

STRENGTH TRAINING WORKOUT GUIDE

21 Days Men's Health Challenge

Prepared By Nick Murphy at Mission Fitness

Note: During the Men's Health Challenges, you may text Nick questions at (315) 256-5673

Important Safety Notes:

- ⚠ Consult your physician before beginning any new exercise program
- ⚠ Use a spotter for heavy lifts, especially squats
- ⚠ Stop immediately if you experience pain (not muscle fatigue)
- ⚠ Hydrate before, during, and after workouts

UPPER BODY WORKOUT

Workout Principles

Tempo & Form:

- 4 seconds UP, 4 seconds DOWN on every rep
- Push to failure or the point where you cannot complete another rep WITH GOOD FORM (*except during the warmup segment*)
- Form is non-negotiable—stop when form breaks down

Target Rep Range: Seek to get to “failure” at 6-12 reps per exercise

Rest Periods: 1-2 minutes between sets

1. CHEST PRESS MACHINE

Warm-Up Sets:

- **Set 1:** 8 reps @ 25% intensity
- **Set 2:** 6 reps @ 50% intensity
- **Set 3:** 3 reps @ 75% intensity

Working Set:

- **6-12 reps @ 100% intensity** (to failure with good form)

REST: 1-2 minutes

2. INCLINE DUMBBELL CHEST PRESS

Neuromuscular Warm-Up:

- 5 reps @ 60% intensity

Working Set:

- 6-12 reps @ 100% intensity (to failure with good form)

REST: 1-2 minutes

3. PULL-DOWN MACHINE

Neuromuscular Warm-Up:

- 5 reps @ 60% intensity

Working Set:

- 6-12 reps @ 100% intensity (to failure with good form)

REST: 1-2 minutes

4. ROWS (Machine, T-Bar, or Low Pulley)

Neuromuscular Warm-Up:

- 5 reps @ 60% intensity

Working Set:

- 6-12 reps @ 100% intensity (to failure with good form)

REST: 1-2 minutes

5. SIDE LATERAL RAISE MACHINE

Working Set:

- 6-12 reps @ 100% intensity (to failure with good form)

REST: 1-2 minutes

6. SHOULDER PRESS MACHINE

Working Set:

- 6-12 reps @ 100% intensity (to failure with good form)

REST: 1-2 minutes

7. TRICEP PUSH-DOWN

Neuromuscular Warm-Up:

- 5 reps @ 60% intensity

Working Set:

- 6-12 reps @ 100% intensity (to failure with good form)

REST: 1-2 minutes

8. TRICEP DIP MACHINE

Working Set:

- 6-12 reps @ 100% intensity (to failure with good form)

REST: 1-2 minutes

9. BICEP CURLS (Machine, Dumbbells, or Barbell)

Neuromuscular Warm-Up:

- 5 reps @ 60% intensity

Working Set:

- 6-12 reps @ 100% intensity (to failure with good form)

 **UPPER BODY WORKOUT COMPLETE**

Total Time: Approximately 45-60 minutes

LOWER BODY WORKOUT

Workout Principles

Tempo & Form:

- 4 seconds UP, 4 seconds DOWN on every rep
- Push to failure or the point where you cannot complete another rep WITH GOOD FORM (*except during the warmup segment*)
- Form is non-negotiable—stop when form breaks down

Target Rep Range: Seek to get to “failure” at 8-15 reps per exercise

Rest Periods: 1-2 minutes between sets

1. LEG PRESS MACHINE

Warm-Up Sets:

- **Set 1:** 10 reps @ 25% intensity
- **Set 2:** 8 reps @ 50% intensity
- **Set 3:** 6 reps @ 70% intensity
- **Set 4:** 3 reps @ 80% intensity

REST: 1-2 minutes

Working Set:

- **8-15 reps @ 100% intensity** (to failure with good form)

REST: 2 minutes

2. LEG EXTENSION MACHINE

Neuromuscular Warm-Up:

- 6 reps @ 60% intensity

Working Set:

- 8-15 reps @ 100% intensity (to failure with good form)

REST: 2 minutes

IMPORTANT PROGRESSION RULE:

THIS SEGMENT OF EXERCISES IS TO BE PERFORMED ONLY AFTER YOU HAVE ALREADY COMPLETED TWO LEG WORKOUTS.

For your first TWO leg workouts: Skip this section entirely and proceed to Hamstring Curls.

After two workouts: Add EITHER Walking Lunges OR Box Squats (choose one, not both).

Why? These movements create muscle damage. Adding them too soon can lead to overtraining and excessive soreness that interferes with recovery.

3. WALKING LUNGES OR BOX SQUATS

OPTION A: Walking Lunges or Step back lunges

Neuromuscular Warm-Up:

- 6 reps @ 60% intensity (each leg)

Working Set:

- 8-15 reps @ 100% intensity (each leg, to failure with good form)

OPTION B: Box Squats

⚠️ REQUIRES SPOTTER - Do not attempt without one

Neuromuscular Warm-Up:

- **Set 1:** 6 reps @ 50% intensity
- **Set 2:** 6 reps @ 75% intensity

REST: 2 minutes

Working Set:

- 8-15 reps @ 100% intensity (with spotter, to failure with good form)

REST: 2 minutes

4. HAMSTRING CURL MACHINE

Neuromuscular Warm-Up:

- 6 reps @ 60% intensity

Working Set:

- 8-15 reps @ 100% intensity (to failure with good form)

REST: 2 minutes

5. 45-DEGREE BACK EXTENSION MACHINE

Working Set:

- 8-15 reps @ 100% intensity
- Slow and controlled movement
- Hold at the top
- No bouncing or fast movements

⚠️ BACK SAFETY CHECK:

- If your back feels tight or you have any pain BEFORE your session, **SKIP this exercise**
- Use that time to stretch your back instead
- Listen to your body

REST: 2 minutes

6. CALF RAISES (Machine)

Neuromuscular Warm-Up:

- 6 reps @ 60% intensity

Working Set:

- 8-15 reps @ 100% intensity (to failure with good form)

REST: 2 minutes

7. CORE/ABS

Choose Your Exercises:

Option 1: All Three Movements (1 set each to failure)

- Sit-ups: 8-15 reps
- Crunches: 8-15 reps
- Plank: Hold as long as possible with good form

Option 2: If Any Movement Hurts Your Back

- Remove the painful exercise
- Do 2 sets of the movements that feel fine

⚠ Back pain = STOP

Never push through back pain during core work.

✅ LOWER BODY WORKOUT COMPLETE

Total Time: Approximately 50-70 minutes

CONTACT & SUPPORT

Questions about form or technique?

Contact Nick Murphy, Personal Training Expert
315-256-5673

Questions about the 21 Days Men's Health Challenge?

Contact the Wellness Initiative
wellness@syr.edu

Remember: Consistency beats intensity. Show up, work hard, recover well, and trust the process. You've got this. Let's build strength together.

This workout is designed for the Syracuse University Men's Health 21-Day Challenge. Consult with a healthcare provider before beginning any new exercise program.