The 14-Day Loaded Carry Progression Plan

Learn farmer and suitcase carries with conservative progression, clean technique, and clear stop rules.

EVIDENCE NOTE

Loaded carries activate grip, shoulder, and trunk musculature while walking. Laboratory studies support the movement as a plausible training option, but do not establish one optimal dose or prove injury prevention.

BEFORE YOU START

Clear a flat path. Choose weights you can lift without twisting, breath-holding, or rushing. Stop for sharp pain, numbness, dizziness, chest symptoms, or loss of control.



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Fourteen days, six carry sessions

DAY 1 — BASELINE
Farmer carry: 3 × 20 seconds. Rest 60–90 seconds. Record load, effort, grip, and gait.

DAY 2 — RECOVER
Walk easily or rest. Note delayed soreness; do not add load because the first session felt exciting.

DAY 3 — REPEAT
Repeat day 1 exactly. Progress only if all three sets remain controlled.

DAY 4 — CHECK
Practice the pick-up and set-down with light weights for five careful repetitions.

DAY 5 — EXTEND
Farmer carry: 3 × 25 seconds at the same load. Keep a normal, quiet stride.

DAYS 6–7 — RECOVER
No loaded carries. Continue ordinary movement and your usual strength work if comfortable.

DAY 8 — CONSOLIDATE
Farmer carry: 3 × 30 seconds. Stop early if posture or gait changes.

DAY 9 — REVIEW
Compare effort with day 1. If it rose sharply, repeat the earlier dose next session.

DAY 10 — INTRODUCE
Suitcase carry: 2 × 20 seconds per side with a lighter weight. Resist leaning; breathe normally.

DAY 11 — RECOVER
Rest from carries. Shoulder or back pain is a reason to reassess, not to push through.

DAY 12 — CHOOSE
Repeat either 3 × 30-second farmer carries or 2 × 20 seconds per side suitcase carries.

DAY 13 — RECOVER
Easy movement only. Prepare a clear path and suitable weights for the final check.

DAY 14 — VERIFY
Repeat your chosen day-12 session. Keep the plan only if technique is stable and recovery is acceptable.

Next step

Progress only one variable: add 5–10 seconds, a small load increase, or one set. Repeat the new dose before changing it again.

Sources

Ellestad et al. Int J Exerc Sci. 2024. Joseph et al. Appl Ergon. 2023. Faghy et al. Med Sci Sports Exerc. 2020.

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