
COURSE RESOURCE

RESISTANCE-TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR GLP-1 CLIENTS

Client handout & coach reference | Muscle-first programming across the three medication phases

A meaningful share of the weight a client loses on a GLP-1 can be lean mass — and lean mass is what protects strength, metabolic rate and long-term maintenance. Progressive resistance training plus adequate protein is the single most evidence-backed way to steer weight loss toward fat and away from muscle. These programs are built to be run through the whole GLP-1 journey.

WHY IT MATTERS

Under an energy deficit the body preferentially spares tissue it is forced to use. Loaded, progressive resistance training is that signal. Without it, weight loss carries a higher lean-mass cost; with it, most of what is lost is fat.

THE NON-NEGOTIABLES

- Train each major muscle group 2-3x per week — full-body or upper/lower splits, not body-part 'bro splits'.
- Prioritise compound lifts (squat/hinge/press/pull) that recruit the most muscle per set.
- Progress load or reps over time — muscle preservation requires a progressive stimulus, not just 'moving'.
- Pair training with a protein target of roughly 1.6-2.2 g/kg/day, distributed across meals.
- Autoregulate on low-appetite / low-energy weeks (see phase notes) — keep frequency and intensity, trim volume.

PHASE ADJUSTMENTS (THE KEY IDEA)

Phase	Training priority	Adjustment
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Early titration (weeks 0-8)	Keep the habit; protect muscle	Energy and appetite are lowest. Keep 2-3 sessions/week and keep the loads challenging, but cut total sets ~20-30%. Do not chase soreness.
Active loss	Defend muscle aggressively	This is where lean mass is most at risk. Maintain or progress load; keep intensity high; guard the protein target; full-body 3x/week is ideal.
Maintenance / off-medication	Build and consolidate	Appetite returns. Push progression, add volume, and use the stronger base to raise the metabolic floor for maintenance.

PROGRAM A — BEGINNER (2 DAYS/WEEK, FULL BODY)

For new lifters or clients early in titration. Rest 90-120s between sets. Progress by adding reps to the top of the range, then load.

Exercise	Sets x Reps	Notes
Goblet or box squat	3 x 8-10	Depth the client can control
Dumbbell bench or push-up	3 x 8-10	Full range
Seated row or lat pulldown	3 x 10-12	Squeeze, controlled
Hip hinge (RDL, light)	2 x 8-10	Technique first
Carry (farmer's) or plank	2 x 30-40s	Core / grip

PROGRAM B — INTERMEDIATE (3 DAYS/WEEK, FULL BODY)

Run as Day 1 / Day 2 / Day 3, rotating a squat-focus, hinge-focus and push/pull-focus day. Rest 2-3 min on main lifts.

Day	Main lift	Accessories
Day 1 (Squat)	Back/front squat 3 x 5-8	Split squat 3x10, row 3x10, hamstring curl 2x12
Day 2 (Hinge)	Deadlift/RDL 3 x 5-6	Press 3x8, pulldown 3x10, calf/core 2x15
Day 3 (Push/Pull)	Bench/OHP 4 x 6-8	Row 4x8, leg press 3x12, curls/triceps 2x12

PROGRAM C — ADVANCED (4 DAYS/WEEK, UPPER/LOWER)

Upper A / Lower A / Upper B / Lower B. Use RPE 7-9 on top sets, leaving 1-3 reps in reserve. Deload every 5-6 weeks (halve volume for a week).

- Upper days: horizontal + vertical press, horizontal + vertical pull, arms.
- Lower days: a squat pattern, a hinge pattern, single-leg work, calves/core.
- Keep 8-16 hard sets per muscle group per week — enough stimulus to defend and build.

ON A BAD WEEK

- Very low energy or nausea: keep the session but drop to ~60% of the sets and stop 3-4 reps short of failure.
- Only got 20 minutes: do the two main compound lifts and leave. Frequency beats perfection.
- Lightheaded, dizzy or unusually weak: stop the session, hydrate, and note it — recurrent episodes are a referral trigger.