

# Stronger in *4 Weeks.*

A beginner's strength training starter plan for busy adults. No gym required, just a pair of dumbbells or a resistance band.

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- 3 quick baseline tests to track your progress
  - 10 foundational exercises with easier and harder options
  - A 4-week plan, plus simple protein and recovery basics

## — WHY STRENGTH

# Strength is the skill *everything else needs.*

Stronger muscles make everyday life easier: carrying groceries, playing with your kids, climbing stairs, staying injury-free, and keeping your metabolism and bones healthy as you age. You do not need hours in a gym. Two or three focused sessions a week is enough to see real change.

### 2+ days

of muscle-strengthening activity a week is recommended for all adults

### 150 min

of moderate activity a week, like brisk walking, is the other half

### About 1 in 4

U.S. adults meet both guidelines

Sources: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans; CDC.

## How to use this guide

- **Do your baseline tests first** (next page) and write down your numbers.
- **Train 2 to 3 days a week** on non-consecutive days. Each workout takes about 30 to 40 minutes.
- **Warm up for 5 minutes** with marching, arm circles, and a few easy bodyweight squats.
- **Pick a weight you could lift 2 to 3 more times** at the end of each set. When that gets easy, go a little heavier. That is called progressive overload, and it is how strength is built.

**Safety first.** Check with your doctor before starting if you have a heart condition, high blood pressure, recent surgery, an injury, or are pregnant. Stop any exercise that causes sharp pain, dizziness, chest pain, or unusual shortness of breath. This guide is general education, not medical advice.

## — BASELINE TESTS

# Know your *starting point*.

These are not pass or fail. They are your personal starting line. Retest at the end of week 4 and compare.

### 1. Push-up test

Do as many push-ups as you can with good form: body in a straight line, chest close to the surface. Use a kitchen counter or sturdy bench if floor push-ups are too hard, and always test at the same height.

### 2. One-minute sit to stand

From a sturdy chair, stand all the way up and sit all the way down as many times as you can in 60 seconds, arms crossed over your chest.

### 3. Plank hold

Hold a plank on your forearms (or on your knees) with a straight line from head to knees or heels. Stop when your hips sag or your back arches.

| Test                                           | Week 1 | Week 4 | Change |
|------------------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| Push-ups (note surface: floor, bench, counter) |        |        |        |
| One-minute sit to stand                        |        |        |        |
| Plank hold (seconds)                           |        |        |        |

**Tip from our trainers:** progress is not only the scale. Better scores here, clothes fitting differently, more energy, and better sleep all count. Read more in our blog post on [how to measure progress without using a scale](#) at RepkeFitness.com.

## — WORKOUT A

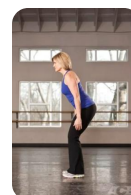
# The big *five*.

Rest 60 to 90 seconds between sets. Move with control, especially on the way down.

### 1 Chair sit-to-stand (squat) 3 sets of 8 to 12

Sit near the front of a sturdy chair, feet about shoulder-width apart. Lean slightly forward, press through your whole foot, and stand all the way up. Sit back down slowly with control.

**Easier:** use your hands on the armrests or a higher seat. **Harder:** hold a dumbbell at your chest, or lightly tap the chair and stand without sitting down.



### 2 Push-up 3 sets of 6 to 12

Hands slightly wider than shoulders, body in a straight line. Lower your chest toward the surface, then press away.

**Easier:** hands on a counter or wall. **Harder:** lower the surface, or do them from the floor.



### 3 Hip hinge 3 sets of 8 to 12

Stand tall with soft knees. Push your hips straight back like closing a car door with your backside, keeping your back flat, then squeeze your glutes to stand. Start with a broomstick along your back, then hold dumbbells in front of your thighs.

**Easier:** hands on your hips, smaller range. **Harder:** heavier weights, or a slow 3-second lower.



### 4 One-arm row 3 sets of 8 to 12 each

Place one hand and knee on a bench or chair, back flat. Pull a dumbbell toward your hip, then lower with control.

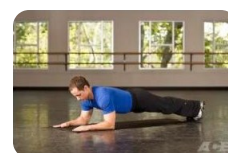
**Easier:** a resistance band anchored in a door. **Harder:** heavier weight with a 2-second pause at the top.



### 5 Plank 3 holds of 20 to 40 seconds

Forearms under shoulders, body in a straight line, squeeze your glutes and brace your abs like you are about to be poked in the stomach.

**Easier:** knees down, or hands on a bench. **Harder:** lift one foot a few inches.



## — WORKOUT B

# Build the *rest*.

Same rules: controlled reps, 2 to 3 reps left in the tank, rest 60 to 90 seconds.

- 6 Split squat** 3 sets of 8 to 10 each
- Stand in a long staggered stance. Lower your back knee toward the floor, keeping your front heel down, then drive back up. Hold a counter for balance if needed.

**Easier:** smaller range of motion. **Harder:** hold dumbbells at your sides.

- 7 Glute bridge** 3 sets of 10 to 15
- Lie on your back, knees bent, feet flat. Drive through your heels and lift your hips until your body forms a straight line from shoulders to knees. Lower slowly.

**Easier:** smaller lift. **Harder:** a dumbbell across your hips, or one leg at a time.



- 8 Farmer's carry** 3 walks of 30 to 60 seconds
- Hold a dumbbell in each hand at your sides, shoulders back and ribs down. Walk slowly with tall posture and short, steady steps. This builds grip, core and balance for carrying groceries and bags.

**Easier:** lighter weights, or carry one weight (suitcase carry). **Harder:** heavier weights, or a longer walk.



- 9 Step-up** 3 sets of 8 to 10 each
- Step onto a sturdy stair or low step with your whole foot, drive through that heel to stand tall, then step down slowly.

**Easier:** a lower step and a handrail. **Harder:** a higher step or dumbbells.



- 10 Dead bug** 3 sets of 6 to 10 each side
- Lie on your back, arms up and knees over hips. Slowly lower the opposite arm and leg while keeping your lower back gently pressed to the floor. Return and switch.

**Easier:** move only your legs. **Harder:** slower reps, or hold a light weight.



## — YOUR PLAN

# Your *4-week plan.*

| Week | Schedule | What to do                                                               |
|------|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1    | A, B     | 2 sets of each exercise. Use the easier options and learn the movements. |
| 2    | A, B, A  | 2 to 3 sets. Find a weight that leaves 2 to 3 reps in the tank.          |
| 3    | B, A, B  | 3 sets. Add a little weight or a few reps where it feels easy.           |
| 4    | A, B, A  | 3 sets. Try a harder option or two, then retest your baseline.           |

On other days, walk or do something active you enjoy. Aim for about 150 minutes a week.

## — RECOVERY BASICS

### Where results actually happen.

- **Protein at every meal.** Active adults generally do well with about 1.4 to 2.0 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight a day (International Society of Sports Nutrition). A palm-sized serving of chicken, fish, eggs, Greek yogurt, tofu, or beans at each meal is a simple start.
- **Sleep 7 or more hours.** The CDC recommends at least 7 hours a night for adults. Muscles recover and grow while you sleep.
- **Some soreness is normal** for a day or two after new exercises. Sharp or joint pain is not. Back off and ask a professional.
- **Be consistent, not perfect.** Missing one workout does not matter. Missing a month does.

— WANT HELP?

# Get a plan built *for your body.*

This guide is a solid start. A trainer beside you checks your form, picks the right weights, and works around old injuries, so you get stronger faster and safer. And at our private studio, there is no crowded gym and no one watching but your trainer.

**Repke Fitness** is a private, nurse-founded personal training studio in Millersville, MD. Our founder is a Registered Nurse, and our trainers bring physical therapy clinic experience. Clients from Severna Park, Pasadena, Glen Burnie, Odenton, Annapolis, and across Anne Arundel County train with us one-on-one, by appointment.

## \$25 FIRST SESSION

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Bring your baseline scores to your first session.