

Strength Training for Women Over 40

A Clear 12-Week Dumbbell Plan for Beginners—
with Illustrated Exercises and Easier Starting
Options

12
weeks, three
4-week phases

2×
a week, about
30 minutes

36
exercise versions across
12 movement families

One light and one medium pair of dumbbells, a sturdy chair, a clear wall, and a little floor space.



Callidus · 2026

CHAPTER 5 EXTRA

Your Milestone Checks

Week 0 • Your starting point

Date: _____

Copy your Chapter 1 sentence. Keep these pages so you can return to it.

My reason: _____

EVERYDAY TASKS

Check tasks that matter to you. Note “easy,” “need a rest,” or “use support.” Keep your usual help. These are daily-life notes, not tests—skip any unsafe task.

[] Carry my usual grocery bags: _____

[] Climb my usual stairs: _____

[] Stand up from my usual chair: _____

[] Get down to the floor and back up, if comfortable: _____

[] My own task: _____

STARTING VERSIONS AND WEIGHTS

Choose from Chapter 6. Fill in untried moves during your first easy A and B. Leave about 4 good reps left, or 5–10 steady seconds in holds. Keep balance support.

Move	Version ID	Lb each / one weight
Chair squat	_____	_____
Split squat or swap	_____	_____
Hip hinge	_____	_____
Bridge or swap	_____	_____
Wall push-up	_____	0
Seated press or swap	_____	_____
Row	_____	_____
Farmer hold	_____	_____
Suitcase hold	_____	_____
Heel tap or swap	_____	_____
Supported balance	_____	0

Use 0 for body weight or no weights. Copy actual reps or seconds and effort from your first cards when you make your Week 4 check.

Week 4 • What works for you now?

Date: _____ Required sessions done: _____

Use your first A/B cards and your Week 4 cards. Compare steady sets at similar effort. Week 1 uses about 4 good reps left; Week 4 uses 3–4. If effort differs, note it. Do not add a hard test to make the numbers match.

COMPARE YOUR LOG

Pick three moves. For each entry, write the version, lb, both sets' reps or seconds, and good reps left—or steady seconds left for holds. Include L/R for one-sided moves and the support used for balance.

Move	First A/B entry	Week 4 entry
_____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
_____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
_____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____

Same version and weight, more reps at similar effort? That is a useful change. A steadier move or easier setup matters too. If you used a different version or swap, name it. The numbers are not a direct comparison.

RETURN TO YOUR REASON

My Chapter 1 reason: _____

My chosen everyday task feels: _____

Same load, stairs, chair, or help as before? What changed?

What now feels easier in my routine? _____

My next step: [] Start Build [] Repeat Learn for more practice

One thing I will keep or adjust: _____

Week 12 · See your own progress

Date: _____ Required sessions done: _____

Use normal workouts and compare with Week 4. Week 12 calls for 2–3 good reps left, while Week 4 calls for 3–4. Choose entries near the same effort, such as about 3 good reps left. If none match, write that down. Do not train to your limit for this check.

COMPARE YOUR LOG

Pick three moves. Write the version, lb, reps or seconds for each set, and effort. Include L/R, hold time left, and balance support where needed.

Move	Week 4 entry	Week 12 entry
_____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
_____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
_____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____

Look for more reps with the same weight and version, or a heavier weight you can control at similar effort. A new version is a separate change. Longer balance time with more support is not the same check. Note both.

RETURN TO YOUR REASON

My Chapter 1 reason: _____

What I notice in that everyday task now: _____

Same task and help as before? What changed? _____

A change I am pleased with: _____

What still needs practice? _____

My next step: [] Repeat Consolidate [] Talk with a trainer

One thing I want to work toward: _____

Learn • Session A log • Weeks 1–4

Use the Learn A card. Reps and seconds below are your actual results; the card gives your targets.

Exercise / side	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Date / elapsed minutes	Date ____ Min ____	Date ____ Min ____	Date ____ Min ____	Date ____ Min ____
Chair squat • 01C	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____
Dumbbell hip hinge • 03C	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____
Wall push-up • 06C	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____
Chair-supported row • 08C • L	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____
Chair-supported row • 08C • R	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____
Farmer standing hold • 09C	ID ____ · lb ____ Sec ____ / ____ Spare ____ / ____ sec	ID ____ · lb ____ Sec ____ / ____ Spare ____ / ____ sec	ID ____ · lb ____ Sec ____ / ____ Spare ____ / ____ sec	ID ____ · lb ____ Sec ____ / ____ Spare ____ / ____ sec
Dead bug heel tap • 11C • L	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____
Dead bug heel tap • 11C • R	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____
Changes / reason to hold or reduce	_____	_____	_____	_____

Week 4 milestone: Versions I want to keep: _____ What feels clearer: _____

Learn • Session B log • Weeks 1–4

Use the Learn B card. Reps and seconds below are your actual results; the card gives your targets.

Exercise / side	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Date / elapsed minutes	Date ____ Min ____	Date ____ Min ____	Date ____ Min ____	Date ____ Min ____
Supported split squat · 02C · L	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __
Supported split squat · 02C · R	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __
Bodyweight bridge · 04C	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __
Seated overhead press · 07C	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __
Chair-supported row · 08C · L	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __
Chair-supported row · 08C · R	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __
Suitcase standing hold · 10C · L	ID __ · lb __ Sec __ / __ Spare __ / __ sec	ID __ · lb __ Sec __ / __ Spare __ / __ sec	ID __ · lb __ Sec __ / __ Spare __ / __ sec	ID __ · lb __ Sec __ / __ Spare __ / __ sec
Suitcase standing hold · 10C · R	ID __ · lb __ Sec __ / __ Spare __ / __ sec	ID __ · lb __ Sec __ / __ Spare __ / __ sec	ID __ · lb __ Sec __ / __ Spare __ / __ sec	ID __ · lb __ Sec __ / __ Spare __ / __ sec
Supported balance · 12C · L	ID __ · no weights Sec __ / __ Support / steady: —	ID __ · no weights Sec __ / __ Support / steady: —	ID __ · no weights Sec __ / __ Support / steady: —	ID __ · no weights Sec __ / __ Support / steady: —
Supported balance · 12C · R	ID __ · no weights Sec __ / __ Support / steady: —	ID __ · no weights Sec __ / __ Support / steady: —	ID __ · no weights Sec __ / __ Support / steady: —	ID __ · no weights Sec __ / __ Support / steady: —
Changes / reason to hold or reduce	_____	_____	_____	_____

Week 4 milestone: Versions I want to keep: _____ What feels clearer: _____

Build • Session A log • Weeks 5–8

Use the Build A card. Reps and seconds below are your actual results; the card gives your targets.

Exercise / side	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
Date / elapsed minutes	Date ____ Min ____	Date ____ Min ____	Date ____ Min ____	Date ____ Min ____
Chair squat • 01C	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____
Dumbbell hip hinge • 03C	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____
Floor press • 05C / wall push-up • 06C	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____
Chair-supported row • 08C • L	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____
Chair-supported row • 08C • R	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____
Farmer standing hold • 09C	ID ____ · lb ____ Sec ____ / ____ Spare ____ / ____ sec	ID ____ · lb ____ Sec ____ / ____ Spare ____ / ____ sec	ID ____ · lb ____ Sec ____ / ____ Spare ____ / ____ sec	ID ____ · lb ____ Sec ____ / ____ Spare ____ / ____ sec
Dead bug heel tap • 11C • L	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____
Dead bug heel tap • 11C • R	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____
Changes / reason to hold or reduce	_____	_____	_____	_____

Build • Session B log • Weeks 5–8

Use the Build B card. Reps and seconds below are your actual results; the card gives your targets.

Exercise / side	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
Date / elapsed minutes	Date ____ Min ____	Date ____ Min ____	Date ____ Min ____	Date ____ Min ____
Supported split squat · 02C · L	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __
Supported split squat · 02C · R	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __
Bodyweight bridge · 04C	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __
Seated overhead press · 07C	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __
Chair-supported row · 08C · L	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __
Chair-supported row · 08C · R	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __	ID __ · lb __ Reps __ / __ Left __ / __
Suitcase standing hold · 10C · L	ID __ · lb __ Sec __ / __ Spare __ / __ sec	ID __ · lb __ Sec __ / __ Spare __ / __ sec	ID __ · lb __ Sec __ / __ Spare __ / __ sec	ID __ · lb __ Sec __ / __ Spare __ / __ sec
Suitcase standing hold · 10C · R	ID __ · lb __ Sec __ / __ Spare __ / __ sec	ID __ · lb __ Sec __ / __ Spare __ / __ sec	ID __ · lb __ Sec __ / __ Spare __ / __ sec	ID __ · lb __ Sec __ / __ Spare __ / __ sec
Supported balance · 12C · L	ID __ · no weights Sec __ / __ Support / steady: —	ID __ · no weights Sec __ / __ Support / steady: —	ID __ · no weights Sec __ / __ Support / steady: —	ID __ · no weights Sec __ / __ Support / steady: —
Supported balance · 12C · R	ID __ · no weights Sec __ / __ Support / steady: —	ID __ · no weights Sec __ / __ Support / steady: —	ID __ · no weights Sec __ / __ Support / steady: —	ID __ · no weights Sec __ / __ Support / steady: —
Changes / reason to hold or reduce	_____	_____	_____	_____

Consolidate • Session A log • Weeks 9–12

Use the Consolidate A card. Reps and seconds below are your actual results; the card gives your targets.

Exercise / side	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	Week 12
Date / elapsed minutes	Date ____ Min ____	Date ____ Min ____	Date ____ Min ____	Date ____ Min ____
Chair squat • 01C	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____
Dumbbell hip hinge • 03C	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____
Floor press • 05C / wall push-up • 06C	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____
Chair-supported row • 08C • L	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____
Chair-supported row • 08C • R	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____
Farmer standing hold • 09C	ID ____ · lb ____ Sec ____ / ____ Spare ____ / ____ sec	ID ____ · lb ____ Sec ____ / ____ Spare ____ / ____ sec	ID ____ · lb ____ Sec ____ / ____ Spare ____ / ____ sec	ID ____ · lb ____ Sec ____ / ____ Spare ____ / ____ sec
Dead bug heel tap • 11C • L	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____
Dead bug heel tap • 11C • R	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____
Changes / reason to hold or reduce	_____	_____	_____	_____

Week 12 comparison with Week 4: Same version / weight / effort?

_____ What changed: _____

Consolidate • Session B log • Weeks 9–12

Use the Consolidate B card. Reps and seconds below are your actual results; the card gives your targets.

Exercise / side	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	Week 12
Date / elapsed minutes	Date ____ Min ____	Date ____ Min ____	Date ____ Min ____	Date ____ Min ____
Supported split squat • 02C • L	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____
Supported split squat • 02C • R	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____
Bodyweight bridge • 04C	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____
Seated overhead press • 07C	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____
Chair-supported row • 08C • L	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____
Chair-supported row • 08C • R	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____	ID ____ · lb ____ Reps ____ / ____ Left ____ / ____
Suitcase standing hold • 10C • L	ID ____ · lb ____ Sec ____ / ____ Spare ____ / ____ sec	ID ____ · lb ____ Sec ____ / ____ Spare ____ / ____ sec	ID ____ · lb ____ Sec ____ / ____ Spare ____ / ____ sec	ID ____ · lb ____ Sec ____ / ____ Spare ____ / ____ sec
Suitcase standing hold • 10C • R	ID ____ · lb ____ Sec ____ / ____ Spare ____ / ____ sec	ID ____ · lb ____ Sec ____ / ____ Spare ____ / ____ sec	ID ____ · lb ____ Sec ____ / ____ Spare ____ / ____ sec	ID ____ · lb ____ Sec ____ / ____ Spare ____ / ____ sec
Supported balance • 12C • L	ID ____ · no weights Sec ____ / ____ Support / steady: —	ID ____ · no weights Sec ____ / ____ Support / steady: —	ID ____ · no weights Sec ____ / ____ Support / steady: —	ID ____ · no weights Sec ____ / ____ Support / steady: —
Supported balance • 12C • R	ID ____ · no weights Sec ____ / ____ Support / steady: —	ID ____ · no weights Sec ____ / ____ Support / steady: —	ID ____ · no weights Sec ____ / ____ Support / steady: —	ID ____ · no weights Sec ____ / ____ Support / steady: —
Changes / reason to hold or reduce	_____	_____	_____	_____

Week 12 comparison with Week 4: Same version / weight / effort?

_____ What changed: _____