



THE WOMEN'S TRAINING & WELLNESS GUIDE

THE STRONG *PLAYBOOK*

*Train with your body, not against it — strength, energy & health
through every phase, stage & season of life.*

TRAINING MENUS

YOUR CYCLE

LIFE STAGES

PREGNANCY & BEYOND

STRONG, YOUR *WHOLE LIFE.*

For too long, women were sold shrinking — smaller, lighter, less. **This playbook is about the opposite: building a body that's capable, energetic and resilient for the long run.** Strength training is one of the most powerful things a woman can do for her bones, her hormones, her mood and her independence as she ages.

And unlike most fitness guides, this one is built around **the way women's bodies actually work** — your monthly cycle, the shifts of each decade, and the seasons of trying to conceive, pregnancy and recovery after birth. Train with your body through every one of them. One rule carries through it all: **progress over perfection. Move today.**

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WHY WOMEN SHOULD *LIFT*

Lifting won't make you "bulky" — women have the hormones to get strong and toned, not huge. What it *will* do is change how you feel and age.



Bone Density

Loading bone now guards against osteoporosis later — a risk that rises sharply after menopause.



Strong & Toned

Muscle is what creates shape and tone, keeps you lean, and makes everyday life feel easy.



Hormones & Mood

Exercise eases PMS, supports better sleep, and is proven to lift mood and reduce anxiety.



Energy & Metabolism

More muscle means more day-to-day energy and a metabolism that works with you, not against you.



Longevity

Strength & balance keep you mobile and independent for decades — the real goal of fitness.



Confidence

Getting stronger in the gym has a way of making you feel stronger everywhere else, too.

2-4×

STRENGTH SESSIONS
A WEEK IS PLENTY

30s

BONE MASS PEAKS —
BUILD IT BEFORE

∞

NEVER TOO LATE
TO START

#1

OSTEOPOROSIS DEFENCE:
RESISTANCE TRAINING

FIND YOUR GOAL

Every good plan points at one main target. Pick what fits you right now — you can always change lanes as life changes.



Get Strong

Lift heavier over time. Lower reps (**4–8**), big movements, full rest. Builds real-world strength & bone density.



Tone & Sculpt

Build shape & definition. Moderate reps (**8–15**), more volume, train close to effort. "Toned" *is* muscle.



Conditioning

Build fitness & energy. Circuits, intervals & carries with short rest. Great for heart health & stamina.



Hybrid

Strength *and* cardio together. The most well-rounded fitness — strong, fit & capable at everything.

NEW OR RETURNING? START HERE

BUILD THE BASE FIRST

Spend your first 8–12 weeks on full-body strength (Menu A). It builds the foundation every other goal stacks on — and teaches you the core movements you'll use for life.

"Strong is not a size. It's a feeling — and it's available at every age."

MENU A — FULL-BODY

BEGINNER

The perfect starting point. Run this **3× per week** (e.g. Mon/Wed/Fri) with a rest day between. One session trains your whole body.

EXERCISE	TARGETS	SETS × REPS
Goblet Squat	Legs	3 × 8–10
Hip Thrust / Glute Bridge	Glutes	3 × 10–12
DB Press / Push-Up	Chest · Arms	3 × 8–12
Seated / Band Row	Back	3 × 10–12
Romanian Deadlift	Hamstrings	3 × 8–10
Plank + Dead Bug	Core	3 rounds



Rest

60–90 seconds between sets. Don't rush the bigger lifts.



Progress

Hit the top reps on all sets? Add a little weight next time.



Form First

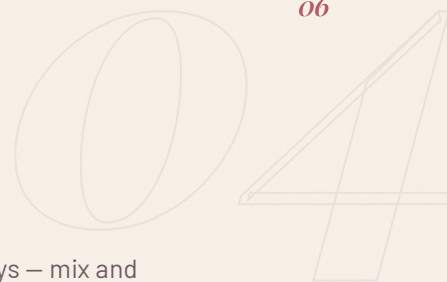
Lighter & clean beats heavy & messy. Own the movement.



Warm up 5–10 minutes first (easy cardio + a light set of each move). Run this menu for 8–12 weeks before moving to a split. Modify freely around your energy & cycle (see page 09).

MENU B — STRENGTH

SPLIT



Once you've built a base, split your week to train each area with more focus. Run 3–4 days — mix and match to fit your schedule.

LOWER BODY

- Back / Goblet Squat — 4 × 6–8
- Hip Thrust — 4 × 8–10
- Romanian Deadlift — 3 × 8
- Walking Lunge — 3 × 20
- Calf Raise — 3 × 15

UPPER BODY

- DB Bench / Push-Up — 4 × 8
- Lat Pulldown / Pull-Up — 4 × 8
- Shoulder Press — 3 × 10
- Seated Row — 3 × 12
- Face Pull + Curl — 3 × 12

CORE & GLUTES

- Hip Thrust — 3 × 12
- Cable / Band Kickback — 3 × 15
- Dead Bug — 3 × 10/side
- Bird Dog — 3 × 10/side
- Side Plank — 3 × 30s

HOW TO SCHEDULE IT

3 OR 4 DAYS A WEEK

3-day: Lower / Upper / Core & Glutes. 4-day: Lower / Upper / Lower / Upper, adding core to each. Keep rest days between hard sessions and progress the weight week to week.

MENU C — CONDITIONING & *CORE*

Build your engine and a strong, functional core — including the pelvic floor, the foundation of core strength for every woman.

THE CONDITIONING SESSION — 3 ROUNDS

"THE CIRCUIT"

400 m row or run · 12 goblet squats · 15 kettlebell swings · 10 push-ups · 20 walking lunges. Rest 90s between rounds. Scale reps to your level & the day.

Core & Pelvic Floor

- Pelvic floor (Kegels) — 3 × 10 holds
- Dead Bug — 3 × 10 / side
- Bird Dog — 3 × 10 / side
- Glute Bridge — 3 × 15
- Side Plank — 3 × 20–30s

Weekly Blueprint

- 2 × strength (Menu A or B)
- 1–2 × conditioning (The Circuit)
- Daily core / pelvic-floor (5 min)
- 1–2 × walks, yoga or rest

i Pelvic-floor health underpins core strength, posture & continence — and matters hugely around pregnancy. If you leak, feel heaviness, or aren't sure you're engaging it right, **see a pelvic-health physiotherapist.**

EQUIPMENT ESSENTIALS

You don't need every machine. These four cover almost everything — here's what each does and where you'll find it.

01



Treadmill PRECOR · CENTR

Walks, incline hikes & interval runs. The most flexible cardio machine for any fitness level.

TRAINS: HEART · STAMINA · FAT LOSS

02



RowErg CONCEPT2

A full-body, low-impact cardio hit that trains legs, back & arms all at once. Kind on the joints.

TRAINS: FULL-BODY · LOW IMPACT

03



Dumbbells EVERY GYM

The most versatile tool on the floor — squats, presses, rows, hip thrusts & more. Start light, build up.

TRAINS: STRENGTH · TONE · EVERYTHING

04



Cable Machine PRECOR FUNCTIONAL

Smooth, constant tension at any angle — gentle on joints and perfect for glutes, back & shaping work.

TRAINS: TONE · JOINT-FRIENDLY

i Illustrations are original diagrams. **Training at home?** A set of dumbbells, resistance bands, a kettlebell & a mat cover nearly every workout in this book. Brand names show where you'll typically find each machine.

TRAINING WITH YOUR *CYCLE*

Energy, strength & recovery shift across your monthly cycle. Working *with* those shifts — not against them — can make training feel easier.

MENSTRUAL
Day 1–5

FOLLICULAR
Day 6–13

OVUL.
~14

LUTEAL
Day 15–28

Menstrual · Day 1–5

Energy may dip. Honour it: gentle movement, walks, mobility or light sessions. Many feel fine to train — just listen to your body, and rest if you need to.

Follicular · Day 6–13

Rising estrogen = climbing energy. Your best window to **push strength & intensity**, chase PRs and add volume.

Ovulation · ~Day 14

Peak energy & strength. Great for hard efforts — but joints are a touch looser, so keep form sharp on heavy lifts.

Luteal · Day 15–28

Energy & recovery may dip before your period. Favour steady, moderate training, extra sleep, and a little more food & patience.

i This is a flexible guide, not a rule — **every woman's cycle & response is different**, and the science is still developing. The real win is tracking your own cycle and energy, then adjusting. (If your cycle is absent or very irregular, check in with your doctor.)

EVERY LIFE STAGE & *MENOPAUSE*

What your body needs shifts each decade. The habit stays the same — keep lifting — but the emphasis changes.

Teens & 20s

Build the Foundation

Peak years for building bone density & muscle. Learn the core lifts, train consistently, and set habits that last a lifetime.

30s

Strength & Stress

Life gets busy. Short, focused strength sessions beat none. Protect sleep, manage stress, and keep muscle on as metabolism starts to shift.

40s

Perimenopause Begins

Hormones start to fluctuate; muscle & bone loss can speed up. Prioritise resistance training & protein, and lift with intent — it eases many symptoms.

50s & up

Menopause & Beyond

Falling estrogen accelerates bone & muscle loss — making strength training **essential**. Lift heavier (safely), add impact & balance work, and protect your bones for the decades ahead.



Strength training is one of the most effective tools for managing menopause — for bones, muscle, mood, sleep & metabolism. For symptoms or medical options, **peak with your doctor**.

PREPARING FOR *PREGNANCY*

Entering pregnancy fit & strong makes the whole journey — and recovery after — easier. The pre-conception window is a great time to build.

Build Your Base

Strong legs, glutes, back & core support your changing body and carry you through labour & new-mum life. Keep up regular strength training now.

Learn Your Pelvic Floor

Learn to both engage **and relax** it now. A strong, coordinated pelvic floor supports pregnancy and speeds postpartum recovery.

Build Aerobic Fitness

A solid cardio base (walking, cycling, swimming) supports a healthy pregnancy and makes staying active later far easier.

Nourish & Prepare

Focus on nutrient-rich food & iron; discuss folic acid & any supplements with your doctor. Build habits, not restrictions.



If you're trying to conceive, keep training as normal unless your doctor advises otherwise — being active supports fertility & overall health. Book a pre-conception check-up to start the journey informed.

"The fitter you go in, the smoother the road through & back."

TRAINING DURING *PREGNANCY*

For most healthy pregnancies, staying active is safe & beneficial — easing back pain, boosting mood & sleep, and supporting recovery. Aim for **~150 min of moderate activity a week**, adjusting as you go.

Generally Safe

- Walking & light jogging (if a runner)
- Swimming & aqua aerobics
- Stationary cycling
- Prenatal yoga & Pilates (modified)
- Light-moderate strength training

Modify or Avoid

- Lying flat on your back after ~16-20 wks
- Contact sports & fall risks (skiing, etc.)
- Heavy lifting with breath-holding
- Hot yoga, scuba & high altitude
- Anything that hurts or feels "off"

STOP & CALL YOUR PROVIDER IF...

Bleeding or fluid leaking · regular painful contractions · chest pain · dizziness or headache · calf pain/swelling · feeling short of breath before exertion. Use the **"talk test"** — you should be able to hold a conversation.



Always get your OB-GYN or midwife's okay first, and follow their guidance over any general advice — especially with twins, high blood pressure, or other complications. Every pregnancy is different.

POSTPARTUM — RETURN *STRONG*

Your body did something extraordinary. Recovery isn't a race — rebuild gently from the inside out, and you'll come back stronger.

Wk
0–6

Rest & Reconnect

Gentle walks & pelvic-floor breathing can start early when you feel ready. Focus on sleep, feeding & healing — not workouts. Pelvic-floor (Kegel) work can usually begin right away.

Wk
6+

Get Cleared, Then Rebuild

After your check-up & your provider's okay, restart with low-impact strength & core. C-section or complications? Expect a longer timeline — follow your provider.

Build

Progress Gradually

Rebuild deep core & pelvic floor before impact (running, jumping). Add load slowly over weeks. Stay hydrated — exercise won't affect your milk supply.



Check for **diastasis recti** (ab separation) & any leaking or heaviness — a **pelvic-health physiotherapist** is worth their weight in gold here. Always get medical clearance before returning, and stop if something hurts.

RECOVERY, FUEL & *MINDSET*

Results are built in recovery, not just the gym. Fuel your training — this is about adding energy & strength, never about shrinking.



Sleep (7–9 hrs)

Your number-one recovery tool — where muscle repairs and hormones rebalance. Protect it like training.



Eat Enough Protein

Aim for a palm of protein at each meal to build & keep muscle. Eat enough overall to fuel your training.



Iron & Calcium

Women lose iron through menstruation and need calcium + vitamin D for bone health. Favour whole foods; ask your doctor about testing.



Be Kind to Yourself

Progress isn't linear, and bodies change through life. Measure wins by strength, energy & consistency — not the scale.

A WORD ON FOOD & BODIES

FUEL, DON'T PUNISH

Under-eating wrecks energy, hormones, your cycle & your bones. Food is fuel, not a reward to be earned. If your relationship with food or exercise feels stressful, reach out to a doctor or registered dietitian — you deserve support.

GETTING STARTED & *CONFIDENCE*

The weights area can feel intimidating at first. It isn't — and you belong there as much as anyone. Here's how to walk in sure of yourself.



Start Light

Begin lighter than you think & nail your form. Add weight when reps feel clean.



Have a Plan

Walk in with your menu written down. A plan beats wandering & second-guessing.



Own Your Space

Nobody's judging — everyone's focused on themselves. You belong on that floor.

Your First-Week Checklist

- ☐ **Pick your menu** (start with Menu A) & schedule 3 days.
- ☐ **Watch a form video** for each new movement beforehand.
- ☐ **Ask for help** — staff would far rather show you than see you guess.
- ☐ **Log your sets** so you can see yourself getting stronger.

"You don't have to be confident to start. You get confident by starting."

PROGRESS OVER PERFECTION.

STRONG IS YOURS TO KEEP.

Your body will change through every phase, stage and season – and through all of them, strength is something you can always build. You don't need to be perfect or fearless to begin. You just need to start, stay kind to yourself, and keep showing up. **Move today.**

— *the Move Today crew*



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Curated sport & lifestyle updates · Training & wellness for every woman, every stage.

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