
THE BIG 5 WORKOUT

Perform Like You're 20, When You're 40+

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Here are the fundamentals of the high intensity weight training model that McGuff and Little present. They differ from everything you've been told about weight training, I'll bet, so take a good look. If you want a deeper dive grab a copy of their book "Body by Science."

During your workout you should remember these points...

Form

- Move as slowly as possible without stuttering or pausing.

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- Do not hold your breath (the valsalva maneuver).

Reps

- Measure your progress in terms of 'Time Under Load' (T.U.L.), not how many reps you perform. 'Time Under Load' simply refers to how long (in seconds) you're able to do exercise repetitions with the weight you're using.
- Work with a weight at 80% of your 1 Rep Max.

Sets

- Each set should be no longer than 90 seconds, no less than 45 seconds and...
- The last 30 seconds should be hell!
- Stay tense at the end of your set for 10 seconds when you can't move the bar anymore and are too fatigued to continue.

Sets, Number of Exercises, and Rests

- Do 1 set of each exercise, with 5 different exercises.
- Rest for 30 seconds to a minute between sets.

Frequency

- Since it takes 5 to 7 days to grow more muscle, most people should workout just once a week.
- No overtraining! Listen to your heart...seriously let your HRV tell you (check out the recovery module for how to do this). Everyone will differ in this. But you can get this right by letting your HRV tell you when you're ready for your next session. For many people once a week to every 10 days will be enough...honestly!

Pliability

- I recommend a minimum 10 mins of pliability (found in the recovery module) before and after each workout, I myself try and do 20 mins.

So, you'll only spend 12 - 15 minutes in the gym per week. If you spend more time than that working out, you're not working hard enough!

Just a tiny bit of high intensity weight training each week and you can get much stronger. It's shocking, and a real change from the conventional 3 days a week, an hour each day, 6 to 8 lifts, and 2 to 4 sets per lift workout!

Do a good 10 - 20 min pliability session before hand as a warm up.

Listen to your body on this...especially the first few times as you get used to it.

The aim is to do this to failure. You want to have jelly legs and the knowledge that you absolutely couldn't do anymore or you would quite literally collapse. It is this which makes this form of exercise so effective.

Once you have finished follow a similar 10 - 15 min cool down pliability session.

With Machines

The first workout routine presented is for five different machine exercises. McGuff and Little call it simply 'The Body By Science Big 5 Workout,' since it incorporates five big, full body lifts.

I'm normally more fond of free weights because they improve balance more. But machines are much safer and allow beginners to exert themselves fully without having to spend a lot of time focusing on proper form. If you're starting out try and use machines as they force you to keep good form which is essential when exercising to failure and thus will help prevent injury.

Workout

Seated Row
Chest Press
Pulldown
Overhead Press
Leg Press

With Free Weights

This is the more traditional free weight version of the Body by Science Big 5 Workout. If you already work with free weights, prefer them, or simply don't have access to machines, use this workout.

Workout

Bent over Barbell Row
Standing Overhead Press
Deadlift
Bench Press
Squat