

Strength Training Simplified

(AKA: WTF to do at the gym)



Hey friend!

I'm SO glad you're here. :)

Strength training is one of my favorite things ever. Nothing makes me happier than teaching a client how to lift and helping them discover how strong they actually are.

I know how intimidating the gym can be, especially if you're trying to navigate the weights for the first time on your own. It's even worse if you don't look like the stereotypical image of "fitness", whatever that even means.

There is a lot of conflicting information out there, and there's so much diet culture in the fitness industry that it's often easier to just avoid the gym altogether. But it doesn't have to be that way. I'm here to give you the basics of strength training without the side of diet culture that it's usually served with.

I also know that competence builds confidence. When you feel like you know what you're doing and why, it can make the whole experience of strength training that much easier.

Strong looks different on everybody, and physical strength can often translate to mental and emotional strength. I'm so excited for you to experience that for yourself!

Ready to get started??? Let's put together a smart strength training workout!

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Step 1: Start with a compound movement.

A compound movement is just a movement that works multiple large muscle groups at the same time. Most of them can be categorized into hip dominant or knee dominant when we're talking about lower body, pushing or pulling when we're talking about upper body, or carrying. Not sure what that means? No worries. I put some common exercises into categories for ya! This is not an exhaustive list, but it's enough to get started! If you're unfamiliar with these movements, the ones that are underlined even have a video-click to watch!

Hip dominant:

- [Deadlift](#)
- [Kettlebell Swing](#)
- Hip Thrust

Knee dominant:

- [Squat](#)
- [Lunge](#)

Push:

- [Push-up](#)
- Bench press or chest press
- Overhead press

Pull:

- [Row](#)
- Pull-up

Carry:

- Farmer's Carry
- [Suitcase Carry](#)
- Overhead Carry

Step 2: Accessorize!

Accessory movements are other exercises that you'll choose to either compliment or oppose your main compound movement. Similar muscle groups & movements or opposites. Choose 3 or 4 accessories. Need some ideas? Here are a few smart ways to pair:

Complementary Exercises:

- squats + lunges
- bench press + push-ups
- deadlifts + kettlebell swings
- pull-ups + rows
- deadlifts + hip thrust
- overhead press + overhead carry

Oppositional Exercises:

- push-ups + rows
- overhead press + pull-ups
- squat + push-ups
- deadlift + lunge
- kettlebell swings + squats
- lunge + hip thrust

Don't overthink this! Get creative and have fun. There are lots of ways to put together a great workout! The most important things are that you feel good and enjoy it.

Step 3: Choose your variables.

The most common question I get is "How heavy should I lift?". My answer is always: It DEPENDS. On your goals, your experience level, your energy level, how much time you have, and more. Same rules apply for how many repetitions and sets you do. Sets, reps, and weights are your "variables".

Choose your reps and sets:

- Super new to lifting? Or has it been awhile? Try 1-3 sets of 12-20 reps.
- Working on endurance? Wanna take it up a notch? Do 2-4 sets of 8-12 reps.
- Wanna get strong AF? Go for 4-6 sets of 1-5 reps.

Choose your weight:

- Choose a weight that allows you to complete all reps with good form.
- Choose a weight that makes the last couple of reps challenging, but still doable.
- Remember that "heavy" is relative to you and will change throughout your strength training journey.

Other things to consider:

- Be sure to mix up your variables over time. This will help you make more progress, prevent overtraining, avoid injury, and keep things fresh!
- Remember that most exercises are just variations of the ones listed above.
- Wondering why some of your favorite exercises aren't listed? No bicep curls? No crunches? There's nothing wrong with these exercises, but believe it or not we're actually already working these smaller muscle groups (and many others) within the compound movements listed above. Feel free to do them (and anything else) anyway if you enjoy them. You can add them to the end of your workout as a "finisher".
- You can keep things interesting by trying them in different ways. Can you make it unilateral (one side only)? Add an element of balance? Try it with a different piece of equipment? Time yourself? Sync it to music? Play around and have fun!

Let's do this!

I hope this helps you take some of the guesswork out of strength training for you! Wanna take a deeper dive? Here are a few ways to keep the momentum going:

Binge read my blog!

My blog has a ton of great information about strength training, fitness mindset, body image, food, and more! If you have questions, chances are, I have answers somewhere on my blog.

Follow me!

Instagram [@itsjennaj](#) and Facebook [It's Jenna J](#)

Wanna work together?

Click [here](#) to learn more about my online group coaching program Tough Love Strength Club.

**Remember: you don't have to run
yourself into the ground to be
healthy, fit, or the best version of
yourself!**

