

FREE PROGRAMME F03

CALIBRE

BRIEF & INTENSE

6 WEEKS · 2 DAYS · FREE

V1.0

Coach Mo · Train with CALIBRE

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DURATION	FREQUENCY	SESSION	EFFORT	LEVEL
6 weeks	2 days / week	40–45 min	RIR	Time-poor

How to use

- 1 Read every page before session one. One hard set only works with the ramp and safety rules.
- 2 Week 1 is calibration: the hard set stops at RIR 2 while you find your loads.
- 3 Train twice a week with at least two days between sessions. A missed day is gone, not owed.
- 4 Log the hard set and the back-off set of every exercise: load, reps, RIR.

Who it is for

Who this is for

- Adults who can reliably train only twice a week, for 40–45 minutes.
- People with some training experience who can judge effort honestly and stop when form changes.
- Newer lifters are welcome, with one extra rule: never go to failure on a barbell or free-weight lift.
- Anyone who wants a short plan they will keep, rather than a bigger one they drop.

Who should not run this

- Anyone returning from injury, surgery or a long lay-off, or training around unassessed pain.
- People who can train three or more days. You will progress faster on more; see the last page.
- People chasing the most muscle possible. This is a minimum dose, not the optimum.
- Anyone looking for a fat-loss, cut or bulk plan. This is a training block, not a diet.

The method

I built Brief & Intense for people whose calendar has already decided how much they can train. Two full-body sessions, four main exercises each, and one hard working set per exercise after proper ramp-up sets. A lighter back-off set follows, so every muscle still gets enough work to count.

The hard set is the whole point, so it has to be earned. You arrive at it warm, not tired. You hit the written tempo. You stop when the next rep would break your form. Going to failure is optional on machines and never needed on barbell lifts.

CALIBRE PRINCIPLE

Minimum dose means maximum intent.

Fewer sets leaves no room for easy ones. Every working set is either logged and hard, or it did not count.

Where the style comes from

This programme borrows from the brief, high-intensity single-set style popularised in 1990s bodybuilding: thorough ramp-up sets, then a single all-out working set. It is a style reference, not a copy of any routine. There are no forced reps or going beyond failure here, the week is two full-body sessions, and a back-off set keeps weekly volume at a workable minimum. Elite lifters built up to this style over years; their results are not transferable.

Based on established training styles. Not affiliated with or endorsed by any athlete.

Why it works

- Sets that end close to failure are productive. With so few sets, each one needs to be hard to count.
- Going all the way to failure is not required: stopping a rep or two short gives broadly similar results for most people. That is why barbell lifts stop at RIR 1–2.
- Training twice a week hits each muscle with around 4 hard sets a week. That is roughly the minimum research-based recommendation for muscle growth, and enough to make progress when every set is hard.

The trade-off, stated plainly

This is the minimum, not the optimum. More weekly sets tend to build more muscle and strength, with diminishing returns. A well-run three- or four-day plan will usually beat this one.

What you get back is two short sessions you can actually protect. This programme is for the weeks when life sets the limit. When you can give three sessions, move up.

SAFETY LIMIT

Machines and cables: the hard set may go to RIR 0–1. **Barbell and free-weight lifts:** RIR 1–2, every week. **Under six months of training:** never go to failure on a barbell or free-weight lift, and cap machine sets at RIR 1 until week 3.

Eat regular meals with enough protein and protect your sleep. Tailored nutrition is part of coaching, not this free programme.

How to run it

The week

DAY	SESSION	FOCUS	WHAT IT COVERS
Mon	Session A	Full body	Leg press, Romanian deadlift, chest press, pulldown
Tue–Wed	—	Rest	Walk. Normal daily activity
Thu	Session B	Full body	Hack squat, leg curl, incline press, row
Fri–Sun	—	Rest	Walk. Normal daily activity

Any two days with at least two rest days between them: Mon/Thu, Tue/Fri or Wed/Sat. Alternate A and B. Do not repeat the same session twice in a week.

Session length: 40–45 min including the warm-up. If you are short on time, cut the last exercise, never the rest periods.

Reading the tables

Reading the sets column: 1 + 1 means one hard set, then one back-off set with about 10% less load. Ramp sets come first and are not logged.

Reading the RIR column: two values such as 0–1 / 1–2 mean hard set / back-off set.

If time runs short, drop the optional exercise, then the back-off sets on the last exercise. Never cut the ramps.

THE MISSED-DAY RULE

Missed days are gone, not owed. If you miss a session, skip it, log the skip and run the next session in order. Do not double up, and do not bolt the missing exercises onto the next session. A block with one missed session is still a good block. A block of crammed sessions is not.

Effort, tempo and rest

RIR – how hard each set is

RIR means reps in reserve: how many more clean reps you could have done at the end of a set. It is the only effort scale in this programme.

TARGET	WHAT IT FEELS LIKE
RIR 4	Four clean reps left. Warm-up pace. Deload week only.
RIR 3	Three left. Bar speed normal. Week 1 calibration.
RIR 2	Two left. Reps slowing, form unchanged.
RIR 1	One left. The last rep is slow but clean.
RIR 0	No clean rep left. Technical failure: stop when form would break. RIR 0 is optional, and only on the hard set of machine and cable exercises.

When a table says 1–2, aim for 2 early in the week and 1 only when form is clean. If you are unsure how many reps you had left, assume it was fewer.

Tempo

Tempo is four digits: lowering, pause at the bottom, lifting, pause at the top, in seconds. 3010 means 3 seconds down, no pause, 1 second up, no pause. X means lift with intent, as fast as clean technique allows. The tempo is part of the prescription: a faster lowering is a lighter set, and it makes your log useless.

Rest

Rests are written m:ss. 2:00 is two minutes, 1:30 is ninety seconds. Rest is the minimum. Take the full time on compound lifts, even when you feel ready early.

Warm-up and ramp sets

General warm-up – 8 to 10 minutes

- 1 5 minutes easy on a bike, rower or incline walk. Warm, not tired.
- 2 2 rounds: 10 bodyweight squats, 10 band pull-aparts, 10 hip hinges with a dowel or empty hands, 8 incline push-ups, 6 dead bugs per side.
- 3 Before each new pattern (squat, hinge, press, pull), one easy set of the first exercise at about half your working load.

Ramp sets

Every exercise gets ramp sets before its hard set. Percentages are of today's planned hard-set load, not of a max. Ramp sets are practice: crisp, well short of fatigue, not logged.

SET	LOAD	REPS	REST	NOTE
Ramp 1	About 50%	8	0:45	First exercise and any barbell lift
Ramp 2	About 70%	4	1:00	Every exercise
Ramp 3	About 85%	2	1:30	Barbell lifts and the first exercise
Hard set	100%	Range	Table	The set that counts most. Log it
Back-off set	About 90%	Range	Table	Same tempo. Log it

Machine exercises after the first need only ramp 2. If a ramp set feels heavy, treat the day as AMBER.

Before every session: recovery gate

GATE	SIGNS	ACTION
GREEN	Slept reasonably, normal soreness, warm-up feels normal	Train as written
AMBER	Poor sleep, heavy legs or arms, ramp sets feel slow or heavy	Keep loads. Add 1 to every RIR target. Drop the last set of isolation work
RED	Sharp or joint pain, illness, or pain that changes how you move	Do not train through it. Skip, log it, and get it assessed if it persists

The sessions

Sessions — the RIR column is the target for weeks 3–5 (hard set / back-off). Weeks 1, 2 and 6 follow the week-by-week table.

Session A – Full body (40–45 min)

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	TEMPO	REST	RIR	NOTES
Leg press	1 + 1	8–12	3010	2:30	0–1 / 1–2	Stop before the lower back rounds
Romanian deadlift	1 + 1	6–10	3011	2:30	1–2 / 2	Barbell: never to failure
Machine chest press	1 + 1	8–12	3010	2:00	0–1 / 1–2	Last rep slow, not bounced
Lat pulldown	1 + 1	8–12	3011	2:00	0–1 / 1–2	Full stretch at the top
Optional: standing calf raise	1	10–15	2111	1:00	0–1	Only if time allows

Session B – Full body (40–45 min)

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	TEMPO	REST	RIR	NOTES
Hack squat	1 + 1	8–12	3010	2:30	0–1 / 1–2	Machine. Use the safety stops
Seated leg curl	1 + 1	10–12	3011	1:30	0–1 / 1–2	Pause at full contraction
Incline machine press	1 + 1	8–12	3010	2:00	0–1 / 1–2	Control the stretch
Seated cable row	1 + 1	8–12	2011	2:00	0–1 / 1–2	Torso still
Optional: overhead cable extension	1	10–15	3010	1:00	0–1	Only if time allows

Week by week

WEEK	WORKING SETS	RIR	WHAT CHANGES
1	Hard set only	2	Calibration. Find hard-set loads. No failure this week
2	1 + 1	1–2 / 2	Back-off set added. Hard set gets closer
3	1 + 1	Table	Full intensity. RIR 0 is optional and only on machines
4	1 + 1	Table	Beat the log by a rep or a load step on each hard set
5	1 + 1	Table	Same as week 4. Hardest week
6	Hard set only	3	Deload and exit. Hard set at week-5 load, easy

Progression and deload

Double progression

- 1 Every exercise has a rep range, for example 8–10.
- 2 Start at the bottom of the range with a load that lands on the target RIR.
- 3 Each session, try to add a rep to one or more sets, at the same load, tempo and RIR.
- 4 When every working set reaches the top of the range at the written tempo and RIR, add the smallest load step next session: usually 2.5 kg on a barbell, 1–2 kg per dumbbell, or one pin on a machine.
- 5 The added load takes you back towards the bottom of the range. Build up again.

When you stall

A stall is two sessions in a row with no extra rep or load on the same exercise at the same RIR. First check sleep, tempo and the log. If the same exercise stalls a third time, reduce the load by about 10% and build back up through the range.

Do not add extra hard sets to fix a stall; that turns this into a different programme. With so little volume, stalls usually mean poor sleep, rushed ramps or a missed session. Check those first.

Week 6: deload and exit

Week 6 is a deload and an exit. Ramp as normal, do the hard set only at your week-5 load, and stop at RIR 3.

Compare week 2 and week 5 hard sets on every exercise. If most went up, the programme worked. Now decide whether you can give it a third day.

Recovery checks

- Sleep: are you getting enough to feel recovered most mornings? Sleep is the first thing to fix when progress stalls.
- Food: eat regular meals with a good protein source at each one. Tailored nutrition is part of coaching; it is not in this free programme.
- Soreness: normal muscle soreness is fine. Soreness that is still there at the next session for the same muscle means the RIR is not honest.
- Bar speed: if your ramp sets feel slow two sessions in a row, treat the day as AMBER.

I want the log filled in before you ask me why you are not progressing.

Exercise swaps

Swap equipment, never the movement pattern. Pick your swap in week 1 and keep it for all 6 weeks so the log stays comparable. The right column is a gentler option if a movement causes pain; if pain persists or is sharp, stop and get it assessed.

PROGRAMMED	EQUIPMENT SWAP	IF IT HURTS, TRY
Leg press	Hack squat or pendulum squat	Goblet squat to a box
Romanian deadlift	Loaded 45° back extension, or cable pull-through	DB Romanian deadlift with a shorter range, or 45° back extension
Machine chest press	Flat DB press, or Smith bench	Neutral-grip machine press, or DB floor press
Lat pulldown	Assisted pull-up, or machine pulldown	Neutral-grip or single-arm cable pulldown
Standing calf raise	Smith or leg-press calf raise	Seated calf raise
Hack squat	Leg press with feet low, or Smith squat	Leg press, controlled range
Seated leg curl	Lying leg curl, or cable leg curl	Lying leg curl, or sliding leg curl on a towel
Incline machine press	Incline DB press, or incline Smith press	Low-incline, neutral-grip machine press
Seated cable row	Machine row, or chest-supported row	Chest-supported DB row
Overhead cable extension	DB overhead extension, or machine triceps extension	Cable pressdown

Session log

Duplicate this page, one per session. Write load and reps before you leave the station, not from memory in the car park. Ramp sets are not logged.

DATE	DAY	EXERCISE	LOAD	REPS	RIR	TEMPO HELD?
						Y / N
						Y / N
						Y / N
						Y / N
						Y / N
						Y / N
						Y / N
						Y / N
						Y / N
						Y / N

Weekly check – five minutes on your rest day

ITEM	STANDARD
All planned sessions done, or missed ones logged as missed	Gone, not owed
Every working set logged: load, reps, RIR	If it is not logged, it did not happen
Tempo held on every working set	Faster lowering is a lighter set
Rest kept as written on compound lifts	Cut an exercise, never the rest
RIR honest: film one set a week if unsure	The log is only as good as the RIR
No exercises added on impulse	Execution beats novelty

What next

Two short sessions a week has taught you the lifts, the log and what a hard set really feels like. The next step is one more day.

Next step: 3-Day Professional (Online Standard)

3-Day Professional is my three-session full-body block, run inside Online Standard coaching. Same logic as here, done properly across three sessions of 45 to 70 minutes, with more weekly work for every muscle and a longer block to progress it.

Coaching is where I read your log, watch your lifts and adjust the plan week to week. A free PDF cannot do that for you.

APPLY FOR COACHING

Apply: <https://trainwithcalibre.com/#/apply>

Bring your week 2 and week 5 hard sets for every exercise, and your full log. First message should be your data, not your goals.

If it is not logged, it did not happen.

LEGAL AND MEDICAL

Education and coaching guidance for healthy adults. Not medical advice, and no medical claims are made. I coach, I do not diagnose.

If you have a medical condition, are pregnant, take medication, or have pain that worsens, stop and get cleared by a qualified medical professional before continuing.

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