FITNESS NOTES

Hypertrophy starter log

A one-page summary of findings from published resistance-training reviews and trials (cited on the last page), plus blank weekly sheets. This is education, not a personalized program.

Five principles

1. **Weekly volume**
   More weekly sets tend to mean more muscle growth, with diminishing returns (Pelland 2026). An ACSM overview summarizes that hypertrophy was enhanced by higher volumes (≥10 sets/wk) — a broad summary, not a personal minimum or optimum (Currier 2026).

2. **Proximity to failure / repetitions in reserve (RIR)**
   Across studies, growth tended to improve slightly when sets finished closer to failure; RIR was often estimated, not measured (Robinson 2024). In one 8-week trial in 18 trained adults, stopping 1–2 reps short gave similar quad growth to failure (Refalo 2024).

3. **Load and repetition range**
   In untrained young men, 8–12 and 20–25 rep training produced similar muscle CSA changes when effort was high (Lees et al.). An umbrella review found volume mattered for hypertrophy more than load alone (McLeod 2024).

4. **Frequency as volume distribution**
   With weekly volume equated, split and full-body routines produced similar hypertrophy; people can choose based on preference (Ramos-Campo 2024). Frequency's own effect on hypertrophy is often small (Pelland 2026).

5. **Include the lengthened position**
   Training that loads a muscle at long length is useful. In trained lifters, lengthened partials and full range of motion gave similar results in the cited trials — lengthened partials have not been shown to beat full ROM (Wolf 2025; Plotkin 2026).

Most trials are small and short (often about 8 weeks), and many samples are young adults. Treat these as current research summaries, not predictions for any one person.

Other topics (rest intervals, exercise choice, drop sets, supersets, cluster sets, accentuated eccentric loading, deload weeks) are summarized on elmsword.netlify.app/fitness/.

Safety. If you have a health condition, pain, or an injury, talk to a qualified health professional before starting or changing training. If an exercise causes pain, stop that exercise and seek appropriate professional advice. This PDF is not a training prescription for clinical populations. Educational use only — not medical advice.

About the author. I have a university engineering background and studied medicine for two years. I'm an independent creator now. I'm not a doctor.

HOW TO USE THIS LOG

Three short rules

1. **Fill after each session**
   Date, exercise, primary muscle, set number, load, reps, estimated RIR, and ROM used (full / lengthened partial / other).

2. **Tally weekly sets**
   Count direct hard sets per muscle group. Indirect (synergist) sets as half a set is optional — a modeling choice in Pelland 2026, not a rule you must follow.

3. **Watch trends, not magic numbers**
   At a similar estimated RIR, note whether load or reps moved up, stayed the same, or dropped. There is no single best set count for everyone in the cited evidence.

Safety again. Pain during an exercise → stop that exercise and seek professional advice. This log does not clear you for training and is not a clinical assessment.

Weekly sheets follow (Weeks 1–4). Sources are on the final page.

Week 1

Dates: _____ / _____ / _____ | Sessions this week: ____

Date	Exercise	Primary muscle	Secondary (opt.)	Set #	Load (kg)	Reps	Est. RIR	ROM

Est. RIR: write 0, 1, 2, 3, 4+ or F (to failure). ROM: F = full · LP = lengthened partial · O = other. Notes (pain → stop that exercise, seek professional advice) go on the back or in a notebook.

Weekly set tally (optional)

Chest	Back	Quads	Hamstrings	Glutes	Shoulders	Arms	Calves	Other
Direct hard sets								
Indirect sets (optional)								
Total ≈ direct + 0.5 × indirect (modeling choice in Pelland 2026; optional)								

Trend (same exercise, similar RIR): load or reps up / same / down? _____

Sessions that hit each muscle this week: fill the boxes above or note here.

Week 2

Dates: _____ / _____ / _____ | Sessions this week: ____

Date	Exercise	Primary muscle	Secondary (opt.)	Set #	Load (kg)	Reps	Est. RIR	ROM

Est. RIR: write 0, 1, 2, 3, 4+ or F (to failure). ROM: F = full · LP = lengthened partial · O = other. Notes (pain → stop that exercise, seek professional advice) go on the back or in a notebook.

Weekly set tally (optional)

Chest	Back	Quads	Hamstrings	Glutes	Shoulders	Arms	Calves	Other
Direct hard sets								
Indirect sets (optional)								
Total ≈ direct + 0.5 × indirect (modeling choice in Pelland 2026; optional)								

Trend (same exercise, similar RIR): load or reps up / same / down? _____

Sessions that hit each muscle this week: fill the boxes above or note here.

Week 3

Dates: _____ / _____ / _____ | Sessions this week: ____

Date	Exercise	Primary muscle	Secondary (opt.)	Set #	Load (kg)	Reps	Est. RIR	ROM

Est. RIR: write 0, 1, 2, 3, 4+ or F (to failure). ROM: F = full · LP = lengthened partial · O = other. Notes (pain → stop that exercise, seek professional advice) go on the back or in a notebook.

Weekly set tally (optional)

Chest	Back	Quads	Hamstrings	Glutes	Shoulders	Arms	Calves	Other
Direct hard sets								
Indirect sets (optional)								
Total ≈ direct + 0.5 × indirect (modeling choice in Pelland 2026; optional)								

Trend (same exercise, similar RIR): load or reps up / same / down? _____

Sessions that hit each muscle this week: fill the boxes above or note here.

Week 4

Dates: _____ / _____ / _____ | Sessions this week: ____

Date	Exercise	Primary muscle	Secondary (opt.)	Set #	Load (kg)	Reps	Est. RIR	ROM

Est. RIR: write 0, 1, 2, 3, 4+ or F (to failure). ROM: F = full · LP = lengthened partial · O = other. Notes (pain → stop that exercise, seek professional advice) go on the back or in a notebook.

Weekly set tally (optional)

Chest	Back	Quads	Hamstrings	Glutes	Shoulders	Arms	Calves	Other
Direct hard sets								
Indirect sets (optional)								
Total ≈ direct + 0.5 × indirect (modeling choice in Pelland 2026; optional)								

Trend (same exercise, similar RIR): load or reps up / same / down? _____

Sessions that hit each muscle this week: fill the boxes above or note here.

SOURCES

References

Titles and DOIs match the research corpus. ABS = abstract-level verification only.

1. Pelland JC et al. Sports Med. 2026;56:481–505. doi:10.1007/s40279-025-02344-w
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5. Lees MJ et al. J Physiol. doi:10.1113/JP289684
6. McLeod JC et al. J Sport Health Sci. 2024;13(1):47–60. doi:10.1016/j.jshs.2023.06.005
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8. Wolf M et al. PeerJ. 2025;13:e18904. doi:10.7717/peerj.18904
9. Plotkin DL et al. Med Sci Sports Exerc. 2026 (aop). doi:10.1249/MSS.0000000000004183 (ABS)

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