume 2. At this foundational level, students are encouraged to ***play with failure by pushing themselves further into reps and sets (and/or increasing the weight)***, while always prioritizing safety and control. Training to failure too often or without proper control can lead to overtraining and injury.

As we get deeper into reps and sets, fatigue will increase and the range of motion of the movement will eventually begin to diminish. At this level, a diminishing range of motion indicates being near failure, which means it's time to discontinue the movement. By repeatedly pursuing this near-failure point, we offer our bodies repeated opportunity for growth and progress.

Go to the below Men's Health article to learn more about whether you should train to failure (non-gender-specific info).

9. ***Do You Need to Train to Failure for muscle growth?*** **- Men's Health, 2023.** (non-gender-specific information) Written by Neudecker, K. https://www.menshealth.com/uk/building-muscle/a45138374/training-to-failure/

Rate of perceived exertion (RPE) and reps In reserve (RIR)

Rate of perceived exertion (RPE) and reps In reserve (RIR) are important acronyms for communicating and understanding training instruction. They act as language to describe levels of training intensity.

Rate of perceived exertion (RPE) is a 1-10 scale that allows a person to communicate level of intensity in a given movement or set. An RPE 2 represents feeling lightly exerted, while an RPE 9 means one is exerting very hard. See RPE scale below from NASM[10].

RPE SCALE[10]

Rating	Perceived Exertion Level
0	No exertion, at rest
1	Very light
2-3	Light
4-5	Moderate, somewhat hard
6-7	High, vigorous
8-9	Very hard
10	Maximum effort, highest possible

Reps in reserve (RIR) refers to how many reps a person feels like they have the ability to still perform safely in a given set. See RIR scale and description below from NASM[10]:

> "When using the 1-10 RPE scale, there is a correlation between a person's rating level and the number of reps in reserve (RIR) or the number of remaining repetitions that the person could do with good form before failing. For example: if the person rates their exertion level at an 8 out of 10, they likely have about 2 reps in reserve. Therefore, this scale could be very beneficial for lifters to use to measure intensity. Here is what measuring RIR using the RPE looks like in chart form:"

[10]

RPE		RIR
1-2	Very light	-
3-4	Light to Moderate	-
5-6	Moderate to Somewhat Hard	4-6 Repetitions Remaining
7	High, Vigorous	3 Repetitions Remaining
8	Very Hard	2 Repetitions Remaining
9	Very Hard	1 Repetitions Remaining
10	Maximum effort	0 Repetitions Remaining

10. ***The Rate of Perceived Exertion (RPE) Scale Explained - NASM, 2024.***
Written by Cave, K.
https://blog.nasm.org/rate-of-perceived-exertion

Understanding RPE and RIR are helpful for planning and communicating exercise objectives and experiences. See *Examples of Action Plans* on page 64 for practical examples of use.

Part 2

RESISTANCE TRAINING BASICS

'Core Four' compound muscle movements:
SQUATS, PUSHES, PULLS, HIP HINGES

Generally speaking, SQUATS work the front of the legs and the glutes, PUSHES work the chest, PULLS work the back, and HIP HINGES work the back of the legs and the glutes. Combining these four movements creates full body engagement. For this reason, the 'Core Four' compound muscle movements should represent 80% - 100% of all resistance work performed at this level.

This section presents instruction for the 'Core Four' compound muscle movements, the foundational resistance training exercises that are the most effective, for most people.

NOTE: always practice with a full range of motion relative to your own ability in order to access more robust mobility / flexibility benefits.

'Core Four' compound muscle movements: SQUATS, PUSHES, PULLS, HIP HINGES[11]

SQUATS: bodyweight squats

PUSHES:
incline pushups

PULLS:
resistance band pulls

HIP HINGES:
Romanian Deadlifts (RDLs)

Learning movement from still images and text can be tough. It can be much easier to learn movement by watching somebody actually, well, move. **If you'd like to watch instead of read, go to www.ThoughtfulMoveFit.com/resistance-training-basics,** or use the QR code below.

Use QR code for free video instruction

11. ***Resistance Training Basics*** **- Thoughtful Movement & Fitness, 2025**
[VIDEO RESOURCE] By Taylor, C.
https://www.thoughtfulmovefit.com/resistance-training-basics

SQUATS

Squats are the best – they're the only exercise that most of us definitely do every day, like whenever we sit or use the toilet. (Almost) everybody squats, whether they realize it or not.

Learning to squat properly is beyond exercise – it can offer a drastic improvement to quality of life for many people. This is because it helps us to learn balance, stability, control, and understanding of how to better move our bodies through the world.

Squats enlist the entire lower body, focusing on the quads (front of thighs) and glutes (booty cheek muscles). ***Always practice full range of motion (ROM) to receive flexibility / mobility benefits.***

Step 1:

- feet (about) shoulder-width apart
- core engaged
- try to keep back and neck in a natural, neutral position from start to finish
- try to not bend or over-arch the lower back

Step 2:

- lower yourself as if you were sitting on a chair or toilet
- **don't worry about how low you get, just go as far down as you can comfortably and safely**

Step 3:

- raise your body by pushing down 'through the floor' with your feet
- keep knees in-line with feet and hips
- be careful not to round the shoulders or back

Step 4:

- stand up as you would naturally, keeping back flat and core engaged
- determine whether to rest or increase TUT between reps (see page 57 to learn about TUT)

SQUATS

alternate view

Step 1:

- feet (about) shoulder-width apart
- core engaged
- try to keep back and neck in a natural, neutral position from start to finish
- try to not bend or over-arch the lower back

Step 2:

- lower yourself as if you were sitting on a chair or toilet
- **don't worry about how low you get, just go as far down as you can comfortably and safely**

Step 3:

- raise your body by pushing down 'through the floor' with your feet
- keep knees in-line with feet and hips
- be careful not to round the shoulders or back

Step 4:

- stand up as you would naturally, keeping back flat and core engaged
- determine whether to rest or increase TUT between reps (see page 57 to learn about TUT)

Not comfortable trying this? No worries! More accessible versions of these movements are presented for each of the Core Four compound muscle movements.

*Always choose a solid, *wheel-free* chair

chair SQUATS

Chair SQUATS are great for anybody who's learning how to do squats.

Chair squats are the same thing as a squat, but there's a chair under your bottom (no wheels on the chair, please!) The point is to offer additional support while learning and building the strength and control to do it without.

Most approachable version: sit down on the chair, then stand back up. Focus on controlling your momentum as you lower yourself down and back up. If this doesn't create enough challenge for you, pause when your bottom is floating juuust above the seat, then stand back up.

From there you can string reps together to create more challenge and even remove the chair increase the depth of your range of motion.

Step 1:

- feet (about) shoulder-width apart
- core engaged
- try to keep back and neck in a natural, neutral position from start to finish
- try to not bend or over-arch the lower back

Step 2:

- lower yourself down to the chair, maintaining control of the movement the whole way (try to resist plopping down)

Step 3:

- raise your body by pushing down 'through the floor' with your feet
- keep knees in-line with feet and hips
- be careful not to round the shoulders or back

Step 4:

- stand up as you would naturally, keeping back flat and core engaged
- determine whether to rest or increase TUT between reps (see page 57 to learn about TUT)

To perform chair squats, follow the same steps as regular squats, but with a wheel-free chair under your butt. If helpful, stop at the bottom of the movement to rest on the seat. Otherwise, the steps are the same.

Use TUT to increase challenge (see page 57):
If you want to create more challenge consider not resting mid-rep or between reps to create more time under tension (TUT).

wall PUSHES

Wall PUSHES can be the most approachable variation of **incline pushups**. Pushes work the upper body, focusing on the muscles in the chest.

People sometimes think that pushes (pushups, chest presses, etc.) are super difficult and require a great deal of effort. This can be true, but similar to the other movements presented in this guidebook, pushes can and should be adjusted to fit the capabilities of the individual. Four different variations of pushes are presented in order of increasing difficulty, starting with wall pushes and ending with pushups from the ground. More advanced variations like decline pushups and chest presses are presented in TMF Guidebook Vol 2.

Step 1:

- feet and hands positioned roughly shoulder-width apart
- core engaged
- try to keep back and neck in a natural, neutral position from start to finish
- stand far enough away from the wall to create a slight angle when leaning against it

Step 2:

- in a moderately slow, controlled manner, 'lower' your body towards the wall
- be sure to control the movement all the way to the wall
- be careful not to bump your face or nose
- continue breathing throughout movement

Step 3:

- 'raise' your body by pushing out from the chest, returning to the starting position
- to increase challenge, don't pause at the top or bottom of the movement, instead, increase time under tension (TUT) by stringing together multiple repetitions
- always practice full range of motion (ROM) to receive flexibility / mobility benefits

Chair PUSHUPS

Chair pushups are incline pushups with a more challenging degree of incline and resistance than wall pushups.

Creating a more dramatic angle increases challenge – as hand placement lowers, resistance increases. Always make sure that the chair is stable prior to use. **If possible, these should be performed on an even more solid and stable surface, such as a weightlifting bench or solid ledge.** Place hands higher for less challenge, lower for more. No chairs with wheels, please!

Step 1:

- feet and hands positioned roughly shoulder-width apart
- core engaged
- try to keep back and neck in a natural, neutral position from start to finish
- try to not bow or over-arch the lower back
- position feet far enough away from the chair to create an angle when leaning against it

Step 2:

- in a moderately slow, controlled manner, lower your body towards the chair, ***focusing on stability***
- be sure to control the movement all the way to the chair
- keep breathing throughout movement

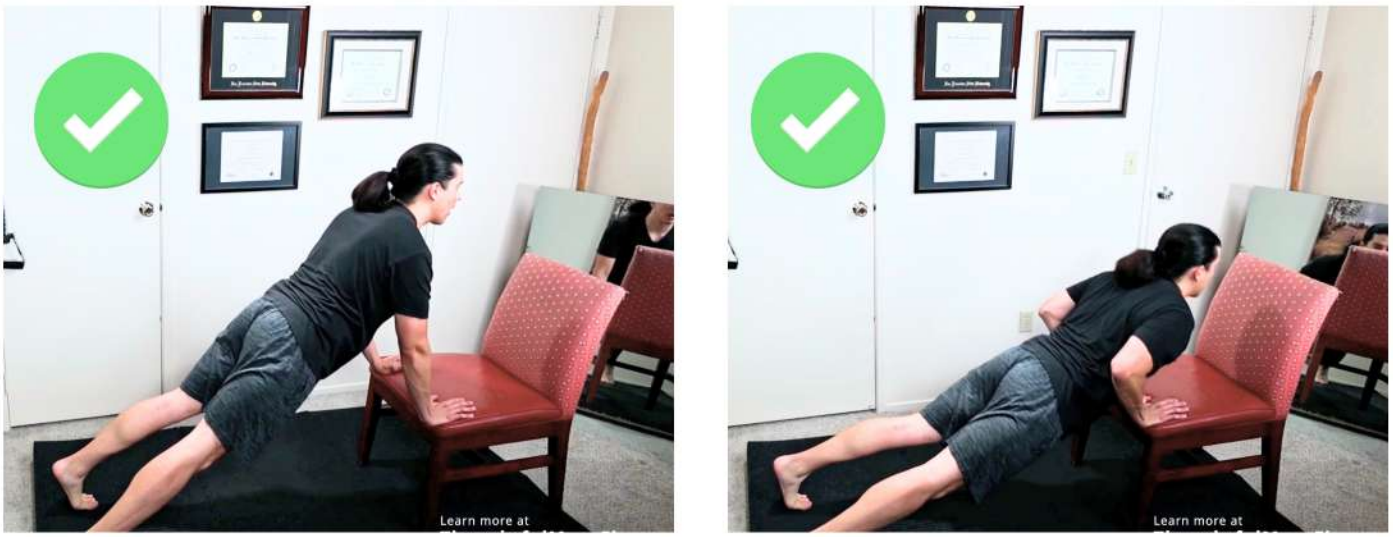
Step 3:

- raise your body by pushing up from the chair, returning to the starting position
- to increase challenge, don't pause at the top or bottom of the movement, instead, increase time under tension (TUT) by stringing together multiple repetitions
- always practice full range of motion (ROM) to receive flexibility / mobility benefits

Regardless of angle, focus on keeping strong, solid form, pictured below.

Regardless of the degree of incline, it's important to keep the core engaged throughout the movement to avoid over-arching or bowing. Poor form can lead to excess soreness and burnout.

Try to always maintain a flat back when performing pushes. We do this by engaging the core muscles, which wrap around the torso. It feels kind of like flexing your tummy, but all the way around. It can be helpful to visualize yourself wearing a snug-fitting corset.



PUSHUPS, from the knees

More challenging than chair pushups, but easier than full pushups from the toes. Practicing these is a good way to build up to full pushups from the toes.

Step 1:

- feet and hands (about) shoulder-width apart
- core engaged
- try to keep back and neck in a natural, neutral position from start to finish
- place knees gently on ground (preferably on a yoga mat, gym flooring, or folded towel) and hands far enough away from the knees to have a flat back

Step 2:

- in a moderately slow, controlled manner, lower your body towards the floor, ***focusing on stability***
- be sure to control the movement *almost* all the way down to the floor, stopping short while still keeping yourself off the ground
- keep breathing throughout movement

Step 3:

- raise your body by pushing up from the floor, returning to the starting position
- to increase challenge, don't pause at the top or bottom of the movement, instead, increase time under tension (TUT) by stringing together multiple repetitions without resting
- always practice full range of motion (ROM) to receive flexibility / mobility benefits

PUSHUPS, from the toes

Here they are! Pushups in all their body-raising glory. These are the same as pushups from the knees, but up on our toes instead. All the same rules apply as previous variations, but with more challenge. As you're learning, it is highly recommended that you practice one rep at a time until you can be certain that you're not going to over-arch at the top of the movement or bow at the bottom of it. Keep that core engaged and that back nice and flat!

Similar to other movements, challenge can be increased by stringing reps together without resting. More advanced versions, including chest presses and decline pushups, are covered in TMF EZ Guidebook Volume 2.

Step 1:

- feet and hands (about) shoulder-width apart
- core engaged
- try to keep back and neck in a natural, neutral position from start to finish
- place toes on ground and hands far enough away to create a long, flat body

Step 2:

- push yourself up off the ground, keeping your core engaged and your back flat
- be sure to control the movement from the starting position all the way through to the ending position at the top
- keep breathing throughout movement

Step 3:

- in a moderately slow, controlled manner, lower your body back down to the floor, returning to the starting position
- to increase challenge, don't pause at the top or bottom of the movement, instead, increase time under tension (TUT) by stringing together multiple repetitions
- always practice full range of motion (ROM) to receive flexibility / mobility benefits

RESISTANCE BAND PULLS

Pulls typically require some kind of equipment. In this case, the equipment is a braided tube-style resistance band attached to a door anchor closed into a door frame. These and similar bands can be purchased online and in stores at reasonable costs.

Resistance band pulls work the upper back (lats) primarily. Always keep core engaged and back flat.

Be sure that the door anchor is secured close to the door hinge and that the door is fully shut in the frame. It can take a bit of trial and error to get the anchor set well – make sure that it is secure prior to use.

Once anchor is set, stand facing the anchor point. While holding the resistance band handles, take steps backwards until band and arms are taut / holding tension.

Step 1:

- feet about shoulder-width apart
- core engaged
- try to keep back and neck in a natural, neutral position from start to finish
- step back far enough that the band is taut at starting point (pictured above). Arms should be fully extended and taut as well.

Step 2:

- with your feet set, pull the handles towards the chest, allowing your elbows to move behind your back (pictured above)
- be sure to control the movement the entire way
- keep breathing throughout movement
- maintain core engagement and flat back throughout movement

Step 3:

- in a moderately slow, controlled manner, return the handles to their starting point, back to a taut, full extension (pictured above)
- to increase challenge, don't pause at the beginning or end of the movement, instead, increase time under tension (TUT) by stringing together multiple repetitions
- always practice full range of motion (ROM) to receive flexibility / mobility benefits

Try to not round back.

Be careful not to over-arch.

Resistance band should not be loose – band should be taut, as seen below.

Core should be engaged in order to create a strong torso and flat back.

Keep face forward with neck and back held in a natural, neutral position.

Resistance band should be taut from the starting point. If it's loose, it's not doing anything – no tension in the band means no resistance on the muscles.

RESISTANCE BAND PULLS

alternate view



Step 1:

- feet about shoulder-width apart
- core engaged
- try to keep back and neck in a natural, neutral position from start to finish
- step back far enough that the band is taut at starting point (pictured above). Arms should be fully extended and taut as well.

Step 2:

- with your feet set, pull the handles towards the chest, allowing your elbows to move behind your back (pictured above)
- be sure to control the movement the entire way
- keep breathing throughout movement
- maintain core engagement and flat back throughout movement

Step 3:

- in a moderately slow, controlled manner, return the handles to their starting point, back to a taut, full extension (pictured above)
- to increase challenge, don't pause at the top or bottom of the movement, instead, increase time under tension (TUT) by stringing together multiple repetitions
- always practice full range of motion (ROM) to receive flexibility / mobility benefits

HIP HINGES: RDLs (Romanian Deadlifts)

RDLs are the version of hip hinges that most people start with. They are similar to a conventional deadlift, but without the lowest portion of that movement.

With RDLs, we start at the top and hinge at the hips with a partial bend in the knee, lowering our torso towards the ground. Then we come up with the same hinging movement, but in reverse. At this level we always try to maintain a flat back and stand above our feet (meaning we don't lean too far forward, so as to keep our balance centered).

Step 1:

- start in a standing position, be sure to keep core engaged and back nice and flat, with a slight bend in the knees
- try to keep back and neck in a natural, neutral position from start to finish

Step 2:

- lower the torse by hinging at the hips
- engagement should be felt primarily in the muscles on the back of the lower body, centered around the hamstrings and glutes

Step 3:

- raise the torse by hinging back up with the hips into a normal standing position
- determine whether to rest or increase TUT by stringing more reps together
- **only go as low as you are comfortable going *while maintaining a flat back***

Many people will have a more moderate range of motion than what is seen above. If you are able to hinge only a small amount while keeping the back flat, that's perfectly okay. The important thing here is to create tension in the hamstrings and glutes (the major muscles on the back of the lower body). Maintaining core engagement and a flat back helps with this.

A more moderate range of motion, as shown on the left, is ideal for many people.

HIP HINGES: RDLs (Romanian Deadlifts)

alternate view

It can be helpful to hold (or visualize yourself holding) an everyday object, like a broom or laundry basket. Holding an object can help by providing a physical cue, making the movement more natural and practical. RDLs are, ultimately, a tool for picking things up and putting them down – remembering this can help to execute the movements more effectively.

Step 1:

- start in a standing position, be sure to keep core engaged and back nice and flat, with a slight bend in the knees
- try to keep back and neck in a natural, neutral position from start to finish

Step 2:

- lower the torse by hinging at the hips
- engagement should be felt primarily in the muscles on the back of the lower body, centered around the hamstrings and glutes

Step 3:

- raise the torse by hinging back up with the hips into a normal standing position
- determine whether to rest or increase TUT by stringing more reps together
- **only go as low as you are comfortable going *while maintaining a flat back***

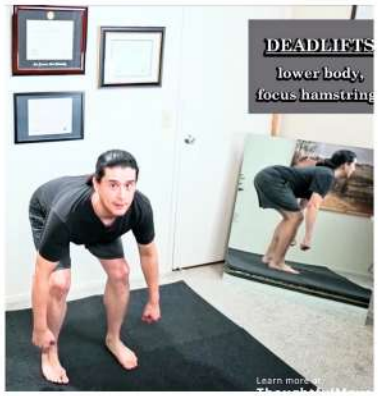
If you are able to hinge only a small amount while keeping the back flat, that's perfectly okay. The important thing here is to create tension in the hamstrings and glutes (the major muscles on the back of the lower body). Maintaining core engagement and a flat back helps with this.

A more moderate range of motion, as shown on the left, is ideal for many people.

HIP HINGES: CONVENTIONAL DEADLIFTS

On the surface, conventional deadlifts can look very similar to squats – they both use the legs to lower the body to the ground. They differ in a major way though – while squats use the quads (front of the legs) and glutes, deadlifts use primarily the hamstrings (back of the legs) and glutes. Both engage the lower legs.

Conventional deadlifts require a bit more practice and understanding to perform than RDLs. Be patient with yourself while learning conventional deadlifts and always fall back on RDLs if you're unsure about conventional deadlifts.



Step 1:

- start from a low point, as if you were picking up weights or an object off of the ground
- it's okay to get in this low position using a squat
- keep core engaged and try to keep back flat throughout movement

Step 2:

- from the low point, start by lifting the bottom up, so as to engage the muscles behind the thighs (hamstrings)
- if done correctly, the knee joint will open up while the back stays flat

Step 3:

- raise your body by hinging at the hip, keeping the back flat and the core engaged
- keep knees in-line with feet and hips
- be careful not to round the shoulders or back

Step 4:

- stand up as you would naturally
- keep slight bend in the knees, being careful not to hyper-extend

(steps continue on next page)

CONVENTIONAL DEADLIFTS (continued)

In this case, the midpoint of the movement is when we're standing straight up (slight bend in the knee still, as seen in step 5). To return to the starting point, perform the same sequence of movements as you did to come up, but in reverse. So, if you lifted your bottom first, then hinged at the hip, then in this case you want to do the reverse and hinge down first, then lower the bottom, along with the rest of the body. Always try to keep the core engaged and the back flat.

When in doubt, discontinue the movement carefully. If you're having trouble with conventional deadlifts, consider using RDLs as your main hip hinge form.

Step 5:

- while in the standing position, be sure to keep core engaged and back nice and flat, with a slight bend in the knees

Step 6:

- from the high midpoint, hinge back down from the hips
- **engagement should be felt primarily in the muscles on the back of the lower body, centered around the hamstrings and glutes**

Step 7:

- once torso is 'hinged' down, it should feel as though our butts are up in the air
- from here, we lower our bottoms back to the low starting point seen in step 1

Step 8:

- Once at the low point, determine whether to rest or increase TUT by stringing more reps together without resting
- only go as low as you are comfortable going while maintaining a flat back

PART 3

NUTRITION BASICS

Understanding the basics of nutrition can be just as, if not more important than understanding the basics of movement. That said, this guidebook is focused on resistance training, so this NUTRITION BASICS section is simplified to offer the most useful foundational information for beginning to understand how to manage your own nutrition. Consistent with the material presented thus far, the basic nutrition information presented here is meant to build towards sustainability, consistency, habit building, and understanding of why we are choosing to eat the way that we are. Always ask, "What and why?", with eating, as well. See TMF EZ Guidebook Volume 2 for more advanced nutrition practices.

Protein

How much protein should we be getting?

The answer depends on each individual's needs and goals. Some people will benefit from increased protein intake, others may benefit from reducing intake. Sufficient protein intake, in combination with resistance training and rest, is critical to creating muscle robustness / growth.

The thoughtful approach:

- As always, one step at a time. Focus on one small change and aim for consistency in execution.
- Start with a protein source that you enjoy eating, prepared in a way that's sustainable *for you*.
- Pay attention to how these changes make you feel. If they feel good, chances are they are good for you. Consider doing these things more often.
- Try not to beat yourself up when you miss the mark – nobody does it perfectly.

protein

International Society of Sports Nutrition (ISSN) says[12]:

From the ISSN Position statement:

The International Society of Sports Nutrition (ISSN) provides an objective and critical review related to the intake of protein for healthy, exercising individuals. Based on the current available literature, the position of the Society is as follows:

1. An acute exercise stimulus, particularly resistance exercise, and protein ingestion both stimulate muscle protein synthesis (MPS) and are synergistic when protein consumption occurs before or after resistance exercise.
2. For building muscle mass and for maintaining muscle mass through a positive muscle protein balance, **an overall daily protein intake in the range of 1.4–2.0 g protein/kg body weight/day (g/kg/d) is sufficient for most exercising individuals**, a value that falls in line within the Acceptable Macronutrient Distribution Range published by the Institute of Medicine for protein.
3. Higher protein intakes (2.3–3.1 g/kg/d) may be needed to maximize the retention of lean body mass in resistance-trained subjects during hypocaloric periods.
4. There is novel evidence that suggests higher protein intakes (>3.0 g/kg/d) may have positive effects on body composition in resistance-trained individuals (i.e., promote loss of fat mass).
5. Recommendations regarding the optimal protein intake per serving for athletes to maximize MPS are mixed and are dependent upon age and recent resistance exercise stimuli. General recommendations are 0.25 g of a high-quality protein per kg of body weight, or an absolute dose of 20–40 g.
6. Acute protein doses should strive to contain 700–3000 mg of leucine and/or a higher relative leucine content, in addition to a balanced array of the essential amino acids (EAAs).
7. These protein doses should ideally be evenly distributed, every 3–4 h, across the day...

These are the first 7 of 14 statements presented in ISSN's position statement.
Continue to website to read more.

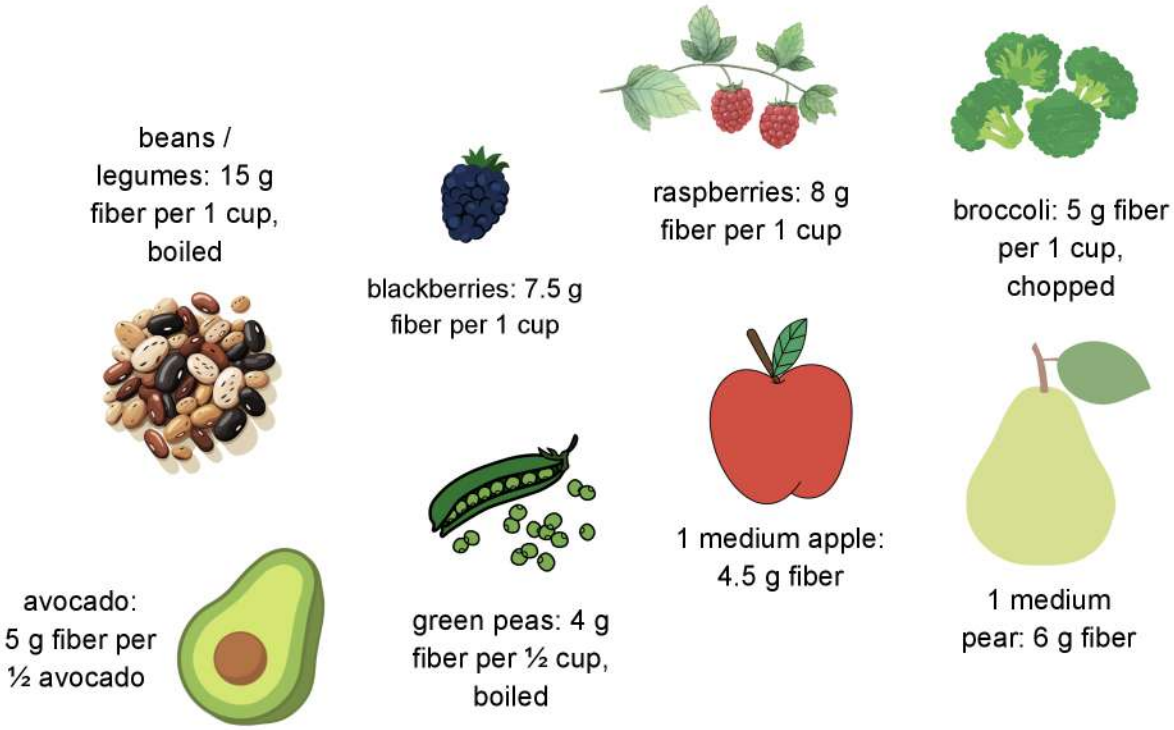
12. **Jäger, et al. (2017). International Society of Sports Nutrition Position Stand: protein and exercise.** *Journal of the International Society of Sports Nutrition,* 14, 20. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12970-017-0177-8
https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC5477153/

Fiber

Why is consuming fiber SO important?

- fiber aids digestion[13]
- helps prevent several types of cancer[14]
- helps maintain a healthy body weight[13]
- fiber intake is often neglected, making it highly consequential for many people

Examples of high-fiber foods[15]:



13. ***Dietary Fiber: Essential for Healthy Diet*** **– Mayo Clinic, 2025.**
Written by Mayo Clinic Staff
https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/fiber/art-20043983

14. **Hu, J., Wang, J., Li, Y., Xue, K., & Kan, J. (2023). Use of Dietary Fibers in Reducing the Risk of Several Cancer Types: An Umbrella Review.** *Nutrients, 15*(11), 2545. https://doi.org/10.3390/nu15112545
https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10255454/

15. ***31 High-Fiber Foods You Should Be Eating*** **- Cleveland Clinic, 2023**
https://health.clevelandclinic.org/high-fiber-foods

fiber

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics says[16]:

Fruits, vegetables, beans and whole grains all contain a type of carbohydrate called dietary fiber. Although the body can't use fiber efficiently for fuel, it's an important part of a healthy eating plan and helps with a variety of health conditions.

- Heart disease: Fiber may help prevent heart disease by helping to reduce cholesterol.
- Weight management: Fiber slows digestion, helping us feel full longer. Foods that are higher in dietary fiber often are lower in calories as well.
- Diabetes: Because fiber slows digestion, it also may help with blood sugar control. This is particularly important with diabetes.
- Digestive issues: Fiber may help improve the frequency of bowel movements.

Most adults should aim for 14 grams of fiber for every 1,000 calories they consume. This is about 25 grams of fiber for women and 38 grams for men each day, although, exact needs can vary.

Make sure to include a variety of foods throughout the week to meet your dietary fiber needs. This can help you get other important nutrients in addition to fiber. Here are a few tips to help increase your fiber intake from foods:

- Include fruits or vegetables at each meal.
- Choose bread and pasta made with 100% whole grains.
- Consider adding whole grains such as amaranth, bulgur, millet, teff and quinoa when choosing grains.
- Toss beans into your next salad or soup.
- Add chopped veggies to sandwiches or noodle dishes such as pasta or stir-fry.
- Blend fruit into a smoothie or use it to top cereal, pancakes or desserts.

When increasing your fiber intake, it also is important to drink plenty of water to prevent discomfort. Increase your fiber intake gradually to give your body time to adjust.

16. ***Dietary Fiber*** **- Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (eatright.org), 2025**
Written by Ellis, E., reviewed by Academy Staff RDNs
https://www.eatright.org/health/essential-nutrients/carbohydrates/fiber

Fiber

The thoughtful approach:

- As always, one step at a time. Focus on one small change and aim for consistency in execution.
- Start with a fiber source that you enjoy eating, prepared in a way that's sustainable *for you*.
- Pay attention to how these changes make you feel. If they feel good, chances are they are good for you. Consider doing these things more often.
- Try not to beat yourself up when you miss the mark – nobody does it perfectly.
- Eat foods high in fiber for general health and gastrointestinal health purposes; foods high in fiber can be considered nutrient-dense carbohydrate sources.
- Consider frequent consumption of beans or lentils (and/or fibrous produce).
- Sufficient fiber intake also helps our digestive systems manage the increased protein intake that can come with eating effectively for weight lifting.
- Making legumes (aka beans, etc.) and produce a sizable percentage of daily food intake can also help many of us manage calorie intake, allowing us to achieve a calorie deficit more easily and healthfully.
- Healthy bowel movements can help to reinforce the associated behaviors over time.

Nutrients and calories

How do nutrients and calories work?

A calorie is a measurement of energy. When our overall calorie balance is positive, our bodies store that excess energy as body mass[17], both muscle and fat (both of which are good things!) Resistance training is important for building muscle.

To reduce bodyweight, one must create a negative energy balance, commonly referred to as a calorie deficit.[17]

Nutrients provide nourishment. Think protein, carbs, fat, vitamins, and minerals.[18]

Adequate nutritional input is vital for both general health and for things like weight loss and muscle gain.

"Nutrient density" refers to the relative nutritional content of a given food.[19]

Energy density vs nutrient density

The European Food Information Council (EUFIC) says[19]:

- **Energy density** measures the calorie content of foods, while **nutrient density** refers to the nutrient composition of foods.
- Energy-dense foods tend to be dry and high in fats (such as biscuits, chips, candy, butter, etc.), whereas less energy-dense foods are usually rich in water and/or fibre such as fruits, vegetables, vegetable soups, etc.
- Overall, nutrient-dense foods are foods that provide vitamins, minerals, and other health-promoting components and have little added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium.
- Nutrient-dense foods can also be energy-dense, meaning that despite being relatively high in calories, they can provide significant amounts of important nutrients. A few examples include dry beans, nuts, seeds, some dairy products and some ready-to-eat cereals.
- Nutrient profiling methods aim to rank foods (but also meals or diets) based on their nutrient content, separating nutrient-rich foods from those of lower nutritional value or largely high in energy.
- Basing our diets on nutrient-dense foods prevents us from eating too many calories, saturated fat, cholesterol, sugar, salt (sodium), or alcohol and are more likely to keep a healthy weight and decrease risk of certain diseases.
- Examples of nutrient-dense foods include vegetables, fruits, whole grains, seafood, eggs, legumes (such as beans, peas and lentils), unsalted nuts and seeds, fat-free and low-fat dairy products, and lean meats and poultry – when prepared with no or little sugarsm saturated fat, and sodium.

17. ***Counting Calories 101: How to Count Calories to Lose Weight* - Healthline, 2024.** Written by West, H., reviewed by Jones, J. https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/counting-calories-101

18. ***Nutrition* - Harvard Health Publishing, 2023** Reviewed by Marshall, M. https://www.health.harvard.edu/topics/nutrition

19. ***What is nutrient density?*, European Food Information Council (EUFIC), 2025** https://www.eufic.org/en/understanding-science/article/what-is-nutrient-density

Calorie awareness

Should I be tracking my food intake?

As is so often the case, the answer depends on what's right for the individual. Each person must consider the potential risks and rewards that come with tracking. **Research suggests that diet and fitness apps may be linked to disordered eating[20].**

The thoughtful approach suggests using tracking as a short-term strategy in order to begin to learn how to approach nutrition intuitively, without tracking, in the long-term.

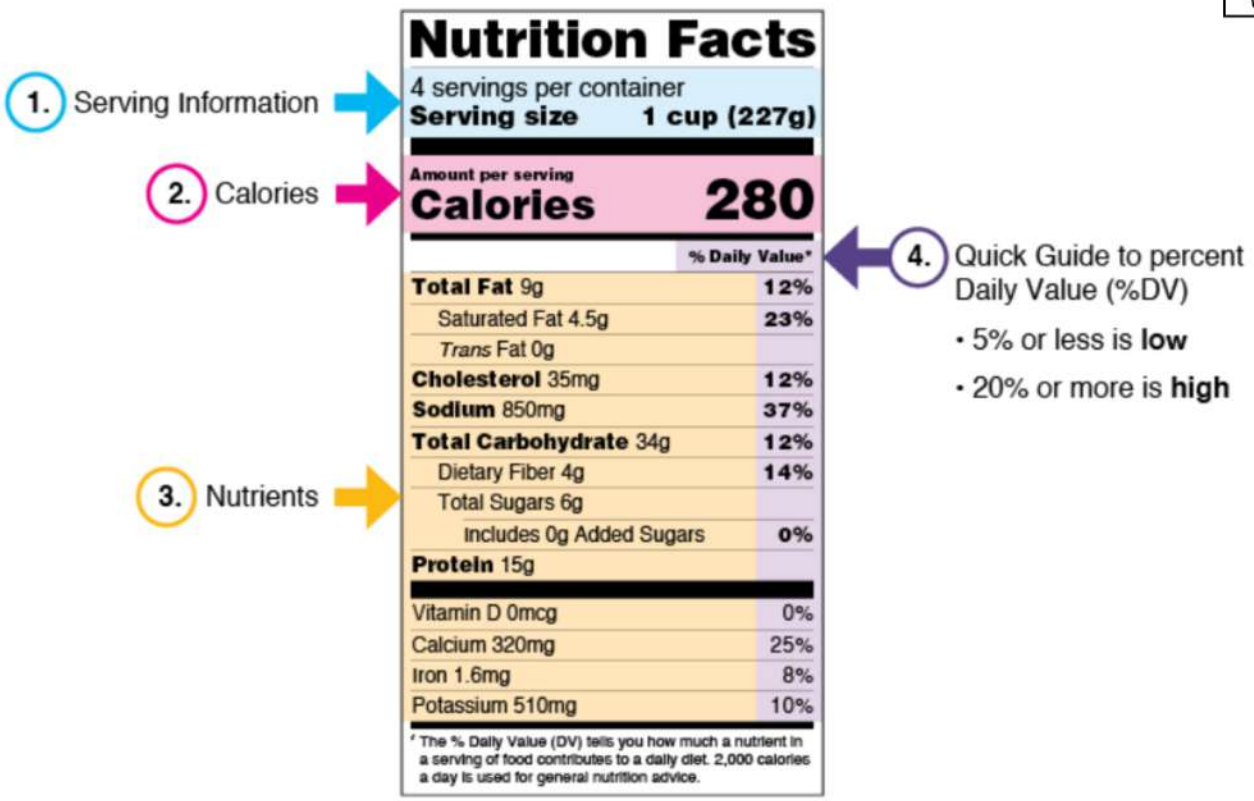
Opting to track calories (and macronutrients) on a short-term basis allows us to begin to understand how the scientific language relates to the real-life consequences of food choices and how exactly those consequences feel. This can, in turn, empower a person to be more aware of their caloric and nutritional intake *without* tracking.

20. **Anderberg, I., Kemps, E., Prichard, I. (2025). The link between the use of diet and fitness monitoring apps, body image and disordered eating symptomology: A systematic review.**
Body Image, Volume 52. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2024.101836.
https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S174014452400158X

How to understand and use nutrition facts label - U.S. FDA[21]

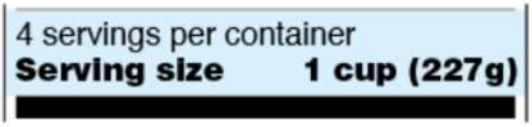
[EDITED FOR LENGTH]

SCREENSHOT DIRECTLY FROM WEBSITE



1. Serving Information

(#1 on sample label)



When looking at the Nutrition Facts label, first take a look at the number of servings in the package (servings per container) and the serving size. Serving sizes are standardized to make it easier to compare similar foods; they are provided in familiar units, such as cups or pieces, followed by the metric amount, e.g., the number of grams (g). The serving size reflects the amount that people typically eat or drink. **It is not a recommendation of how much you should eat or drink. [...]**

21. ***How to understand and use nutrition facts label*** **- U.S. FDA, 2024**
https://www.fda.gov/food/nutrition-facts-label/how-understand-and-use-nutrition-facts-label

How to understand and use nutrition facts label - U.S. FDA[21]

[EDITED FOR LENGTH]

SCREENSHOT DIRECTLY FROM WEBSITE

2. Calories

(#2 on sample label)

Amount per serving	
Calories	**280**

Calories provide a measure of how much energy you get from a serving of this food. In the example, there are **280 calories** in one serving of lasagna. What if you ate the entire package? Then, you would consume 4 servings, or **1,120 calories[...]**

3. Nutrients

(#3 on sample label)

Total Fat 9g	**12%**
Saturated Fat 4.5g	**23%**
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 35mg	**12%**
Sodium 850mg	**37%**
Total Carbohydrate 34g	**12%**
Dietary Fiber 4g	**14%**
Total Sugars 6g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	**0%**
Protein 15g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 320mg	25%
Iron 1.6mg	8%
Potassium 510mg	10%

Look at section 3 in the sample label. It shows you some key nutrients that impact your health. You can use the label to support your personal dietary needs – look for foods that contain more of the nutrients you want to get more of and less of the nutrients you may want to limit**[...]** **[go to website for complete article]**

21. ***How to understand and use nutrition facts label*** **- U.S. FDA, 2024** https://www.fda.gov/food/nutrition-facts-label/how-understand-and-use-nutrition-facts-label

SCREENSHOT DIRECTLY FROM WEBSITE

If you're preoccupied with food or your weight, feel guilt about food choices, or engage in restrictive diets, consider reaching out for support.[17]

These behaviors may indicate a disordered relationship with food or an eating disorder.

Disordered eating and eating disorders can affect anyone, regardless of gender, race, age, socioeconomic status, or other identities.

They can be caused by any combination of biological, social, cultural, and environmental factors — not just by exposure to diet culture.

Consider speaking with a healthcare professional or contacting the National Alliance for Eating Disorders, which offers a daytime helpline staffed by licensed therapists and an online search tool for treatment options.

For general mental health support at any time, you can call the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration 24 hours per day at 800-662-4357 (TTY: 800-487-4889).

healthline

Resource for finding a therapist

22. **Find a Therapist Near You [RESOURCE] - Psychology Today**
https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists

PART 4

PSYCHOLOGY BASICS: MOTIVATION

This section presents key information from a 2025 Psychology Today article.[23]

"**What is Motivation?**

Motivation is the desire to act in service of a goal. It's the crucial element in setting and attaining our objectives.

Motivation is one of the driving forces behind human behavior. It fuels competition and sparks social connection. Its absence can lead to mental illnesses such as depression. Motivation encompasses the desire to continue striving toward meaning, purpose, and a life worth living.

How can understanding motivation help us reach our goals?

Achieving a goal is a process. And all of the components of that process deserve attention to ensure success, from setting the objective, to overcoming obstacles, to sustaining momentum until the project is complete."

- Psychology Today, 2025

Motivation and goal attainment is a process, not a product. Choosing realistic objectives, persevering through challenges, and creating sustainability are critical to finding success.

23. ***Motivation*** **- Psychology Today, 2025**
https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/motivation

Examples of how to set goals thoughtfully:

- Instead of going 'all out' with exercise, start with a walk and gentle bodyweight movement.

- Instead of avoiding certain foods (restricting), try adding a variety of nutrient-dense foods.

Restricting foods we enjoy and exercising excessively can backfire over time. Enjoying the foods we love ***in addition*** to a variety of nutrient-dense foods allows us to create sustainable, long-term practice. Similarly, we want to keep the movement and exercise approachable and enjoyable. With time and repetition, we can learn to add more activity and adjust our nutrition in helpful, progressive ways. But one must walk before running, so-to-speak.

Plan goals that feel small and achievable; over time, small wins add up to meaningful change.

- Pay attention and take note of how you feel in response to behaviors. Generally speaking, we should be taking actions that feel good and we should be repeating them regularly.

- Consider using basic tools to your advantage, like setting alarms to help remember to do a thing you want to do. For example, one could set a regular alarm to get up and move around most days*.

*when using alarms to get something done, be sure to generally hold yourself accountable to those alarms by committing to snoozing or resetting the alarm until the thing is actually done. The alarm helps to remind us, but we need to actually do the behavior in order to get the benefits.

PsychologyToday says[23]:

How do I build momentum?

Motivation targets the "why" of change, but momentum targets the "how." Generating momentum is pivotal for taking the concrete steps needed to **shift out of entrenched patterns** and make change. Focusing on momentum can also be used in a therapeutic context. For example, a therapist might address a pattern of avoidance in a patient with depression by identifying small steps they have already taken (getting out of bed that morning, coming to therapy) and then listing the next steps they can take next. Recognizing the motivation for change and focusing on the dynamics that support change can also help build momentum.

Examples of how to build momentum thoughtfully:

- Commit to something easy and fun.
- Consider ways you can get movement from home, making it easier to build momentum.

Most of us don't mind exercise if it's an activity that we enjoy doing. Go, play, enjoy fresh air. If you want to create safe, stimulating challenge for yourself, consider learning basic bodyweight resistance movements.

Go for walks, learn bodyweight resistance movements, consider buying adjustable dumbbells and a weight lifting bench for resistance training at home. The gym is great, but it requires jumping through a few extra hoops to get the benefits of movement, i.e. getting dressed for being in public, driving to the gym, interacting with other humans, etc.. Knowing how to work out in your own space grants meaningful flexibility and privacy that can contribute to sustainability and, in turn, improved behavioral consistency over time.

23. ***Motivation*** **- Psychology Today, 2025**
https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/motivation

Psychology Today says[23]:

How do I persevere through difficult tasks?

It's natural to feel stuck at certain points, especially when working through difficult tasks. But research suggests that several strategies can help. One is to focus on the positive consequences of the activity, such as passing a final exam. Another is to try and regulate your emotions during the task, such as by thinking about an upcoming vacation while running on the treadmill. Yet another is to monitor and track your progress, which can continue to propel you toward the next milestone. Lastly, try to enrich the task and make it more enjoyable (called "temptation bundling"), like listening to a podcast as you do the laundry.

Examples of perseverance strategies:

Focus on positive, immediate consequences:

- It may be tempting to focus on things like reducing body fat or increasing muscle, but these are consequences of specific actions taken over the course of months and years.

- Consider the motivational power of focusing on more immediate consequences like feeling good and increased mental clarity, especially when considering strategies for long-term sustainability.

Pair movement with other activities that you enjoy, such as:

- watching tv
- playing games
- spending time with people that you enjoy (animals count!)

23. ***Motivation*** **- Psychology Today, 2025**
https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/motivation

PsychologyToday says[23]:

How can I feel more motivated?

Sometimes you might **feel completely unmotivated**—and that's ok. In that situation, allow yourself to feel the discomfort, hear the negative self-talk, and then take action anyway, For example, let's say you come home after a long day at work and just want to unwind and watch TV. Instead of turning the TV on, acknowledge that you're tired and then challenge yourself to read five pages of the book on your nightstand first. This approach gives space for negative thoughts and feelings, while helping you change ingrained patterns.

Negative self-talk and being unmotivated are completely normal. Choosing one small action at a time can help teach our brains that we can continue on despite those things. Consider working with a therapist who can help with excessive negative self-talk and other clinical-level motivation issues[22].

PsychologyToday says[23]:

How can I stick to my diet?

Many people struggle to stick to a diet. Research suggests that extrinsic motivators—to avoid hurtful comments or fit into an outfit—can jumpstart the process but that intrinsic motivation—interest, enjoyment, and challenge in the journey—is key to **sustained, lasting weight loss.** Intrinsic motivation encompasses competence, autonomy, and relatedness, so it's helpful to 1) choose a diet that will be sustainable and effective 2) believe that the diet, start date, and end goals have been chosen autonomously and not "assigned" by others 3) find a community of supporters.

1. Choose to eat in a way that is sustainable and effective.
2. Choose to eat how you want to, because you want to.
3. Seek support in community.

22. **Find a Therapist Near You [RESOURCE] - Psychology Today**
https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists

23. ***Motivation* - Psychology Today, 2025**
https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/motivation

Psychology Today says[23]:

How can I stay motivated to exercise?

There are a few creative ideas to consider if motivation is a barrier to exercise. One is to widen the options you have: If you don't have time to go to the gym, exercise by going for a walk, doing a bodyweight circuit, or watching a yoga video. Another is to make exercise more enjoyable, such as by listening to a book on tape. Yet another is to establish a social contract with a friend or family member. For example, if you allow phone time to supersede exercise, you must donate to a cause of the other person's choosing.

- Choose movement that is accessible and sustainable.
- Choose movement that is enjoyable and effective.
- Combine movement with other things to make it more enjoyable and sustainable.

Psychology Today says[23]:

How should I set my goals?

Failing to accomplish a goal is sometimes due to the way it was set. But a few psychological tricks can help set and reach those goals. One is to ensure that the goal is attached to a value, such as the value of supporting your local community or fighting climate change. Another is to frame your goal as an asset to be gained rather than a threat to be avoided. For example, instead of thinking, "I shouldn't bother my boss, so we can avoid a rocky relationship," try thinking, "I want to learn new communication skills to reset our relationship." Yet another idea is to try setting a learning goal instead of a performance goal; instead of deciding to lose 20 pounds, decide to learn more about nutrition and cook two healthy recipes each week.

Failure is an important part of learning how to succeed. Instead of trying to avoid failing, lean into it and know that choosing to learn from these experiences is the very thing that will build towards eventual success. ♥

23. ***Motivation*** **- Psychology Today, 2025**
https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/motivation

PART 5

MEDITATION, CARDIO, AND SLEEP

This section addresses meditation, cardio training, and sleep. It's a short section as this guidebook is focused primarily on resistance training. Meditation, cardio training, and sleep hygiene can be critical parts of creating a thoughtful, effective framework for movement.

MEDITATION

Meditation offers a multitude of benefits. Lots of people don't practice it because they think they're supposed to have no thoughts. This is not the case. Meditation is the practice of letting thoughts go. So really, we can learn to meditate in many different ways, including losing ourselves in activities that we enjoy. Movement itself can be meditative: try going for a walk and practice being present, feeling the breeze and the sunshine. Resistance work can become this as well, with time and practice.

In the meantime, consider learning about how to meditate more traditionally[24].

Meditation benefits include[24]:

- stress reduction
- anxiety reduction
- mental health support
- sleep improvement
- pain management
- blood pressure reduction
- can be accessed anywhere

24. ***How Meditation Benefits Your Mind and Body*** **- Healthline, 2024**
Written by Thorpe, M. and Ajmera, R.. Reviewed by Jelinek, J.
https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/12-benefits-of-meditation

Learning to meditate can be much simpler and more approachable than it might seem. Mayo Clinic says[25]:

> "Don't judge how you meditate. That can increase your stress. Meditation takes practice.
>
> It's common for your mind to wander during meditation, no matter how long you've been practicing meditation. If you're meditating to calm your mind and your mind wanders, slowly return to what you're focusing on.
>
> Try out ways to meditate to find out what types of meditation work best for you and what you enjoy doing. Adapt meditation to your needs as you go. Remember, there's no right way or wrong way to meditate. What matters is that meditation helps you reduce your stress and feel better overall."

To learn more about how to meditate, read:

25. ***Meditation: A simple, fast way to reduce stress*** **- Mayo Clinic, 2023**
Written by Mayo Clinic Staff
https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/meditation/in-depth/meditation/art-20045858

CARDIO BASICS

Cardio training is an important part of any movement program. Like resistance training, it can be simplified to focus on what you as the individual enjoy and will want to continue to do over time.

The following is a list of recommended cardio activities and some of the value they offer.

Walking

Walking is the best cardio exercise that most of us can do, for a variety of reasons. Don't worry about how far or how fast you go; focus on enjoying yourself, creating challenge, and building stamina and endurance. Don't be afraid to get out there and have some fun!

Elliptical trainer
Excellent full-body cardio, just make sure to raise the resistance setting high enough to engage your whole body; low-impact.

Swimming
Extremely low impact, perfect for individuals who want challenge with minimal impact on the joints.

Bicycling
Also generally low impact; great for elevating heart rate. When using stationary bikes, be sure to set the resistance to an appropriate and realistic challenge level.

Running / jogging
Run only if you want to. Running can be excellent for our health, but it's not necessary.

Regardless of which exercise is chosen, always practice good form and try not to overdo it. With time and repetition intensity may be increased.

Always remember to REST as needed and to be done when you're done.

SLEEP

Healthline says[26]:

"Most adults should aim to get 7 or more hours of uninterrupted sleep each night. Keep reading to learn about habits for getting good sleep and what to do if you find it hard to get enough.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that you aim to get the amounts of sleep listed below:

13 - 17 years	
18 to 60 years	8 to 10 hours
61 to 64 years	7 or more hours
65 years and older	7 to 9 hours
	7 to 8 hours

Younger children have even greater sleep needs..."

Healthline says[26]:

"Ultimately, each person has unique sleep needs. Certain factors, such as genetics, may influence your sleep quality and the duration of your sleep. The National Sleep Foundation has also published recommendations for sleep duration.

Further, people who get good quality sleep may need a little less sleep than people who frequently wake up or have trouble staying asleep.

Sleep Hygiene

Sleep hygiene is a set of habits that, when practiced, may improve your sleep. Here are some ways you can practice good sleep hygiene:

- go to bed and get up at the same time every day
- avoid large meals before bedtime
- avoid drinking alcohol before bedtime
- turn off electronic devices at least 30 minutes before bed
- avoid drinking caffeine in the afternoon and evening
- keep bedroom quiet, relaxing, and at a cool temperature
- exercise regularly
- maintain a healthy diet"

Why is this important?

- Sleep is critical to recovering from exercise, including resistance training.
- Sleep is critical for our bodies and brains to work properly.

The thoughtful approach:

- As always, one step at a time. Focus on one small change and aim for consistency in execution.
- Pay attention to how those changes make you feel. If they feel good, chances are they are good for you. Consider doing these things more often.
- Once a habit has been established, start working on another (if you want).

26. ***What to Know About Healthy Sleep*** **- Healthline, 2024**
Written by Holland, K. reviewed by Kryger, M.
https://www.healthline.com/health/healthy-sleep

Part 6

INTRO TO INTERMEDIATE / ADVANCED RESISTANCE TRAINING AND ADDITIONAL MOVEMENTS

For foundational instruction see *Part 1: Introduction to Thoughtful Movement & Fitness* (p.4) and *Part 2: Resistance Training Basics* (p. 16).

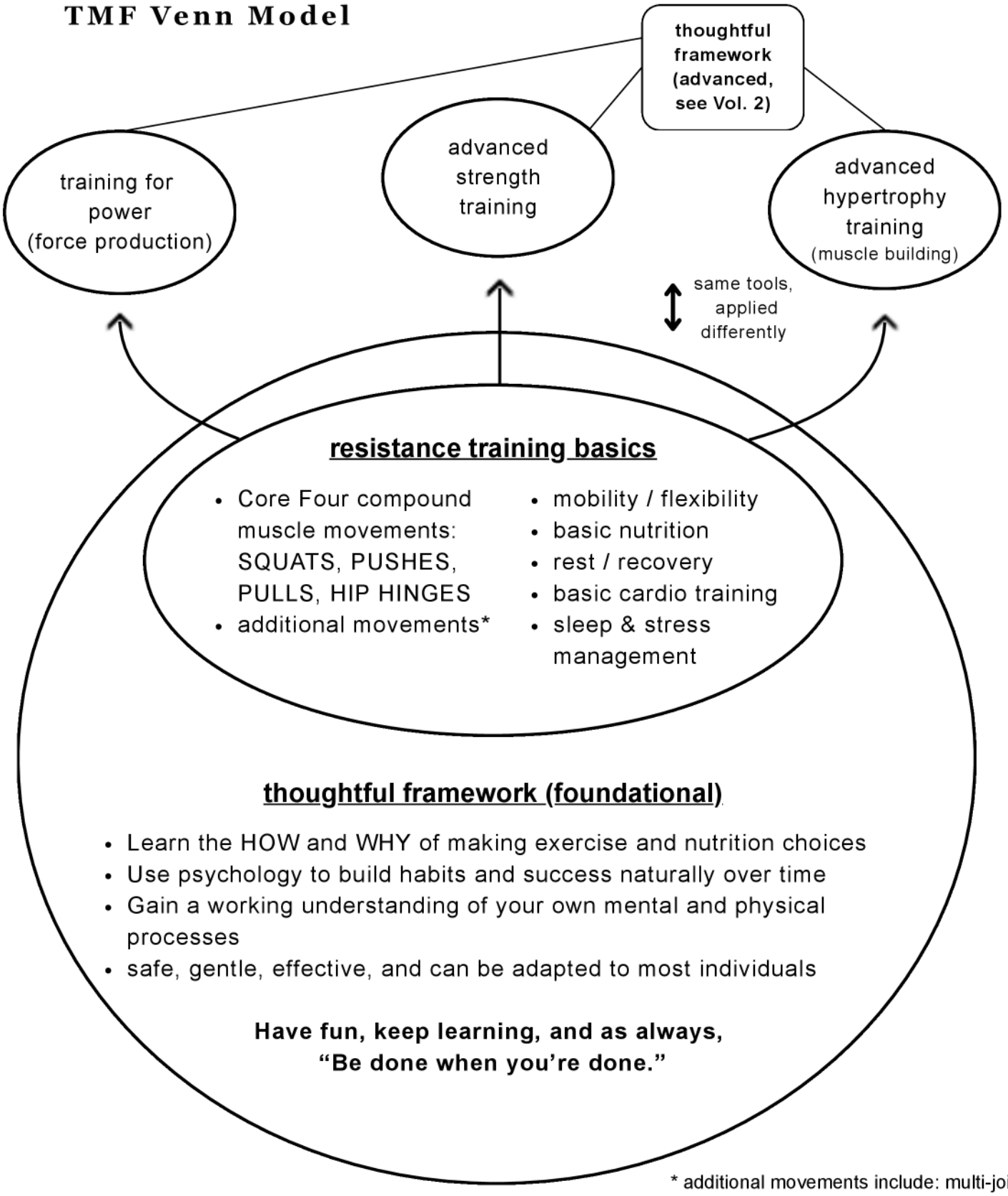
This is the intro to the intermediate / advanced section for resistance training in the thoughtful style. It's important to note that these tools are best practiced along with the 'Core Four' compound muscle movements. The 'Core Four' remain the most generally useful resistance exercises for most people. The additional movements create benefits beyond those of the Core Four muscle movements.

This section is introductory to the advanced training techniques discussed in TMF's EZ Guidebook Volume 2. Volume 2 builds on the habits and techniques presented in this volume in order to accomplish things like weight loss, muscle gain, and improved performance.

Go to www.ThoughtfulMoveFit.com for TMF EZ Guidebook Volume 2.

Access Volume 2 at:
www.ThoughtfulMoveFit.com
Additional resources available.

TMF Venn Model



* additional movements include: multi-joint, single-joint, isometric, transversal, varied directional load, progressive technique, etc..

Introduction to intermediate / advanced training ideas

The following ideas are critical for understanding how to progress to more advanced and challenging goals like reducing body fat and increasing muscle.

Reducing body fat and increasing muscle doesn't just happen. These things often require a more complex understanding of how to apply the tools in a way that drives physiological change. For example, one must be in a calorie deficit in order to reduce body fat, whereas being in a calorie surplus is ideal for gaining muscle and increasing body fat. The most effective approaches tend to integrate and/or alternate these naturally conflicting objectives (see EZ Guidebook Volume 2). Intermediate and advanced approaches, including the thoughtful framework, often require managing opposing concepts and tools in this nuanced, sometimes seemingly contradictory manner.

The following concepts are meant to give example of some of these nuances while encouraging students to think about how seemingly contradictory factors and tools can be combined to pursue more concrete objectives, such as losing weight and gaining muscle.

This section also introduces movements that can and should be used in addition to the 'Core Four' compound muscle movements to create true full body engagement beyond the foundational four movements.

These concepts and movements naturally lead TMF students into the EZ Guidebook Volume 2 curriculum.

Incorporating Intensity

Throughout this guidebook there's been a consistent recommendation of approaching intensity conservatively and thoughtfully. The next level of this approach involves incorporating bouts of increased intensity into this framework.

Intensity level is an important factor to consider throughout movement sessions. The moments of elevated intensity help to create more demanding stimulation on all of the muscles, the heart included. The elevated demand tends to create more robust results, up to a point. This holds true as well for advanced techniques like training for hypertrophy (muscle building) and power. That said, going too hard, too often can cause burnout and injury. Approaching intensity thoughtfully involves considering your own wants and needs and learning to apply these moments of intensity in ways that are appropriate for you.

Time-Under-Tension (TUT)[27]

Time under tension (TUT) is the amount of time a muscle or group of muscles is held under tension or resistance. In practice, this amounts to approaching reps with slow, controlled movement, often without resting between reps. The value of TUT varies depending on the source. TMF students are encouraged to think of time under tension as a tool for performing movements with better control, more intent, and potentially increased value.

27. ***Time Under Tension Workouts: Are They More Effective?* - Healthline, 2020**
Written by Cronkleton, E., reviewed by Minnis, G.
https://www.healthline.com/health/exercise-fitness/time-under-tension

Rest, between sets

Rest is vital for both recovering from workouts and recovering between sets. If we want to make the most of our movement, it means that we need to spend time *not moving* prior to and after sets of repetitions. How long a person should rest depends on preference and goals, but a good rule of thumb is to rest long enough to feel refreshed, but not so long that our muscles have cooled down and need another warmup. For many people, 3-5 minutes works for this, though everybody is different and may have different needs based on personal goals and approach. Most importantly, we want to rest often enough and long enough to feel good throughout our workouts and after.

Always be done when you're done. You can always come back and do more, if you like.

ADDITIONAL MOVEMENTS

The following is a brief list of movements to use in addition to the Core Four compound muscle movements. Some of the movements require equipment found at the gym. Follow links and QR codes to learn more.

Always engage the core to create a strong, flat back, when performing these movements.

OVERHEAD PRESS[28]: compound (multi-joint) shoulder exercise – push dumbbells above the head. Control the decline.

28. ***Seated Overhead Press*** **- Ace Fitness Exercise Library, accessed 2026**
https://www.acefitness.org/resources/everyone/exercise-library/45/seated-overhead-press/?srsltid=AfmBOopqehGVw_esT9VOrjwknAdt45wHvjtD83SsKdSe1iPpozn8ROTh

LATERAL RAISES[29]: isolation (single-joint) shoulder exercise – lift dumbbells out laterally from body. Control the decline.

29. ***Lateral Raises*** **- Ace Fitness Exercise Library, accessed 2026**
https://www.acefitness.org/resources/everyone/exercise-library/26/lateral-raise/?srsltid=AfmBOopcGv1xh6qN6PUrKw1BvpwoYAuUokDhBOhxU2L6u6TD-u_K4mrC

BICEPS CURLS[30]: lift dumbbells from below the waist to top of arms. Control the movement – don't swing the weights.

30. ***Seated Biceps Curl*** **- Ace Fitness Exercise Library, accessed 2026**
https://www.acefitness.org/resources/everyone/exercise-library/44/seated-biceps-curl/?srsltid=AfmBOooleBXh8EOuW20VbUZeTBhKdwzztQz1jl5fYbn0JW64IauVA0vI

TRICEPS EXTENSION[31]: extend single dumbbell above head from behind. Control movement and range of motion (ROM).

31. ***Triceps Extension*** **- Ace Fitness Exercise Library, accessed 2026**
https://www.acefitness.org/resources/everyone/exercise-library/74/triceps-extension/?srsltid=AfmBOopEcZOAxLQzPHqGYok_bEX0ADm6FNFZamNNnYBmggfTrySQ8LNH

HAMSTRING CURLS[32]: bend your knee using the muscles on the back of you leg.

32. ***Seated Leg Curl*** **- NASM Exercise Library, accessed 2026**
https://www.nasm.org/resource-center/exercise-library/seated-leg-curl?srsltid=AfmBOoqkHyuaP2ann8SEIW-njR2zuq0aUutAhfQGOIx3hpZywndvubrX

QUAD EXTENSIONS[33]: straighten your leg from a bent position using the thigh muscles.

33. ***Learn How to Do the Leg Extension to Build Bigger Quads*** **- Men's Health, 2025** (non-gender-specific instruction) Written by Neudecker, K.
https://www.menshealth.com/uk/fitness/a735486/leg-extension/

LUNGES[34]: lower your body with one foot out front.

34. ***Forward Lunge*** **- Ace Fitness Exercise Library, accessed 2026**
https://www.acefitness.org/resources/everyone/exercise-library/94/forward-lunge/?srsltid=AfmBOopgvMBvaFb9dEEiiFm7vDZiau3wO5Sflu15ZdpTQaPxFCx4iCz6

WOODCHOPPERS / TRANSVERSAL PLANE MOVEMENT[35]: rotate at the trunk. Can be performed with a cable machine.

35. ***Standing Wood Chop*** **- Ace Fitness Exercise Library, accessed 2026**
https://www.acefitness.org/resources/everyone/exercise-library/108/standing-wood-chop/?srsltid=AfmBOoocdp2WsVnVO8YEuE6mK1_10c3NJWz_L-HXTqtgBXXITqZ2TSRD

COMBOS[36]: some movements, like squats and overhead press, can be performed at the same time to create a challenging combo version of the exercises.

36. ***Squat to Overhead Press*** **- Ace Fitness Exercise Library, accessed 2026**
https://www.acefitness.org/resources/everyone/exercise-library/357/squat-to-overhead-press/?srsltid=AfmBOopsWUfp3pVBaufFdNI_hrUtCaYzGBcwCuzgJsgi3KtVY_USLtD6

SPLITS[37] (training schedule): a split training schedule refers to dividing up the trained muscle groups in a way that allows for more intense overall training. This is accomplished by focusing on one or two muscle groups in a workout, then cycling to other muscle groups in subsequent workouts while the initial muscle group is recovering. This is covered in more detail in TMF EZ Guidebook Volume 2.

37. ***Split Workout Schedule: What To Know and Examples*** **- Healthline, 2025**
Written by Read, T., reviewed by Hildreth, D.
https://www.healthline.com/health/fitness/split-workout-schedule

Advanced Psych / training ideas

Sustainability

Sustainability in the context of movement and fitness is often overlooked. There are multiple reasons for this, but the bottom line is that many conventional fitness approaches favor quick results over those that are actually sustainable long-term.

We, as TMF students, pursue sustainability by thoughtfully learning about what we personally find enjoyable, repeatable, and useful. By creating practical enjoyment and use within our daily lives, we naturally build sustainability into our overall approach.

Habit forming (aka habituation)

One of the reasons that sustainability is vitally important to progress is that it gives ample opportunity for behavior repetition. If we do a thing a bunch of times, we are more likely to continue to do that thing, especially if it's accompanied by a reward of some kind. As we pay attention and begin to notice how the movement is helping us to feel good, we will start to associate the exercise itself with feeling good, further reinforcing the habituation process. The same logic applies to eating!

Decision making

Having to repeatedly make decisions can be one of the biggest challenges to sustainability. This is why TMF students learn to work from a thoughtful framework, so that the impact of day-in, day-out decision making can become simpler and quicker while still being effective.

Decision fatigue

Working from a thoughtful framework helps to reduce the fatigue that comes with having to make decisions about movement day-in, day-out. Repeatedly practicing these decision-making skills can help make the process easier to maintain long-term.

Continued learning is needed, always.

We don't know what we don't know.

The nature of science and anecdotal evidence is that we're constantly learning new things. Sometimes, the new things we learn teach us that the old things we thought we knew, were actually wrong. The only way to stay informed about a topic like exercise is to continue to learn, always.

We will find out one day that we were mistaken about *something*, maybe even something taught in this guidebook. Best practice is to do one's best to incorporate the updated knowledge in a way that works for the individual. Learn to find trusted sources of information that focus on health and well-being over things like maximizing aesthetics.

Seek trusted sources

Where can we find trustworthy information?

Generally speaking, looking towards organizations that are well-known with good reputations is a good idea; think Healthline.com, Mayo Clinic, NIH (National Institute of Health). When reading academic articles, it can help to first read the introduction section and then the conclusion section, in order to get a clear sense of what the authors are communicating. See references section of this guidebook for concrete examples of trusted sources (p. 67).

Consider working with a trusted and certified professional.
Visit www.ThoughtfulMoveFit.com for both paid and free instruction. 

Importance of being social and learning from others

Working with others can be helpful in multiple ways.

Training by yourself is excellent, and how most of us will spend most of our time exercising, but it's important to stay connected with others who share your interests in order continue to learn and grow in meaningful ways.

Human beings are social creatures. We learn from each other, we help keep each other motivated and engaged, and most importantly, we help keep each other *safe*. Having others to connect with, whether in-person or online, can be critical to successfully staying safe and motivated.

Many communities and organizations have free and low-priced options for getting involved in movement-based activities.

Importance of customizing to self, always.

Only do movement that is good for you, personally.

As important as it is to learn with and from others, it's even more important to always personalize your movement to you and your body, regardless of what others may say. Nobody else knows how your body feels, and therefore nobody else can determine what is right for you and your body.

Always choose safety over everything else. Trying new things is important, but never more important than your well-being.

Part 7

EXAMPLES OF ACTION PLANS

THESE ARE NOT COMPLETE PLANS. THEY REQUIRE EACH INDIVIDUAL TO FILL IN AND ADJUST THESE TOOLS TO THEIR OWN NEEDS.

There are many ways to approach exercise action plans. The following examples are general templates that may be used as a starting point for implementing the thoughtful framework in a way that works for *you*.

Start simple – move some and then build from there. When you feel ready, try implementing some of the action plans below.

Four different action plans have been provided. It's recommended that they be used interchangeably, based on what fits best into the schedule of any given week.

Remember: Be safe, have fun, keep learning, and be done when you're done.

Total # of workouts each week: x3

Total # of sets performed for each movement, *per workout*: 3 - 6 is an acceptable range for most goals. Always practice the amount that's right for you and your body.

Cardio suggestions are variable, as well. Always choose the amount and type that is right for you, personally.

Action Plan X
(EXAMPLE)

3x total workouts, weekly:
Core Four workout x2,
additional movements workout x1

3 - 6 sets for each movement performed	5 - 12 reps each set	5 - 9 RPE (progressively)

+ cardio 1 - 3x weekly

Resistance training 3 x weekly is the recommended amount for progression and physiological results at this level.

# of Core Four workouts (performing all four compound movements in a single workout): x2

# of workouts focused on additional movements: x1 (see page 59)

RPE: (see page15) Apply intensity in a way that starts gently, then becomes more aggressive and closer to failure towards the end of the workout. Always prioritize safety and reduce RPE when helpful.

Examples of Action Plans

Action Plan A

3x total workouts, weekly:
Core Four workout x2,
additional movements workout x1

3 - 6 sets for each movement performed	5 - 12 reps each set	5 - 9 RPE (progressively)

+ cardio 1 - 3x weekly

Resistance training 3x weekly is the recommended amount for progression and physiological results at this level. Always customize sets, reps, and RPE to meet your personal needs.

Action Plan B

2x total workouts, weekly:
Core Four workout x2

3 - 6 sets for each movement performed	5 - 12 reps each set	5 - 9 RPE (progressively)

+ cardio 1 - 3x weekly

Resistance training 2x weekly can be useful for building habits, as well as maintaining physiological results while prioritizing everyday life. Always customize sets, reps, and RPE to meet your personal needs.

Action Plan C

1x total workout, weekly:
Core Four workout x1

3 - 6 sets for each movement performed	5 - 12 reps each set	5 - 9 RPE (progressively)

+ cardio 1 - 3x weekly

Resistance training 1x weekly can be useful for learning, building habits, and maintaining progress. Always customize sets, reps, and RPE to meet your personal needs.

Action Plan D

4x total workouts, weekly:
split schedule, combining Core Four
& additional movements dynamically

3 - 6 sets for each movement performed	5 - 12 reps each set	5 - 9 RPE (progressively)

+ cardio 1 - 3x weekly

Resistance training 4x weekly is an advanced approach covered in TMF EZ Guidebook Vol. 2. It typically requires split scheduling to manage rest and recovery.

thoughtful Style Applied

You did it!

Great job! You reached the end!

Or, the beginning perhaps?

This EZ Guidebook is meant to be used practically and repeatedly over time to begin to install the foundations of what is known as the thoughtful style. Utilize this guidebook to learn about and guide your movement goals. **This guidebook is given to every Thoughtful Movement & Fitness student and represents the first 18 - 24 months of diligent and rigorous training, for most people.**

For many people, the information provided here will be sufficient for them to navigate movement and nutrition, generally, over the course of their lives. For others, this is the foundation on which they'll pursue more conventional outcomes, like hypertrophy (muscle building), power (force production), advanced strength training, and / or advanced mobility training. To learn more about these things, including how to reduce body fat and increase muscle, see TMF EZ Guidebook Volume 2.

Welcome to Thoughtful Movement & Fitness.

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About the author

Clayton Taylor, MA, NASM-CPT, Pn1

Qualifications:

- Master of Arts in Psychological Science (SFSU, 2025)
  - emphasis in Mind, Brain, & Behavior
- Certified Personal Trainer (NASM, since 2018)
- Certified Pn1 Nutrition Coach (Precision Nutrition, since 2022)

Raised in the business, training has been an important part of Clayton's life from a young age. As a child of a personal trainer, he saw both the good and the bad of the fitness industry and found that the industry as a whole tended to serve primarily those willing to push harder, do more, and keep going unquestioningly. While these values can serve the goal of physique change, they can also be detrimental to mental health and general well-being.

Experiencing this first-hand, Clayton began to explore the ways in which conventional fitness tools might be used to benefit his own mental health and well-being. His personal, academic, and professional goals would coalesce around uncovering and sharing these insights with others in ways that might serve them and improve their lives beyond the changing of their physique/aesthetic. His work as a psychological researcher and as a personal trainer benefit each other mutually, creating novel and unique opportunities for those he works with.

At the time of publishing, Clayton has an academic article under review with an APA journal. Manuscript is available upon request.