

SMITH'S FITNESS

VERSION 1.

BIG 4 TEMPL- ATE

20
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BUILD YOUR OWN PROGRAM
BUILD YOUR OWN STRENGTH



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PREFACE & DISCLAIMER

Let me preface this whole template by acknowledging that coaching and individualised programming is the gold standard for everybody, beginner or athlete. If you want top notch service, please hire a professional. If you have previous injuries, hire a professional. If you are unsure, hire a professional. This template is really just a create-a-program-for-dummies and is targeted more towards beginners and intermediates. You can find great coaches at smithsfitness.com.au, [@smiths_fitness](https://www.instagram.com/smiths_fitness) on Instagram or email aj@smithsfitness.com.au.

*Please consult with your physician before undertaking this, or any other strength/fitness program. By implementing anything from the following document you accept all risk and hold Smith's Fitness, specifically Andrew Smith, harmless of any risk or responsibility.

INTRO

Welcome to the Smith's Fitness BIG 4 Template.

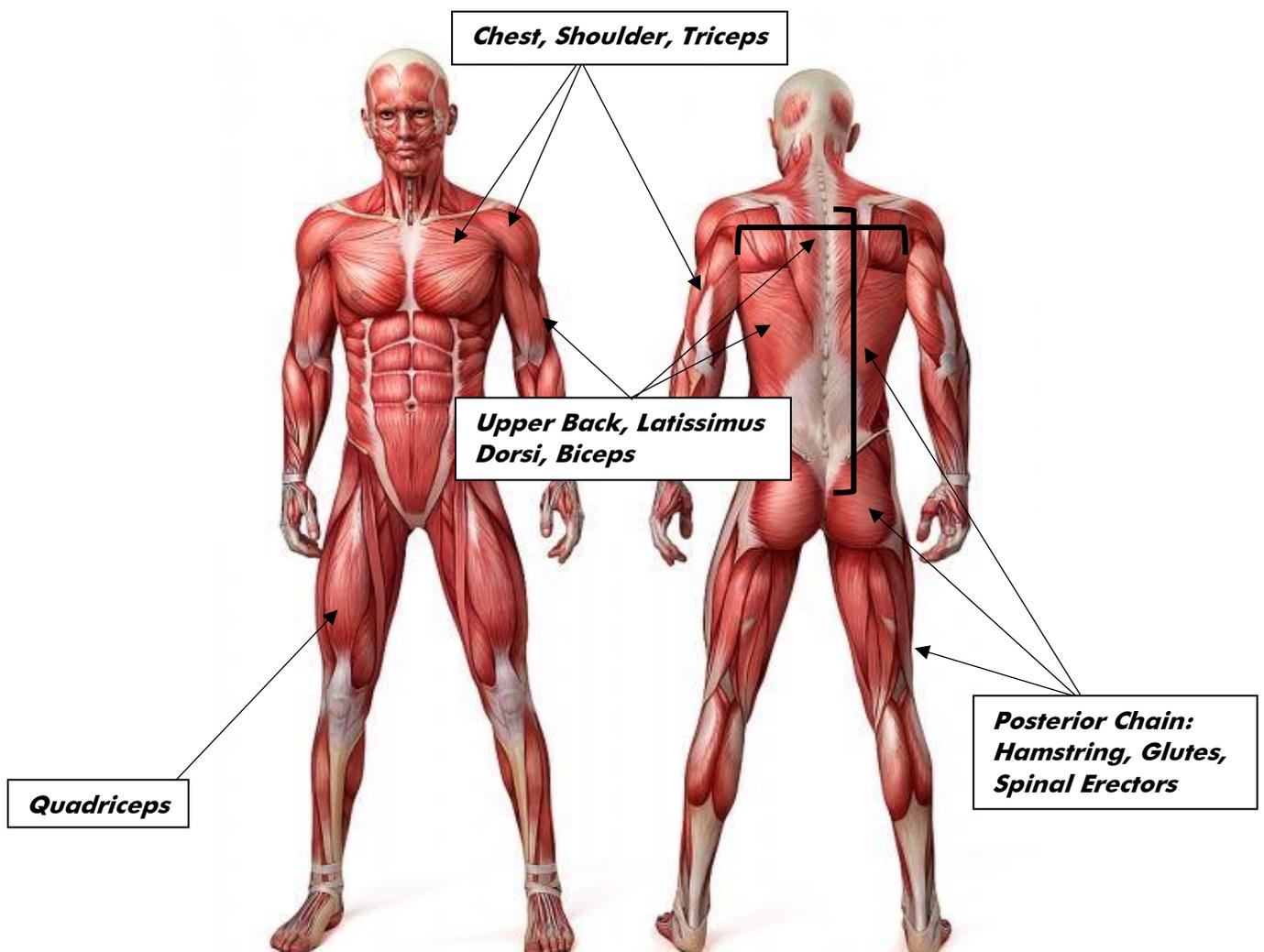
I've created this template to give the general gym goer/beginner the tools and knowledge to easily create a structured and effective program on their own that addresses what they need.

So what do they need?

I'm a firm believer that most (if not all) people training for general strength are best served with a program of large fundamental exercises that address our major movement patterns and subsequently our major muscle groups.

Without writing a new book on anatomy or naming muscles specifically and further complicating things, this is a very simplified diagram of our major muscle groups:

(I've obviously taken a few generous liberties here).



THE BIG 4 MOVEMENTS

The big 4 movement patterns are fundamental multi-joint movements that take our body through a large range of motion, are easily loaded with resistance and are metabolically demanding. They are as follows:

SQUAT:

I categorise squat movements as any knee dominant movements, as you'll soon see, there are a tonne of variations. These movements address the quadriceps and typically to a lesser extent the hamstrings and glutes.

HINGE:

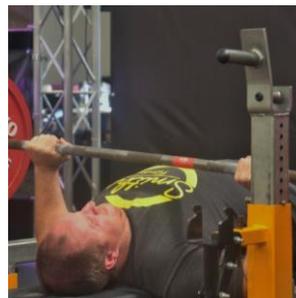
These are our hip dominant movements. Typically, the hardest to learn but great for developing a strong base. These movements address our posterior chain; the hamstrings, glutes, spinal erectors.

PUSH:

These are all our pushing/pressing movements. They address our chest, shoulders and triceps.

PULL:

This is any pulling/rowing movement. These movements primarily address our upper back, latissimus dorsi and biceps.



As you can see, if we address each of the BIG 4 movement patterns, we can work the majority of our major muscle groups which adds up to a very effective resistance training program.

So how do I put this all together?

Simple, almost too simple.

You'll see on the following page.

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

Let's start with choosing 1 exercise from each of our BIG 4 movement pattern.

I've compiled a pretty extensive list for each BIG 4 movement pattern on the last couple of pages of this document.

I've also highlighted the ones that I think are the best bang for your buck (my favourites), but that does not mean you have to do them. After all, that's what initially sparked me to make this template. As long as you are addressing each pattern, you are good for now.

So choose an exercise from each of the BIG 4.

This will be Day 1. It will start to look like this.

Day 1	Example exercises
Squat movement – your choice	Barbell Back Squat
Hinge movement – your choice	Romanian Deadlift
Push movement – your choice	Bench Press
Pull movement – your choice	Pull Up

You could simply repeat these exercises each training day, say 3 days per week, that'd be especially wise if you really want to get strong and proficient at those particular exercises.

But, more than likely you'll want a bit of variation, so simply choose different exercises from each pattern to build your subsequent training days. Remember, within this template you have the freedom to have as much or as little variation in exercises as you like.

It might look like this.

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
Squat movement #1	Squat movement #2	Squat movement #3
Hinge movement #1	Hinge movement #2	Hinge movement #3
Push movement #1	Push movement #2	Push movement #3
Pull movement #1	Pull movement #2	Pull movement #3

I can already guess what you're saying

[“Wait, only four exercises?”](#)

Calm down, we are getting to that.

ADDING VOLUME & BIAS

Let me preface this small section with a little warning:

When adding to your program be careful not to create too big of a bias towards any one of the BIG 4, unless it's a movement you see as a massive weakness. It's common we'll do too much pushing and not enough pulling, too much squat and not enough hinge. Just be mindful.

So, at this stage you've chosen only 4 exercises for each training day.

You're going to want to do more than 4 exercises, right?

You'd be correct. I'd suggest up to 8 at the most.

It's very simple, choose another exercise(s) for the movement pattern(s) or muscle group your trying to develop.

So your training day might look more like this.

Day 1	Example exercises
Squat movement #1	Barbell Back Squat
Hinge movement #1	Romanian Deadlift
Push movement #1	Bench Press
Pull movement #1	Pull Up
added extras:	
Squat movement #2	Leg Press
Push movement #2	Push Up

The next question...

"But AJ, how many reps should I do"

Don't worry, I've got you covered.

SET & REP RANGES

It's important to realise that rep ranges don't work in isolation, there is crossover between our typical rep and set ranges.

Yes, it's true that higher repetitions with lighter weights aren't the best for improving maximum strength. It's also true that low repetitions with heavy weights aren't the best for learning technique.

***AJ's notes: If you are a beginner, I highly suggest you start with higher rep schemes with light to moderate weights. This will help build a good technical base before you progress.**

Here's our typical rep ranges:

Sets x Reps	Prerequisites	Best for
2-3 x 15+	None	Learning technique, improving strength endurance & hypertrophy
3-4 x 10-12	None	Learning technique, increasing hypertrophy
4 x 8	At least 4 weeks of 3 x 10	Building Strength, increasing hypertrophy
5 x 5	At least 4 weeks of 4 x 8	Building strength
5 x 3	Adequate technical ability and strength built through previous training.	Building strength and power

So a complete beginners program might look like this:

Day 1	Sets x Reps
Squat movement #1	3 x 12
Hinge movement #1	3 x 12
Push movement #1	3 x 12
Pull movement #1	3 x 12
added extras:	
Squat movement #2	3 x 12
Push movement #2	3 x 12

Very simple I know, and it ought to be.

There is however more to this puzzle.

Your exercise selection will, at times, impact what rep range you use.

For example, if you choose Push Ups as a Push exercise, or Bodyweight Squats as a Squat Exercise, doing 5 sets of 3 reps probably isn't going to progress you too far. Use common sense in this regard.

As you advance, you may also choose different rep ranges across the same training day, this is common place and at times also dictated by your exercise selection.

So, for someone with a bit of training under their belt, their session might start to look more like this.

Day 1	Sets x Reps
Squat movement #1	5 x 5
Hinge movement #1	4 x 8
Push movement #1	5 x 5
Pull movement #1	4 x 8
Squat movement #2	3 x 10
Push movement #2	3 x 10

It really comes down to what you are trying to get out of each exercise and your program as a whole. The good news is, if you stick to these guidelines, you can't stuff it up too much.

***AJ's notes: I normally suggest sticking to a particular set & rep range for a period of at least 4 weeks, as you try to slowly and safely increase resistance.**

"Lastly, how much weight should I use?"

This question doesn't even get its own section, because there is only one rule.

That is,

Use common sense.

If the weight is so heavy you can't finish the prescribed repetitions with GOOD technique, it's too heavy, make it lighter.

If the weight is so light you could do a set of 100 and you're only doing a set of 10, it's probably best to make it heavier.

Enough said I reckon.

BIG 4 SAMPLE PROGRAM - Beginner

DAY 1

<i>Exercise</i>	<i>Sets x Reps</i>
<i>Goblet Squat</i>	<i>3x12</i>
<i>Romanian Deadlift</i>	<i>3x12</i>
<i>Bench Press</i>	<i>3x12</i>
<i>Ring Row</i>	<i>3x12</i>
<i>Step Up</i>	<i>3x10ea</i>
<i>Push Ups</i>	<i>3x12</i>

DAY 2

<i>Exercise</i>	<i>Sets x Reps</i>
<i>Leg Press</i>	<i>3x12</i>
<i>Romanian Deadlift</i>	<i>3x12</i>
<i>Bench Press</i>	<i>3x12</i>
<i>DB Row</i>	<i>3x10ea</i>
<i>Walking Lunge</i>	<i>3x10ea</i>
<i>DB Shoulder Press</i>	<i>3x12</i>

DAY 3

<i>Exercise</i>	<i>Sets x Reps</i>
<i>Deadlift</i>	<i>3x12</i>
<i>Goblet Squat</i>	<i>3x12</i>
<i>DB Incline Bench Press</i>	<i>3x12</i>
<i>Ring Row</i>	<i>3x12</i>
<i>Leg Press</i>	<i>3x12</i>
<i>Push Ups</i>	<i>3x12</i>

BIG 4 SAMPLE PROGRAM - Intermediate

DAY 1

<i>Exercise</i>	<i>Sets x Reps</i>
<i>Back Squat</i>	<i>4x8</i>
<i>Romanian Deadlift</i>	<i>3x8</i>
<i>Bench Press</i>	<i>4x8</i>
<i>Bent Over Row</i>	<i>3x8</i>
<i>Leg Press</i>	<i>3x10</i>
<i>Close Grip Bench Press</i>	<i>3x10</i>

DAY 2

<i>Exercise</i>	<i>Sets x Reps</i>
<i>Bench Press</i>	<i>5x5</i>
<i>Bent Over Row</i>	<i>5x5</i>
<i>Goblet Squat</i>	<i>3x10</i>
<i>Glute Ham Raise</i>	<i>3x10</i>
<i>DB Incline Bench Press</i>	<i>3x10</i>
<i>DB Row</i>	<i>3x10ea</i>

DAY 3

<i>Exercise</i>	<i>Sets x Reps</i>
<i>Deadlift</i>	<i>4x8</i>
<i>Front Squat</i>	<i>3x8</i>
<i>Bench Press</i>	<i>4x8</i>
<i>DB Row</i>	<i>3x8ea</i>
<i>Leg Press</i>	<i>3x10</i>
<i>Lat Pulldown</i>	<i>3x10</i>

BIG 4 SAMPLE PROGRAM – (Sort of) Advanced Program

DAY 1

<i>Exercise</i>	<i>Sets x Reps</i>
<i>Back Squat</i>	<i>5x3</i>
<i>Romanian Deadlift</i>	<i>4x5</i>
<i>Bench Press</i>	<i>4x8</i>
<i>Bent Over Row</i>	<i>3x8</i>
<i>Pause Squat</i>	<i>4x5</i>
<i>Close Grip Bench Press</i>	<i>3x10</i>

DAY 2

<i>Exercise</i>	<i>Sets x Reps</i>
<i>Bench Press</i>	<i>5x3</i>
<i>Bent Over Row</i>	<i>5x5</i>
<i>Close Grip Bench</i>	<i>5x5</i>
<i>DB Row</i>	<i>4x8ea</i>
<i>Belt Squat</i>	<i>3x10</i>
<i>Back Extension</i>	<i>3x10</i>

DAY 3

<i>Exercise</i>	<i>Sets x Reps</i>
<i>Deadlift</i>	<i>5x3</i>
<i>Front Squat</i>	<i>4x5</i>
<i>Bench Press</i>	<i>5x5</i>
<i>Bent Over Row</i>	<i>3x8</i>
<i>Glute Ham Raise</i>	<i>3x10</i>
<i>Close Grip Bench Press</i>	<i>3x10</i>

BIG 4 MOVEMENTS

Below you'll find a pretty comprehensive list of exercises for each BIG 4 movement pattern.

It's not a complete list by any means mainly due to the fact there are so many exercises variations derived from any one particular movement. I have also omitted typical isolation exercises as the goal of this template is to focus on our BIG 4 movement patterns.

**AJ notes - The ones highlighted in red are my favourites*

BIG 4 – SQUAT PATTERN

Barbell Back Squat

Front Squat

Bulgarian Split Squat

Goblet Squat

Barbell Box Squat

Bodyweight Squat

Belt Squat

Leg Press

Hack Squat

Split Squat

Step Up

Walking Lunge

Reverse Lunge

BIG 4 – HINGE PATTERN

Deadlift

Romanian Deadlift

Kettlebell Swing

Good Morning

Single Leg Romanian Deadlift

Stiff Leg Deadlift

Glute Hamstring Raise

Back Extension

Hip Thrust

Single Leg Hip Thrust

Trap Bar Deadlift

*****BIG 4 – PUSH PATTERN*****

Bench Press

Military Press

Push Up

Close Grip Bench Press

Incline Bench Press

Seated Shoulder Press

DB Bench Press

DB Incline Bench Press

Push Press

*****BIG 4 – PULL PATTERN*****

Pull Up

Chin Up

Bent Over Row

DB Row

Cable Row

Supine Row

Ring Row

Lat Pulldown

Seated Row

Prone Row

*AJ notes – I know I've forgotten abdominal exercises, again, I've done this on purpose to focus on the BIG 4. FYI – just do a whole bunch.

LET'S FINISH THIS OFF

Now you understand what the BIG 4 movement patterns are and how to build them into a structured and effective program.

You've even been given a couple of sample programs to make your life even easier.

You've got a pretty extensive list of exercises to choose from.

This is all well and good but means absolutely nothing if you don't implement it.

So, build your program and go get stuck in.

If you implement anything from the BIG 4 Template, I'd love to see your training footage.

Feel free to tag @smiths_fitness on IG and use the hashtag #SmithsBIG4

For further help, coaching or membership enquiries don't hesitate to contact aj@smithsfitness.com.au