

3-day and 4-day advanced templates

A simple week you can hand a client or a coach. Parent lifts stay the gauge: squat, press, bench, deadlift.

Use the 3-day week if they train Monday / Wednesday / Friday. Use the 4-day week if they can split upper and lower. Both keep one lift as the priority each day. Hit a PR on something every week. Do not fail singles in the gym.

3-day comes from the SS Gyms advanced template (spotlight + exercise rotation). 4-day comes from *Simplifying Advanced Programming*, Stronger is Better #1.

HOW A HEAVY DAY WORKS

One heavy single. It should be a grind and stay within about 5% of the current PR. Then three back-off sets of three. Bench back-offs are usually about 85% of that single. Squat and pull back-offs are usually about 80% (a little higher for women, a little lower for older or beat-up lifters). Rest 5–10 minutes before the single, 3–5 minutes between back-offs.

Volume work is a range, not a max. About 70% is a starting guess. Short rest. Last rep can be slow. Bar speed should stay even across the sets. A volume day should never stall.

3-DAY WEEK

Three non-consecutive days. Slot 3 is optional. Recovery-limited people do two barbell lifts and stop.

MONDAY · VOLUME

Volume squat + press

1. Volume squat: 4×4, or 10×2 dynamic effort if they qualify
2. Press volume 5×5
3. Back work or chins (optional)

WEDNESDAY · BENCH + PULL

Heavy bench, then the pull

1. Heavy bench: single + 3×3 back-offs
2. Heavy pull (spotlight week) or pull volume 4×4
3. Weak-point work (optional)

FRIDAY · SQUAT + PRESS

Heavy squat, then press singles

1. Heavy squat (spotlight week) or squat volume 4×4
2. Press singles, 5–10, short rest, no misses
3. Bench volume 3–5×5

Spotlight

Squat and heavy pull both show up every week. Only one gets the PR. Alternate weeks. They still PR something every week.

WEEK	MONDAY	WEDNESDAY PULL	FRIDAY SQUAT
Squat spotlight	Volume squat	Pull volume 4×4	Heavy squat PR
Pull spotlight	Volume squat	Heavy pull PR	Squat volume 4×4

4×4 is heavy volume. 3×3 is for recovery-compromised lifters only. Dynamic-effort 10×2 on Monday is for men with good technique. Never DE the press, women, or pulls on a 3-day week.

Exercise rotation

When bi-weekly PRs on the parent lifts slow down, rotate the closest variations through the heavy slots. Start here. Most people never need more than 4–6 weeks.

WEEK	HEAVY SQUAT SLOT	HEAVY PULL SLOT
1	Squat single + back-offs	Rack pull 4×4
2	Pause squat 4×4	Rack pull single + back-offs
3	Pause squat single + back-offs	Deadlift 4×4
4	Squat 4×4	Deadlift single + back-offs

Closest variations first: squat → pause → tempo → SSB → front. Pull: rack pull → halt → deficit → snatch-grip. Bench: pause → close-grip → partial. Press mostly stays the press; pin press only for lockout. Variation PRs are tracked. They do not replace the parent lift as the gauge.

4-DAY WEEK

Upper / lower split. One priority lift each day. Third slot is whatever they want. They have earned it.

DAY 1 • HEAVY BENCH

Monday

1. Heavy bench: single + 3×3 back-offs. Rotate bench → pause bench → close-grip (partials later if they are very strong)
2. Press volume 5×5 (3×5 if the press is huge, near 300 for men). Women stay 5×5
3. Third lift: chins, extra press, whatever fills the gap

DAY 2 • HEAVY LOWER

Tuesday

1. Heavy squat or heavy pull, alternating weeks: single + 3×3 at about 80%
2. The other lower lift for volume, 4×4 (about 70%). That is next week's heavy lift
3. Third lift optional

DAY 3 • HEAVY PRESS

Thursday

1. Heavy press singles (the press protocol you already use)
2. Bench volume 5×5 or 3×5
3. Third lift optional

DAY 4 • LIGHT LOWER

Friday

1. Pause squat 10×2 at about 65–70%. Faster up than down. Rest about 60–90 seconds. Belt stays on
2. Rack pull 5×2, same speed and rest. Or power clean / power snatch here

Lower-body rotation on the 4-day

Start with squat and deadlift only, flipping every week. When that slows, add pause squat and rack pull and run four weeks. The second slot is always next week's lift for 4×4.

WEEK	HEAVY (SINGLE + 3×3)	VOLUME (4×4)
1	Squat	Deadlift
2	Deadlift	Pause squat
3	Pause squat	Rack pull
4	Rack pull	Squat

If they were already rack-pulling as the heavy pull, keep that. Older or recovery-limited: 3×3 on the volume slot instead of 4×4. Parent-lift PRs beat variation PRs. Skip a rack-pull PR if it would cost the deadlift two weeks later.

RULES THAT KEEP THIS SIMPLE

- No missed singles in training. Stay within 5% of the PR on a bad day.
 - Volume is a range. Short rest. Never grind volume like a max.
 - 4×4 is heavy volume. 3×3 is for people who cannot recover from 4×4.
 - Women: no dynamic-effort doubles. Higher back-offs (about 85–90%). Frequency over extra work in one session.
 - One change at a time. Let it run two or three weeks.
 - The four parent lifts are the scoreboard. Everything else is a tool.
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3-day: SS Gyms advanced template, spotlight, and exercise rotation (current coach doctrine, including the 2026-08-23 4×4 / 3×3 ruling).

4-day: Nick Delgadillo, *Simplifying Advanced Programming*, Stronger is Better Podcast #1, April 16, 2025.

This is a template, not a cut-and-paste program. Fit the person. Print or open in a browser.