

# Starting Strength

SIMPLE. HARD. EFFECTIVE.

# GETTING STARTED





The phrase "Starting Strength" (SS) has two distinct meanings.

The first is the title of the best-selling book, [Starting Strength: Basic Barbell Training](#) by Mark Rippetoe.

The second is the Starting Strength Novice Program. (aka the "Starting Strength Linear Progression")

While the program appears in the book, the book itself is much more than simply a description of the Novice program. Starting Strength provides an in-depth, thorough analysis of the five primary barbell lifts: Squat, Deadlift, Press, Bench Press, and Power Clean/Power Snatch. Correct form is derived through analysis and application of functional anatomy, biomechanics, and physics. How to utilize this correct form is then distilled into easy to follow instructions that make the complexities of the lifts as easy to execute as possible.

# WHY DO STARTING STRENGTH?

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Developed from Mark Rippetoe's many decades of coaching, Starting Strength allows beginners to make strength gains very quickly.

The Starting Strength Program is the best program for a Novice to develop the strength that will serve as the basis for all future training as well as increase performance in life and sports. Developed by Mark Rippetoe and refined over decades of experience coaching thousands of trainees, the SS Program allows trainees to make faster strength gains during their first serious period of training than any other program.

The Starting Strength Program is an appropriate place to start for nearly all trainees new to serious strength training. Whether the long term goal is powerlifting, general health and fitness, or training for sport, the SS Program will provide the training base necessary to succeed and excel at any and all of those endeavors.

The SS Program's beauty is its simplicity. You need only perform and master 5 basic barbell exercises, plus chin-ups, to complete this program. It is cost effective for those who prefer to purchase their own equipment and work out at home. It is also time efficient, since you don't need to perform a lot of isolation or assistance work.



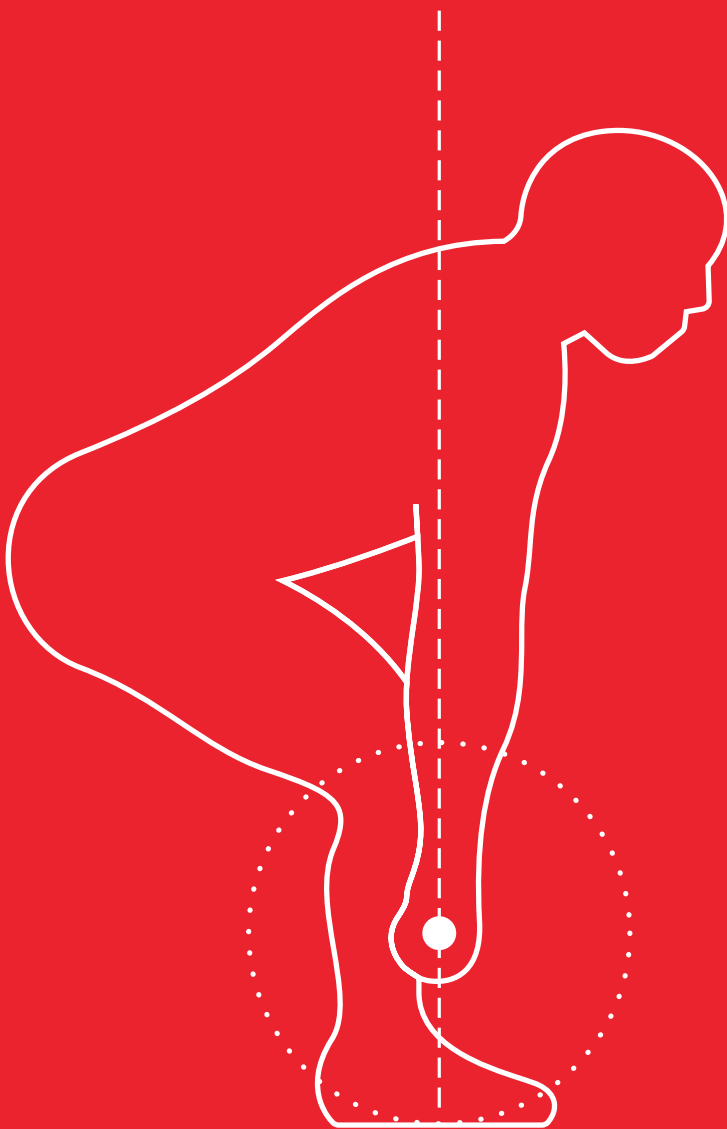
## WHAT IF I'M NOT A NOVICE?

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For those who've already developed the basic lifts past the novice phase, paying attention to *The Lifts - Starting Strength* (the book) and other resources - remains important for technique and coaching development.

More advanced lifters can continue to make strength gains by using programs matched to their level. [Practical Programming for Strength Training](#) addresses exercise physiology and program construction in more detail, with many approaches and examples to help drive continued strength improvements. [The Barbell Prescription: Strength Training for Life After 40](#) contains additional modifications for and guidance for older lifters.

# THE LIFTS



The basic barbell lifts are at the center of training to improve strength safely and efficiently. Correct technique is critical for success.

## TOOLS TO LEARN THE LIFTS

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- [Starting Strength](#) book - Starting Strength is the only work of its kind. No other resource delves as seriously and deeply into the background and application of technique for the primary barbell lifts and how to correct deviations from proper technique.

Doing the SS Program without using the SS Lifting Model and Method will work but not nearly as well as using both together. It is therefore highly recommended that you purchase and read the book before beginning the SS Program.

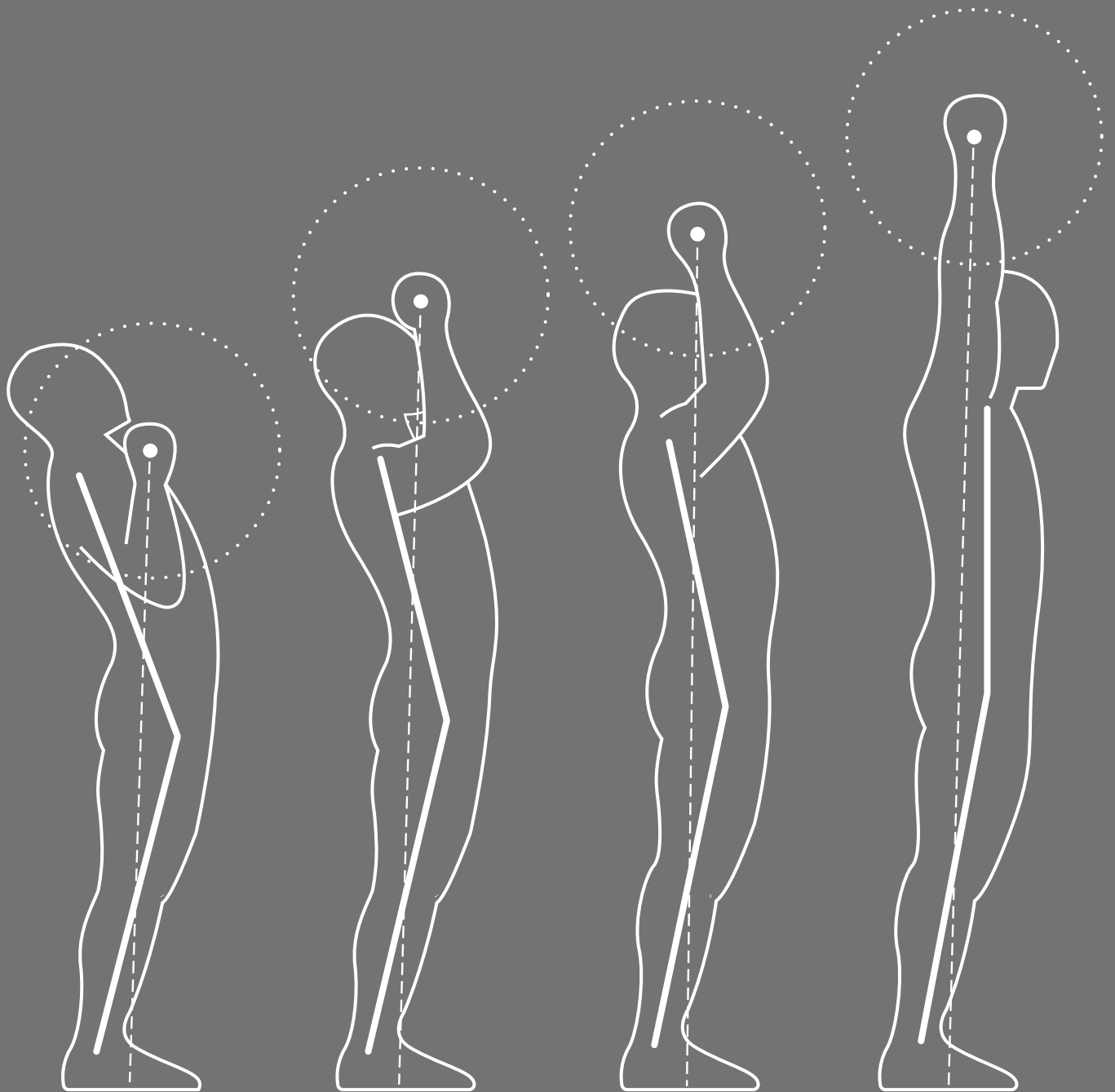
- [Starting Strength](#) app - The Starting Strength app is designed for use at the gym with handy features like auto training setup, Notes, Warmup weight calculator, Rest timer and access to learning the lift-focused sections of the Starting Strength book so you can refresh your knowledge in between sets.
- Starting Strength videos - The Starting Strength DVD and other technique-oriented videos are on this site for your use.

Go to the [Main lifts section](#) on this site.

Go to the [DVD section](#) on this site.

- The Starting Strength [Training Log section](#) addresses specific lifting problems each week. Review the [Cues entries](#) for help in identifying and correcting common form errors.
- [Starting Strength coaching](#) - Learn the lifts from the experts through a seminar, camp, [Starting Strength Gym](#), or private appointment.

# THE PROGRAMS





# THE STARTING STRENGTH PROGRAM

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The Starting Strength Novice Program can be broken down into two workout days, Day A and Day B. The entire body is worked each session. As the trainee progresses through the program, Days A and B are slightly modified to take into account the adaptations in the body of the lifter.

## General Notes

The goal of this program is to add weight each and every time you lift, taking advantage of [The Novice Effect](#) that allows you to do so. Perform the program on a 3 day per week schedule, on non-consecutive days, i.e. Mon/Wed/Fri, Tues/Thurs/Sat or similar.

Most healthy men between the ages of 18 and 35 or 40 can add 10 lbs to the squat the first 2-3 times it's performed, 15-20 lbs to the deadlift the first couple times, and 10 lbs the next several times it's performed. After that, jumps become 5 lbs per workout. For the press, bench press, and power clean, you may get one 10 lb jump, but you may need to start with 5 lb jumps. Later on, you'll move to 2.5 lb or smaller jumps for these lifts when 5 lbs becomes too much to add every workout. The pattern is similar for females and older lifters, but with smaller increases. Program modifications for older novices are discussed extensively in [The Barbell Prescription: Strength Training for Life After 40](#). Once you're into Phase 3 and doing chin-ups as part of the program, some of you will progress to weighted chin-ups. If you can perform 3 sets of 10 reps at bodyweight, then you can do every other chin-up workout as a 3 sets of 5 weighted, while continuing to do 3 sets of bodyweight chins to fatigue on your alternate chin-up days.

Now let's get to the program itself.

# Phase 1

(Usually 1-3 weeks)

DAY A	DAY B
<b>Squat 5 reps x 3 sets*</b>	<b>Squat 5 reps x 3 sets</b>
<b>Press/Bench Press 5 reps x 3 sets</b>	<b>Press/Bench Press 5 reps x 3 sets</b>
<b>Deadlift 5 reps x 1 set</b>	<b>Deadlift 5 reps x 1 set</b>

\*Sets here include only work-sets, not warm-up sets.

## Phase 1 Notes

In this initial phase, workouts A and B are the same, except that the press and bench press alternate. So if you began the program on Monday and pressed, you'll bench press Wednesday and press again Friday. The second week, you'll bench press Monday and Friday and press on Wednesday.

At the end of this phase, if you're in that 18-35 healthy male demographic, your squat should be 40-50 lbs higher than it started, your deadlift should be 50-70 lbs higher than it started, and your press and bench press each 15-20lbs higher than they started.

Most women (and men over 35 or 40) will begin with smaller jumps - perhaps a single 10 lb jump in the squat, two or three 10 lb jumps in the deadlift, and immediate 5 lb jumps in the other exercises - then proceed to 2.5 lb or smaller incremental increases in some movements sooner.

There is no single prescription for everyone, so common sense and paying attention to how your body responds to the increased weight are your best guides here.

## Phase 2

DAY A	DAY B
<b>Squat 5 reps x 3 sets</b>	<b>Squat 5 reps x 3 sets</b>
<b>Press/Bench Press 5 reps x 3 sets</b>	<b>Press/Bench Press 5 reps x 3 sets</b>
<b>Deadlift 5 reps x 1 set</b>	<b>Power Clean 3 reps x 5 sets</b>

### Phase 2 Notes

In this phase, we introduce the power clean. Your deadlift is now heavy enough that doing it 3 days per week is difficult to recover from. You'll do deadlifts on Day A as before, and do 5 sets of 3 reps in the power clean on Day B. The explosive nature of the Power Clean will continue to help drive up your deadlift, without the excessive fatigue associated with high frequency deadlifting.

Phase 2's length is variable, from several weeks to several months, depending on the individual trainee.



## Phase 3

DAY A	DAY B
<b>Squat 5 reps x 3 sets</b>	<b>Squat 5 reps x 3 sets</b>
<b>Press/Bench Press 5 reps x 3 sets</b>	<b>Press/Bench Press 5 reps x 3 sets</b>
<b>Deadlift 5 reps x 1 set/Power Clean 3 reps x 5 sets</b>	<b>Chin-ups</b>

### Phase 3 Notes

At this point you've become strong enough to pull enough weight that we limit deadlift and cleaning frequency. Each is alternated on Day A, while chin-ups are performed on Day B. So if you deadlift on Monday, you'll do chins on Wednesday, power cleans Friday, chins (or weighted chins, see General Notes above) on Monday, and deadlift again Wednesday. This allows adequate recovery.

Phase 3 is also often where people often need to begin micro-load their pressing movements and cleans, adding weight in 2.5lb or smaller increments to continue linear progress.

Finally, Phase 3 is also often where people reach the "Advanced Novice" stage, and add weight to their squats only twice per week (i.e. Monday and Friday), while using Wednesday as a lighter recovery day for squats.

# After Getting Started and Finishing the Novice Phase

First, make sure you are actually finished being a Novice: [Who Wants to Be a Novice? You Do](#)

## Intermediate & Advanced Programs

Intermediate programs are appropriate for those who have already developed their strength using a linear progression.

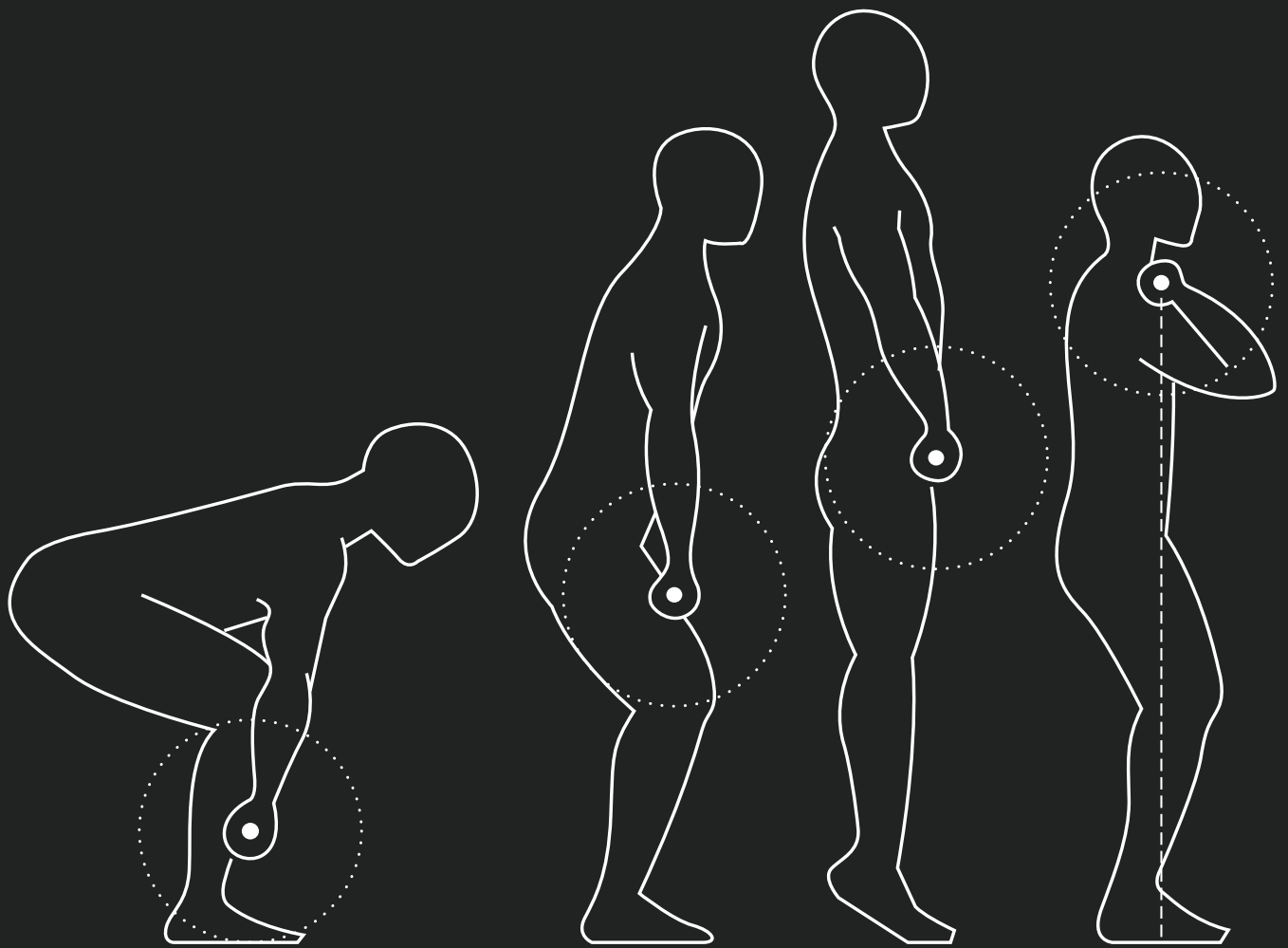
Rationale, construction, and example programs for intermediates are in [Practical Programming for Strength Training](#).

Program modifications for older intermediates and the very detrained can be found in [The Barbell Prescription: Strength Training for Life After 40](#).

For a taste of some intermediate-level programming, see articles:

- [The Texas Method](#)
- [Five Ways to 5 x 5](#)

# THE EQUIPMENT

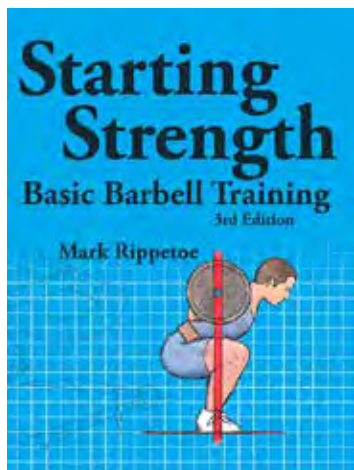


## BOOKS

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### Essential

[Starting Strength](#) is an essential reference for comprehensive theory of barbell training and instructions and corrections on each lift.



### Recommended

[Practical Programming](#) details the why and how behind programming, with expanded explanations and modifications at every stage of advancement, as well as for special populations.

[The Barbell Prescription](#) examines the benefits of strength training for healthy living and aging, followed by program approaches and modifications for older lifters.

### Supplemental Texts

[Mean Ol Mr Gravity](#) contains informative and entertaining Q&A from the StartingStrength Forums. It can serve as an advanced FAQ as you progress in your training.

[Strong Enough?](#) is a collection of essays on barbell training.

## APPS

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The [Official Starting Strength App](#) - Designed for use at the gym with handy features like auto training setup, Notes, Warmup weight calculator, Rest timer and access to the mobile friendly Learning the Lifts sections from the Starting Strength book so you can refresh your knowledge in between sets.

## GYMS

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Starting Strength Gyms and Starting Strength Affiliate Gyms are the best places to train to get strong in the country. [Look for a location](#) close to you.



## COACHING

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A good coach can help you save time learning the lifts, solve problems that make it "impossible" for you to perform a lift, and keep your programming on track. [Find Coaching](#).



# TRAINING EQUIPMENT

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## General

### Bars

"Bars are the place to spend money, if you have it. If you don't, raise it somehow, because cheap bars are potentially dangerous, unpleasant to use, and a bad investment. Cheap bars will bend...even under normal use. Cheap bars should be - but somehow ever are - an embarrassment to their manufacturers and the gyms that keep them. You can do better, and you should."

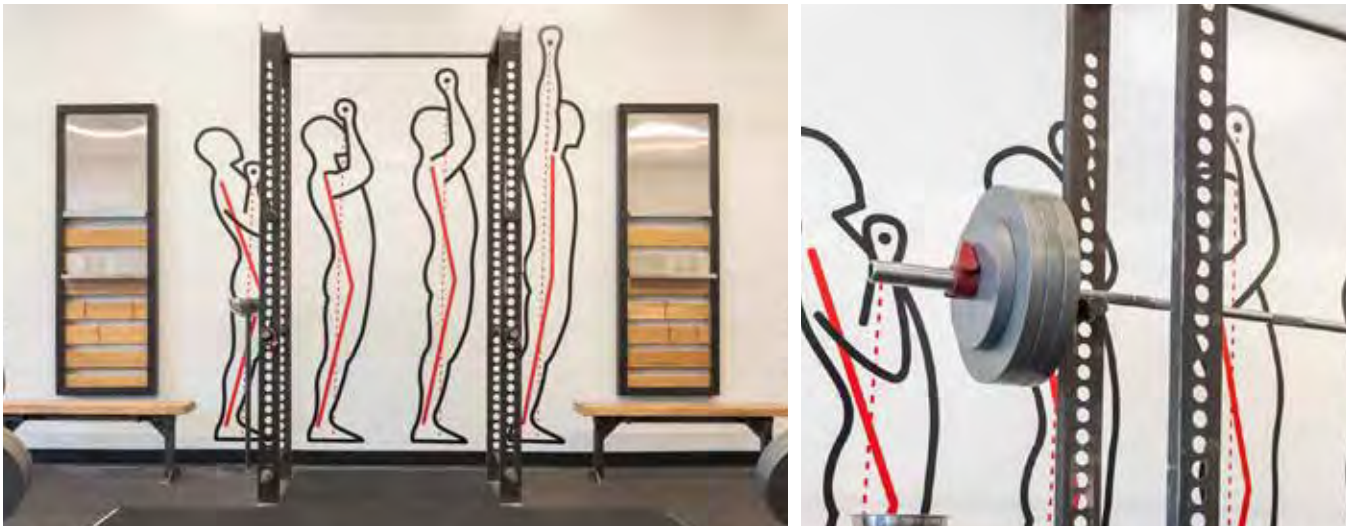
If you're in the market for a new bar, we recommend the [Starting Strength Bars](#) designed by Mark Rippetoe and manufactured by Capps Welding. If you're considering used equipment, you should watch this video:



In this video, Rip explains more about barbells, including some maintenance tips.

## Power Racks or Stands

Power racks are the gold standard. [The Starting Strength Power Rack](#) is designed by Mark Rippetoe and manufactured by Texas Strength Systems. If you'd rather fab up your own, plans for a welded power rack are included in Starting Strength. They can be [downloaded here](#).



## Bench

The [Starting Strength Bench](#) designed by Mark Rippetoe is manufactured and sold by Texas Strength Systems.



## Chalk

Chalk dries the hands, improving grip and reducing callus formation.

## Plates

Small plates that allow increments less than 5 pounds to be loaded are important for women and older people at the outset, as well as for everyone as the novice phase progresses.



# Personal

## Essential

- Shoes - Hard-soled shoes increase stability and allow you to train each lift more effectively.

## Useful, Especially Later

- Belt - [The Starting Strength Belt](#) by Dominion Strength Training
- Wraps, Sleeves, Tape

# Starting Strength

**StartingStrength.com**