

FREE PROGRAMME F02

CALIBRE

CLASSIC VOLUME SPLIT

6 WEEKS · 6 DAYS · FREE

V1.0

Coach Mo · Train with CALIBRE

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DURATION	FREQUENCY	SESSION	EFFORT	LEVEL
6 weeks	6 days / week	60–75 min	RIR	Intermediate

How to use

- 1 Read every page before session one. The volume only works inside the caps written here.
- 2 Week 1 is calibration: find loads that leave 3 reps in reserve, then log them.
- 3 Run six days a week, or the 5-day rolling option. A missed day is gone, not owed.
- 4 Write load, reps and RIR for every working set before you leave the station.

Who it is for

Who this is for

- Intermediates with at least a year of consistent training who recover well from higher weekly volume.
- People who want a classic bodybuilding week: chest and back, shoulders and arms, legs, twice through.
- Anyone with the time for six sessions a week (or five on the rolling option), 60–75 minutes each.
- Lifters who will log every working set and keep the RIR honest.

Who should not run this

- Beginners. The volume and frequency here are more than you need; start with a full-body plan.
- Anyone returning from injury or a long lay-off, or training around unassessed pain.
- People who can only train three or four days. A 4-day plan will serve you better.
- Anyone looking for a fat-loss, cut or bulk plan. This is a training block, not a diet.

Entry requirement: 1+ year of consistent training.

The method

I built Classic Volume Split for the intermediate who wants the old-school bodybuilding week: chest with back, shoulders with arms, legs, then round again. Opposing muscles are paired in supersets so one side rests while the other works, and a lot of quality work fits into a normal session.

What I have not copied is the old volume. Weekly hard sets per muscle are capped at roughly 12–20. Beyond that, the extra sets cost more recovery than they return for most people. The work is high, but it is measured.

CALIBRE PRINCIPLE

Volume only counts when every set is controlled.

Higher volume multiplies good execution and bad execution equally. Control first, then load.

Where the style comes from

This programme borrows from the high-volume split style of the 1970s golden era of bodybuilding: chest and back, shoulders and arms, and legs, each trained twice a week, with antagonist supersets and pyramided first lifts. It is a style reference, not a copy of any routine. The volume is cut to research-supported levels, and results from elite athletes of that era are not transferable.

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

Why it works

- More weekly hard sets tend to mean more growth, but with diminishing returns. For trained lifters, around 12–20 sets per muscle per week is a sensible standard, so that is the cap here.
- Pairing opposing muscles in supersets keeps the quality of your sets while shortening the session. It saves time; it is not a growth trick.
- Rests are at least 1:00, and 1:30 or more on most straight sets. Very short rests may slightly reduce growth, so the only short-rest work is one optional drop set at the end of a session.
- Overhead triceps work and seated leg curls train those muscles at long lengths, which some research suggests helps growth. The evidence is small, so they sit alongside the basics, not instead of them.

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	Day 1	Chest & Back A	Heavier pyramids, antagonist pairs
Tue	Day 2	Shoulders & Arms A	Press/rear-delt pair, arm pairs
Wed	Day 3	Legs A	Squat, hinge, quad/hamstring pair, calves
Thu	Day 4	Chest & Back B	Moderate loads, higher ranges
Fri	Day 5	Shoulders & Arms B	Variation of day 2
Sat	Day 6	Legs B	Leg press, split squat, hamstrings, calves
Sun	—	Rest	Full rest day

5-day rolling option: train five days a week (for example Mon–Tue, Thu–Sat) and simply run the six sessions in order. One full rotation takes about eight or nine days, and weekly volume drops by roughly a sixth, still inside the target range.

Session length: 60–75 min including the warm-up. If you are short on time, cut the last exercise, never the rest periods.

Weekly hard sets per muscle (weeks 2–3)

MUSCLE	6-DAY WEEK	5-DAY ROLLING	NOTES
Chest	17	≈14	Days 1 and 4
Back	17	≈14	Days 1 and 4
Quads	16	≈13	Days 3 and 6
Hamstrings	12	≈10	Days 3 and 6, plus hinge work
Side and rear delts	15	≈12	Days 2 and 5, plus pressing
Biceps / triceps	10 / 10	≈8 / 8	Plus pulling and pressing work
Calves	8	≈7	Days 3 and 6

Reading the tables

Supersets: A1 and A2 are a pair. Do a set of A1, go straight to A2, then rest the time shown on A2. Finish all rounds before moving on.

Pyramids: on the first lift of days 1 and 3, reps drop and load rises each set (12, 10, 8, then 6–8). Double progression applies to the last set.

If the gym is busy and you cannot hold two stations, run the pair as straight sets with 1:30 rest. Log that you did.

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 used only on the last set of isolation exercises (flies, raises, curls, extensions, leg extension and curl).

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

Ramp sets are for the first lift of each session. Percentages are of today's planned working load, not of a max. On pyramid days the first 12-rep set is part of the work, so the ramp is short. Ramp sets are not logged as working sets.

SET	LOAD	REPS	REST	NOTE
Ramp 1	Empty bar or about 40%	10	1:00	Groove the pattern
Ramp 2	About 60%	6	1:00	Same tempo as working sets

Later exercises need one lighter set of 8 at about 60% before the first round. Supersets after the first pair need no extra warm-up.

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 2–5. Week 1 and week 6 follow the week-by-week table. Drop set = on the final set, reduce the load by about 25% and continue to RIR 0–1 with no rest. RIR '1 · last 0' means RIR 1 on every set, with the last set taken to RIR 0.

Day 1 – Chest & Back A

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	TEMPO	REST	RIR	NOTES
A1 Incline barbell press	4	12 · 10 · 8 · 6–8	3010	—	2	Pyramid: load up each set. Straight to A2
A2 Weighted pull-up	4	8–10	2011	2:30	2	Rest after the pair. Pulldown if needed
B1 Flat DB press	3	8–10	3010	—	2	Straight to B2
B2 Chest-supported row	3	8–10	2011	2:00	2	Chest stays on the pad
C1 Cable fly	3	12–15	2011	—	1 · last 0	Straight to C2. Weeks 3–5: drop set on the last set
C2 Straight-arm pulldown	3	12–15	2011	1:30	1	Arms long, lats do the work

Day 2 – Shoulders & Arms A

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	TEMPO	REST	RIR	NOTES
A1 Seated DB shoulder press	3	8–10	3010	—	2	Straight to A2
A2 Face pull	3	12–15	2011	2:00	2	Rest after the pair
B1 Lateral raise	3	12–15	2010	—	1 · last 0	Straight to B2
B2 Rear-delt fly	3	12–15	2011	1:30	1	Light and strict
C1 EZ-bar curl	3	8–10	3010	—	2	Straight to C2. Elbows still
C2 Overhead cable extension	3	10–12	3010	1:30	2	Long-length triceps. Full stretch
D1 Incline DB curl	2	10–12	3011	—	1 · last 0	Straight to D2. Long-length biceps
D2 Cable pressdown	2	12–15	2011	1:30	1 · last 0	Weeks 3–5: drop set on the last set

Day 3 – Legs A

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	TEMPO	REST	RIR	NOTES
Back squat	4	12 · 10 · 8 · 6–8	3010	2:30	2	Pyramid: load up each set. Same depth every rep
Romanian deadlift	3	8–10	3011	2:00	2	Stop at the hamstring stretch
A1 Leg extension	3	12–15	2011	—	1 · last 0	Straight to A2
A2 Seated leg curl	3	10–12	3011	1:30	1 · last 0	Long-length hamstrings. Hips back
Standing calf raise	4	10–12	2111	1:30	1	One-second pause at the bottom
Hanging knee raise	3	10–15	2010	1:00	2	No swing

Day 4 – Chest & Back B

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	TEMPO	REST	RIR	NOTES
A1 Incline DB press	3	10–12	3010	—	2	Straight to A2
A2 Seated cable row	3	10–12	2011	2:00	2	Rest after the pair
B1 Machine chest press	2	10–12	3010	—	1–2	Straight to B2
B2 Lat pulldown	2	10–12	3011	2:00	2	Full stretch at the top
C1 Pec deck	2	12–15	2011	—	1 · last 0	Straight to C2. Weeks 3–5: drop set on the last set
C2 Single-arm DB row	2	10–12 / side	2011	1:30	1–2	Weaker side first

Day 5 – Shoulders & Arms B

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	TEMPO	REST	RIR	NOTES
A1 Machine shoulder press	3	10–12	3010	—	2	Straight to A2
A2 Reverse pec deck	3	12–15	2011	2:00	1	Rest after the pair
Cable lateral raise	3	12–15 / side	2010	1:30	1 · last 0	Single arm, weaker side first
C1 Cable curl	3	10–12	2011	—	1–2	Straight to C2
C2 EZ-bar skull crusher	3	8–10	3010	1:30	2	Lower just behind the head
D1 Hammer curl	2	10–12	2011	—	1 · last 0	Straight to D2
D2 Overhead cable extension	2	12–15	3010	1:30	1 · last 0	Weeks 3–5: drop set on the last set

Day 6 – Legs B

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	TEMPO	REST	RIR	NOTES
Leg press	4	10–15	3010	2:30	2	Same foot position every week
Bulgarian split squat	3	8–12 / leg	3010	2:00	2	Weaker leg first
A1 Leg extension	2	15–20	2011	—	1 · last 0	Straight to A2
A2 Lying leg curl	3	10–12	3011	1:30	1 · last 0	Hips stay down
45° back extension	3	12–15	2011	1:30	2	Round slightly for hamstrings
Seated calf raise	4	12–15	2111	1:00	1	Pause at the bottom

Week by week

WEEK	SETS	RIR	WHAT CHANGES
1	As written	3 on everything	Calibration. Find loads that land RIR 3 at the top of the range. Log them
2	As written	Table	Train to the RIR column. Double progression starts
3	As written	Table	Drop set added to the last set of the marked isolation exercise
4	As written	Table	Add reps before load. Volume stays capped; do not add sets
5	As written	Table	Hardest week. Beat week 4 by a rep or a load step where you can
6	About a third fewer	3–4	Deload and exit. Drop one set from every exercise. No drop sets. Loads held

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 sets or exercises to fix a stall. The weekly volume is already at the cap. If most lifts stall at once, take the week-6 deload early.

Week 6: deload and exit

Week 6 is a deload and an exit. Drop one set from every exercise (about a third of the volume), remove the drop sets, keep the loads from week 5 and stop every set at RIR 3–4.

Compare week 2 and week 5 on the first lift of each session. That comparison is your result.

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
Incline barbell press	Incline Smith press, or incline machine press	Incline DB press with a neutral grip
Weighted pull-up	Lat pulldown, or assisted pull-up machine	Neutral-grip pulldown
Flat DB press	Machine chest press, or Smith bench	Neutral-grip DB press, or floor press
Chest-supported row	Machine row, or T-bar row with chest pad	Seated cable row, neutral handle
Cable fly	Pec deck, or DB fly	Pec deck with a shorter stretch
Straight-arm pulldown	DB pullover	Straight-arm pulldown with a rope, shorter range
Seated DB shoulder press	Machine shoulder press	Landmine press, or neutral-grip DB press
Face pull	Reverse pec deck, or band face pull	Band pull-apart
Lateral raise	Cable or machine lateral raise	Cable lateral raise, stop at shoulder height
Rear-delt fly	Reverse pec deck, or cable rear-delt fly	Face pull with a light load
EZ-bar curl	Cable curl, or machine preacher curl	DB hammer curl
Overhead cable extension	DB overhead extension, or machine triceps extension	Cable pressdown
Incline DB curl	Cable curl from behind, or preacher curl	Seated DB curl
Cable pressdown	Machine triceps extension, or band pressdown	Rope pressdown, lighter load
Back squat	Hack squat, pendulum squat or Smith squat	Heel-elevated goblet squat, or leg press with a shorter range
Romanian deadlift	Loaded 45° back extension, or cable pull-through	DB Romanian deadlift with a shorter range, or 45° back extension
Leg extension	Cable leg extension, or sissy squat with support	Leg extension with a shorter top range, or a slower tempo and lighter load
Seated leg curl	Lying leg curl, or cable leg curl	Lying leg curl, or sliding leg curl on a towel
Standing calf raise	Smith or leg-press calf raise	Seated calf raise
Incline DB press	Incline machine press, or incline Smith press	Low-incline DB press, neutral grip
Seated cable row	Machine row, or chest-supported row	Chest-supported DB row

PROGRAMMED	EQUIPMENT SWAP	IF IT HURTS, TRY
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
Pec deck	Cable fly, or DB fly	Cable fly with a shorter stretch
Machine shoulder press	Seated DB shoulder press	Landmine press
Leg press	Hack squat or pendulum squat	Goblet squat to a box
Bulgarian split squat	Single-leg leg press, or Smith split squat	Reverse lunge to a step, or split squat with support
Lying leg curl	Seated leg curl, or cable leg curl	Seated leg curl, or sliding leg curl on a towel
Hanging knee raise	Captain's chair knee raise	Lying leg raise, or dead bug

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

Six weeks of capped high-volume work tells you how much you recover from and which lifts moved. Both are in your log.

Next step: Lean Mass Builder (Online Pro)

Lean Mass Builder is my four-day muscle-building block, run inside Online Pro coaching. It takes what you have learned here about your volume tolerance and progresses it over a longer block, with your log reviewed, your week built around your recovery and schedule, and nutrition set for you rather than guessed.

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 numbers for the first lift of each session, 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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