

7-Day Starter Plan

Build your first consistent week.

Start small. Learn the basics. Make it repeatable.

A practical, low-pressure first week for adults new to exercise or returning after a break.

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Start small. Learn the basics. Make it repeatable.

You do not need a perfect routine to begin. This free BTB starter gives you one manageable step each day: plan your week, practice a few movements, prepare meals you will actually eat, and make room for recovery.

This is for adults who are new to exercise or returning after a break. Start on any day; “Day 1” does not have to be Monday. Most activity sessions take about 10–30 minutes, and meal preparation may take longer. Shorter sessions and easier versions are welcome.

Your goal is to finish with a schedule you can repeat—not a seven-day body transformation.

No weigh-ins, before-and-after photos, calorie targets, supplements, purchases, or account signup are required to use this plan.

Before you start

This is general fitness and meal-planning education, not personalized medical, rehabilitation, or dietary advice. If you have a chronic condition, an injury, pregnancy/postpartum considerations, or uncertainty about what activity is appropriate, ask a qualified health professional for individual guidance. Adapt every activity to your ability and circumstances. ^{1 2}

Stop an exercise if it causes sharp pain or makes you feel unwell. Do not push through dizziness or unusual breathlessness. For chest pain, fainting, severe breathing difficulty, or other signs of an emergency, seek urgent medical help.

Keep this first week comfortable. CDC recommends starting slowly and gradually increasing activity.

The general adult guideline is at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity per week plus muscle-strengthening activity on at least two days. **This introductory week is a starting point, not a claim that you have met the full guideline.** ^{1 2}

Your seven days

Day 1 — Make room for your first week

Today’s task: choose when and where you will move. Allow about 15–20 minutes for planning and a short activity.

Put Day 2 and Day 5 strength sessions on your calendar. Choose the gym route or the equipment-light home route below. Set out comfortable clothes, shoes suited to your activity, and any equipment you need.

Write one reason you want to start that does not depend on appearance. It might be making exercise part of your week or feeling more familiar with the gym. Then take a comfortable 5–10-minute walk, indoor walk, roll, or other activity that suits your ability. You can split it into shorter periods.

Write it down: “I will move at ____ in/at _____. My reason for starting is _____.”

Busy-day option: write the two training appointments and do two minutes of comfortable movement.

☐ **Day 1: I chose my training times and completed an activity that suited me.**

Day 2 — Practice your first strength session

Today’s task: learn the movements, not your maximum effort. Allow about 20–30 minutes, including rest and setup.

Use the **Starter Strength Session** below. Warm up, do one set of each suitable movement, and finish with a few minutes of easy movement. At the gym, ask staff or a qualified trainer to show you equipment adjustments and safe setup. If you are unsure how to use an exercise, do not guess. Choose light resistance that lets you move steadily while leaving several comfortable repetitions in reserve. There is no need to add weight or chase soreness.

Write it down: “The movement I want to understand better is _____.”

Busy-day option: after warming up, practice one or two familiar, suitable movements. Record the shortened session rather than trying to make it up later.

☐ **Day 2: I practiced a suitable version of the strength session.**

Day 3 — Prepare one meal you can repeat

Today’s task: make tomorrow’s food decision easier. Allow about 20–40 minutes, depending on your meal.

Choose one breakfast, lunch, or dinner you already like. Use the **Simple Meal-Prep Guide** below to make two or three portions, or prepare ingredients for them. Check your pantry before shopping.

Label what you store with its preparation date.

If it suits you, add a comfortable 5–10-minute walk or equivalent activity. The meal task matters more than making today another workout.

Write it down: “My repeatable meal is _____. I need to buy _____.”

Busy-day option: choose the meal and write a short shopping list. Preparation can happen at your next available time.

☐ **Day 3: I chose a repeatable meal and prepared it or made a clear preparation plan.**

Day 4 — Take a recovery day

Today’s task: leave space between strength sessions. No strength workout is planned today.

Take a full rest day or do 5–10 minutes of easy walking, rolling, or another comfortable activity. Gentle, pain-free movement is optional; stretching should not be forced.

Notice how you feel after Day 2. If soreness makes normal movement difficult, postpone Day 5 until you have recovered. Persistent or concerning pain needs assessment, not a harder workout.

Make one evening decision that helps tomorrow run more smoothly: set out your clothes, prepare breakfast ingredients, or choose a realistic bedtime.

Write it down: “Tomorrow will be easier if I ____.”

☐ **Day 4: I took an intentional rest or easy-movement day.**

Day 5 — Repeat the strength session

Today’s task: make the second session familiar. Allow about 20–30 minutes.

Repeat the same **Starter Strength Session** and the same route you used on Day 2. Keep one set and the same or lighter resistance. There is no automatic increase today. If your first session felt too hard, use fewer repetitions, a smaller comfortable range of motion, or an easier version.

Focus on one improvement in setup or control. If you have not recovered or feel unwell, rest and

reschedule instead. Do not cram two strength sessions together to preserve a streak.

Write it down: “One thing that felt clearer this time was ____.”

Busy-day option: repeat one or two suitable movements after warming up, or deliberately reschedule the session.

☐ **Day 5: I repeated or appropriately rescheduled my second strength session.**

Day 6 — Choose movement you would do again

Today’s task: find a comfortable activity you enjoy. Try about 10–15 minutes, or less if that is your current starting point.

Choose walking, indoor cycling, dancing, rolling, or another suitable activity. Keep the effort easy

enough to speak comfortably. There is no running, jumping, or step-count requirement. If outdoors is too hot, choose a suitable indoor option.

Check your prepared food. Make a small second batch or prepare fresh ingredients for the next few days. Do not keep cooked meals in the refrigerator for the entire seven-day plan; follow the storage guidance below.

Write it down: “The activity I would happily repeat is ____.”

Busy-day option: do a few minutes of comfortable movement and choose your next meal-prep time.

☐ **Day 6: I chose an enjoyable activity and checked my food-prep plan.**

Day 7 — Keep what worked

Today’s task: plan your next week from real experience. Allow about 10–15 minutes for reflection.

Rest or take an optional easy walk.

Look at your calendar and notes. Which activity fitted your schedule? Which movement needs help?

Which meal was worth making again? Change the parts that were too complicated.

Choose two future strength appointments with recovery time between them. Pick a few manageable activity periods and your next meal-prep time. You can repeat this starter week before making

anything harder. Rest days, modified sessions, and sensible rescheduling are part of the plan.

Write it down: “Next week I will keep ____, simplify ____, and ask for help with ____.”

☐ **Day 7: I reviewed my week and wrote down my next manageable steps.**

Starter Strength Session

Use this on Day 2 and Day 5. Choose one route—not both. These are introductory practice options, not a complete long-term training prescription.

Start with about **5 minutes of comfortable walking, rolling, or other suitable movement.**

Practice each exercise without added resistance or with a very light setting before its working set. Do **one set of 6–10 controlled repetitions** per suitable exercise. For a one-sided movement, that means 6–10 on each side. A repetition is one complete movement; a set is the group of repetitions before resting. Start with fewer if needed. Rest about **60–90 seconds** between exercises, longer if you need it. Breathe throughout; do not hold your breath or strain. Even one set can be a useful starting point. **3**

Gym route

Ask for help with machine setup before your first attempt. Open a BTB guide for additional setup and common-mistake information.

1. **Leg press.** Use light resistance and a comfortable depth. Keep your back supported and move without bouncing or forcefully locking your knees.
2. **Machine chest press.** Adjust the seat so the handles are near chest level. Keep your back supported and press without shrugging or straining.
3. **Seated cable row.** Sit tall and pull the handle toward your torso. Return with control; do not rock backward to move the weight.
4. **Lying leg curl.** Have the machine adjusted to fit you. Bend your knees through a comfortable range without arching your back.
5. **Wall plank — one 10–15-second hold.** Place your forearms on a solid wall and step back slightly. Keep your body in a comfortable straight line and breathe normally. Step closer to make it easier.

Equipment-light home route

Use a solid wall, a stable non-wheeled chair placed against a wall, and one light dumbbell for the row. A comfortable mat is useful if floor work is suitable for you. These are simpler movement options, not identical substitutes for every gym exercise.

1. **Chair sit-to-stand.** Start seated with both feet planted. Stand up and sit down slowly. Use your hands for assistance if needed; keep the chair stable.
2. **Wall push-up.** Place your hands on a solid wall near shoulder height. Bend your elbows to move toward it, then gently push away. Stand closer to make it easier.
3. **Supported light-dumbbell row.** Rest one hand on a stable surface and hinge comfortably at your hips. Pull the dumbbell toward your side without twisting, then lower slowly. Use very light resistance. The [BTB row guide](#) gives additional technique information.
4. **Glute bridge, if getting onto and off the floor is comfortable.** Lie on your back with knees bent and feet planted. Gently lift your hips without over-arching your back, then lower. Skip it if floor work is unsuitable or painful.

5. **Wall plank — one 10–15-second hold.** Use the gym-route description above.

No safe equipment or suitable movement option? Do not improvise an unstable setup. Skip that exercise, use a comfortable activity you know, and seek help selecting an appropriate alternative. You can begin the other daily tasks without buying equipment.

Finish either route with **2–3 minutes of easy movement**. Record the route, repetitions, resistance or machine setting, and any questions. Do not use soreness as your score.

Day 2 session notes: _____

Day 5 session notes: _____

Simple Meal-Prep Guide

Plan one meal first—not a completely different diet. These examples are meal ideas, not prescribed portions or calorie targets. Adapt them for allergies, dietary needs, culture, appetite, and budget; follow any individual dietary guidance you have been given.

For a simple bowl, choose a protein food such as beans, tofu, eggs, fish, or chicken; a grain or starchy food such as rice or potatoes; and vegetables you enjoy. Add seasoning or a dressing that fits the meal.

You can plan fruit and other foods separately throughout your day.

Two easy examples are **beans, rice, and cooked frozen vegetables**, or **chicken or tofu, potatoes, and vegetables**. Use package directions and safe cooking instructions. Frozen vegetables, canned beans, and ready-to-cook ingredients are reasonable time-saving choices.

For Day 3, prepare only what you expect to eat within a few days. For Day 6, make another small batch or use safely frozen portions. There is no need to buy supplements or start tracking every calorie.

Store it safely

USDA advises refrigerating perishable leftovers within **two hours**, or **one hour if the temperature is above 90°F**. Divide food into shallow containers so it cools promptly and keep your refrigerator at **40°F or below**. Refrigerated leftovers generally keep for **3–4 days**; freeze portions you will need later instead of refrigerating a full seven-day batch. Reheat leftovers to **165°F**, checked with a food thermometer. Follow safe cooking temperatures for the original ingredients too. ⁴

My meal: _____

Ingredients I already have: _____

My short shopping list: _____

First prep date / second prep date: _____

Use-by dates or portions to freeze: _____

Your next week, written down

Keep these notes for yourself; you do not need to share body measurements or medical information with BTB.

Strength appointment 1: day _____ time _____ place _____

Strength appointment 2: day _____ time _____ place _____

Manageable activity periods: _____

Meal I will repeat / next prep time: _____

My fallback on a busy day: _____

One question I will ask for help with: _____

When your current routine feels comfortable, increase gradually rather than changing time, repetitions, and resistance all at once. There is no requirement to progress after exactly seven days. ^{2 3}

Keep going with BTB

Start with the [BTB beginner resource page](#). Browse the [exercise guides](#) or use the [printable weekly worksheet](#) to write down your next week.

For meal organization, try the separate [BTB browser Meal Planner](#). You can also explore the [BTB](#)

[Fitness & Health iPhone app](#). The browser Meal Planner and iPhone app are separate tools; they do not currently share an account or synchronized records. Neither is required to complete this plan.

If you want, share the habit you practised with [@btbfitnessandhealth](#) on [Instagram](#). Sharing is optional —there is no need to post a photo, weight, or private health details.

Build The Body. Start with a week you can repeat.

BTB Fitness & Health • General education • Version 1.0, October 16, 2026. The daily sequence, practice sessions, and meal examples are BTB starter-plan suggestions, not a routine prescribed by the sources below.

References

Full source links

- [1] CDC: Adding Physical Activity as an Adult — <https://www.cdc.gov/physical-activity-basics/adding-adults/index.html>
- [2] CDC: Steps for Getting Started With Physical Activity — <https://www.cdc.gov/healthy-weight-growth/physical-activity/getting-started.html>
- [3] NIDDK: Tips for Starting Physical Activity — <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/weight-management/tips-get-active/tips-starting-physical-activity>
- [4] USDA FSIS: Leftovers and Food Safety — <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/food-safety/safe-food-handling-and-preparation/food-safety-basics/leftovers-and-food-safety>