

4-Week Beginner Dumbbell Plan (5–80 lb)

Schedule

- Train 3 days per week; alternate Day A and Day B
- Effort: 1 to 2 reps in reserve on most sets
- Start with a weight you can do for 8 to 12 clean reps

Weekly Progression

- Week 1: Learn form; pick mid-range reps; log weights and reps
- Week 2: Add 1 to 2 reps per set if clean
- Week 3: Keep reps; slow the lowering by 1s on main lifts
- Week 4: Keep tempo; add 2.5 to 5 lb per DB if you hit the top reps clean; otherwise add a 1s pause at the hardest point

Tempo

- 3-1-1 = 3s down, 1s pause, 1s up
- 2-1-2 = 2s down, 1s pause, 2s up

Rest

- Big lifts 90 to 120s; accessory/core 60 to 90s

Day A

- Goblet Squat — 3 x 8 to 12, tempo 3-1-1, rest 90s Start: 15 to 35 lb. Heels down, chest tall, full depth you can control.
- Dumbbell Bench Press (flat or slight incline) — 3 x 8 to 12, 3-1-1, 90s Start: 10 to 25 lb/hand. Touch lightly, no bounce, wrists straight.
- One-Arm Dumbbell Row (bench-supported) — 3 x 8 to 12/side, 2-1-2, 90s Start: 15 to 35 lb. Square hips and shoulders, squeeze at the top 1s.
- Romanian Deadlift (2 DBs) — 3 x 10 to 12, 3-0-2, 75s Start: 20 to 40 lb/hand. Hinge at the hips, keeping your knees soft, and feel the stretch in your hamstrings.
- Half-Kneeling Single-Arm Press — 3 x 8 to 10/side, 2-1-2, 75s Start: 10 to 20 lb: rib cage down, glute squeeze, no lean.
- Dead Bug with DB Reach or Front Plank — 3 x 8 to 12/side or 3 x 20 to 40s, 60s Start: 5 to 10 lb reach; or bodyweight plank. Low back stays down.

Day B

- Reverse Lunge (DBs at sides) — 3 x 8 to 12/leg, 3-1-1, 90s Start: 10 to 25 lb/hand. Step back, front heel down, tall torso.

- Incline DB Press or Floor Press — 3 x 8 to 12, 3-1-1, 90s Start: 10 to 25 lb/hand. Elbows 30 to 45 degrees, pause 1s at bottom.
- One-Arm Row (lat focus, elbow to hip) — 3 x 8 to 12/side, 2-1-2, 90s Start: 15 to 35 lb. Control bottom stretch, no rotation.
- Hip Thrust (DB across hips) or DB Glute Bridge — 3 x 10 to 15, 2-1-2, 75s Start: 20 to 60 lb total. Complete lockout, 1s squeeze at top.
- Lateral Raise — 3 x 10 to 15, 2-1-2, 60s Start: 5 to 10 lb/hand. Stop at shoulder height, slight elbow bend.
- Hammer Curl + Overhead Triceps Extension (superset) Hammer Curl — 2 x 10 to 12, 2-1-2 Overhead Triceps — 2 x 10 to 12, 2-1-2 Rest 60s between sets Start: curls 10 to 20 lb/hand; triceps 15 to 30 lb total.

Load and Variation Ladder

- Hit top reps on all sets with clean form, then:
 - Add 2.5 to 5 lbs per DB next session, or
 - Keep load and slow eccentric by 1s, or add 1s pause at bottom/top as noted
- Legs: goblet → two-DB front squat when goblet grip limits load
- Presses: floor press if shoulders cranky → bench or incline
- Rows: increase range and control; keep spine neutral
- Hips: bridge → hip thrust with back on bench when ready

Form Cues

- Brace before reps; ribs down; neutral spine
- Control the bottom inch; no bouncing
- Own the last rep; stop if form slips
- No joint pain; adjust angle or load if needed

PAGE 2 — Training Log Sheets (4 copies)

Log Sheet 1 Week: _____ Date: _____ Day: [] A [] B

Goblet Squat (3-1-1; 90s) Weight _____ Set 1 Reps _____ RIR _____ Set 2 Reps _____ RIR _____ Set 3 Reps _____ RIR _____

DB Bench Press (3-1-1; 90s) Weight/hand _____ Set 1 _____ RIR _____ Set 2 _____ RIR _____ Set 3 _____ RIR _____

1-Arm Row Left/Right (2-1-2; 90s) Weight _____ L Sets Reps: _____ RIR: ___ R
Sets Reps: _____ RIR: ___

DB RDL (3-0-2; 75s) Weight/hand _____ Set 1 _____ RIR _____ Set 2 _____ RIR _____ Set 3 _____ RIR _____

Half-Kneeling Press L/R (2-1-2; 75s) Weight _____ L Reps: _____ RIR: ___ R
Reps: _____ RIR: ___

Dead Bug or Plank (60–90s) Load/time _____ Set 1 _____ RIR _____ Set 2 _____ RIR _____
Set 3 _____ RIR _____

Reverse Lunge L/R (3-1-1; 90s) Weight/hand _____ L Reps: _____ RIR: ___ R
Reps: _____ RIR: ___

Incline or Floor Press (3-1-1; 90s) Weight/hand _____ Set 1 _____ RIR _____ Set 2 _____ RIR _____
Set 3 _____ RIR _____

1-Arm Row L/R (2-1-2; 90s) Weight _____ L Reps: _____ RIR: ___ R Reps: _____
RIR: ___

Hip Thrust or Bridge (2-1-2; 75s) Weight _____ Set 1 _____ RIR _____ Set 2 _____ RIR _____
Set 3 _____ RIR _____

Lateral Raise (2-1-2; 60s) Weight/hand _____ Set 1 _____ RIR _____ Set 2 _____ RIR _____
Set 3 _____ RIR _____

Hammer Curl (2-1-2; 60s) + Overhead Triceps (2-1-2; 60s) Curl weight/hand _____ Sets/Reps: _____ | _____
RIR: _ | _ Triceps weight _____ Sets/Reps: _____ | _____ RIR: _ | _

Notes: _____ Next session
changes (load, tempo, pause, rest): _____

Log Sheet 2 [Repeat the same lines as Log Sheet 1]

Log Sheet 3 [Repeat the same lines as Log Sheet 1]

Log Sheet 4 [Repeat the same lines as Log Sheet 1]