

The **7** Keys to Improving Strength

Strength

Made **Simple**

Free
Report



Contents Page

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---------|
| Introduction | Page 3 |
| Key 1: The Right Exercises | Page 4 |
| Key 2: Consistency | Page 5 |
| Key 3: Frequency | Page 6 |
| Key 4: Loading | Page 7 |
| Key 5: Start Easy | Page 8 |
| Key 6: Progression | Page 9 |
| Key 7: Keep Track | Page 10 |
| Wrap Up! | Page 11 |

Introduction

Firstly thanks for taking the opportunity to download this free report. I am certain that the information you are about to learn will help you make steady progress and ultimately become successful in your endeavour to become strong(er)!

I put this report together because I believe that the mainstream fitness industry is doing it's customers (you!) a disservice and not providing the real keys to your health and fitness success. I hope that it will go some way to remedying that and show you a long term path to your goals and further.

Let's get to it...

Key 1: Choosing The Right Exercises

There are certain exercises that have stood the test of time. They are big compound movements that recruit a lot of different muscles and cover many joints. They stress the body as a whole and allow heavy weights to be used. In [Starting Strength](#) Mark Rippetoe explains how this allows us to constantly, over time, make steady improvements in strength.

These exercises are the competitive lifts from powerlifting and Olympic weightlifting, the Squat, Bench Press, Deadlift, Clean & Jerk and Snatch. All of these exercises have their own derivatives and any of those would be suitable too depending on your own body shape and physique. Throw in Pull Ups, Dips, Military Press and Chest Supported Rows and you have the bulk of your training program. We'll call these you Core Lifts.

You see as I mentioned these exercises allow continual progress. Compare a squat to a bicep curl and you can see that the weight you use for a curl is going to stall after a few weeks if you try and move up to a heavy set of dumbbells each week. With a squat however you can add to the bar for long periods of time if you train appropriately.

Now I'm not saying you shouldn't or can't use isolation exercises but they should only make up a small amount of your training and should be used to bring up a struggling body part to help improve your compound exercises strength. Some people can have very good results eliminating isolation exercises entirely, others, long limbed individuals for example, need extra isolation work. A good rule of thumb is to devote 80% of training time to compound lifts and 20% for the rest.



Key 2: Consistency

Now you know which exercises to use it is important to highlight the need to practice those lifts consistently.

You see with all the great programs available to people these days there is a tendency to “program hop” from one program to another, the idea being that the next program you read about is the best and it is exactly what you need right now. The problem is you haven’t made any progress on the initial program and chances are you won’t give the next program a decent crack of the whip before moving to something new.

Some internet guru’s even try to make this sound like it’s the plan quoting muscle confusion and advanced periodization schemes. But before the internet lifters would stick with an exercise until they improved and then would continue to stick with it and make more progress!

I can’t emphasize my point enough but you have to stick with your main exercises for a minimum of 8 weeks before even considering changing. The problem with changing exercises is that whenever you do the initial progress you make is learning or relearning the lift if you then change exercise you haven’t forced the neuromuscular system to improve and adapt (get stronger!).

Now to give yourself a bit of freedom you can change your assistance exercises, you know the ones that only take up 20% of your training time, more frequently, say every 4 weeks. But persevere with your core lifts for multiple months to really reap the benefits.



Key 3: Frequency

Frequency refers to how frequently you train a particular muscle group per week. When training for strength you need to develop not only the muscles but also the nervous system. You see the nervous system actually controls the muscles and therefore a more powerful nervous system results in more force produced by your muscles.

The nervous system responds well to frequent stimulation and therefore must be trained more than once a week going against all the body-part split bodybuilding programs I'm sure you have seen.

There are 3 common training splits, body-part split where you train one muscle group per day, basically trashing it with a lot of volume (sets & reps) then leaving it to rest until next week. Then upper/lower split where you train upper body twice a week and lower body twice a week and finally total body split where you train your whole body 3 days a week. Obviously the latter two splits are more conducive to strength development. Not that you can't get strong on a body-part split but you won't get as strong as possible.

Obviously the more frequently you train, the less volume you can perform. However you will still get similar volume throughout the whole week. Whether you lift 2 or 3 times a week really depends on the loading protocol but generally the more frequently you can lift and remain recovered the better. When training for strength 2 weekly sessions of an exercise is the minimum.

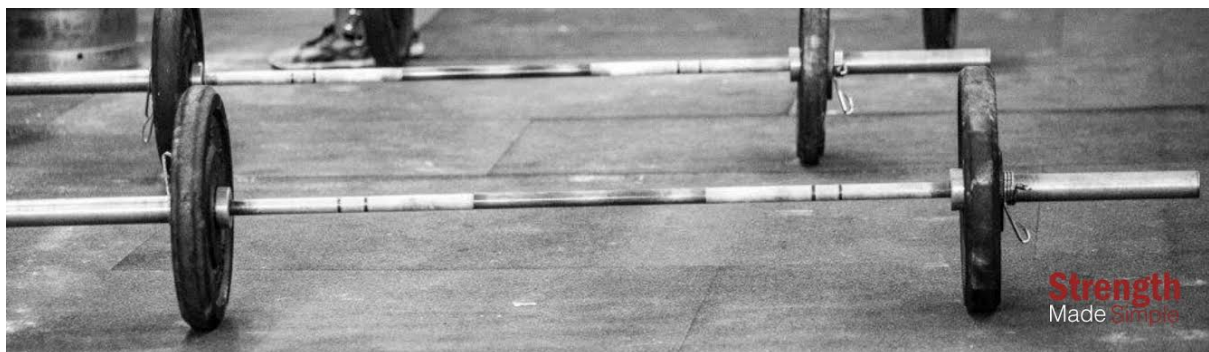


Key 4: Loading

Loading refers to both the intensity (weight lifted) and the volume (sets & reps). Intensity is obviously high to improve strength, it should go without saying that to get stronger you need to lift heavy objects! Research into Russian weightlifters and powerlifters found that the majority of their lifts were around the 75-85% of 1RM mark with occasional forays into the higher 85% area.

Again the actual percentage you use depends on the set/rep protocol but so long as you are around the 80% figure you will be going well. Going into the 90%+ domain of course is doable but don't do it too often and don't be a "one rep wonder" trying to set a new 1RM every session. Dan John in his book [Easy Strength](#) talks about training to gradually increase your 80% and sneakily improve your 1RM, a much more achievable plan with less chance of burnout.

In terms of Volume working at the above percentages a good starting point is the classic 5x5, it has been shown to work time and again but is at the limit of what I would prescribe for strength work (25 total reps). The minimum effective dose seems to be 10 reps total so if you work between 10 and 25 reps there are many protocols which have been shown to work. 5x2, 5/3/2, 2x5, 3x3, 3x5, 4x5, 5x4, 5x3, 5x5, 4x4, 6x1, 3/2/3/2, 5/4/3 etc. As you can see the highest number of reps is 5, for strength there is no need to go higher.



Key 5: Start Easy

I'm not sure if this gets misunderstood or people just forget because they get excited when they start a program?! But you don't see someone decide to run a marathon and begin their training by running a half marathon. It is about progressing to a level that challenges you but is achievable at the same time.

I see it all the time though someone gets motivated to start a new program, usually having left it until the last minute to get in shape, jumps in with both feet, great! They smash themselves the first session and then the next session they can't progress or improve. This is one of the big reasons people become demotivated and stop training or dare I say it program hop.

You see when you first start a new exercise, program, set/rep scheme, whatever, it is a new stimulus to the body and it will adapt. Therefore you don't need to go 100 miles an hour to start, just get it done to a decent level, don't hurt yourself and turn up next time ready to go a bit harder. It's no excuse to train soft but there is a difference between training soft and leaving room to improve.

An example: Your trying to improve your 5 rep max bench press (who isn't!!) it is currently 100kg, the program calls for 3x5 on the first session. A good idea is to go 10-20% lighter the first week, start at 3x5 @ 80/85/90kg with great technique, dominating the weight. At the next session increase the weight slightly.

Jim Wendler's [5/3/1](#) is a great example of starting really light, working on technique and then building up to new rep maxes, then backing off and building back up slightly higher again.



Key 6: Progression

At the end of key 5 I touched on one progression technique that is the most commonly used for strength development, putting more weight on the bar! Obviously you can't always do this or we would all be squatting 500kg by now. But luckily there are other ways to progress. All programs should have some sort of progression plan built into them for them to be successful.

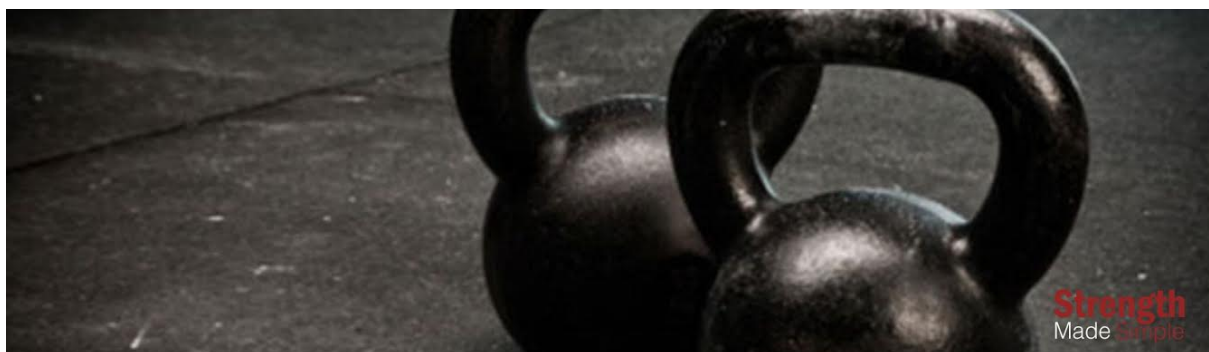
As well as increasing the intensity the other progression models include increasing volume by either increasing reps at a certain weight or sets and increasing the density of the training. I will give examples of all 3.

Rep progression could be starting week 1 with 5x2 @ 80% 1RM, then going to 5x3 the following week, then 5x4 then finishing on 5x5. If you make every rep you could begin again with 5x2 @80%+2.5-5kg and build up again.

A typical set progression is begin with 3x5, then 4x5, then 5x5 the third week then deload with 3x5 the 4th week.

Density refers to the amount of volume performed per unit of time and is often forgotten about as a progression model. An example would be to perform as many reps as possible with 80% 1RM in 5mins. Record the number of reps and at the next session try to beat it, if you have, well, that's progress! This is a really powerful method but shouldn't be followed for too long as it can be quite stressful.

You should be able to see how Keys 5 & 6 work together to allow the program to work. It is imperative to get this right to make long term gains in strength.



Key 7: Keep Track

If you remember back to Key 5, our smart trainer recorded his session in his training diary, that small act is one of the biggest keys to long term success. Quite simply how do you know if you are progressing if you haven't got data of your previous maxes etc.

I recommend everyone uses a training diary to track workouts and highlight pbs. There are some online that you can purchase that have areas to record 1,3,5 & 10 rep maxes for Core Lifts which is pretty cool but at least use a regular old diary so you can search back through to find them.

It's something so simple and easy but very few do it, don't be one of them. Buy a diary of sorts and track as much as possible. What gets measured gets managed and it can be used as a motivational tool to see your progress in black and white in front of you. You can also look through and see what has worked and what hasn't and adapt your training accordingly you might find exercises that help bring up your lifts and be able to discard ones that you don't get anything out of. Get a diary!!



Wrap Up!

I hope you enjoyed the 7 keys free report. I believe you are now in a much better position to develop your training and your strength. Hopefully you can use this information to plan your own training.

If you'd like a program based on these principles, I wrote an extremely powerful program one which I hope to release soon. I had extremely good results from it and it is currently being beta tested to fine tune it and deliver it in the most professional way. I want this program to help as many people as possible so stay tuned to [Strength Made Simple](#) to hear about its progress.

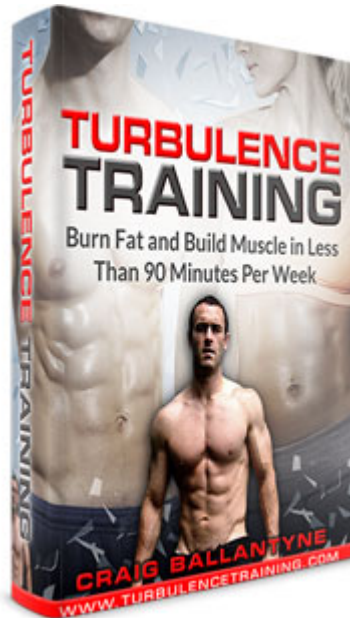
Yours in Strength

Jamie

Strength
Made Simple

Strength Made Simple Recommends:

Turbulence Training by Craig Ballantyne



2x4 Strength Training Program by Bret Contreras

