



Sisters of Steel

Small-Group Strength Training Program Manual



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Introduction to Strength Training

If you take nothing else away from this manual, understanding the basics of **‘Progressive Overload’**, will stand you in good stead.

There’s a difference between ‘training’ and ‘working out’.

‘Working out’ means get, hot, sweaty, and out of puff. Moving your body, burning some calories, releasing a few endorphins, and improving your physical health & fitness.

‘Training’ is about **progression**.

It’s about making tangible (measurable) improvements.

In this case, lifting more weight, more times.

Progressive Overload is a principle taught to all Fitness Professionals.

It essentially means that if you don't continuously 'overload' the muscles, they won't change or improve (eg get stronger).

Let's say you can lift a 10kg weight above your head 5 times, before your muscles 'fail' (reach fatigue) and prevent you from lifting it a 6th time.

Your body 'learns' that it struggled, so will repair the muscles* ready for the next training session, to be a tiny bit stronger.

This means you will probably be able to lift that same 10kg weight above your head 6, 7 or maybe 8 times, before 'failure' (muscular fatigue) kicks in to prevent you from lifting more.

* Exercise damages muscles. Micro-tears occur, and the body then goes to work during periods of rest (like during sleep) to repair those muscle fibres, that tiny bit stronger.

If you decide to only lift that 10kg weight 5 times, you won't stress your muscles enough, meaning they won't grow back stronger. They'll just stay the same - forever capable of lifting that weight 5 times.

Note: this is not an exact science. Your body doesn't work in 'binary'. It doesn't magically enable you to lift one more rep each time. But the **principle** is a scientific fact - that if you put enough stress on your body, it **WILL** grow back that tiny bit stronger, over time.

However..... it's not as simple as 'lift heavier and heavier.
Or lift 'more and more times (reps).

The reason is that not all muscles are equal.....

Muscle fibres

You don't need to understand all the geeky bits, in order to enjoy lifting weights and make progress. BUT, you'll buy into the process more, and probably progress faster, if you 'get it'.

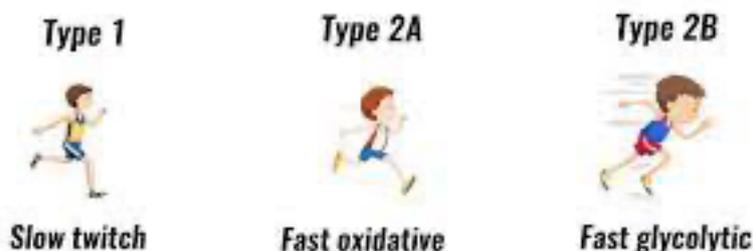
Essentially, we have different muscle fibres. Our muscles are made up of a mix of different muscle fibre types.

Some muscle fibres are more 'endurance' based - eg, they're not very strong, but they last a long time before fatiguing. Marathon runners tend to have a higher proportion of 'endurance' type muscle fibres.

Some muscle fibres are more 'strength based' - eg, they provide more strength, but fatigue very quickly. Sprinters tend to have a higher proportion of 'strength' type muscle fibres.

There's actually 3 main types of fibres (but we don't need to go into that much detail here!)

Types Of Muscle Fibres



All you need to know is that in Strength Training, you need to train all 3 muscle fibre types.

And we do that through 3 'themes'.

- 1) **Endurance**
- 2) **Hypertrophy**
- 3) **Strength**

Endurance = lower weight, higher reps (typically 12-20)

Hypertrophy = moderate weight, moderate reps (typically 8-12)

Endurance = higher weight, lower reps (typically 3-8)

In Sisters of Steel, you will have a different theme each week.

Week 1 = Endurance

Week 2 = Hypertrophy

Week 3 = Strength

Week 4 = X-Training*

*X-Training (cross-training) is where we mix all 3, and also throw in some interval type training.....just to keep you on your toes;-)

The 7 'Big Lifts'

If you were training alone, and laser-focused, you'd track the progress of pretty much every exercise you do.

For the other 95% of us though, we don't need to do that.

We just need to track the progress of the 'big' exercises, and use the other exercises as 'accessory' exercises (or 'supportive' exercises) to help us build our overall strength in the 'big lifts'.

In Sisters of Steel, you'll be tracking, and working towards making progress on **7 key exercises - aka the 'The Big Lifts'**.

- [1. Barbell Deadlift](#)**
- [2. Barbell Back Squat](#)**
- [3. Barbell Front Squat](#)**
- [4. Barbell Overhead Press](#)**
- [5. Barbell Bench Press](#)**
- [6. Barbell Hang Clean](#)**
- [7. Barbell Clean & Press](#)**

That list all contains clickable links to show you what the exercises look like ;-)

Tracking Your Progress

How do you know what weights to choose on each exercise ?

How do you ensure you're always pushing that boundary and striving for progressive overload so that you get stronger, and your body continues to change?

Simple answer: you track your progress, and refer back to the last time you performed that exercise so you know what weight to 'roughly' go for.

Note: Because we lift lighter weights for more reps in endurance sessions, we can't just automatically choose the last weight lifted on that exercise, when doing a strength focussed session. Do not stress over this detail and minor complexity.

- 1) Your Coach will help guide you on this. It's what they're there for!
- 2) Over time, you will begin to know your body, and be able to easily say things to yourself *"well if I lifted 20kg for 15 reps, for a 5 rep target, I probably want to start at about 25kg and take it from there"*

Trust the process !

"But WHERE and HOW do I track my progress?" you might be wondering?

We have an app, for that!

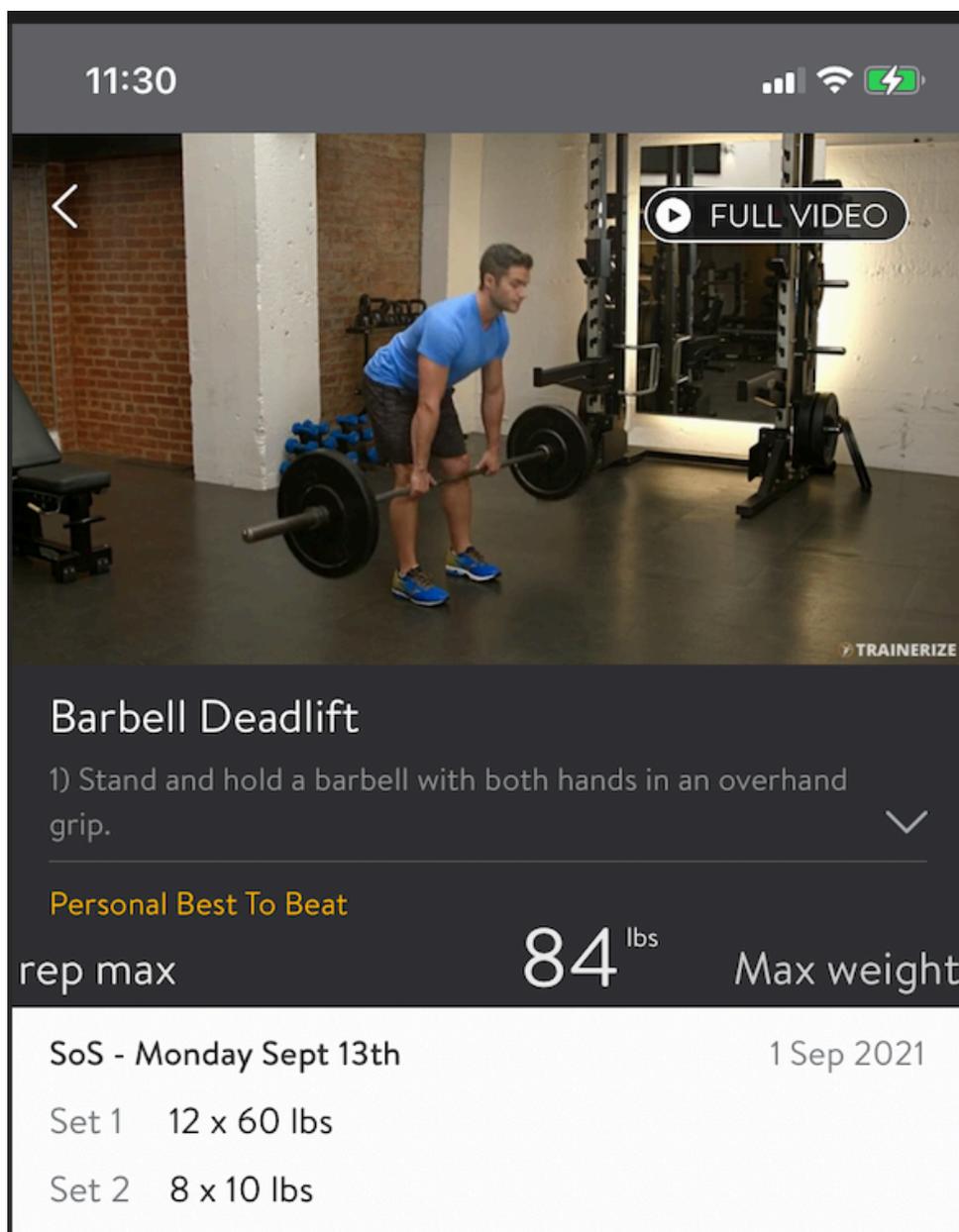
We have a separate, short video demo of how to use the app (it's dead simple!) so won't go through it here. All you need to know is that as per the screenshot below, it will show today's 'Big Lift' exercises. And has space for you to enter how many reps you did, and how much weight you lifted.

The screenshot shows a mobile app interface for tracking workouts. At the top, the status bar displays the time 11:29, signal strength, Wi-Fi, and battery icons. Below the status bar is a blue header with 'Cancel' on the left and 'Save' on the right, with a refresh icon, a chat bubble icon, and a menu icon in between. The main content area has a white background with a blue border. It starts with the instruction: 'Follow each exercise and rest period from top to bottom.' Below this is a list of exercises. The first exercise is 'Barbell Back Squat' with '2 sets x 15' reps. It has two sets: 'SET 1' with input boxes for 'reps' and 'lbs' and a total of '5 x 25 lbs'; 'SET 2' with input boxes for 'reps' and 'lbs' and a total of '2 x 30 lbs'. Below the sets is a blue link '+ ADD NEW SET'. The second exercise is 'Rest for 90s' with a hand icon and a 'START' button with a refresh icon. The third exercise is 'Barbell Overhead Press' with '2 sets x 15' reps. It has two sets: 'SET 1' with input boxes for 'reps' and 'lbs'; 'SET 2' with input boxes for 'reps' and 'lbs'.

You'll also be able to see your Personal Best (the heaviest weight you've ever lifted on that particular exercise) - a super useful reference point.

The key message here though is that this is simply a convenient way of logging what your lift, on the 7 'big lift' exercises.

Nothing more, nothing less.



The screenshot shows a mobile app interface for a fitness workout. At the top, the time is 11:30, and there are icons for signal strength, Wi-Fi, and battery. Below the status bar is a video player showing a man in a blue shirt performing a barbell deadlift in a gym. A 'FULL VIDEO' button is overlaid on the video. Below the video, the exercise is titled 'Barbell Deadlift' with a description: '1) Stand and hold a barbell with both hands in an overhand grip.' A 'Personal Best To Beat' section shows 'rep max' as 84 lbs and 'Max weight' as 84 lbs. The workout details include 'SoS - Monday Sept 13th' on '1 Sep 2021', with two sets: 'Set 1 12 x 60 lbs' and 'Set 2 8 x 10 lbs'. A 'TRAINERIZE' logo is visible in the bottom right corner of the video player.

11:30

← FULL VIDEO

TRAINERIZE

Barbell Deadlift

1) Stand and hold a barbell with both hands in an overhand grip.

Personal Best To Beat

rep max **84** lbs Max weight

SoS - Monday Sept 13th 1 Sep 2021

Set 1 12 x 60 lbs

Set 2 8 x 10 lbs

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: I have a question about something to do with my own training with SoS - who do I go to?

A: The best thing to do is speak to one of the Coaches. Depending on the question, they may need to come back to you - but on the whole, the Coaches are the experts, and your first port of call.

Q: What should I be eating? Do I need to 'fuel up' for this style of training?

A: Unless, you're an elite athlete, you don't need to overthink this. If you train 'fasted' (eg. not eaten for quite some time before training) you MIGHT find you don't feel as strong. This differs person to person though, and being consistent with your training, is more important than worrying about the nuances around 'pre workout nutrition'.

Getting some starchy carbs (banana for example) about an hour before training can certainly help though.

Q: Great. But what about my nutrition the rest of the time? Do I need to eat differently to recover?

A: Recovery (the periods BETWEEN exercising) is when your body changes and improves. Muscles are mostly made of protein, so getting adequate protein into your diet, to help the muscle-repair process is very important, when it comes to strength training. Protein supplements are very useful here, as most people struggle to get sufficient protein into their daily diet.

Q: I'm not always hot and sweaty and out of puff. And what's with the rest periods, where I'm not doing ANY exercise?

A: You HAVE to embrace that 'training' is different to 'working out'. How out of breath you are, or how sweaty you are, is NOT an indicator of the quality of your training session. Seeing your strength increase more in 4 weeks than it would in a year of 'working out' will convince you. And let's not forget that nothing will change your body shape faster and better, than lifting weights :-)

Above all else, ENJOY the process.

Nothing is more empowering, than
the feeling that lifting big-ass
weights gives you!

#BeMore



