



# How to Build a Foundation to Develop Greater Gains

I see it all the time. Younger athletes and brand new lifters, trying to mimic the YouTube and Instagram videos of their favorite athletes and lifters.

Cleans, squats, deadlifts and all of the other great exercises out there that are essential for building a bigger, stronger, faster, more powerful you.

However, some of these lifters aren't quite ready for these movements.

I'm not talking about all beginners, I'm talking about the guys and girls that are extremely tight, weak, lack stability or have suffered some type of injury that limits their mobility or training capabilities.

For instance, if you cannot pick up a 135 lb. deadlift with a perfectly neutral spine, well then you shouldn't be deadlifting, yet. But in many cases, not only are they performing deadlifts but they are attempting Olympic lifts like Cleans and Snatches.

The sad part is, most of the time these exercises are recommended to them by coaches or their gym's meathead. You know the guy, usually rocking the headphones, cutoff, has the worst technique of all time but is always giving people advice on their form.

**Don't listen to that guy. Please.**

Instead, if you're a young athlete or a beginner who isn't sure how to move properly you are better off building a foundation of balance, strength and mobility first. Then progress to the big complex lifts.

At that point you will have built the foundation needed to perform the exercises properly and really benefit from them.

And don't worry, if you're new to the iron game you will absolutely pack on muscle during this foundational phase. In fact, this period is an absolute necessity if you want to maximize your gains.

If you can't move or balance properly, you ain't getting stronger, which means you ain't gettin bigger either. It's more of a waste of time to try the bigger lifts without doing them right.

Now that you're with me, lets talk about some basic movement patterns you should be practicing if you want to get jacked!

## **Squat**

First, learn to squat with body weight. Place your hands behind your head and set your feet just outside of shoulder width apart, toes slightly pointed out. Initiate the movement by driving your hips back as far as you can, keeping your chest up the entire time, begin to sit on your heels all the way down to parallel (make a straight line from your knee to your hip), once you get down to parallel begin driving back up through your heels. On the way up push your knees out away from each other. Be sure to exhale hard once you get about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the way up.

Perform 20 of these in your warm-up every day to help beat this movement pattern into your brain.

Now, work some squat variation into your training program. I recommend the goblet squat which is the same movement I just mentioned, only you are now holding a dumbbell against your chest. The dumbbell should be held vertically with your palms underneath the top head of the dumbbell and your fingers grasping over the top of the same head.

These are great for building a base of strength and stability and are much safer for beginners to learn than a traditional back squat.

## **Push-ups**

Push-ups are an exercise that, when done correctly, are incredible for building size, strength and stability.

Start in the top position with your elbows fully extended, lower yourself to the ground keeping your elbows against your sides as if you were squeezing your rib cage with your elbows. Keep your abs tight like you were going to take a punch to the stomach the entire set to ensure that your hips do not drop. Once your chest touches the ground, exhale and forcefully push back up to the starting position. Keep in mind that your feet should be touching each other for the entire set.

## **Romanian Deadlift**

Learning a proper hip hinge is also essential. Like the squat, it is a fundamental human movement pattern. Start with just a barbell to teach yourself the movement. Grab the bar with an even, shoulder width grip and start in the standing position. While keeping your chest up for the entirety of the exercise, engage your hips by pushing your butt back as far as you can. Eyes on the floor about one foot in front of you. As you begin the hip hinge the bar will start moving down, be sure to keep the barbell against your legs at all times. In the bottom position your chest should be parallel to the floor and ideally the bar will be at about mid-shin. The knees will bend slightly but do not confuse this with a squat. Keep in mind that you don't want to reach for the floor with your shoulders. A good way to feel this is to keep your shoulders back and the lats flexed at all times. On the way back up you are driving the hips forward so you finish in the standing position. Be sure to not shrug the weight on the way up.

## **Rows**

In most public gyms, rows might be the number one exercise that people destroy the most. Let's keep it simple and use a bent over supinated barbell row as an example since there are many variations. Supinated is just referring to your grip. Grab the bar with your palms facing away from you and your pinky finger on the line between the smooth and rough part of the bar (about shoulder width). Now get set the same way

as if you were doing a Romanian Deadlift (RDL). Only this time you are going to begin pulling the barbell towards your bellybutton by squeezing your shoulder blades together. Keep the low back arched at all times and be sure to pull from your upper back, not your biceps or forearms. Keep the wrists straight and bring the bar all the way up to touch your bellybutton. Then, begin bringing the bar back to the starting position by reaching the shoulders towards the floor. Again, start with just the bar, then begin adding weight. On any row, if you can't pause in the top range of the exercise, the weight is too heavy.

Your program can be as simple as those four exercises for the first 3-6 weeks of training. If you just get good at those four first and foremost, the other stuff you add in will make much more sense. Remember, training is for the long haul and you have to crawl before you walk. You will get to the bigger exercises in a couple of months.

Start small and get big, faster!

I hope this helps guys, if you have any questions please feel free to shoot me an email at [info@tutelatraining.com](mailto:info@tutelatraining.com).

Catch you guys next time!

*Chris Tutela*