

This hybrid program combines the best elements of strength and hypertrophy into a single 8-week program for incredible gains across the board. Expand your training and start growing!

When you first started lifting, you probably trained with the idea of becoming both big and strong, as if the two words were synonymous. And for those first few months, they were! You saw significant increases in both your size and strength, regardless of [what rep range](#) you worked in.

But eventually your [progress stalled](#), and you most likely responded by getting specific. You committed to training for either strength or size.

It's understandable; today, most training advice online and in magazines is skewed toward either strength or size. Go meet with a trainer, and they'll ask you which one you want to focus on and work from there. You'll rarely see a strategy that aims to develop both.

But here's one, which I call "powerbuilding."

## What Is Powerbuilding?

Powerbuilding is the simple but dramatically effective combination of the lifting styles specific to powerlifting and bodybuilding. I make no claims to have invented the term, it has been used by other coaches before, but this particular version is my own. I created this plan to help [develop collegiate and professional football](#) linemen and linebackers throughout my coaching career. Powerbuilding training has given my front seven guys the armor they need to survive a season's worth of violent collisions, while also gaining the strength necessary for delivering punishing blows.

They also experienced a killer side effect: They [got lean](#) and huge. In short, they looked and performed like monsters. If you want to do the same, it's time to add some power to your building routine.

Let's run through two quick definitions of each:

**Powerlifting:** You may think of [powerlifting as a sport](#), but I'm going to expand the definition: It is the use of high muscle tension to successfully transport a heavy load.

More specifically, the focus is usually on building and measuring strength during three compound lifts: the **back squat**, **bench press**, and **deadlift**. Train to maximize low-rep performance in these three big lifts, and brutal strength is yours.

**Bodybuilding:** Let's also condense bodybuilding into a single, simple sentence: getting as big as possible while staying as lean as possible. Lifting **rep ranges** are in the moderate-to-high range—usually at least 8—but possibly up to 15 or more. Of course, your conditioning and diet will have plenty to say about how lean you stay!

**Want to get lean and huge? You'll need plenty of protein. Aim for 1 gram per pound of body weight daily, and use shakes to help you get there!**

### Why Combine Bodybuilding And Powerlifting?

Traditional training periodization models imply that low-rep and high-rep training can't cohabitate a single training block. But coaches in the trenches know that successfully squatting or deadlifting a wheel-packed bar creates an internal environment that's definitely advantageous for **hypertrophy**.

Many lifters attempt to "have it all" by focusing on maximal strength development early **in the offseason**, while transitioning to more traditional hypertrophy training as the year progresses. This certainly works, particularly for beginners, but I find that intermediate to advanced lifters benefit greatly from concurrent size and strength stimuli to optimize growth. Otherwise, **strength gains** fade as the training year progresses.

Nodding your head in agreement? Then you're ready for the workouts.

### Powerbuilding: The Program

In this eight-week program, you'll work through two progressive four-day training splits, each with two upper-body days and two lower-body days. Throughout the first four-week phase, the first and second training sessions are strength days designed to elicit maximal

muscle tension and force in the lower and upper body. The second and fourth sessions employ unique volume building to maximize muscle building.

The second four weeks revolve around a four-day combined powerbuilding split. This progression prioritizes a solid strength base before continuing into the higher total volume of the combined powerbuilding split. You get strong, and then you get big.

#### Notes:

- Workouts don't include warm-up sets. Do as many as you need, but never take warm-ups to muscle failure.
- The workouts require you to use a weight that corresponds to your 5RM and 15RM when using cluster and rest-pause techniques. Your 5RM is a weight that you can lift for 5 (and only 5) reps. A one-rep max calculator can help you find it.
- Don't feel like you need to follow this program to the letter. Shoulders don't like the barbell? Use dumbbells or a neutral-grip bar instead.

**A solid belt means stronger, safer big lifts. For powerbuilding training, it's a must!**

### Weeks 1-4: Separate Strength And Volume Workouts

#### Workout 1: Powerbuilding Deadlift Strength

Print

**1**

Barbell Deadlift

After 1-2 warm-up sets, use the same weight across all 5 working sets.

5 sets, 2 reps (rest 3 min.)

**2**

Rack pull

After 1-2 warm-up sets, use the same weight across all 4 working sets.

4 sets, 3-4 reps (rest 3 min.)

3

Romanian Deadlift

Use the same weight across all 3 sets.

3 sets, 5-6 reps (rest 2 min.)

4

Good Morning

Use the same weight across all 3 sets.

3 sets, 6 reps (rest 2 min.)

Workout 2: Powerbuilding Bench Strength

Print

1

## **SUPERSET**

Perform the exercises in order, resting as little as possible between movements and 3 min. between sets.

Barbell Bench Press - Medium Grip

After 1-2 warm-up sets, use the same weight across all 5 working sets.

5 sets, 3 reps (no rest)

Standing face pull

5 sets, 12 reps (rest 3 min.)

2

## SUPERSET

Perform the exercises in order, resting as little as possible between movements and 2 min. between sets.

Dumbbell floor press

After 1-2 warm-up sets, use the same weight across all 4 working sets.

4 sets, 3-4 reps (no rest)

Incline dumbbell row

3 sets, 5-6 reps (rest 2 min.)

Workout 3: Powerbuilding Lower-Body Volume

Print

1

## SUPERSET

Perform the exercises in order, resting as little as possible between movements and 3 min. between sets.

Barbell back squat

After 1-2 warm-up sets, use the same weight across all 4 working sets. Using your 5RM, perform 2 reps, wait 20 seconds, then do 2 more reps. Repeat until you've performed 8 total reps. That equals 1 set.

4 sets, 8 reps (no rest)

Barbell roll-out

4 sets, 8-10 reps (rest 3 min.)

**2**

Goblet Squat

Using a weight you can handle for around 15 reps, rep out until you're a few reps shy of failure. Rest for 20 seconds and start again, stopping a few reps shy of failure. Continue in this manner until you have performed 40 total reps.

1 set, 40 reps

**3**

Dumbbell walking lunge-

3 sets, 24-30 reps (alternating, 12-15 reps per side, rest 1 min.)

Workout 4: Powerbuilding Upper-Body Volume

Print

**1**

## **SUPERSET**

Perform the exercises in order, resting as little as possible between movements and 2 min. between sets.

Barbell Bench Press - Medium Grip

After 1-2 warm-up sets, use the same weight across all 4 working sets. Using your 5RM, perform 2 reps, wait 20 seconds, then do 2 more reps. Repeat until you've performed 8 total reps. That equals 1 set.

4 sets, 8 reps (no rest)

Standing face pull

4 sets, 12-15 reps (rest 2 min.)

**2**

## **SUPERSET**

Perform the exercises in order, resting as little as possible between movements and 2 min. between sets.

Military press

After 1-2 warm-up sets, use the same weight across all 4 working sets. Using your 5RM, perform 2 reps, wait 20 seconds, then do 2 more reps. Repeat until you've performed 8 total reps. That equals 1 set.

4 sets, 8 reps (no rest)

Band Pull Apart

4 sets, 12-15 reps (rest 2 min.)

**3**

Dumbbell Bench Press

Using a weight you can handle for around 15 reps, rep out until you're a few reps shy of failure. Rest for 20 seconds and start again, stopping a few reps shy of failure. Continue in this manner until you have performed 40 total reps.

1 set, 40 reps

**4**

Incline dumbbell row

4 sets, 15 reps (rest 1 min.)

**5**

Standing dumbbell shoulder press

Using a weight you can handle for around 15 reps, rep out until you're a few reps shy of failure. Rest for 20 seconds and start again, stopping a few reps shy of failure. Continue in this manner until you have performed 40 total reps.

1 set, 40 reps

**6**

Lat pull-down

4 sets, 15 reps (rest 1 min.)

**7**

Dumbbell Biceps Curl

3 sets, 12-15 reps (rest 1 min.)

## Weeks 5-8: Combined Powerbuilding Workouts

Workout 1: Upper-Body Powerbuilding Bench Workout

Print

**1**

### **SUPERSET**

Perform the exercises in order, resting as little as possible between movements and 3 min. between sets.



### Barbell Bench Press - Medium Grip

After 1-2 warm-up sets, use the same weight across all 5 working sets.

5 sets, 3 reps (no rest)

### Standing face pull

5 sets, 12-15 reps (rest 3 min.)

**2**

### **SUPERSET**

Perform the exercises in order, resting as little as possible between movements and 2 min. between sets.

### Barbell Incline Press

After 1-2 warm-up sets, use the same weight across all 3 working sets.

3 sets, 5 reps (no rest)

### Band Pull Apart

3 sets, 12-15 reps (rest 2 min.)

**3**

### **SUPERSET**

Perform the exercises in order, resting as little as possible between movements and 2 min. between sets.

### Dumbbell Bench Press

Increase weight with each set.

4 sets, 12, 10, 10, 8 reps (no rest)

Incline dumbbell row

4 sets, 15 reps (rest 2 min.)

**4**

### **SUPERSET**

Perform the exercises in order, resting as little as possible between movements and 2 min. between sets.

Standing dumbbell shoulder press

Increase weight with each set.

4 sets, 12, 10, 10, 8 reps (no rest)

Lat pull-down

4 sets, 15 reps (rest 2 min.)

**5**

Dumbbell Biceps Curl

3 sets, 12-15 reps (rest 1 min.)

Workout 2: Lower-Body Powerbuilding Squat Workout

Print

**1**

Barbell back squat

After 1-2 warm-up sets, use the same weight across all 5 working sets.

5 sets, 3 reps (rest 3 min.)

2

Barbell front squat

3 sets, 5 reps (rest 3 min.)

3

### **SUPERSET**

Perform the exercises in order, resting as little as possible between movements and 2 min. between sets.

Goblet Squat

Increase weight with each set.

4 sets, 12, 10, 10, 8 reps (no rest)

Barbell roll-out

4 sets, 8-10 reps (rest 1 min.)

4

### **SUPERSET**

Perform the exercises in order, resting as little as possible between movements and 2 min. between sets.

Barbell Bulgarian split squat

Increase weight with each set.

4 sets, 12, 10, 10, 8 reps (left side, no rest)

Barbell Bulgarian split squat

Increase weight with each set.

4 sets, 12, 10, 10, 8 reps (right side, no rest)

Hanging leg raise

4 sets, 8-10 reps (rest 2 min.)

**5**

Dumbbell walking lunge-

3 sets, 24-30 reps (alternating, 12-15 reps per side, rest 1 min.)

Workout 3: Upper-Body Powerbuilding Press Workout

Print

**1**

### **SUPERSET**

Perform the exercises in order, resting as little as possible between movements and 3 min. between sets.

Military press

After 1-2 warm-up sets, use the same weight across all 5 working sets.

5 sets, 3 reps (no rest)

Standing face pull

5 sets, 12-15 reps (rest 3 min.)

**2**

## **SUPERSET**

Perform the exercises in order, resting as little as possible between movements and 2 min. between sets.

Seated dumbbell shoulder press

After 1-2 warm-up sets, use the same weight across all 3 working sets.

3 sets, 5 reps (no rest)

Band Pull Apart

3 sets, 12-15 reps (rest 2 min.)

**3**

## **SUPERSET**

Perform the exercises in order, resting as little as possible between movements and 2 min. between sets.

Standing dumbbell shoulder press

Increase weight with each set.

4 sets, 12, 10, 10, 8 reps (no rest)

Incline dumbbell row

4 sets, 15 reps (rest 2 min.)

**4**

### **SUPERSET**

Perform the exercises in order, resting as little as possible between movements and 2 min. between sets.

Dumbbell Bench Press

Increase weight with each set.

4 sets, 12, 10, 10, 8 reps (no rest)

Lat pull-down

4 sets, 15 reps (rest 2 min.)

**5**

Dumbbell Biceps Curl

3 sets, 12-15 reps (rest 1 min.)

Workout 4: Lower-Body Powerbuilding Deadlift Workout

Print

**1**

Barbell Deadlift

After 1-2 warm-up sets, use the same weight across all 5 working sets.

5 sets, 3 reps (rest 3 min.)

**2**

Rack pull

3 sets, 5 reps (rest 2 min.)

**3**

### **SUPERSET**

Perform the exercises in order, resting as little as possible between movements and 2 min. between sets.

Romanian Deadlift

4 sets, 12, 10, 10, 8 reps (no rest)

Hanging leg raise

4 sets, 8-10 reps (rest 2 min.)

**4**

### **SUPERSET**

Perform the exercises in order, resting as little as possible between movements and 2 min. between sets.

Cable Pull-Through

Increase weight with each set.

4 sets, 12, 10, 10, 8 reps (no rest)

Reverse crunch

4 sets, 8-10 reps (rest 2 min.)

5

Lying Leg Curl

3 sets, 12-15 reps (rest 1 min.)