

THE

# 10-Week Program.

This is how I train.  
Ten weeks. Four sessions. One Saturday run.  
The plan I run myself, written down for you.

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## PART 01

# This is how I train.

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Same sessions. Same numbers. Same Saturday run. The plan I run on myself, written down so you can run it too.

I'm Chris. I'm a full-time carpenter. This program isn't theory and it isn't a motivation pack. It's exactly how I train. Four sessions a week in the gym, one Saturday run, the same default meals through the day, and a routine I've been running long enough to know what actually works when the rest of life is already heavy.

I train in the morning before work. That's been the key for me. Most online programs are written for people who have time. They assume you're fresh, unbroken, and willing to spend ninety minutes in a gym five days a week. Most of us don't have that. Whether you've spent eight hours on a slab or eight hours behind a desk, you turn up to the gym already tired and you have to train around what's left of the day.

This is the plan I built for myself first. Four sessions a week, forty-five to sixty minutes each. Structured so you make real progress without falling apart. If you want to do what I do, this is it.

## Who this is for

- You already lift. You know what a bench, a row, and an overhead press feel like.
- You work full-time and have real commitments. Long days, long commutes, the lot.
- You want to get stronger, leaner, and keep some aerobic fitness.
- You want a plan you finish, not a subscription you forget to cancel.

## Who this is not for

- Total beginners. If you've never held a barbell, start with a coach in person.
- People looking for a six-pack in six weeks. Go look somewhere else.
- Bodybuilders in contest prep. This isn't that level of specific.

## What you need

<b>Equipment</b>	A commercial gym. Bench, dumbbells, cable stack, leg press, standard machines.
<b>Time commitment</b>	4 sessions x 45–60 min in the gym, 1 run x 40–60 min. ~5 hrs per week.
<b>Experience</b>	Six months of consistent lifting. You know how to use the gym.
<b>When to train</b>	Morning before work is best. After work works too. Pick a slot and protect it.

## PART 02

# Training that fits a working life.

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Four ideas underpin everything in this plan. None of them are complicated. All of them matter more than the set and rep numbers that come later.

## 1. Your job is already training.

If your day is already physical, you've banked work before you walk into the gym. You don't need to 'earn' your session. What you need is sensible volume, real rest, and enough left in the tank on Friday so Saturday's run doesn't destroy you.

## 2. Consistency beats intensity.

Ten weeks of four sessions where you actually turn up beats two weeks of six sessions followed by a collapse. The program is deliberately conservative on volume for that reason. If a session feels easy on week three, good. That's the plan. We build from there.

## 3. The lifts you can do forever are the ones worth doing.

This plan is built around lifts you can run for years without breaking. Bench press, overhead press, rows, lat pulldowns, leg press, and a handful of accessories that round out the body. Heavy compound lifts that wreck your back over time aren't on the list. We get strong, we stay healthy, we keep going.

## 4. Eating properly is the real difference.

Training builds the stimulus. Food is what your body uses to actually change. You can train hard for ten weeks and look the same if you eat like you did before. Hit the calories, hit the protein, eat real food most of the time. That's where the results come from. The gym is the easy part.

## PART 03

# How the ten weeks are built.

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Three phases. Each one does something different. You don't skip phases and you don't rearrange them.

**PHASE 01****Foundation. Weeks 1 to 3.**

3 weeks · Volume accumulation · RPE 6–7

Moderate loads, moderate reps. Build the groove. This is the phase that feels too easy. Don't chase it. Week 1 should end with you thinking 'I could have done more.' That's correct.

**PHASE 02****Build. Weeks 4 to 7.**

4 weeks · Intensification · RPE 7–8

Loads climb. Reps come down on the main lifts. Accessory work stays in a hypertrophy range. This is where strength gains get noticeable. It's also where most programs overreach. We don't.

**PHASE 03****Peak & Test. Weeks 8 to 10.**

3 weeks · Specificity + test · RPE 8–9, then deload

Heaviest loads of the block on weeks 8 and 9. Week 10 is a planned deload and a test week. You'll aim for a new top set on bench, seated shoulder press, and leg press. Week 10's run is optional.

**A note on RPE**

RPE is how hard a set felt, on a 1 to 10 scale. RPE 7 means three reps left in the tank. RPE 8 is two. RPE 9 is one. Use it instead of percentages. If work was rough that day, your RPE 8 is just a lighter weight. That's the point.

## PART 04

# Four gym sessions. One run. Two rest days.

The week is the unit of training. This is the shape of it. Stick to the pattern. The days don't matter as much as the order.

DAY	SESSION	FOCUS	TIME
<b>Monday</b>	Push	Chest, triceps, push movements	45–55 min
<b>Tuesday</b>	Legs	Quads, hamstrings, glutes, calves	50–60 min
<b>Wednesday</b>	Rest	Full recovery. Walk if anything.	,
<b>Thursday</b>	Pull	Back, biceps, pulling movements	45–55 min
<b>Friday</b>	Shoulders + Abs	Delts, rotator cuff, core	50–60 min
<b>Saturday</b>	The long run	Aerobic base, easy pace	40–60 min
<b>Sunday</b>	Rest	Do nothing. Sit down. Eat.	,

## Flex the days if you need to

Monday and Tuesday can shift to Tuesday/Wednesday. Thursday and Friday can shift to Friday/Saturday if you swap the run to Sunday. The non-negotiable: never do Push and Shoulders back to back, and always keep a rest day between Legs and the Saturday run.

## If you miss a session

Skip it. Pick up where you should be on the next scheduled day. Do not try to 'catch up.' Catching up is how people end up injured in week four. The program is forgiving. One missed session out of forty changes nothing.

## PART 05

# The sessions.

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Each session has a pool of ten exercises. Pick six to eight per session, always starting with the main lift listed first. Rotate the accessories across the ten weeks so the body keeps adapting and nothing gets stale.

## How to use the pools

The first exercise on every list is the **main lift** for that day. Always do it. Choose five to seven of the remaining nine to round the session out. Pick what your body needs that week. Sets and reps below are the default. The 10-week plan in Part 06 shows how the main lifts load through each phase.

## Session 1. Push (Monday)

Pool of 10. Pick 6 to 8. Always start with the main lift.

#	EXERCISE	SETS × REPS	NOTES
1	<b>Bench press</b>	3–4 × 6–8	Main lift. Build up. Use a spotter or safety bars. Rest 2–3 min.
2	<b>Incline dumbbell press</b>	3 × 8–10	30 to 45 degree bench. Drive evenly. Pause briefly at the bottom.
3	<b>Dumbbell flyes</b>	3 × 10–12	Slow stretch, controlled return. Feel the chest, not the shoulders.
4	<b>Cable crossover</b>	3 × 12–15	Light. Squeeze hard at the front. Two-second hold.
5	<b>Dips</b>	3 × 8–12	Bodyweight or weighted. Lean forward for chest bias.
6	<b>Close-grip bench press</b>	3 × 8–10	Hands shoulder-width. Elbows in. Triceps drive the lift.
7	<b>Triceps rope pushdown</b>	3 × 10–12	Full lockout. Two-second squeeze at the bottom.
8	<b>Skull crushers</b>	3 × 10–12	EZ bar or dumbbells. Slow on the way down.
9	<b>Overhead triceps extension</b>	3 × 10–12	Cable or dumbbell. Long head emphasis.
10	<b>Push-ups (finisher)</b>	2 × AMRAP–2	Stop two reps short of failure. Keep the elbows tucked.

## Session 2. Legs (Tuesday)

Pool of 10. Pick 6 to 8. No squats. No deadlifts. Build from the leg press.

#	EXERCISE	SETS × REPS	NOTES
1	<b>Leg press</b>	3–4 × 8–10	Main lift. Full range of motion. Feet mid-platform. Rest 2–3 min.
2	<b>Walking lunges</b>	3 × 10 each leg	Dumbbells in hands. Long step, alternate legs.
3	<b>Reverse lunges</b>	3 × 10 each leg	Step back, drive through the front heel. Easier on the knees.
4	<b>Step-ups</b>	3 × 10 each leg	Box at knee height. Drive through the heel. No bouncing.
5	<b>Hip thrust</b>	3 × 8–10	Bench under shoulder blades. Squeeze the glutes hard at the top.
6	<b>Leg extensions</b>	3 × 10–12	Slow tempo. Pause at the top for a beat.
7	<b>Lying leg curls</b>	3 × 10–12	Flex the toes. Squeeze hard at the top. Slow negative.
8	<b>Glute kickback (cable or machine)</b>	3 × 12–15	Strict. No swinging. Squeeze at lockout.
9	<b>Standing calf raises</b>	4 × 12–15	Pause at the top. Full stretch at the bottom.
10	<b>Seated calf raises</b>	4 × 12–15	Heavy. Soleus work. Two-second pause each rep.

## Session 3. Pull (Thursday)

Pool of 10. Pick 6 to 8. Always start with the main lift.

#	EXERCISE	SETS × REPS	NOTES
1	<b>Pull-ups or chin-ups</b>	3–4 × 6–10	Main lift. Weighted if you can do 8+ bodyweight. Assisted if not.
2	<b>Lat pulldown (wide grip)</b>	3 × 8–10	Pull to upper chest. No leaning back. Lats do the work.
3	<b>Reverse-grip lat pulldown</b>	3 × 8–10	Underhand, shoulder-width. Drive elbows down and back.
4	<b>Seated cable row</b>	3 × 8–10	Pull to lower ribs. Squeeze the shoulder blades.
5	<b>Single-arm dumbbell row</b>	3 × 8–10	Heavy. Pull to hip, not armpit. Square hips.
6	<b>T-bar or chest-supported row</b>	3 × 8–10	Strict. Lock the chest in. Drive the elbows back.
7	<b>Straight-arm pulldown</b>	3 × 12–15	Cable. Slight bend in elbows. Squeeze lats hard.
8	<b>Barbell curl</b>	3 × 8–10	EZ bar fine. Slow negative. Strict form.
9	<b>Hammer curl</b>	3 × 10–12	Neutral grip. Alternating or together.
10	<b>Preacher curl</b>	3 × 10–12	Cable, dumbbell, or machine. Full stretch at the bottom.

## Session 4. Shoulders + Abs (Friday)

Pool of 10. Pick 6 to 8. Finish with one or two ab pieces.

#	EXERCISE	SETS × REPS	NOTES
1	<b>Seated shoulder press</b>	3–4 × 6–8	Main lift. Dumbbells or machine. Rest 2–3 min.
2	<b>Standing barbell press</b>	3 × 6–8	Strict, no leg drive. Brace the core. Press to lockout.
3	<b>Arnold press</b>	3 × 8–10	Rotate as you press. Slow, controlled. Light to moderate.
4	<b>Side lateral raises</b>	3 × 12–15	Light. Strict. Slight lean forward to bias the medial delt.
5	<b>Cable lateral raise</b>	3 × 12–15	One side at a time. Constant tension. Stop at shoulder height.
6	<b>Rear delt flyes</b>	3 × 12–15	Bent over with dumbbells, or reverse pec-deck.
7	<b>Face pulls</b>	3 × 12–15	Cable or band. Elbows high. Drive shoulders back.
8	<b>Hanging leg raises</b>	3 × 8–12	Knees to chest, then straight when strong enough. No swinging.
9	<b>Plank</b>	3 × 45–60 sec	Glutes squeezed, ribs down. Quality over time.
10	<b>Pallof press</b>	3 × 10 each side	Anti-rotation. Slow press out, slow return.

## PART 06

# The 10-week plan.

One table. Three phases. The main lifts on the left, and how to load them as you move from Foundation through Build to Peak.

## How to read the table

Each cell is sets x reps at the target RPE. '3 x 8 @ 7' means 3 sets of 8 reps with 3 reps left in the tank. Rest 2 to 3 minutes between main-lift sets, 60 to 90 seconds on accessories. Add 2.5 kg to the bar when every set hits the top of the rep range at the target RPE.

MAIN LIFT	PHASE 01 Weeks 1–3	PHASE 02 Weeks 4–7	PHASE 03 Weeks 8–10
Bench press	3 x 8–10 @ 6–7	4 x 6–8 @ 7–8	4 x 4–6 @ 8–9
Seated shoulder press	3 x 8–10 @ 6–7	4 x 6–8 @ 7–8	4 x 5 @ 8
Leg press	3 x 10–12 @ 6–7	4 x 8 @ 7–8	4 x 6 @ 8–9
Pull-ups / Lat pulldown	3 x 8–10 @ 7	4 x 6–8 @ 8	4 x 5–6 @ 8
Rows (cable or DB)	3 x 8–10 @ 7	4 x 6–8 @ 8	3 x 5–6 @ 8
Accessories	3 x 10–12 @ 7	3 x 8–12 @ 8	2–3 x 8–10 @ 8

## How each phase progresses

**Phase 01 (Foundation):** add one rep per set before adding weight. When every set hits the top of the rep range at RPE 7, add 2.5 kg and reset to the bottom of the range the following week.

**Phase 02 (Build):** add 2.5 kg to the bar each week on every main lift, as long as RPE stays at or below the target. If RPE jumps to 9, hold the weight for the next week. Never chase the load past the RPE.

**Phase 03 (Peak):** heavy week 8, heavier week 9, deload and test in week 10. Halve accessory volume across the phase. The block ends with a top single on bench, a heavy 5 on shoulder press, and a heavy 6 on leg press. Write the numbers down. They become the starting points for the next block.

## PART 07

# The Saturday run.

One run a week. Long, steady, conversational. No intervals. Just kilometres. The lifting is the hard work. The run is the aerobic base that lets the lifting keep happening.

## The pace

Start at 5:35/km and build toward 4:45/km over the ten weeks. Conversational doesn't mean slow. It means you can speak in full sentences. If you can't, ease off. The pace shifts down as you adapt; don't force it.

WEEK	DISTANCE	TARGET PACE	NOTES
1	8 km	5:35 / km	Settle in. Get the rhythm.
2	8 km	5:30 / km	Same distance, slightly quicker.
3	9 km	5:25 / km	Bump the distance and the pace.
4	9 km	5:20 / km	Hold form on the back half.
5	10 km	5:15 / km	First time at 10 km.
6	9 km	5:15 / km	Recovery week. Back the distance off.
7	10 km	5:05 / km	Push the pace. Stay conversational.
8	10 km	5:00 / km	Sub-50 territory. You'll feel it.
9	10 km	4:50 / km	Hard but controlled.
10	10 km	4:45 / km	The target. Earned over ten weeks.

**If your legs are rubbish from Friday**, swap the run to Sunday. Don't skip it, and don't try to make it up later in the week. One run, in the right slot, or the next one.

## PART 08

# How to actually eat.

No meal plans. They don't survive contact with a real week. What you need is a framework: calorie targets that match your output, a macro split that holds, and a handful of default meals you can come back to. Once your numbers are dialled in, eating to suit them is the easy part.

## Step 1. Find your calorie target.

Use your bodyweight in kilograms, then multiply by the activity factor that fits your life. These numbers assume you work full-time and you're on your feet most of the day.

GOAL	MULTIPLIER	EXAMPLE (85 KG)
Lose fat	bodyweight × 32	85 × 32 = 2,720 cal / day
Recomposition (hold weight)	bodyweight × 38	85 × 38 = 3,230 cal / day
Gain muscle	bodyweight × 42	85 × 42 = 3,570 cal / day

**If the number feels high, trust it.** Standard online calculators underestimate what someone with a physical job actually burns. You're moving, lifting, walking, and sweating before you ever touch a barbell.

## Step 2. Set your macros.

Once you've got your calorie number, fill it up in this order:

<b>Protein</b>	2.0 g per kg bodyweight. For 85 kg, 170 g.
<b>Fat</b>	0.9 g per kg bodyweight. For 85 kg, 77 g.
<b>Carbs</b>	Everything else. This is your fuel.

**Worked example (85 kg, recomp, 3,230 cal):** 170 g protein (680 cal) + 77 g fat (693 cal) = 1,373 cal from protein and fat. The remaining 1,857 cal comes from carbs. That's about 465 g of carbs a day. If that sounds like a lot, it is. You're working.

## Step 3. The eating framework.

Forget 'meal prep Sunday.' The framework below is flexible. Hit the protein and calorie targets, you're done. Here's the shape of the day.

### ~5:30 am. Pre-work breakfast.

Quick, protein-led, low faff. Default: oats with Greek yogurt, mixed berries, a scoop of whey stirred through, and a handful of nuts on top. No cooking. Assemble it the night before or the morning of. Coffee. Big bowl.

### ~10:00 am. Lunch.

Sort it the night before. The biggest meal until dinner. Defaults: chicken with rice and veg, steak with sweet potato and broccoli, or last night's leftovers reheated. Big portion. You're working.

### ~4:30 pm. The session. Fluids only.

I don't eat before the gym. Pre-workout if I want the kick, BCAAs or electrolytes through the session, and a scoop of whey the moment I'm done. The real meal comes after, not before.

### ~6:30 pm. Dinner (post-session).

The biggest meal of the day, and the one that does the recovery work. Lean protein, a proper carb, and vegetables. Either cooked from scratch or a quality premade meal, whichever fits the day. On rotation: grilled steak with sweet potato, chicken with rice and greens, baked fish with rice and steamed veg, lean mince wraps.

### ~8:00 pm. Pre-bed (optional).

Optional and personal. Useful if you're trying to gain weight or you finished training late and dinner wasn't enough. Defaults: Greek yogurt with honey and walnuts, or a scoop of casein or whey stirred into milk. Skip it if you're not hungry.

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*"You don't have to eat clean. You have to eat enough."*

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## Principles that hold up on a bad week

- Lean protein at every meal. Non-negotiable.
- Build the plate around rice, sweet potato, or regular potato. Those carbs carry the load.
- Eat real food 80% of the time. Whey and bars are tools, not meals.
- If you can't cook, premade is perfect. A decent supermarket ready meal beats skipping a meal every time.
- If you're tired and under-recovered, the fix is usually calories or sleep, not more training.
- Weigh yourself on the same morning each week. Same scales, same time, in the nude. One data point is noise. Three weeks of a trend is signal.
- Hydration: aim for 3 L a day, more in summer or after a long run.

## Supplements worth your money

<b>Whey protein</b>	Convenience, not magic. Use it when food is hard, especially post-session.
<b>Creatine monohydrate</b>	5 g per day. Cheapest, most-proven supplement in the game.
<b>Vitamin D</b>	1,000–2,000 IU in winter. Australian sun is strong but winters still bite.
<b>Fish oil / omega-3</b>	Optional. 1–2 g EPA+DHA per day for joints.
<b>BCAAs (intra-workout)</b>	Optional. I sip them through a session when I've trained fasted.
<b>Pre-workout</b>	Situational. Use it when you want the kick. Don't make it daily or the kick stops working.

## Supplements that are wasting your money

Fat burners. Testosterone boosters. Green powder. 'Natural' anything with a cartoon on the label. Anything promising 'shredded in 30 days.' Anything your favourite influencer won't shut up about.

## PART 09

# Recovery is the program.

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The gym is where you create the stimulus. Recovery is where you adapt to it. If you're short on recovery, no amount of extra training will compensate. It just digs the hole deeper.

## Sleep. The first lever.

If you sleep fewer than seven hours a night, that's your ceiling. You won't out-train a four-hour sleep. Some rules that make a real difference:

- Same wake time every day, including weekends. Even if you went to bed late.
- No screens for 30 minutes before bed. If you can't do that, red filter on your phone.
- Cold room. 18°C is the sweet spot.
- If you nap on a Saturday arvo, cap it at 20 minutes. Longer and you kill Sunday night's sleep.

## Training when you're cooked from work

Some days you'll walk into the gym already gassed. This is the rule: **train anyway, but train lighter**. Drop 10–20% off your working weight. Hit your reps. Walk out. You've maintained the pattern, which is 90% of the battle. The weight will come back next session.

## When to actually rest

If you see the following for two weeks in a row, take an unplanned deload:

- Main lift performance dropping session to session, even at the same RPE.
- Resting heart rate elevated 10+ bpm above your normal in the morning.
- Motivation to train is at zero, and has been for a week.
- Sleep quality falling off without a clear reason.

'Deload' here means: reduce all working sets by 40%, keep the exercises, skip the Saturday run, add an hour of sleep. One week. Then resume where you left off.

## PART 10

# Questions and the boring bit.

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The questions I get asked most, and the legal note you read once.

## Questions I get asked

### **Why no squats or deadlifts?**

Choice, not dogma. I've watched too many lifters trash their backs and knees chasing those two lifts. Leg press, lunges, and hip thrusts build the same muscle without the wear. If you love squats and deads and they feel good, run them.

### **I'm trying to lose fat. Do I still train heavy?**

Yes. The lifting stays. The calories change. Cutting calories while dropping intensity is how people lose muscle and look worse at a lower bodyweight.

### **I've got an old shoulder, back, or knee injury. Can I do this?**

Talk to a physio before you start. Most exercises have an obvious swap once you're cleared. The structure still applies.

### **What do I do after week 10?**

Take a week off entirely. Then run the program again, using your week-10 test numbers as the new starting point. Two or three blocks before you need a different stimulus.

### **I missed a whole week. What now?**

Go back one week. If you missed week 6, restart week 6 next Monday. Don't skip ahead.

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## Disclaimer

General fitness guidance, not medical advice. If you have any pre-existing condition (cardiovascular, metabolic, joint, spinal, or current injury), speak to your doctor before starting. Pain is information: if something hurts like injury rather than effort, stop. © Chris Nield 2026, licensed for personal use. Please don't redistribute. Send mates to [nieldmethod.com](https://nieldmethod.com).