
TRUST PERSONAL TRAINING

PERFORMANCE SERIES / 03

TRAINING FOUNDATIONS

8 WEEKS / 3 TRAINING DAYS / GYM BASED



THEMBA COLLIN MLOMBO

Trust Personal Training | Johannesburg, South Africa

EDITION 01 / SEPTEMBER 2026 / PERSONAL USE

01 / PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Your starting point

Establish movement skill, whole-body strength and a sustainable three-day training habit.

Length	Weekly frequency	Level	Session time
8 weeks	3 sessions	Beginner / returning	45-65 minutes

Who this is for

Healthy adults beginning gym training or returning after a break. Arrange a coached introduction to unfamiliar equipment before using it independently.

What you need

A commercial gym with dumbbells, a bench, cable station and standard leg machines. Barbell programmes also require a suitable rack, plates and safeties. Shoes must provide a stable base; use the exercise alternatives if equipment is unavailable.

Choose one programme

Follow this plan on its own. Do not stack it with another Trust programme or add a second heavy leg or arm plan. Consistency, controlled effort and recovery matter more than doing every available exercise.

This is a general training product, not an individual assessment, rehabilitation plan or medical prescription. Training responses differ; no specific muscle gain, weight change or strength increase is guaranteed.

How to use the workbook

Read the training rules and calendar first. Use the session cards for exercises, the week-by-week matrix for effort and recovery weeks, and the final logs to record your work. Warm-up sets are separate from all prescribed working sets.

03 / TRAINING RULES

Effort you can measure

RIR means repetitions in reserve: your estimate of how many additional good reps you could complete. It is not permission to attempt those reps. Stop at the prescribed target.

RIR	How it feels	Action
4	About four good reps remain.	Technique practice or recovery-week effort.
3	About three good reps remain.	A controlled starting load.
2	About two good reps remain.	Challenging, repeatable work.
1	About one good rep remains.	Only if the week allows it; no grinding or failure.

Choose your first load

Start conservatively. Perform the bottom of the prescribed rep range. If fewer reps remain than the week requires, reduce the load by about 5-10% and repeat after resting. If it is much too easy, use the next small increment. Record the successful load as your starting point.

Working sets and unilateral reps

3 x 8-12 means three working sets, each containing 8-12 reps. 2 x 8/side means two sets of eight reps on each side. For one-sided work, begin with the less capable side, then match its reps with the other side. Rest after both sides unless you need a brief break for balance.

Rest means real rest

Use the rest interval on the session card between working sets. Avoid supersets for the main compound lifts. If breathing or balance is not restored at the interval, extend it by 30-60 seconds. Record unusually long rests so comparisons remain fair.

For all accessory exercises, keep at least 2 RIR even when a muscle-building week permits 1 RIR on a controlled main lift. If you cannot estimate effort confidently, choose the easier option and ask a trainer for feedback.

05 / PROGRESSION

Progress without guessing

Double progression

Keep the load unchanged while you build reps within the prescribed range. Increase only when every set reaches the top of the range at the required RIR with consistent technique. Use the smallest available increment, then return to the lower end of the rep range. For dumbbells, the listed load is per hand; for barbells it includes the bar.

When sets increase

An extra set is already a progression in workload. Keep the previous load initially and check the new week's RIR. If the added set falls below the minimum reps, reduce the load instead of forcing it.

Example	3 x 8-12 at 20 kg per hand	Decision
First exposure	10 / 10 / 9 reps at target RIR	Keep 20 kg and build reps.
Later exposure	12 / 12 / 12 reps at target RIR	Try the next small increment next time.
After increase	9 / 8 / 8 reps at target RIR	Build reps again; do not add more weight yet.

Missed reps or a plateau

If you miss the bottom rep target or your technique breaks, stop that set. Reduce the next set's load by about 5-10%. If the same lift stalls at two consecutive exposures, check sleep, food and rest intervals. Repeat the load or reduce one working set for a week; never add weight to hide poor reps.