

# THE BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO THE BIG 3

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Everything you need to start squatting, benching, and deadlifting — the right way.

FREE GUIDE

BEGINNER FRIENDLY

POWERLIFTING FOCUSED

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## INTRODUCTION

# Why the Big 3?

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The squat, bench press, and deadlift are the three most effective movements you can do in the gym. They train more muscle, build more strength, and transfer to real life better than anything else. Powerlifting — built entirely around these three lifts — produces some of the strongest athletes on the planet.

This guide is for anyone who has never done these lifts, feels unsure about their form, or has been training without a real system. You don't need to compete to benefit from training like a powerlifter. You just need to learn the movements, stay consistent, and trust the process.

By the end you'll know: how to set up for each lift, the key cues that make the difference, the most common mistakes and how to fix them, and how to structure your first training week.

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**WHAT YOU'LL NEED**

- A barbell and plates
- A flat bench
- A willingness to start light
- A squat rack or power cage
- Flat-soled shoes (recommended)
- This guide open on your phone

LIFT 01 OF 3

# The Squat

## SETUP

- Set the bar at upper-chest height. Step under it across your upper traps (high bar) or rear delts (low bar).
- Take a shoulder-width stance, toes out 15–30 degrees.
- Big breath into your belly. Brace your core hard before unracking.
- Unrack with a short walk-out — 2 steps back, feet set.

## KEY CUES

- Chest up — prevents forward collapse under the bar.
- Knees out — push them in the direction your toes point throughout the movement.
- Break at hips and knees simultaneously — don't sit straight down.
- Drive the floor away — think about pushing the ground down, not standing up.
- Full depth — hip crease below the knee. Don't cut it short.

COMMON MISTAKE	THE FIX
Knees caving inward	Push knees out actively. Strengthen glutes with banded work.
Heels rising off the floor	Improve ankle mobility. Elevate heels temporarily if needed.
Excessive forward lean	Brace harder. Try low bar. Check that your squat depth isn't too fast.
Cutting depth short	Record yourself from the side. Build confidence at lighter weight.

***"The squat will humble you. Start lighter than your ego wants and own the movement before adding weight."***

LIFT 02 OF 3

# The Bench Press

## SETUP

- Eyes directly under the bar. Feet flat on the floor.
- Grip slightly wider than shoulder-width. Thumbs wrapped around the bar — no suicide grip.
- Pinch and pull your shoulder blades down. Create a tight, stable upper back arch.
- Unrack by straightening your arms — don't jerk the bar off.

## KEY CUES

- Pull the bar apart — create outward tension throughout the press.
- Tuck your elbows — 45–75 degrees from your torso, not 90.
- Touch your lower chest / upper abs, not your collarbone.
- Drive your feet into the floor — leg drive transfers power through your whole body.
- Bar path curves slightly back toward your face at the top — not straight up.

COMMON MISTAKE	THE FIX
Elbows flared to 90 degrees	Tuck to protect shoulders. Think 'elbows toward your hips.'
Bar bouncing off chest	Control the descent. Touch and press — no bounce.
Wrists bent backward	Stack wrists over elbows. Use wrist wraps if needed.
No leg drive	Plant feet firmly. Drive through the floor on every rep.

***"The bench is a full-body lift. Legs, back, and shoulders all contribute. It's not just chest and arms."***

LIFT 03 OF 3

# The Deadlift

## SETUP

- Bar over mid-foot, about 1 inch from your shins. Feet hip-width apart.
- Hinge at the hips, push them back, grip just outside your legs.
- Big breath, brace your core, squeeze your lats to protect your lower back.
- Chest up, hips down — shoulders directly over or just in front of the bar.

## KEY CUES

- Push the floor away — it starts like a leg press, not a back pull.
- Bar drags up your shins and thighs — any gap costs you leverage.
- Hips and shoulders rise at the same rate — don't let hips shoot up first.
- Lock out by squeezing your glutes at the top — don't hyperextend your lower back.
- Control the descent — hinge at hips, push them back, reverse the movement.

COMMON MISTAKE	THE FIX
Bar drifting forward	Engage your lats hard. Think 'protect your armpits.'
Hips shooting up first	Reset your start position — lower hips, raise chest.
Rounding the lower back	Reduce weight. Brace harder. Build posterior chain strength.
Jerking the bar off the floor	Pull the slack out first — create tension before you drive.

***"The deadlift is the great equalizer. There is no faking it. You either pick it up or you don't. Train it honestly."***

## PUTTING IT TOGETHER

# What Your Training Should Look Like

Now that you understand the Big 3, here is a general framework for how to structure your training as a beginner. This is not a program — it's an overview of the principles behind effective beginner programming. A proper program applies these principles with specific exercises, sets, reps, and progressions built for your goals.

<b>TRAINING FREQUENCY</b>	3 days per week is ideal for beginners. You recover faster at this stage, so training each lift multiple times per week accelerates skill development. Non-consecutive days — for example Mon, Wed, Fri — give adequate recovery.
<b>SETS AND REPS</b>	Beginners respond best to low-to-moderate rep ranges on the main lifts (3–5 reps per set) and slightly higher ranges on accessories (8–12 reps). Lower reps on the Big 3 prioritize skill development and strength.
<b>PROGRESSIVE OVERLOAD</b>	Add weight consistently — this is the most important variable. A beginner can typically add 5 lbs to squat and bench and 10 lbs to the deadlift every week. When you stop progressing, a structured program adjusts your variables for you.
<b>WHEN YOU'RE READY</b>	This framework gives you the concepts. A real program gives you the execution — exact weights, sets, progressions, and a week-by-week structure so you don't have to guess. That's exactly what our paid programs deliver.

## NUTRITION BASICS

<b>Protein</b>	0.7–1g per lb of bodyweight daily. This is the most important number.
<b>Calories</b>	Eat at maintenance to start. Add 200–300 cal/day to gain, subtract to lose.
<b>Sleep</b>	7–9 hours. This is when you actually get stronger. Non-negotiable.

READY TO GO FURTHER?

# Work Directly With Us

This guide gives you the foundation. A coach who writes your program, reviews your form, and checks in every single week is what actually accelerates your progress.

<b>1-ON-1 COACHING</b>		<b>MEET PREP</b>	
Custom programming, weekly check-ins, nutrition guidance, and direct coach access. Built around your life.		Peak phase programming, attempt selection, weight class strategy, and day-of coaching support.	
<b>\$197 / month</b>		<b>Pricing varies — Apply to discuss</b>	
<b>BIG 3 FOUNDATION</b>	<b>POWERBUILDING BLOCK</b>	<b>ATM STARTER PACK</b>	
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<b>\$99 / program</b>	<b>\$67 / program</b>	<b>\$47 / one-time</b>	
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