



THE BEGINNER DUMBBELL WORKOUT



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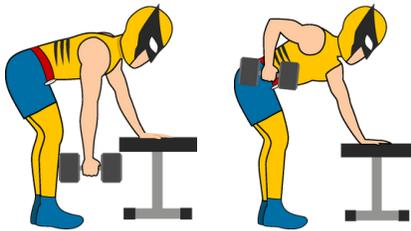
Do this 2–3x per week with a rest day between each session:



Goblet Squats

3 sets of 8–12 reps

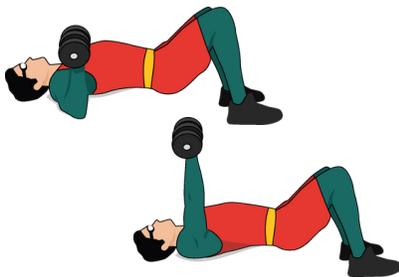
Not ready for weighted squats yet? Start with [bodyweight squats](#) or [squatting to a sturdy box](#) or chair for extra support!



One-Arm Dumbbell Rows

3 sets of 8–12 reps per arm

Want to save time and have multiple dumbbells? Try doing a [Bent Over Row](#) instead.



Dumbbell Floor Presses

3 sets of 8–12 reps

- Have a bench lying around? Feel free to switch this to a [dumbbell chest press](#)!
- To get a bit more range of motion, try doing this while holding a [glute bridge](#) at the same time, or resting your upper back and head on a long foam roller.

...that's it. Three exercises that are big bang for your buck movements, and you've got yourself a workout.

Rest 60–90 seconds between sets. Focus on slow, controlled movement on the way down, and then smooth and athletic movement on the way up.

Warm up with some arm circles, bodyweight squats, and light cardio (marching in place works great), and then do a few reps of each exercise with a lighter weight (if you have one) or just with the weights you have to get your body moving and ready to workout.

Once these start to feel easier? Increase reps, increase the weight, slow down the tempo, or add 1 or 2 more exercises to your circuit.

The Beginner Dumbbell Workout

WARM UP: Arm circles, bodyweight squats, and light cardio. Then do a few reps of each exercise with a light weight

COOL DOWN: Light upper/lower body stretches as desired.

GUIDELINES: Go through all the exercises once, then repeat again. (If you are feeling really good - go through a third time!) You can also choose to do two sets of a single exercise, then move onto the next exercise. Record reps done and/or weight used. Do on non-consecutive days.

DO TWO CIRCUITS OF THE FOLLOWING:

1 Goblet Squats (3 sets of 8-12 reps)

2 One-Arm Dumbbell Rows (3 sets of 8-12 reps per arm)

3 Dumbbell Floor Presses (3 sets of 8-12 reps)

4

5

6

	WORKOUT 1			WORKOUT 2			WORKOUT 3			WORKOUT 4			WORKOUT 5		
CIRCUIT	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
EXERCISE	1														
	2														
	3														
	4														
	5														
	6														
NOTES															

	WORKOUT 6			WORKOUT 7			WORKOUT 8			WORKOUT 9			WORKOUT 10		
CIRCUIT	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
EXERCISE	1														
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	3														
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	5														
	6														
NOTES															

	WORKOUT 11			WORKOUT 12			WORKOUT 13			WORKOUT 14			WORKOUT 15		
CIRCUIT	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
EXERCISE	1														
	2														
	3														
	4														
	5														
	6														
NOTES															

MY FAVORITE DUMBBELL EXERCISES

When you're ready to mix things up or go deeper, here's your go-to list of awesome dumbbell moves:

Lower Body

[Goblet Squats](#)

[Front Squats](#)

[Lunges](#) (walking or stationary)

[Bulgarian Split Squat](#)

[Romanian Deadlifts](#)

[Stagger Stance Deadlift](#) (shown here with a Kettlebell, but you can use a dumbbell for the same motion!)

Upper Body Pull

[One-Arm Rows](#)

[Bent Over Row](#)

[Dumbbell Pullovers](#)

[Dumbbell Reverse Fly](#) (great for if you don't have access to heavier weights!)

Upper Body Push

[Floor Presses](#)

[Overhead Press](#)

[Chest Flyes](#)

[Incline Chest Press](#)

Accessory Lifts

[Skull Crushers](#) (triceps)

[Lateral Raises](#) (shoulders)

[Bicep Curls](#)

[Calf Raises](#)

Power Moves (for full-body strength & conditioning)

[1-Arm Snatch](#)

[Dumbbell Thrusters](#)

[Skier Swings](#)

No machines, no problem. You can build a complete and effective strength routine with just one or two dumbbells and some floor space.

COMMON DUMBBELL QUESTIONS (ANSWERED!)

Q: I only have one set of dumbbells. What do I do?

A: No worries! The key is adjusting your reps and variations.

If you can do 20+ reps with ease, it's time to:

- Add a tempo (like 3 seconds down)
- Do single-leg or staggered-stance versions
- Reduce your rest between sets
- Add another 1-2 exercises from the selection to your circuit.

There are tons of ways to make things harder without heavier weights. Just like you can make your bodyweight exercises harder by changing the leverage angle or progressing to a more challenging variation, you can do the same even with a limited weight selection!

Q: Will dumbbells make me bulky?

A: Not unless you're trying really hard to bulk up.

This concern pops up a lot, especially among women, but the reality is:

Building visible muscle takes years of consistent training, lots of food, great sleep, and favorable genetics.

What will happen: you'll build lean strength, improve joint and tendon health, and help prevent osteoporosis (especially important for women in peri-menopause and beyond).

Q: How long should a dumbbell workout take?

A: 20–30 minutes is plenty when you're starting out.

If you're short on time, even one solid set of each exercise is better than nothing. You can always build from there.

Q: What weight should I start with?

A: As a general rule of thumb, always start with less weight than you think. You can use it to warm up and feel out the movement.

As you get more experience with dumbbells, you'll know what weights you used last time (though you still want to make sure you do a [warm up](#) round!)

Ultimately, you want a weight where the last 2-3 reps feel challenging, but doable with good form.

Too easy? Go heavier or add reps. Too hard? Go lighter or reduce reps.

Your form is always the priority. Strength gains follow.

Still unsure if you are lifting enough weight? [Read this](#).

Q: Do I need to do cardio too?

A: Dumbbells can be your cardio (or at least, a part of it!)

Moves like thrusters, snatches, and skier swings elevate your heart rate and build muscle.

Heck, any dumbbell exercise can elevate your heart rate if you perform the reps on a timer. Try one of these options:

- **Level 1:** 30 seconds of work with 60 seconds of rest between each exercise for 3-5 rounds.
- **Level 1:** 30 seconds of work with 30 seconds of rest between each exercise for 3-5 rounds.
- **Level 2:** 40 seconds of work with 20 seconds of rest between each exercise for 3-5 rounds.

Trust me, you'll feel your heart rate getting up there.

But if you love walks, bike rides, or dance breaks? That counts too. Just move.

FINAL THOUGHTS

You've got the dumbbells. You've started moving. That's a big win.

But the hardest part isn't getting started.

It's knowing how to **keep going** - especially when life gets messy.

That's where Nerd Fitness Coaching comes in.

You'll get a plan built around your goals, your schedule and your preferences.

And a real human coach in your corner to help you stay consistent, challenged, and on track without burning out or backsliding.

You don't need to figure it all out alone.

We've helped thousands of beginners do exactly what you're doing.

Only this time, it sticks.

Ready for a plan that grows with you?

[Schedule your free coaching call →](#)

Chat with our team



-Steve Kamb, creator Nerdfitness.com