

Hitting a Strength Plateau

A **plateau** is a leveling off of your strength progress that occurs around 4-6 months into a routine. It is important not to give up on a routine too quickly because success might not immediately be seen.

Steps to overcome a plateau:

✓ **Change the intensity of your workout.**

- Increase the difficulty of the workout.
- Switch to a high-intensity workout focused on low repetitions and higher weights. For example, choose a weight that feels heavy enough to be lifted for only 5 reps at a time with proper form, and do a workout involving 3-5 sets of 5 reps with this weight.

✓ **Vary the workout routine.**

- Try various programs with different equipment. Major, multi-joint lifts, such as squats, dead lifts, bench presses, or any “clean and jerk” variation, can be done early in your workout.
- Try using free weights or barbell training instead of machines.
- Take an exercise you would normally do first and do it last.

✓ **Properly warm up for your workout.**

- Spend a few minutes jogging or cycling at low intensity, then move to dynamic stretches and movements, such as lunges, knee hugs, or skips.
- Mobility stretches or soft tissue loosening exercises using a foam roller may also be helpful.
- A good warm-up should increase your heart rate and cause you to sweat.



✓ **Properly recover from a workout.**

- Try to schedule workouts every other day; it is acceptable to add very low-intensity active recovery on off days.
- Address your diet—working out properly needs to be fueled with a proper diet.
- Add a recovery snack with a 3:1 carbohydrate to protein ratio within 30 minutes post workout, such as 8 oz. chocolate milk or a PBJ sandwich.
- Drink more water during the day.
- Sleep at least 6-8 hours per night to allow the body to recover from the stress of working out and other daily activities.
- Create a habit of performing static stretches for the sorest muscles in your body every night—it doesn’t need to be longer than 15 minutes, but it will increase flexibility and blood flow for a better recovery.