

Introduction

The Basic Muscle Gain Program is a scientific sound and proven training program spanning over 5 mesocycles for a total of 20 weeks. The first two mesocycles (first 8 weeks) are strength specific and will prepare you for the three following mesocycles of hypertrophy specific training. With that being said, the strength phase will induce a lot of new muscle growth, especially if you're not used to strength work in the 5 to 1 repetition range.

The strength phase will also increase the efficiency of your central nervous system, which will increase your capacity to recruit fast twitch muscle fibers. This will make the following hypertrophy specific phase even more efficient for building muscle mass.

This 20-week training program was developed after the success with my book *The Maximum Muscle Guide*. It was tested by more than 50 people and finalized as a blueprint for beginners and intermediates in 2013. That is, it was used as a base for certain clients and then individualized. This program is now being released to subscribers/members of *The Classic Muscle Newsletter*.

Program Protocol

This is *mesocycle 1* of the program, or if you prefer, *training block 1*. A mesocycle (or training block) consists of several microcycles. These microcycles are usually referred to as a "training week" and can be anything from 5 to 10 days. For the sake of convenience and guaranteed recovery, the microcycles in this program are 7 days long. The mesocycles are structured to progressively increase training volume over the course of the mesocycle while maintaining intensity levels. It's important that you do your best to generate as much force as you can during every repetition. This means that you try to accelerate the load as much as possible through the full range of motion, no matter how much weight is on the bar. This goes beyond being just explosive, you need to treat every rep as a max-rep. This intention to always generate maximum force and power will further enhance the activation and development of your central nervous system (and let you recruit more muscle fibers). Never bounce at the bottom of a movement and always lower the weight slow and under full control. The eccentric part of the movement should take somewhere between 2 to 3 seconds. Don't waste energy or mental focus on counting seconds or lowering the weight extremely slow. Simply lower it under control and make sure you feel your muscles working against the load.

Please note that during the strength phase all your energy and focus should be on multi-joint movements and to get as strong as possible in the following eight weeks. Because of this, there is no direct arm or ab work. They will get enough stimulus from the structural lifts such as rows, presses, the squat and the deadlift.

Example of program structure

Week 1/Microcycle 1	Week 2/Microcycle 2	Week 3/Microcycle 3	Week 4/Microcycle 4
Monday: Full Body Wednesday: Full Body Friday: Full Body	Monday: Full Body Wednesday: Full Body Friday: Full Body	Monday: Full Body Wednesday: Full Body Friday: Full Body	Monday: Full Body Thursday: Full Body
5 reps per set	3 reps per set	5, 3, 1 (Max out)	12-15 reps per set

Week 1: only the final set on each exercise should feel heavy. No sets should be taken to failure.

Week 2: only the final set on each exercise should feel heavy. No sets should be taken to failure.

Week 3: the final set with 1 repetition should be as close to your max as possible.

Week 4: 12-15 reps per set, stop 2 to 3 reps before failure. Recovery week.

Training Session 1: Full Body (Mesocycle 1, Microcycle 1)

Exercise	Sets	Reps	Technique	Rest	Your Notes
Central Nervous System Activation – Max Explosiveness					
A1. Vertical Jump (from approximately 110 °)	3	3-5	Max Explosiveness	30-45s	
A2. Push-Ups against a bench	3	3-5	Max Explosiveness	30-45s	
<p>A1. Go down just above parallel, pause for one second and then explode up as high as possible. Use your arms as pendulums. A2. Perform these explosive push-ups against the side of a bench. Try to explode up to standing.</p>					
Central Nervous System Potentiation and Recruitment of The Fast Twitch Muscle Fibers: Ramping The Weight					
B. Standing Military Press	5-7	5	Max Force Production	45-90s	
<p>Perform about 6 sets of 5 reps where you increase the weight for each set (ramping). Start with about 50% of your estimated 1RM. The final set of the ramp should be close to the maximum weight you can handle for 5 repetitions with good technique. Do not go to failure. Your daily performance level will dictate how many sets you need to get into the groove and do five solid reps with your daily 5 reps-max. Do a minimum of 5 sets in your ramp (to get a good potentiation effect) and try not to exceed 7 sets (to limit metabolic fatigue). Keep the rest between sets as short as possible without losing performance.</p>					
Work Sets With Focus on Strength Development. Stimulation of Fast Twitch Muscle Fibers					
C. Standing Military Press	3	4-5 (7RM)	Max Force Production	60-90s	
D. Barbell Row, supinated grip (palms up)	3	4-5 (7RM)	Max Force Production	60-90s	
E. Bench Press	3	4-5 (7RM)	Max Force Production	60-90s	
F. Deadlift	3	4-5 (7RM)	Max Force Production	60-90s	
G. Barbell Back Squat	3	4-5 (7RM)	Max Force Production	60-90s	
<p>Perform 5 repetitions per set with a weight that you can handle for a maximum of 6 to 7 repetitions (7 Reps-Max). The first and second set should be relative easy. The third should be close to muscular failure. Always generate as much force as you can in the concentric/lifting phase – try to accelerate the weight as much as you can. Lower the weight during the eccentric phase in a controlled manner (2 to 3 seconds).</p>					

Training Session 2: Full Body (Mesocycle 1, Microcycle 1)

Exercise	Sets	Reps	Technique	Rest	Your Notes
Central Nervous System Activation – Max Explosiveness					
A1. Vertical Jump (from approximately 110 °)	3	3-5	Max Explosiveness	30-45s	
A2. Standing long jump	3	3-5	Max Explosiveness	30-45s	
<p>A1. Go down just above parallel, pause for one second and then explode up as high as possible. Use your arms as pendulums. A2. Jump as far as you can from a standstill.</p>					
Central Nervous System Potentiation and Recruitment of The Fast Twitch Muscle Fibers: Ramping The Weight					
B. Deadlift	5-7	5	Max Force Production	60-90s	
<p>Perform about 6 sets of 5 reps where you increase the weight for each set (ramping). Start with about 50% of your estimated 1RM. The final set of the ramp should be close to the maximum weight you can handle for 5 repetitions with good technique. Do not go to failure. Your daily performance level will dictate how many sets you need to get into the groove and do five solid reps with your daily 5 reps-max. Do a minimum of 5 sets in your ramp (to get a good potentiation effect) and try not to exceed 7 sets (to limit metabolic fatigue). Keep the rest between sets as short as possible without losing performance.</p>					
Work Sets With Focus on Strength Development. Stimulation of Fast Twitch Muscle Fibers					
C. Deadlift	3	4-5 (7RM)	Max Force Production	60-90s	
D. Barbell Row, supinated grip (palms up)	3	4-5 (7RM)	Max Force Production	60-90s	
E. Standing Military Press	3	4-5 (7RM)	Max Force Production	60-90s	
F. Barbell Back Squat	3	4-5 (7RM)	Max Force Production	60-90s	
G. Bench Press	3	4-5 (7RM)	Max Force Production	60-90s	
<p>Perform 5 repetitions per set with a weight that you can handle for a maximum of 6 to 7 repetitions (7 Reps-Max). The first and second set should be relative easy. The third should be close to muscular failure. Always generate as much force as you can in the concentric/lifting phase – try to accelerate the weight as much as you can. Lower the weight during the eccentric phase in a controlled manner (2 to 3 seconds).</p>					

Training Session 3: Full Body (Mesocycle 1, Microcycle 1)

Exercise	Sets	Reps	Technique	Rest	Your Notes
Central Nervous System Activation – Max Explosiveness					
A1. Vertical Jump (from approximately 110 °)	3	3-5	Max Explosiveness	30-45s	
A2. Standing long jump	3	3-5	Max Explosiveness	30-45s	
A1. Go down just above parallel, pause for one second and then explode up as high as possible. Use your arms as pendulums. A2. Jump as far as you can from a standstill.					
Central Nervous System Potentiation and Recruitment of The Fast Twitch Muscle Fibers: Ramping The Weight					
B. Barbell Back Squat	5-7	5	Max Force Production	60-90s	
Perform about 6 sets of 5 reps where you increase the weight for each set (ramping). Start with about 50% of your estimated 1RM. The final set of the ramp should be close to the maximum weight you can handle for 5 repetitions with good technique. Do not go to failure. Your daily performance level will dictate how many sets you need to get into the groove and do five solid reps with your daily 5 reps-max. Do a minimum of 5 sets in your ramp (to get a good potentiation effect) and try not to exceed 7 sets (to limit metabolic fatigue). Keep the rest between sets as short as possible without losing performance.					
Work Sets With Focus on Strength Development. Stimulation of Fast Twitch Muscle Fibers					
C. Barbell Back Squat	3	4-5 (7RM)	Max Force Production	60-90s	
D. Standing Military Press	3	4-5 (7RM)	Max Force Production	60-90s	
E. Barbell Row, supinated grip (palms up)	3	4-5 (7RM)	Max Force Production	60-90s	
F. Bench Press	3	4-5 (7RM)	Max Force Production	60-90s	
G. Deadlift	3	4-5 (7RM)	Max Force Production	60-90s	
Perform 5 repetitions per set with a weight that you can handle for a maximum of 6 to 7 repetitions (7 Reps-Max). The first and second set should be relative easy. The third should be close to muscular failure. Always generate as much force as you can in the concentric/lifting phase – try to accelerate the weight as much as you can. Lower the weight during the eccentric phase in a controlled manner (2 to 3 seconds).					

Training Session 1: Full Body (Mesocycle 1, Microcycle 2)

Exercise	Sets	Reps	Technique	Rest	Your Notes
Central Nervous System Activation – Max Explosiveness					
A1. Vertical Jump (from approximately 110 °)	3	3-5	Max Explosiveness	30-45s	
A2. Push-Ups against a bench	3	3-5	Max Explosiveness	30-45s	
<p>A1. Go down just above parallel, pause for one second and then explode up as high as possible. Use your arms as pendulums. A2. Perform these explosive push-ups against the side of a bench. Try to explode up to standing.</p>					
Central Nervous System Potentiation and Recruitment of The Fast Twitch Muscle Fibers: Ramping The Weight					
B. Standing Military Press	5-7	3	Max Force Production	45-90	
<p>Perform about 6 sets of 3 reps where you increase the weight for each set (ramping). Start with about 50% of your estimated 1RM. The final set of the ramp should be close to the maximum weight you can handle for 3 repetitions with good technique. Do not go to failure. Your daily performance level will dictate how many sets you need to get into the groove and do five solid reps with your daily 3 reps-max. Do a minimum of 5 sets in your ramp (to get a good potentiation effect) and try not to exceed 7 sets (to limit metabolic fatigue). Keep the rest between sets as short as possible without losing performance.</p>					
Work Sets With Focus on Strength Development. Stimulation of Fast Twitch Muscle Fibers					
C. Standing Military Press	3	2-3 (5 RM)	Max Force Production	60-90s	
D. Barbell Row, supinated grip (palms up)	3	2-3 (5 RM)	Max Force Production	60-90s	
E. Bench Press	3	2-3 (5 RM)	Max Force Production	60-90s	
F. Deadlift	3	2-3 (5 RM)	Max Force Production	60-90s	
G. Barbell Back Squat	3	2-3 (5 RM)	Max Force Production	60-90s	
<p>Perform 3 repetitions per set with a weight that you can handle for a maximum of 5 to 6 repetitions (5 Reps-Max). The first and second set should be relative easy. The third should be close to muscular failure. Always generate as much force as you can in the concentric/lifting phase – try to accelerate the weight as much as you can. Lower the weight during the eccentric phase in a controlled manner (2 to 3 seconds).</p>					

Training Session 2: Full Body (Mesocycle 1, Microcycle 2)

Exercise	Sets	Reps	Technique	Rest	Your Notes
Central Nervous System Activation – Max Explosiveness					
A1. Vertical Jump (from approximately 110 °)	3	3-5	Max Explosiveness	30-45s	
A2. Standing long jump	3	3-5	Max Explosiveness	30-45s	
<p>A1. Go down just above parallel, pause for one second and then explode up as high as possible. Use your arms as pendulums. A2. Jump as far as you can from a standstill.</p>					
Central Nervous System Potentiation and Recruitment of The Fast Twitch Muscle Fibers: Ramping The Weight					
B. Deadlift	5-7	3	Max Force Production	60-90s	
<p>Perform about 6 sets of 3 reps where you increase the weight for each set (ramping). Start with about 50% of your estimated 1RM. The final set of the ramp should be close to the maximum weight you can handle for 3 repetitions with good technique. Do not go to failure. Your daily performance level will dictate how many sets you need to get into the groove and do five solid reps with your daily 3 reps-max. Do a minimum of 5 sets in your ramp (to get a good potentiation effect) and try not to exceed 7 sets (to limit metabolic fatigue). Keep the rest between sets as short as possible without losing performance.</p>					
Work Sets With Focus on Strength Development. Stimulation of Fast Twitch Muscle Fibers					
C. Deadlift	3	2-3 (5 RM)	Max Force Production	60-90s	
D. Barbell Row, supinated grip (palms up)	3	2-3 (5 RM)	Max Force Production	60-90s	
E. Standing Military Press	3	2-3 (5 RM)	Max Force Production	60-90s	
F. Barbell Back Squat	3	2-3 (5 RM)	Max Force Production	60-90s	
G. Bench Press	3	2-3 (5 RM)	Max Force Production	60-90s	
<p>Perform 3 repetitions per set with a weight that you can handle for a maximum of 5 to 6 repetitions (5 Reps-Max). The first and second set should be relative easy. The third should be close to muscular failure. Always generate as much force as you can in the concentric/lifting phase – try to accelerate the weight as much as you can. Lower the weight during the eccentric phase in a controlled manner (2 to 3 seconds).</p>					

Training Session 3: Full Body (Mesocycle 1, Microcycle 2)

Exercise	Sets	Reps	Technique	Rest	Your Notes
Central Nervous System Activation – Max Explosiveness					
A1. Vertical Jump (from approximately 110 °)	3	3-5	Max Explosiveness	30-45s	
A2. Standing long jump	3	3-5	Max Explosiveness	30-45s	
A1. Go down just above parallel, pause for one second and then explode up as high as possible. Use your arms as pendulums. A2. Jump as far as you can from a standstill.					
Central Nervous System Potentiation and Recruitment of The Fast Twitch Muscle Fibers: Ramping The Weight					
B. Barbell Back Squat	5-7	3	Max Force Production	60-90s	
Perform about 6 sets of 3 reps where you increase the weight for each set (ramping). Start with about 50% of your estimated 1RM. The final set of the ramp should be close to the maximum weight you can handle for 3 repetitions with good technique. Do not go to failure. Your daily performance level will dictate how many sets you need to get into the groove and do five solid reps with your daily 3 reps-max. Do a minimum of 5 sets in your ramp (to get a good potentiation effect) and try not to exceed 7 sets (to limit metabolic fatigue). Keep the rest between sets as short as possible without losing performance.					
Work Sets With Focus on Strength Development. Stimulation of Fast Twitch Muscle Fibers					
C. Barbell Back Squat	3	2-3 (5 RM)	Max Force Production	60-90s	
D. Standing Military Press	3	2-3 (5 RM)	Max Force Production	60-90s	
E. Barbell Row, supinated grip (palms up)	3	2-3 (5 RM)	Max Force Production	60-90s	
F. Bench Press	3	2-3 (5 RM)	Max Force Production	60-90s	
G. Deadlift	3	2-3 (5 RM)	Max Force Production	60-90s	
Perform 3 repetitions per set with a weight that you can handle for a maximum of 5 to 6 repetitions (5 Reps-Max). The first and second set should be relative easy. The third should be close to muscular failure. Always generate as much force as you can in the concentric/lifting phase – try to accelerate the weight as much as you can. Lower the weight during the eccentric phase in a controlled manner (2 to 3 seconds).					

Training Session 1: Full Body (Mesocycle 1, Microcycle 3)

Exercise	Sets	Reps	Technique	Rest	Your Notes
Central Nervous System Activation – Max Explosiveness					
A1. Vertical Jump (from approximately 110 °)	3	3-5	Max Explosiveness	30-45s	
A2. Push-Ups against a bench	3	3-5	Max Explosiveness	30-45s	
<p>A1. Go down just above parallel, pause for one second and then explode up as high as possible. Use your arms as pendulums. A2. Perform these explosive push-ups against the side of a bench. Try to explode up to standing.</p>					
Central Nervous System Potentiation and Recruitment of The Fast Twitch Muscle Fibers: Ramping The Weight					
B. Standing Military Press	5-7	2	Max Force Production	45-90	
<p>Perform about 6 sets of 2 reps where you increase the weight for each set (ramping). Start with about 50% of your estimated 1RM. The final set of the ramp should be close to the maximum weight you can handle for 2 repetitions with good technique. Do not go to failure. Your daily performance level will dictate how many sets you need to get into the groove and do five solid reps with your daily 2 reps-max. Do a minimum of 5 sets in your ramp (to get a good potentiation effect) and try not to exceed 7 sets (to limit metabolic fatigue). Keep the rest between sets as short as possible without losing performance.</p>					
Work Sets With Focus on Strength Development. Stimulation of Fast Twitch Muscle Fibers					
C. Standing Military Press	3	5, 3, 1	Max Force Production	60-90s	
D. Barbell Row, supinated grip (palms up)	3	5, 3, 1	Max Force Production	60-90s	
E. Bench Press	3	5, 3, 1	Max Force Production	60-90s	
F. Deadlift	3	5, 3, 1	Max Force Production	60-90s	
G. Barbell Back Squat	3	5, 3, 1	Max Force Production	60-90s	
<p>Perform 5 repetitions in the first set, you should be one or two repetitions from failure (6 to 7 RM). Increase the weight and perform 3 reps in the second set, these reps should be hard but still performed with good form (approximately your 4 RM). Increase the weight and do 1 repetition close to your 1 rep-max in the final set and then move on to the next exercise. Feel free to use a spotter. Always generate as much force as you can in the concentric/lifting phase – try to accelerate the weight as much as you can. Lower the weight during the eccentric phase in a controlled manner (2 to 3 seconds).</p>					

Training Session 2: Full Body (Mesocycle 1, Microcycle 3)

Exercise	Sets	Reps	Technique	Rest	Your Notes
Central Nervous System Activation – Max Explosiveness					
A1. Vertical Jump (from approximately 110 °)	3	3-5	Max Explosiveness	30-45s	
A2. Standing long jump	3	3-5	Max Explosiveness	30-45s	
A1. Go down just above parallel, pause for one second and then explode up as high as possible. Use your arms as pendulums. A2. Jump as far as you can from a standstill.					
Central Nervous System Potentiation and Recruitment of The Fast Twitch Muscle Fibers: Ramping The Weight					
B. Deadlift	5-7	2	Max Force Production	60-90s	
Perform about 6 sets of 2 reps where you increase the weight for each set (ramping). Start with about 50% of your estimated 1RM. The final set of the ramp should be close to the maximum weight you can handle for 2 repetitions with good technique. Do not go to failure. Your daily performance level will dictate how many sets you need to get into the groove and do five solid reps with your daily 2 reps-max. Do a minimum of 5 sets in your ramp (to get a good potentiation effect) and try not to exceed 7 sets (to limit metabolic fatigue). Keep the rest between sets as short as possible without losing performance.					
Work Sets With Focus on Strength Development. Stimulation of Fast Twitch Muscle Fibers					
C. Deadlift	3	5, 3, 1	Max Force Production	60-90s	
D. Barbell Row, supinated grip (palms up)	3	5, 3, 1	Max Force Production	60-90s	
E. Standing Military Press	3	5, 3, 1	Max Force Production	60-90s	
F. Barbell Back Squat	3	5, 3, 1	Max Force Production	60-90s	
G. Bench Press	3	5, 3, 1	Max Force Production	60-90s	
Perform 5 repetitions in the first set, you should be one or two repetitions from failure (6 to 7 RM). Increase the weight and perform 3 reps in the second set, these reps should be hard but still performed with good form (approximately your 4 RM). Increase the weight and do 1 repetition close to your 1 rep-max in the final set and then move on to the next exercise. Feel free to use a spotter. Always generate as much force as you can in the concentric/lifting phase – try to accelerate the weight as much as you can. Lower the weight during the eccentric phase in a controlled manner (2 to 3 seconds).					

Training Session 3: Full Body (Mesocycle 1, Microcycle 3)

Exercise	Sets	Reps	Technique	Rest	Your Notes
Central Nervous System Activation – Max Explosiveness					
A1. Vertical Jump (from approximately 110 °)	3	3-5	Max Explosiveness	30-45s	
A2. Standing long jump	3	3-5	Max Explosiveness	30-45s	
A1. Go down just above parallel, pause for one second and then explode up as high as possible. Use your arms as pendulums. A2. Jump as far as you can from a standstill.					
Central Nervous System Potentiation and Recruitment of The Fast Twitch Muscle Fibers: Ramping The Weight					
B. Barbell Back Squat	5-7	2	Max Force Production	60-90s	
Perform about 6 sets of 2 reps where you increase the weight for each set (ramping). Start with about 50% of your estimated 1RM. The final set of the ramp should be close to the maximum weight you can handle for 2 repetitions with good technique. Do not go to failure. Your daily performance level will dictate how many sets you need to get into the groove and do five solid reps with your daily 2 reps-max. Do a minimum of 5 sets in your ramp (to get a good potentiation effect) and try not to exceed 7 sets (to limit metabolic fatigue). Keep the rest between sets as short as possible without losing performance.					
Work Sets With Focus on Strength Development. Stimulation of Fast Twitch Muscle Fibers					
C. Barbell Back Squat	3	5, 3, 1	Max Force Production	60-90s	
D. Standing Military Press	3	5, 3, 1	Max Force Production	60-90s	
E. Barbell Row, supinated grip (palms up)	3	5, 3, 1	Max Force Production	60-90s	
F. Bench Press	3	5, 3, 1	Max Force Production	60-90s	
G. Deadlift	3	5, 3, 1	Max Force Production	60-90s	
Perform 5 repetitions in the first set, you should be one or two repetitions from failure (6 to 7 RM). Increase the weight and perform 3 reps in the second set, these reps should be hard but still performed with good form (approximately your 4 RM). Increase the weight and do 1 repetition close to your 1 rep-max in the final set and then move on to the next exercise. Feel free to use a spotter. Always generate as much force as you can in the concentric/lifting phase – try to accelerate the weight as much as you can. Lower the weight during the eccentric phase in a controlled manner (2 to 3 seconds).					

Training Session 1: Full Body (Mesocycle 1, Microcycle 4)

Exercise	Sets	Reps	Technique	Rest	Your Notes
Central Nervous System Activation – Max Explosiveness					
A. Vertical Jump (from approximately 110 °)	3	3-5	Max Explosiveness	30-45s	
B. Weighted Vertical Jump	3	3	Max Explosiveness	30-45s	
A. Go down just above parallel, pause for one second and then explode up as high as possible. Use your arms as pendulums. B. As above, but hold a dumbbell or a weight plate to your chest (5 to 15 kg / 10 to 33 lbs should be enough).					
Work Sets With Focus on Increased Blood Flow and Recovery					
C. Incline Dumbbell Fly	3	12-15	Controlled	60-90s	
D. Lat Pull-Down, shoulder-width supinated grip	3	12-15	Controlled	60-90s	
E. Standing Dumbbell Press	3	12-15	Controlled	60-90s	
F. Split Squat / Bulgarian Squat	3	12-15/leg	Controlled	60-90s	
G. Lying Leg Curl	3	12-15	Controlled	60-90s	
H. Standing Calf Raises	3	12-15	Controlled	60-90s	
I. The Plank	3	30s	Static	60-90s	
Use a load that allows you to do 12-15 repetitions in each set with 2 to 3 reps from reaching failure.					

Training Session 2: Full Body (Mesocycle 1, Microcycle 4)

Exercise	Sets	Reps	Technique	Rest	Your Notes
Central Nervous System Activation – Max Explosiveness					
A. Vertical Jump (from approximately 110 °)	3	3-5	Max Explosiveness	30-45s	
B. Weighted Vertical Jump	3	3	Max Explosiveness	30-45s	
A. Go down just above parallel, pause for one second and then explode up as high as possible. Use your arms as pendulums. B. As above, but hold a dumbbell or a weight plate to your chest (5 to 15 kg / 10 to 33 lbs should be enough).					
Work Sets With Focus on Increased Blood Flow and Recovery					
C. Seated Cable Row	3	12-15	Controlled	60-90s	
D. Standing Cable Fly	3	12-15	Controlled	60-90s	
E. Dumbbell Lateral Raise	3	12-15	Controlled	60-90s	
F. Alternating Dumbbell Lunge	3	12-15/leg	Controlled	60-90s	
G. Seated Leg Curl	3	12-15	Controlled	60-90s	
H. Seated Calf Raises	3	12-15	Controlled	60-90s	
I. Side Plank	3	30s	Static	60-90s	
Use a load that allows you to do 12-15 repetitions in each set with 2 to 3 reps from reaching failure.					