

# Mathias Method

## Strength to Change the World

By Ryan Mathias

### Level 1- The Basics

This is a beginner level program for anyone starting to build strength in a gym setting. Presented is a 13+ week program for anyone who has little to no resistance training experience. Level 1 begins by teaching a routine warm-up that promotes proper movement patterns and some basic strength exercises that will most effectively build full body strength. Here we will build a foundation that increases strength using the most effective exercises. With few exercises, the focus will be on practicing these new motions to become a safe and effective lifter. It is also a very adaptable level of training that allows you to train two, three or four days a week. The more training days you utilize (2x, 3x, or 4x weekly), out of the given options, the more effective the program will be. After completing this program you will have built a strong enough base to progress forward in your journey to gaining strength to change the world.

Presented in this program are four training days a week, each focused upon one strength motion. You will begin by practicing only the most effective exercises enabling you to learn proper movement patterns while building strength. As your neuromuscular proprioception, or muscle activation, increases you will then start to use more basic strength exercises that will build a strong foundation to lay your goals upon. For each training session make sure that you do the proper mobility and warm-up drills to increase the training's effectiveness. After completing the training session always remember to mobilize your tight tissues for at least 10+ minutes, with each stretch lasting longer than 2 minutes. It will take time for your body to adapt to all the new stimuli but you will continuously be growing stronger in the process. Also, after you have completed the first four weeks of training you are encouraged to try new things. Always complete the listed exercises first, but then feel free to try 1 or 2 more exercises that will help you gain strength in a similar way to the previous work. Just remember to be safe and have fun!

#### **Weeks 1-4:**

**Goal:** Learning the basic motions and activating the correct muscles.

#### **Weeks 5-12:**

**Goal:** Practice basic motions and improve body positioning.

#### **Weeks 13+:**

**Goal:** Practice technique and build strength.



## Squat/ Deadlift Mobility Warm-Up

### General Warm-Up and Systems Check:

Toe Reach	x 10
The Bow	x 10-30 sec.
Torso Twist & Reach	x 10 total
Side Bend & Reach	x 10 total
Hip Circles	x 10 total
Hip Open-Close	x 1 each
Paleo Squat	x 30+ sec.

### The Daily 30:

Paleo Squat	x 10
Push-Ups	x 10
Prone Cobra	x 10

### Training Specific Mobility:

Lat Stretch- Underhand	x 10-30 sec.
Bicep Stretch	x 10-30 sec.
Squat & Extend	x 3
Dynamic Hamstring Stretch	x 10 total
Deep Lunges	x 10 total
Dynamic Pigeon Stretch	x 10 each

\*\*Add any additional mobility stretches here to fit your specific needs\*\*

### Activation Techniques:

Single Leg Romanian Deadlift	x 10 each
Hip Airplanes	x 10 each
Bulgarian Split Squat	x 10 each

### **BONUS- Calf Mobility**

Static Single Leg Calf Stretch	x 2 min. each
Weighted Deep Squat Calf Stretch	x 1 min. each



## **Bench/ Military Press Mobility Warm-Up**

### **General Warm-Up and Systems Check:**

Toe Reach	x 10
The Bow	x 10-30 sec.
Torso Twist & Reach	x 10 total
Side Bend & Reach	x 10 total
Hip Circles	x 10 total
Hip Open-Close	x 1 each
Paleo Squat	x 30+ sec.

### **The Daily 30:**

Paleo Squat	x 10
Push-Ups	x 10
Prone Cobra	x 10

### **Training Specific Mobility:**

Arm Circles	x 10 each
Horizontal Hug & Open	x 10
Shoulder Flexion-Extension	x 10
Single Arm Swings	x 10 each way
Scapular Rotations	x 10 each
Chest Stretch	x 10 sec.
Lat Stretch- Overhand	x 10-30 sec.
Doorway/ Pec Minor Stretch	x 10-30 sec.
Scapular Abduction Stretch	x 10-30 sec.

\*\*Add any additional mobility stretches here to fit your specific needs\*\*

### **Activation Techniques:**

#### **Dumbbell Shoulder Warm-Up**

Lateral Raises	x 10
Front Raises	x 10
Reverse Flyes	x 10
Military Press	x 10
Shoulder Dislocations	x 10



**Weeks 1-4:****Day 1****Technique Work:**

Slow Box Squats

3 x 5

- *To learn proper movement patterns, descend down for 4 seconds and pause on the box while maintaining tightness for 2 seconds before ascending at a normal pace. Use a light weight.*

**Main Lift:**

Box Squat

5 x 5

- *Try to increase the weight used each week, or even throughout the training session. Maintain perfect form and only increase the weight if you can still control the movement. Do not drop onto the box. Sit softly and pause before ascending.*

Mobility Work

10+ min.

- *You can foam roll any tight or sore muscles or just stretch the muscles used. Hold each stretch for at least 2 minutes but be active by moving through the tight positions under control. Go to the Mobility Tab at [MathiasMethod.com](http://MathiasMethod.com) to find out more.*



## Day 2

### **Technique Work:**

Slow Closegrip Bench Press-Paused 3 x 5

- *To learn proper movement patterns, descend for 4 seconds and pause on your chest for 2 seconds before pressing back to the top at a normal pace. Keep your elbows in line with your wrists and pulled in close to your sides. Use a light weight.*

### **Main Lift:**

Closegrip Bench Press-Paused 5 x 5

- *Try to increase the weight used each week, or even throughout the training session. Maintain perfect form and only increase the weight if you can still control the movement. Pause the bar on your chest for 2 seconds before pressing.*

Mobility Work 10+ min.

- *You can foam roll any tight or sore muscles or just stretch the muscles used. Hold each stretch for at least 2 minutes but be active by moving through the tight positions under control. Go to the Mobility Tab at [MathiasMethod.com](http://MathiasMethod.com) to find out more.*



## Day 3

### Technique Work:

#### Slow Conventional Deadlift

3 x 5

- *To learn proper movement patterns, ascend at a normal pace, hold the top position for two seconds, descend for 4 seconds and pause on the floor before starting again. Maintain perfect form, stay tight and keep the bar against you. Utilize an overhand grip as long as you can without decreasing performance. Use a light weight.*

### Main Lift:

#### Conventional Deadlift

5 x 5

- *Try to increase the weight used each week, or even throughout the training session. Maintain perfect form and only increase the weight if you can still control the movement. Do not drop the weight at any point as you descend. Touch the weight to the floor lightly and pause before ascending.*

#### Mobility Work

10+ min.

- *You can foam roll any tight or sore muscles or just stretch the muscles used. Hold each stretch for at least 2 minutes but be active by moving through the tight positions under control. Go to the Mobility Tab at [MathiasMethod.com](http://MathiasMethod.com) to find out more.*



## Day 4

### **Technique Work:**

Slow Military Press

3 x 5

- *To learn proper movement patterns, press the bar overhead at a normal pace, pause at lockout and descend for 4 seconds. Keep your elbows in line with your wrists, directly under the bar. Use a light weight.*

### **Main Lift:**

Military Press

5 x 5

- *Try to increase the weight used each week, or even throughout the training session. Maintain perfect form and only increase the weight if you can still control the movement. Do not arch your back. Be sure to push your head through to finish the lift.*

Mobility Work

10+ min.

- *You can foam roll any tight or sore muscles or just stretch the muscles used. Hold each stretch for at least 2 minutes but be active by moving through the tight positions under control. Go to the Mobility Tab at [MathiasMethod.com](http://MathiasMethod.com) to find out more.*



**Weeks 5-12:****Day 1****Technique Work:**

Box Squat 3 x 5

- *Descend under control and pause on the box, while maintaining tightness, for 2 seconds before ascending. Keep your knees out and use a light weight.*

**Main Lift:**

Squat 5 x 5

- *Try to increase the weight used each week, or even throughout the training session. Maintain perfect form and only increase the weight if you can still control the movement. Lower until your hips are lower than your knees.*

**Accessory Work:**

Good Mornings 3 x 10

- *Maintain a neutral spine, stay tight and bend from your hips. Keep your glutes activated and knees pressed out. Use a reasonably light weight.*

New Exercise (Optional) 3 x 10-15

- *You may try any new exercise, or one that you need more practice on, that will help build up your main lift, or other areas you need work on.*

New Exercise (Optional) 3 x 10-15

- *You may try any new exercise, or one that you need more practice on, that will help build up your main lift, or other areas you need work on.*

Mobility Work 10+ min.

- *You can foam roll any tight or sore muscles or just stretch the muscles used. Hold each stretch for at least 2 minutes but be active by moving through the tight positions under control. Go to the Mobility Tab at MathiasMethod.com to find out more.*





## Day 2

### Technique Work:

Closegrip Bench Press-Paused

3 x 5

- *Descend under control and pause on your chest for 2 seconds before pressing back to the top at a normal pace. Keep your elbows in line with your wrists and pulled in close to your sides. Use a light weight.*

### Main Lift:

Bench Press

5 x 5

- *Try to increase the weight used each week, or even throughout the training session. Maintain perfect form and only increase the weight if you can still control the movement. Do not drop the weight onto your chest. Keep your elbows tucked on the descent and flair them as you press.*

### Accessory Work:

Body Rows

- x 30

- *Do as many sets as it takes to complete 30 total good repetitions. Start with your bench press grip and move your hands from there as needed. Your elbows should finish behind your torso for each repetition.*

New Exercise (Optional)

3 x 10-15

- *You may try any new exercise, or one that you need more practice on, that will help build up your main lift, or other areas you need work on.*

New Exercise (Optional)

3 x 10-15

- *You may try any new exercise, or one that you need more practice on, that will help build up your main lift, or other areas you need work on.*

Mobility Work

10+ min.

- *You can foam roll any tight or sore muscles or just stretch the muscles used. Hold each stretch for at least 2 minutes but be active by moving through the tight positions under control. Go to the Mobility Tab at [MathiasMethod.com](http://MathiasMethod.com) to find out more.*



## Day 3

### Technique Work:

Conventional Deadlift

3 x 5

- *Move under control, pause on the floor and do not drop at any point as you lower the weight to the ground. Maintain perfect form, stay tight and keep the bar against you. Utilize an overhand grip as long as you can without decreasing performance. Use a light weight.*

### Main Lift:

Conventional Deadlift

5 x 5

- *Try to increase the weight used each week, or even throughout the training session. Maintain perfect form and only increase the weight if you can still control the movement. Keep the bar tight against you and utilize a double overhand grip until the weights are too heavy to do so.*

### Accessory Work:

Planks

3 x 30+ sec.

- *Keep your glutes activated and stay straight from your head to heels. Breathe normally.*

New Exercise (Optional)

3 x 10-15

- *You may try any new exercise, or one that you need more practice on, that will help build up your main lift, or other areas you need work on.*

New Exercise (Optional)

3 x 10-15

- *You may try any new exercise, or one that you need more practice on, that will help build up your main lift, or other areas you need work on.*

Mobility Work

10+ min.

- *You can foam roll any tight or sore muscles or just stretch the muscles used. Hold each stretch for at least 2 minutes but be active by moving through the tight positions under control. Go to the Mobility Tab at [MathiasMethod.com](http://MathiasMethod.com) to find out more.*



**Day 4****Technique Work:**

Military Press

3 x 5

- *Move the weight under control and stay tight. Keep your elbows in line with your wrists, directly under the bar. Use a light weight.*

**Main Lift:**

Military Press

5 x 5

- *Try to increase the weight used each week, or even throughout the training session. Maintain perfect form and only increase the weight if you can still control the movement. Keep your glutes activated and do not arch your back. Push your head through to finish the lift.*

**Accessory Work:**

Face Pulls

3 x 10-15

- *Keep your elbows high and use relatively light weights. Pull your elbows all the way behind you and hold for a second before controlling the descent.*

New Exercise (Optional)

3 x 10-15

- *You may try any new exercise, or one that you need more practice on, that will help build up your main lift, or other areas you need work on.*

New Exercise (Optional)

3 x 10-15

- *You may try any new exercise, or one that you need more practice on, that will help build up your main lift, or other areas you need work on.*

Mobility Work

10+ min.

- *You can foam roll any tight or sore muscles or just stretch the muscles used. Hold each stretch for at least 2 minutes but be active by moving through the tight positions under control. Go to the Mobility Tab at [MathiasMethod.com](http://MathiasMethod.com) to find out more.*



**Weeks 13+:****Day 1****Technique Work:**

Box Squat 3 x 5

- *Descend under control and pause on the box, while maintaining tightness, for 2 seconds before ascending. Keep your knees out and use a light weight.*

**Main Lift:**

Squat 5 x 5

- *Try to increase the weight used each week, or even throughout the training session. Maintain perfect form and only increase the weight if you can still control the movement. Lower until your hips are lower than your knees.*

**Accessory Work:**

Good Mornings 3 x 10

- *Maintain a neutral spine, stay tight and bend from your hips. Keep your glutes activated and knees pressed out. Use a reasonably light weight.*

New Exercise (Optional) 3 x 10-15

- *You may try any new exercise, or one that you need more practice on, that will help build up your main lift, or other areas you need work on.*

New Exercise (Optional) 3 x 10-15

- *You may try any new exercise, or one that you need more practice on, that will help build up your main lift, or other areas you need work on.*

Planks 3 x 45-60 sec.

- *Keep your glutes activated and stay straight from your head to heels. Breathe normally.*

Mobility Work 10+ min.

- *You can foam roll any tight or sore muscles or just stretch the muscles used. Hold each stretch for at least 2 minutes but be active by moving through the tight positions under control. Go to the Mobility Tab at [MathiasMethod.com](http://MathiasMethod.com) to find out more.*



## Day 2

### Technique Work:

Closegrip Bench Press

3 x 5

- *Descend under control and pause on your chest for 2 seconds before pressing back to the top. Keep your elbows in line with your wrists and pulled in close to your sides. Use a light weight.*

### Main Lift:

Bench Press

5 x 5

- *Try to increase the weight used each week, or even throughout the training session. Maintain perfect form and only increase the weight if you can still control the movement. Do not drop the weight onto your chest. Keep your elbows tucked on the descent and flair them as you press.*

### Accessory Work:

Push-Ups

- x 30-50

*Superset*

Body Rows

- x 30-50

- *Do as many sets as it takes to complete 30-50 total good repetitions. Only rest as needed between your push-ups and body row exercises.*

New Exercise (Optional)

3 x 10-15

- *You may try any new exercise, or one that you need more practice on, that will help build up your main lift, or other areas you need work on.*

New Exercise (Optional)

3 x 10-15

- *You may try any new exercise, or one that you need more practice on, that will help build up your main lift, or other areas you need work on.*

Mobility Work

10+ min.

- *You can foam roll any tight or sore muscles or just stretch the muscles used. Hold each stretch for at least 2 minutes but be active by moving through the tight positions under control. Go to the Mobility Tab at [MathiasMethod.com](http://MathiasMethod.com) to find out more.*



## Day 3

### **Technique Work:**

Conventional Deadlift 3 x 5

- *Move under control, pause on the floor and do not drop at any point as you lower the weight to the ground. Maintain perfect form, stay tight and keep the bar against you. Utilize an overhand grip as long as you can without decreasing performance. Use a light weight.*

### **Main Lift:**

Conventional Deadlift 5 x 5

- *Try to increase the weight used each week, or even throughout the training session. Maintain perfect form and only increase the weight if you can still control the movement. Keep the bar tight against you and utilize a double overhand grip until the weights are too heavy to do so.*

### **Accessory Work:**

Walking Lunges 3 x 10-20 steps

- *Keep your core tight and do not let your knees travel in front of your toes. Only step as far as you can while maintaining a neutral pelvis (little to no stretch in your hip flexors).*

Planks 3 x 45-60 sec.

- *Keep your glutes activated and stay straight from your head to heels. Breathe normally.*

New Exercise (Optional) 3 x 10-15

- *You may try any new exercise, or one that you need more practice on, that will help build up your main lift, or other areas you need work on.*

New Exercise (Optional) 3 x 10-15

- *You may try any new exercise, or one that you need more practice on, that will help build up your main lift, or other areas you need work on.*

Mobility Work 10+ min.

- *You can foam roll any tight or sore muscles or just stretch the muscles used. Hold each stretch for at least 2 minutes but be active by moving through the tight positions under control. Go to the Mobility Tab at [MathiasMethod.com](http://MathiasMethod.com) to find out more.*



**Day 4****Technique Work:**

Military Press 3 x 5

- *Move the weight under control and stay tight. Keep your elbows in line with your wrists, directly under the bar. Use a light weight.*

**Main Lift:**

Military Press 5 x 5

- *Try to increase the weight used each week, or even throughout the training session. Maintain perfect form and only increase the weight if you can still control the movement. Keep your glutes activated and do not arch your back. Push your head through to finish the lift.*

**Accessory Work:**

Face Pulls 4-5 x 10-15

- *Keep your elbows high and use relatively light weights. Pull your elbows all the way behind you and hold for a second before controlling the descent.*

New Exercise (Optional) 3 x 10-15

- *You may try any new exercise, or one that you need more practice on, that will help build up your main lift, or other areas you need work on.*

New Exercise (Optional) 3 x 10-15

- *You may try any new exercise, or one that you need more practice on, that will help build up your main lift, or other areas you need work on.*

Mobility Work 10+ min.

- *You can foam roll any tight or sore muscles or just stretch the muscles used. Hold each stretch for at least 2 minutes but be active by moving through the tight positions under control. Go to the Mobility Tab at [MathiasMethod.com](http://MathiasMethod.com) to find out more.*

