

# Full Body Bulk Program

Evidence-Based Hypertrophy for Limited Home Gym

3–4 days/week · Free Weights · Bench · Cable Machine

## Weekly Sessions

3–4 Days

## Per Session

45–60 min

## Volume per Muscle

10–20 sets/wk

## Difficulty

Intermediate

## Surplus Needed

+300–500 kcal

## Protein Target

1.6–2.2 g/kg

## The Science Behind This Program

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This program is built on the strongest available evidence for muscle hypertrophy:

- **Frequency:** 2–3x per muscle group per week maximises muscle protein synthesis (MPS) pulses. Full body 3–4x/week keeps MPS elevated all week (Schoenfeld et al., 2016, 2019).
- **Volume:** 10–20 hard sets per muscle per week is the hypertrophy sweet spot. Beyond 20 sets, returns diminish significantly (Refalo et al., 2023).
- **Proximity to Failure:** 1–2 reps in reserve (RIR) or RPE 8–9. Going to actual failure every set isn't necessary and accumulates unnecessary fatigue (Refalo et al., 2024).
- **Progressive Overload: Double progression**—add reps first, then add weight. When you hit the top of the rep range across all your sets, increase the load.
- **Protein:** 1.6–2.2 g/kg bodyweight, spread across 4–5 meals. The hypertrophy ceiling is approximately 1.62 g/kg (Morton et al., 2018).
- **Exercise Order:** Compound (multi-joint) lifts come first when the central nervous system is fresh, followed by isolation (single-joint) work.

### ↑ How to Progress: Double Progression

1. Pick a rep range (e.g., 8–12 for presses)
2. Use a weight where you can hit approximately **8 reps** on all sets
3. Each session, try to add **1 rep** to any set while keeping good form
4. When you can hit **12 reps on all sets with good form**, add 2.5–5 kg
5. You'll drop back to approximately 8 reps—**repeat the cycle**

**⚠ Don't chase failure.** If your last rep slows to a crawl, stop. 1–2 RIR is your sweet spot. Going to failure every set adds fatigue without extra gains.

## Workout A — Strength Emphasis (Lower Root)

#	Exercise	Sets × Reps	Notes
1	Goblet Squat or Front Squat	3–4 × 6–10	Full ROM, controlled descent. Keep torso upright.
2	Flat Dumbbell Press	3–4 × 8–12	Lower to chest, squeeze at top. Elbows at 45°.
3	Cable Row	3–4 × 10–15	V-grip or wide. Squeeze back, 2-sec eccentric.
4	Overhead Press (db or bb)	3 × 8–12	Standing preferred for core engagement.
5	Cable Lateral Raise	3 × 12–20	<b>Key isolation.</b> Slight lean, raise to parallel.
6	Leg Curl (Cable) or Nordic Curl	3 × 12–15	Ankle cuff on cable, face down on bench.
7	Cable Crunch / Knee Raise	3 × 12–20	Direct ab work. Slow, controlled.

Estimated time: 45–55 minutes

## Workout B — Volume Emphasis (Upper Root)

#	Exercise	Sets × Reps	Notes
1	Romanian Deadlift	3–4 × 8–12	Hip hinge, neutral spine. Stretch hamstrings. <b>Best hamstring builder.</b>
2	Bulgarian Split Squat	3 × 8–12/leg	Rear foot on bench. Quad + glute destroyer.
3	Incline Dumbbell Press	3–4 × 8–12	30–45° incline. Upper chest focus.
4	Pull-up or Lat Pull-down	3–4 × 6–12	Weighted if possible. Full ROM.
5	Cable Face Pull	3 × 15–20	<b>Crucial.</b> Rear delts + posture + shoulder health.
6	Cable Biceps Curl	3 × 12–15	Constant tension throughout ROM.
7	Cable Triceps Push-down	3 × 12–15	Lock elbows at sides. Squeeze at full extension.

Estimated time: 50–60 minutes

## Weekly Schedule

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Day	Workout
Monday	A — Strength Emphasis
Tuesday	B — Volume Emphasis
Wednesday	Rest
Thursday	A — Strength Emphasis
Friday	B — Volume Emphasis
Saturday	Rest
Sunday	Rest

**3-Day Option:** Mon (A), Wed (B), Fri (A) — then the next week starts with B.

## Nutrition for the Bulk

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Metric	Recommendation	Notes
Caloric Surplus	+300–500 kcal/day	Above maintenance. Adjust if gaining too fast.
Protein	1.6–2.2 g/kg bodyweight	Spread across 4–5 meals.
Carbohydrates	4–7 g/kg bodyweight	Fuel for training sessions.
Fats	0.8–1 g/kg bodyweight	Hormone health (testosterone, etc.).
Rate of Gain	0.25–0.5% bodyweight/week	If exceeding, reduce surplus slightly.
Water	3–4 litres/day	Hydration aids recovery and performance.

**⚠ Note:** If you're approximately 80 kg, that's roughly 130–175 g protein per day. Don't overthink it—hit the lower end with good food quality and you'll grow.

## Equipment Limitations — Workarounds

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Missing	Solution
No squat rack	Goblet squats, Bulgarian split squats, lunges hit quads <b>harder per unit load</b> than back squats.
No pull-up bar	Lat pulldown on cable is virtually equivalent for hypertrophy (Schoenfeld, 2017).
Only one cable handle	Get a V-grip handle + ankle cuff for rows, curls, pushdowns, leg curls, face pulls.
No leg press	Not needed. Squats + RDL + split squats are superior for natural training.
No barbell	Dumbbell and cable variations work just as well or better for hypertrophy purposes.

### 🏠 The Cable Machine — Your Most Valuable Asset

In a limited home gym, the cable machine is king. Use it for:

- **Lateral raises** — constant tension through the entire range of motion. Better than dumbbells for hypertrophy.
- **Face pulls** — injury prevention, posture correction, and rear delt development in one move.
- **Rows** — constant tension version of barbell rows. Your back will thank you.
- **Triceps / biceps** — better stretch at the top vs free weights due to resistance curve.

- **Leg curls** — only way to isolate hamstrings with a home setup.

## Training Notes

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1. **Warm-up:** 5–10 min light cardio + dynamic stretches + 1–2 light warm-up sets of the first exercise.
2. **Rest between sets:** 2–3 minutes for compounds, 60–90 seconds for isolations.
3. **Cool-down:** 5 min stretching for the muscle groups trained.
4. **Deload:** Every 6–8 weeks, take a week at 50% intensity (same exercises, half the weight, same reps). This prevents CNS burnout.
5. **Sleep:** 7–9 hours. This is where the growth actually happens. Non-negotiable.
6. **Track everything:** Log every set, every rep, every weight. Spreadsheet or notebook. If you're not tracking, you're guessing.

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“The body adapts to what it’s repeatedly exposed to. Give it a reason to grow, then feed it.”

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