THE TWO-DAY MINIMUM STRENGTH PLAN

A calm, progressive starting structure for healthy beginners

How to use this plan

Train on two nonconsecutive days each week. Begin with one work set per movement for the first two weeks. Add a second set only when the first set is controlled, recovery is comfortable, and the schedule feels repeatable.

Effort guide

Choose a load that allows 6-15 smooth repetitions while leaving about 2-3 good repetitions in reserve. Stop when technique changes, pain appears, or the next repetition would be uncertain. Rest 1-3 minutes between work sets.

DAY A	MOVEMENT	STARTING OPTION	SETS x REPS
1	Squat	Goblet squat or sit-to-stand	1-2 x 6-15
2	Push	Incline push-up or machine press	1-2 x 6-15
3	Pull	Cable/band row	1-2 x 8-15
4	Carry	Suitcase carry	1-2 x 20-40 sec/side

Progression rule

When you reach the top of the repetition range with the same good technique in two sessions, add the smallest practical amount of resistance. Change only one variable at a time: repetitions, load, range, or variation.

DAY B + YOUR WEEKLY LOG

Simple enough to repeat; specific enough to progress

DAY B	MOVEMENT	STARTING OPTION	SETS x REPS
1	Hinge	Kettlebell deadlift or hip hinge	1-2 x 6-15
2	Push	Dumbbell overhead or floor press	1-2 x 6-15
3	Pull	Supported row or pulldown	1-2 x 8-15
4	Legs	Step-up or split squat to support	1-2 x 6-12/side

Weekly log

DATE	EXERCISE	LOAD / VERSION	REPS	NOTES

Safety boundary

Muscle effort and temporary fatigue are expected. Stop for sharp pain, chest pressure, fainting, new neurological symptoms, or rapidly worsening joint pain. Seek individualized guidance after recent surgery or with uncontrolled cardiovascular disease, major balance problems, significant osteoporosis, or pregnancy complications.

Evidence note: resistance training reliably outperforms no training. Minimal doses can improve strength and function, but larger or more specific doses are usually needed to maximize muscle growth or sport performance. Sources: ACSM position stand (2026); Currier et al. (2023); Fyfe et al. (2022).