
TRUST PERSONAL TRAINING

PERFORMANCE SERIES / 02

STRENGTH DEVELOPMENT

12 WEEKS / 4 TRAINING DAYS / GYM BASED



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Trust Personal Training | Johannesburg, South Africa

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01 / PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Your starting point

Improve repeatable squat, bench and deadlift performance through specific practice and staged rep targets.

Length	Weekly frequency	Level	Session time
12 weeks	4 sessions	Intermediate	60-80 minutes

Who this is for

Healthy adults with at least 6 months of consistent training and competent squat, bench and hinge technique. This is submaximal strength training, not a competition peak.

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

Main lifts: repeat, then increase

Main and paused lifts use fixed reps in each block. Keep the same load until every prescribed set meets both the rep target and the week's RIR target with stable technique. At the next occurrence, add the smallest available increment: commonly 1-2.5 kg total for upper-body barbell lifts and 2.5-5 kg total for squat or deadlift. Smaller steps are preferable when available.

When a new block starts

Do not automatically raise the weight when the rep target drops. Choose a fresh load that allows all the new sets at the first week's RIR target. Added sets also increase work. A rep change is a new prescription, not a reason to chase a maximal attempt.

Assistance lifts

For exercises with rep ranges, add reps at the same load until every set reaches the top of the range with at least 2 RIR. Then raise the weight by one small increment and return to the lower end of the range.

Bench example	Prescription	Decision
Session 1	3 x 5 at 60 kg; 3 RIR on every set	All targets met: a small increase is allowed next time.
Session 2	3 x 5 at 62.5 kg; final set only 1 RIR	Too hard for a 3-RIR week: reduce or repeat a lighter load.
Block change	4 x 4; new week requires 3 RIR	Re-select a manageable load; do not add weight by default.

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.