

The Matt Roberts plan Why you need to lift weights

If you follow my fitness plan for eight weeks, you should lose about 2-3 inches from around your waist, shed fat and lose the moobs. The programme is as follows: on days one, three, five and seven you will be following the weights programme on this page. Weights are key to my programme because the load they place on muscles will prompt a greater release of human growth hormone (HGH). On days two and four, which are mainly rest days, do some light cardio (a brisk walk, a gentle jog or a swim). One day out of every week you must rest completely to allow your body to recover. On your workout days, you must always start with the four exercises below. They will warm up your muscles and help to prevent injury, while activating the biggest muscles in the body. After the warm-up exercises, choose

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a pair of weights exercises — I have divided them into “Saturday”, “Monday”, etc. It’s important to perform them in a pair, and in quick transition. This way of doing exercises stimulates hormone production during the workout and as part of the post-session “burn”, which means you will grow more muscle and lose fat. Select a weight that you can lift for 8-10 repetitions but no more. Start with dumbbells weighing 6-7kg each while you perfect your technique, then gradually increase the weight you’re using as you get stronger. By the end of the programme you should be able to use weights of about 20-25kg. Do 10 repetitions of each of the two exercises, with no rest in between. Take 60 seconds recovery, then repeat. As you get stronger, you should be able to do the circuit three times.

Four warm-up exercises Do these before every session

Lateral lunge

You can do this with or without an exercise band. If you are using a band, place it around your ankles. Stand upright and take a large step to the side. Raise your arms in front of you for balance and squat down by bending your knees. Without a band, it’s more of a lunge movement. Add some muscle engagement by bringing your left arm to touch your right ankle as you lunge to the right and vice versa. Do it 15-20 times, recover, repeat.



Deadlift

Hold a dumbbell in each hand and stand with feet shoulder-width apart. Hinge from the waist, keep your core muscles engaged and lower your upper body until your back is parallel to the floor. Make sure your head is in line with your body and your knees are slightly flexed. As you lower the weight, keep the dumbbells as close to your body as possible. Pause, then raise your torso back to the starting position. Do this 10-12 times, recover, then repeat.



Goblet squat

Stand with feet slightly wider than shoulder width apart, holding the end of a dumbbell with both hands, in front of you. Lower your body into a squat by bending your knees. Push your knees out slightly. Push back up to the standing position. Your upper body should barely move — the idea is to use legs, hips and lower back as a unit. Do this 10-12 times, recover, then repeat.



Bridge

Lie on the floor on your back, with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Using your gluteal muscles for power, push your pelvis upwards and keep your head on the floor, neck relaxed. Your knees should stay in line with the body. Raise your hips to the point where they form a straight diagonal line with your knees to the shoulders. Hold and lower back down. Do this 15-20 times, recover, then repeat.



Saturday Chest and arms

Bent-over row
Stand bending over with feet hip-width apart, holding a dumbbell in each hand. Keep your back flat. Slightly bend your knees and squeeze your shoulder blades together to raise the weights upwards, bringing the elbows around the side of your body. Do it 10 times, then move straight on to the dumbbell press.

Dumbbell press
Lie on your back on the floor, knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Hold a dumbbell in each hand above your chest. Lower the elbows to the side of your chest, bending until they are at a 90 degree angle to the body. Push the weights straight back up to the start position. Do it 10 times, then take a 60-second break before doing a second circuit.

Monday Chest, back and arms

Dumbbell pullover
Lie on your back on a flat bench with feet flat, knees raised. You could also do this on the floor, but the range of movement isn’t as great. Hold a single dumbbell in both hands over your chest with arms extended. Lower the weight behind your head, keeping your arms fairly straight. Keep your back as flat on the bench or floor as possible. Return to the start. Do this 10 times, then move straight on to the incline fly.

Dumbbell fly
You can perform this on an incline bench in the gym, or on the floor (which doesn’t work the pecs quite as hard). Hold a dumbbell in each hand. Hold the weights overhead with arms stretched out. Lower weights to a crucifix position at the sides, keeping elbows slightly flexed. Raise to the start position. Do this 10 times, then take a 60-second break before doing a second circuit.

Wednesday Glutes and legs

Straight leg deadlift
Hold a dumbbell in each hand. Start with feet hip-width apart and hinge forward as you almost lock your knees. Go as far down as you can comfortably go — you should feel a stretch in your hamstrings — lowering your dumbbells in the process. Keep your back completely flat and squeeze your shoulder blades together. Return to the start position. Do it 10 times, then move straight on to the split squat.

Split squat
Hold a weight in each hand and stride forward with your left leg. Squat down by flexing the knee and hip of the right leg. The right leg should almost touch the floor. Push back to the start position. Do it 10 times, then repeat on the other side. Take a 60-second break before doing a second circuit.

Friday Arms, chest and shoulders

Triceps overhead
Kneel on the floor with knees slightly wider than hip-width apart. Use one dumbbell held with both hands. Raise the weight above your head, then bend the elbows to lower it behind your head. Lower to the point you start to lose the position of your elbows which should stay tucked in to the body. Raise upwards to the start position. Repeat 10 times, then move straight on to the biceps curl.

Biceps curl
Hold one dumbbell in each hand. Legs should be hip-width apart and your palms facing outwards. Keep a neutral spine and knees slightly flexed. Curl the weights up to the chest by bending the elbows. Keep the elbows tucked in to the sides of the body. Lower the weights back to the start position by straightening the arms slowly. Do this 10 times, then take a 60-second break before doing a second circuit.