

# Machine-Heavy Anterior / Posterior Split

Low volume. High intensity. Step-by-step execution guide with warm-ups, rest times, effort targets, logbook rules, and progressive overload.

## Who this is built for

This plan is designed for an aesthetics-focused lifter who prefers machines, wants low weekly volume, trains hard near failure, and values repeatable execution over random exercise variety.

## How the split runs

You repeat a 3-day loop: **Anterior A -> Posterior A -> Rest**, then **Anterior B -> Posterior B -> Rest**, then back to Anterior A. The goal is to keep session quality high while giving you frequent practice on the core movements.

## What success looks like

You do not chase novelty. You beat your logbook with clean form, preserve recovery, and stay close to failure on the working sets that matter. If you can do that for 8 to 10 weeks, the split is doing its job.

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This PDF turns the entire plan into a printable training manual. It covers: the weekly structure, effort and RIR rules, rest intervals, warm-up sequences, exercise form in baby steps, cardio guidelines, logbook tracking, progression rules, and when to add or reduce volume.

# 1. The big rules before you train

## Your global effort rule

For most movements, run the first working set at **1 rep in reserve**. Run the second working set at **0 to 1 reps in reserve**. If the exercise has a third working set, keep it at roughly **1 rep in reserve** unless you feel unusually fresh and stable.

## Your global rest rule

**Big compounds:** 3 to 4 minutes. **Medium machine work:** 2 to 3 minutes. **Isolation work:** 75 to 90 seconds. **Leg curls, leg extensions, and calves:** 90 to 120 seconds. Rest long enough to reproduce a high quality next set.

## Your global tempo rule

Lower the weight with control for **2 to 3 seconds**. Pause briefly in the stretched position when it improves tension. Drive the concentric hard but smoothly. No bouncing. No panic reps. No turning machines into momentum contests.

## Weekly loop at a glance

Day	Session	Primary emphasis
1	Anterior A	Upper chest, shoulder press, lateral delts, quads, calves, triceps
2	Posterior A	Lat width, upper-back thickness, rear delts, hamstrings, biceps, calves
3	Rest / cardio	Low-stress cardio, easy recovery work, sunlight, hydration
4	Anterior B	Flat press, pec isolation, delts, quad pattern two, triceps, calves
5	Posterior B	Second pulldown/row pattern, rear delts, hamstrings, glutes, biceps, calves
6	Rest / cardio	Same as Day 3
7	Back to Anterior A	Repeat the loop

The split is intentionally repetitive. Repetition is not a flaw here. It is how you build technique, create comparability from session to session, and make progressive overload obvious instead of guessing whether a random new exercise is helping.

## 2. Warm-up system: exactly how many sets and how to do them

### The purpose of warm-up sets

Warm-up sets are there to raise tissue temperature, rehearse the movement pattern, wake up the target muscles, and let you feel the machine path before the real work starts. Warm-up sets are **not** there to create fatigue.

- **First big exercise of the workout** - Do 3 to 4 warm-up sets. Example ramp: 40% x 8, 60% x 5, 75% x 3, 85% x 1 to 2.
- **Second compound for a similar body region** - Do 2 warm-up sets. Example ramp: 50% x 5, 70% x 3.
- **Isolation exercise** - Usually 0 to 1 feeler set of 10 to 12 reps is enough.
- **If a machine feels awkward that day** - Take one extra feeler set rather than rushing into a bad first working set.

### Practical warm-up map for your split

Session	Exercise	Warm-up sets
Anterior days	First press movement	4
	Second press movement	2
	Lateral raise / leg extension / calves / pushdown	1 each
	Primary squat or leg press pattern	3
Posterior days	First pulldown or row	3
	Second heavy row	2
	Cable row / straight-arm pulldown / reverse pec deck curls / calves	1 each
	Hamstring curl	2

### Quick check before your first hard set

Ask yourself four questions: **Am I warm? Does the groove feel stable? Can I feel the target muscle? Am I still fresh?** If the answer to the last question is no, your warm-up was too aggressive.

## 3. Day 1 - Anterior A

### Anterior A

Goal: upper chest, machine shoulder strength, lateral delt cap, quads, calves, and triceps.

#### 1) Incline chest press machine

**Working sets:** 2 working sets   **Rep target:** 6 to 10   **Rest:** 3 to 4 min

**Warm-up:** 4 warm-up sets: 40% x 8, 60% x 5, 75% x 3, 85% x 1 to 2.

##### Form steps

- Set the seat so the handles line up around the upper chest, not the neck and not the lower chest.
- Pin the upper back to the pad before you unrack the movement. Keep the rib cage controlled instead of flaring upward.
- Use an elbow path around 30 to 45 degrees from the torso. Too tucked becomes triceps-heavy. Too flared becomes shoulder-heavy.
- Lower until you feel a deep chest stretch without the shoulders rolling forward off the pad.
- Press by driving the elbows up and in. Finish the rep without losing chest tension at lockout.

**Main cue:** Push through the elbows and keep the upper chest loaded the whole way.

#### 2) Machine shoulder press

**Working sets:** 2 working sets   **Rep target:** 6 to 10   **Rest:** 3 min

**Warm-up:** 2 warm-up sets: 50% x 5, 70% x 3.

##### Form steps

- Set the seat low enough that the handles begin around chin to ear level.
- Glue your glutes and upper back to the pad. Do not turn the movement into a high-incline chest press.
- Press mostly upward, not out in front. Keep the rib cage down so your lower back does not over-extend.
- Lower in control until you feel the delts stretch while still staying stable in the bottom position.

**Main cue:** Press tall. Ribs down. Finish with delts, not low back.

#### 3) Lateral raise machine

**Working sets:** 3 working sets   **Rep target:** 12 to 20   **Rest:** 75 to 90 sec

##### Form steps

- Set the machine so the arm pad or handle sits comfortably against the upper arm or hand path the machine intends.
- Lean slightly if the machine allows it. Start with the shoulders down instead of shrugged.
- Lead the raise with the elbow. Stop around shoulder height unless the machine naturally takes you slightly above.
- Lower slowly for 2 to 3 seconds without letting the stack slam.

**Main cue:** Lead with the elbow. Do not swing.

#### 4) Leg press, quad biased

**Working sets:** 3 working sets   **Rep target:** 8 to 12   **Rest:** 3 to 4 min

**Warm-up:** 3 warm-up sets, then 3 working sets.

##### Form steps

- Place the feet lower on the platform, around shoulder width, with a slight toe-out angle.
- Lower under control and let the knees travel forward naturally if your mobility allows it.
- Stop just before your pelvis tucks under. That is your true bottom, not whatever the deepest Instagram rep would be.
- Drive the platform away through the midfoot and keep the quads working throughout the whole rep.

**Main cue:** Knees forward, pelvis stable, no bounce out of the hole.

#### 5) Leg extension

**Working sets:** 2 working sets    **Rep target:** 10 to 15    **Rest:** 90 to 120 sec

**Form steps**

- Align the knee joint with the machine pivot.
- Curl the ankle slightly upward if that helps you feel the quads more clearly.
- Squeeze at the top for 1 second, then lower slowly into full stretch without dropping tension.

**Main cue:** Kick, squeeze, lower slowly.

## 6) Seated calf raise

**Working sets:** 3 working sets    **Rep target:** 8 to 12    **Rest:** 90 sec

**Form steps**

- Let the heel sink into a deep stretch for roughly 2 seconds at the bottom.
- Drive up forcefully, then hold the squeeze for 1 second at the top.
- Do not bounce. Calves respond well to strict pauses and full range.

**Main cue:** Stretch hard, then stand high.

## 7) Rope pushdown

**Working sets:** 2 working sets    **Rep target:** 8 to 12    **Rest:** 75 to 90 sec

**Form steps**

- Set the cable high and stand stable with a small forward lean if needed.
- Keep elbows pinned slightly in front of the torso instead of drifting backward or flaring outward.
- Push the rope down and slightly apart. Lock out hard, then return slowly until the triceps are stretched again.

**Main cue:** Only the elbow joint should move.

## 4. Day 2 - Posterior A

### Posterior A

Goal: lat width, mid-back thickness, rear delts, hamstrings, biceps, and calves.

#### 1) Lat pulldown, neutral or shoulder-width grip

**Working sets:** 2 working sets    **Rep target:** 6 to 10    **Rest:** 3 min

**Warm-up:** 3 warm-up sets before the first hard set.

##### Form steps

- Sit tall, plant the thighs under the pad, and bring the chest up before the first rep starts.
- Begin by pulling the shoulders down slightly, then drive the elbows toward the ribs.
- Use a small lean back, not a swing. Pull to upper chest or collarbone level depending on the machine path.
- Return all the way to a stretch at the top without losing control of the shoulder position.

**Main cue:** Drive the elbows into your back pockets.

#### 2) Chest-supported T-bar row

**Working sets:** 2 working sets    **Rep target:** 6 to 10    **Rest:** 3 to 4 min

**Warm-up:** 2 warm-up sets: 50% x 5, 70% x 3.

##### Form steps

- Glue the chest to the pad and keep it there for the entire set.
- Pull the handle toward the lower chest or upper stomach. Let the elbows travel roughly 45 to 70 degrees from the torso.
- Squeeze the mid-back hard, then lower into a complete stretch before the next rep begins.

**Main cue:** Row through the elbows. Keep the torso quiet.

#### 3) Seated cable row

**Working sets:** 2 working sets    **Rep target:** 8 to 12    **Rest:** 2 to 3 min

##### Form steps

- Sit mostly upright and start the rep by reaching forward into stretch.
- Pull the elbows back without shrugging and without turning the set into a lower-back swing.
- Finish with a strong squeeze in the middle of the back, then reach forward again under control.

**Main cue:** Stretch first, then row behind you.

#### 4) Straight-arm pulldown

**Working sets:** 2 working sets    **Rep target:** 10 to 15    **Rest:** 75 to 90 sec

##### Form steps

- Take a small hip hinge and keep the elbows softly bent.
- Sweep the bar or rope from around eye level down to the upper thighs.
- Keep the shoulders packed and the rib cage controlled. This is a lat movement, not a triceps lockout drill.

**Main cue:** Armpits down. Sweep, do not yank.

#### 5) Reverse pec deck

**Working sets:** 2 working sets    **Rep target:** 12 to 20    **Rest:** 75 sec

##### Form steps

- Set the handles so your arms start slightly in front of your torso.
- Pull wide with the elbows and avoid shrugging toward the ears.
- Control the return. Keep the rear delts and upper back under tension instead of letting the machine snap back.

**Main cue:** Spread the machine apart.

## 6) Seated or lying hamstring curl

**Working sets:** 3 working sets   **Rep target:** 8 to 12   **Rest:** 90 to 120 sec

**Warm-up:** 2 warm-up sets before the first work set.

### Form steps

- Set the machine carefully before the first set. Ham curl setups matter.
- Keep the hips pinned down while you curl. Pause and squeeze hard at peak contraction for 1 second.
- Lower slowly to full stretch before curling again.

**Main cue:** Cramp the hamstrings, then lower slowly.

## 7) Preacher curl

**Working sets:** 2 working sets   **Rep target:** 8 to 12   **Rest:** 75 to 90 sec

### Form steps

- Pin the upper arms and armpits to the pad so the shoulders do not take over.
- Curl smoothly without jerking from the bottom.
- Lower extra slowly. The stretched position is one of the biggest reasons preacher curls work so well.

**Main cue:** Curl with the biceps, not with body English.

## 8) Standing calf raise

**Working sets:** 3 working sets   **Rep target:** 8 to 12   **Rest:** 90 sec

### Form steps

- Let the heel sink into a full bottom stretch with no bouncing.
- Drive all the way up to the ball of the foot and squeeze for 1 second.
- Stay strict. The machine should move because the calves work, not because you bounce your torso.

**Main cue:** Stretch, rise, squeeze.

## 5. Day 4 - Anterior B

### Anterior B

Goal: second chest pattern, chest isolation, delt work, second quad pattern, triceps, and calves.

#### 1) Flat chest press machine

**Working sets:** 2 working sets    **Rep target:** 6 to 10    **Rest:** 3 to 4 min

**Warm-up:** 4 warm-up sets on the first press of the session.

##### Form steps

- Set the seat so the handles line up around mid chest.
- Maintain the same press principles as Incline Press: upper back pinned, elbows in a strong path, controlled stretch, and no shoulder roll at the bottom.
- Drive the handles out smoothly and stop just short of tensionless lockout.

**Main cue:** Stable torso, chest loaded, elbows drive the press.

#### 2) Pec deck or cable fly

**Working sets:** 2 working sets    **Rep target:** 10 to 15    **Rest:** 90 sec

##### Form steps

- Use a setup that keeps constant chest tension instead of forcing an awkward range.
- Open into a strong chest stretch and bring the arms together in a wide hugging arc.
- Do not let the shoulders shrug or roll forward aggressively at the end of the rep.

**Main cue:** Hug wide and squeeze chest, not front delts.

#### 3) Machine shoulder press or smith high incline press

**Working sets:** 2 working sets    **Rep target:** 6 to 10    **Rest:** 3 min

##### Form steps

- Use the same shoulder press rules as Day 1: seat height matters, ribs stay down, and the press should track upward.
- If using a smith high incline press, set the bench angle high enough to be shoulder dominant but not so vertical that stability breaks down.

**Main cue:** Press up, not out.

#### 4) Cable or machine lateral raise

**Working sets:** 3 working sets    **Rep target:** 12 to 20    **Rest:** 75 to 90 sec

##### Form steps

- Same rules as Day 1. This movement should burn and pump, not turn into momentum chaos.
- Own the top half and lower slowly.

**Main cue:** Smooth reps beat ugly heavy reps.

#### 5) Hack squat or pendulum squat

**Working sets:** 3 working sets    **Rep target:** 8 to 12    **Rest:** 3 to 4 min

**Warm-up:** 3 warm-up sets before the first hard set.

##### Form steps

- Brace before you descend and keep your whole foot planted.
- Sit down between the ankles under control and let the knees travel where your structure allows.
- Drive up hard while keeping the quads loaded instead of folding the hips and turning the movement into a grindy good morning.

**Main cue:** Sit down, then stand hard through the floor.

## 6) Leg extension

**Working sets:** 2 working sets   **Rep target:** 10 to 15   **Rest:** 90 to 120 sec

### Form steps

- Same setup and execution as Day 1. Make the quads do the work all the way to lockout.

**Main cue:** Squeeze the top and own the negative.

## 7) Overhead rope extension

**Working sets:** 2 working sets   **Rep target:** 10 to 15   **Rest:** 75 to 90 sec

### Form steps

- Step forward slightly and let the elbows point naturally forward instead of flaring wide.
- Allow the triceps to stretch deep behind the head, then extend smoothly to full lockout.

**Main cue:** Stretch the long head, then finish the extension.

## 8) Seated calf raise

**Working sets:** 3 working sets   **Rep target:** 8 to 12   **Rest:** 90 sec

### Form steps

- Same calf rules as Day 1: full stretch, strict squeeze, no bounce.

**Main cue:** Calves grow when the reps stay honest.

## 6. Day 5 - Posterior B

### Posterior B

Goal: second pulldown and row pattern, rear delts, hamstrings, glutes, biceps, and calves.

#### 1) Close or medium-grip pulldown

**Working sets:** 2 working sets   **Rep target:** 6 to 10   **Rest:** 3 min

**Warm-up:** 3 warm-up sets.

##### Form steps

- Use a slightly different grip than Day 2 so the movement pattern is not identical while the intent stays similar.
- Pull the elbows down and in toward the torso while keeping the neck relaxed and the chest tall.

**Main cue:** Elbows down, lats loaded.

#### 2) Chest-supported machine row, elbows more tucked

**Working sets:** 2 working sets   **Rep target:** 8 to 12   **Rest:** 3 min

**Warm-up:** 2 warm-up sets.

##### Form steps

- Use a more tucked elbow path than on Day 2 to bias the lats slightly more while still training thickness.
- Pull toward the lower rib cage or upper waist depending on the machine path.
- Stretch completely between reps.

**Main cue:** Pull elbows toward the hips, not up toward the shoulders.

#### 3) Seated cable row, alternate handle

**Working sets:** 2 working sets   **Rep target:** 8 to 12   **Rest:** 2 to 3 min

##### Form steps

- Pick a handle that feels natural. The point is not novelty for novelty's sake, but a slightly different line of pull from Day 2.
- Stay strict and keep the torso from rocking backward as fatigue rises.

**Main cue:** Stable torso, full stretch, strong squeeze.

#### 4) Straight-arm pulldown or lat prayer

**Working sets:** 2 working sets   **Rep target:** 10 to 15   **Rest:** 75 to 90 sec

##### Form steps

- Use whichever version gives you the cleanest lat stretch and best tension path.
- If you use a prayer, hinge more and drive the elbows down through a wide arc.

**Main cue:** Keep the lats under tension from top to bottom.

#### 5) Reverse pec deck or face pull

**Working sets:** 2 working sets   **Rep target:** 12 to 20   **Rest:** 75 sec

##### Form steps

- If using face pulls, pull to forehead or eye level and rotate slightly so the rear delts and upper back stay engaged.
- If using reverse pec deck, keep the movement smooth and wide like Day 2.

**Main cue:** Rear delts and upper back, not shrugging.

#### 6) Seated hamstring curl

**Working sets:** 3 working sets   **Rep target:** 8 to 12   **Rest:** 90 to 120 sec

**Form steps**

- Same ham curl rules: set it up correctly, squeeze hard, lower slowly.
- Your hamstrings should feel loaded in both the squeeze and the stretch.

**Main cue:** Full stretch, full squeeze.

## 7) Glute drive machine

**Working sets:** 2 working sets   **Rep target:** 8 to 12   **Rest:** 2 min

**Form steps**

- Set the pad and foot position so the movement feels glute dominant instead of lower-back dominant.
- Keep ribs down, chin slightly tucked, and drive through the heels to finish with the glutes.
- Stop at the point where the glutes are fully shortened without hyperextending the spine.

**Main cue:** Finish with glutes, not low back.

## 8) Cable curl or preacher curl

**Working sets:** 2 working sets   **Rep target:** 10 to 15   **Rest:** 75 to 90 sec

**Form steps**

- If using cable curls, keep the elbows quiet and let the cable provide constant tension.
- If using preacher curls again, own the bottom stretch and keep the shoulders out of the rep.

**Main cue:** Tension first, weight second.

## 9) Standing calf raise

**Working sets:** 3 working sets   **Rep target:** 8 to 12   **Rest:** 90 sec

**Form steps**

- Same calf execution as before. Calves reward consistency more than novelty.

**Main cue:** Make every rep match.

## 7. Rest days, cardio, tracking, and progression

### Rest day cardio

On each rest day, do **20 to 35 minutes** of easy cardio. Incline treadmill walking, cycling, or a light elliptical are all fine. Keep the pace conversational. This is not a separate punishment block. It is recovery support and cardiovascular maintenance.

- **Before the session** - Log bodyweight, sleep quality, and energy level. This helps you read recovery trends instead of blaming random bad days on the program.
- **During the session** - Log every working set. Write the load, reps completed, and a quick note if the set was clean, sloppy, or stronger than expected.
- **After the session** - Record where you got a pump, where technique felt shaky, any pain, and what exact number you want to beat next time.

### Progressive overload rules

- **Use double progression** - Stay inside the assigned rep range. Add reps until all working sets reach the top of the range with clean form. Then add the smallest load jump next session.
- **Compounds** - Aim to add 1 total rep across the work sets each session until the range tops out.
- **Isolations** - Aim to add 1 to 2 total reps across the work sets before increasing load.
- **Never force ugly progression** - If the rep only exists because you shortened range or lost control, it does not count.

### When to add or reduce volume

- **Add volume only if** - performance has stalled for 2 to 3 straight weeks, recovery feels fine, target muscles are not getting enough stimulus, and your pumps are weak. Add only 1 set to the lagging area, not 5 random exercises.
- **Reduce volume if** - joints ache, performance trends downward, sleep worsens, motivation crashes, or you feel beat up before you even start the work sets.

### Your arm work is enough

Direct arm work in this plan is intentionally controlled. Presses and rows already feed triceps and biceps. If you execute the direct curl and pushdown work hard, your current arm volume is enough to grow.

## 8. Printable session logbook template

Use this page as the exact structure for your notes app or your printed training log. The point is not perfection. The point is to create a record that shows whether your form, load, and recovery are actually moving forward.

Field	Write this down
Date	
Bodyweight	
Sleep	
Energy (1 to 10)	
Session	Anterior A / Posterior A / Rest / Anterior B / Posterior B / Rest
Exercise 1	Warm-ups / Set 1 / Set 2 / notes
Exercise 2	Warm-ups / Set 1 / Set 2 / notes
Exercise 3	Warm-up / Set 1 / Set 2 / Set 3 / notes
Exercise 4	Warm-ups / Set 1 / Set 2 / Set 3 / notes
Exercise 5	Warm-up / Set 1 / Set 2 / notes
Exercise 6	Warm-up / Set 1 / Set 2 / Set 3 / notes
Exercise 7	Warm-up / Set 1 / Set 2 / notes
Pump / performance / pain / next target	

### Final reminder

Do not judge the split by one heroic workout. Judge it by whether your technique improves, your logbook numbers trend upward, and your body looks better after 8 to 10 weeks. This plan is supposed to be boring in the best possible way.