

JONO'S GYM POCKET GUIDE

Training and nutrition fundamentals for every level, from your first session to your next stage.

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START HERE

BUILD THE PHYSIQUE YOU TRAIN FOR

This guide is the stuff I wish every lifter knew on day one. No fads and no shortcuts. Just the fundamentals that build serious muscle and keep it.

Whether you're brand new to the gym, a few years in and stuck, or chasing a competition stage, the same principles apply: train with intent, progress over time, eat to support the work, and recover like it matters. Come back to it whenever you need a reset.

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Jono

Jonathan Kapouleas · Physiques By Jonathan

TRAINING

THE FIVE RULES

Every good program, at every level, is built on these.

01 PROGRESSIVE OVERLOAD

Do a little more over time. Add a rep, a bit more weight, a cleaner rep or an extra set. Log your sessions so you know what to beat next time.

02 TRAIN CLOSE TO FAILURE

Most working sets should finish with 0–3 reps left in the tank (RIR). If you could have done 6 more, it was a warm-up.

03 ENOUGH VOLUME

Aim for roughly 10–20 hard sets per muscle group per week. Start at the lower end and build up as recovery allows.

04 HIT EACH MUSCLE TWICE

Training a muscle about twice per week tends to beat once, because it spreads quality volume across fresher sessions.

05 CONSISTENCY BEATS INTENSITY

A good plan followed for 12 months beats a perfect plan followed for 3 weeks. Show up, then show up again.

6–12	0–3	10–20
REPS · MOST SETS	REPS IN RESERVE	SETS / MUSCLE / WK

TRAINING

TRAIN FOR YOUR LEVEL

Same rules, different focus. Find where you are and prioritise accordingly.

BEGINNER · 0–1 YR

LEARN THE MOVEMENTS

- Master the basics: squat, hinge, push, pull, carry.
- 3 full-body sessions a week is plenty.
- Leave 2–3 reps in reserve while technique settles.

INTERMEDIATE · 1–3 YRS

BUILD VOLUME AND STRUCTURE

- Move to an upper/lower or push/pull/legs split.
- Track sets per muscle and push hard sets closer to failure.
- Progress in rep ranges (e.g. 8–12) before adding load.

ADVANCED · 3+ YRS

REFINE AND SPECIALISE

- Bring up lagging muscle groups with targeted volume blocks.
- Choose exercises for biomechanics: stable, full range, high tension.
- Manage fatigue: not every set needs to be to failure.

TRAINING

PICK YOUR SPLIT

The best split is the one you can stick to. Match it to how many days you can realistically train.

DAYS	SPLIT	BEST FOR
3 DAYS	**Full body** Mon · Wed · Fri	Beginners, busy schedules
4 DAYS	**Upper / Lower** Upper · Lower · rest · Upper · Lower	Most lifters. A great balance of volume and recovery
5 DAYS	**Upper / Lower + PPL** Upper · Lower · Push · Pull · Legs	Intermediate lifters wanting more volume
6 DAYS	**Push / Pull / Legs ×2** Each muscle hit twice a week	Experienced lifters with strong recovery

BUILDING A SESSION

- **Start heavy:** 1–2 compound lifts first, while you're freshest (6–10 reps).
- **Then accessories:** 2–3 movements for the target muscles (8–15 reps).
- **Finish with isolation:** 1–2 movements to chase the pump (12–20 reps).
- **Keep it tight:** 5–7 exercises and 45–75 minutes is plenty.

TRAINING

TECHNIQUE & RECOVERY

You grow from the training you recover from. Treat both like they matter.

WARM UP SMART

- 5 min light cardio to raise heart rate.
- Dynamic mobility for the joints you'll use.
- 2–4 ramp-up sets before your first working set.

OWN EVERY REP

- Control the lowering phase (2–3 sec).
- Use a full, pain-free range of motion.
- Ego off. The muscle doesn't see the plates.

REST BETWEEN SETS

- Big compounds: 2–3 min.
- Accessories and isolation: 1–2 min.
- Rest long enough to repeat the performance.

DELOAD

- Every 6–8 weeks, or when progress stalls.
- Cut sets by ~40–50%, keep the weights.
- Come back fresher and stronger.

7–9H	8–10K	1–2
SLEEP PER NIGHT	DAILY STEPS	FULL REST DAYS / WK

NUTRITION

EAT FOR THE GOAL

Training is the stimulus. Nutrition decides what your body does with it.

01 CALORIES SET THE DIRECTION

Build: a small surplus of ~200–300 kcal/day. **Lean out:** a deficit of ~300–500 kcal/day, aiming to lose 0.5–1% of bodyweight per week. **Maintain:** eat at maintenance and recomp slowly.

02 PROTEIN IS NON-NEGOTIABLE

Aim for 1.6–2.2 g per kg of bodyweight daily, spread across 3–5 meals of roughly 30–50 g each.

03 CARBS FUEL THE WORK

Prioritise carbs around training, like rice, oats, potatoes, fruit and wholegrain bread. More training, more carbs.

04 FATS SUPPORT HORMONES

Keep fats at around 20–35% of calories from eggs, olive oil, nuts, avocado and oily fish.

05 HYDRATE

About 35 ml per kg of bodyweight per day as a base, plus extra on training days and in the heat.

1.6–2.2G	0.5–1%	35ML
PROTEIN / KG	WEEKLY LOSS ON A CUT	WATER / KG

NUTRITION

YOUR PLATE, SIMPLIFIED

You don't need a perfect diet. You need a repeatable one.

BUILD EVERY MAIN MEAL

PALM	**Lean protein:** chicken, beef, fish, eggs, Greek yoghurt, tofu
FIST	**Quality carbs:** rice, potatoes, oats, pasta, fruit
HALF PLATE	**Vegetables:** colour and fibre at every meal
THUMB	**Healthy fats:** olive oil, nuts, avocado

MEAL TIMING

- Protein + carbs 1–3 hrs before training.
- A solid protein meal within a few hours after.

80 / 20

- 80% whole, minimally processed foods.
- 20% flexibility for life and social events.

SUPPLEMENTS: THE BASICS ONLY

- **Protein powder:** a convenient way to hit your daily protein. Food first.
- **Creatine monohydrate:** 3–5 g daily, every day. Safe, cheap and well researched.
- **Caffeine:** optional pre-workout. Avoid within ~8 hrs of bed.

Check with your GP before starting any supplement.

HABITS

TRACK IT TO CHANGE IT

What gets measured gets managed. Pick a few metrics and stay consistent.

MEASURE WEEKLY

- Morning bodyweight 3–7 days a week. Use the weekly average.
- Waist measurement, same spot each time.
- Progress photos every 2–4 weeks, same light and poses.

JUDGE PROGRESS BY

- Strength trends in your training log.
- How clothes fit and how you look.
- 2–4 week trends, not one day on the scale.

DAILY CHECKLIST

- [ ] Hit my protein target
- [ ] Trained to plan, or took a planned rest day
- [ ] Hit my step goal
- [ ] Drank enough water
- [ ] 7+ hours of sleep
- [ ] Logged my session and food

3–7	2–4WK	100%
WEIGH-INS / WEEK	BETWEEN PHOTOS	SESSIONS LOGGED

PLEASE READ

GENERAL ADVICE ONLY

This guide is a starting point, not a personalised program.

The information in Jono's Gym Pocket Guide is general in nature and is provided for educational purposes only. It does not take into account your individual goals, health, injury history, medical conditions or dietary needs, and it is not a substitute for advice from a doctor, physiotherapist, dietitian or other qualified health professional.

Figures in this guide (calories, protein, sets, reps) are general ranges. Individual needs vary. Physiques By Jonathan accepts no responsibility for any injury or loss arising from the use of this general information.

SEE YOUR GP FIRST IF YOU

- Have a medical condition or injury
- Are pregnant or postpartum
- Take regular medication
- Are new to exercise

STOP AND SEEK ADVICE IF

- You feel sharp or lasting pain
- You feel dizzy or faint
- You have chest discomfort
- You are unusually short of breath

WANT A PLAN BUILT FOR YOU?

Tailored training, nutrition and supplement protocols are provided through direct one-on-one coaching. They're designed around your body, your goals and your lifestyle, and adjusted from your check-ins.

WORK WITH JONO

COACHING PACKAGES

STANDARD COACHING

A structured, science-based training and nutrition plan tailored to your current level, lifestyle and goals.

- Fortnightly check-ins through Loom
- Full access to training app
- Macro diet
- Basic supplement protocol
- Training program
- Contact via WhatsApp

PREMIUM COACHING

HIGH-TOUCH

An advanced coaching package for individuals who want deeper support with training, nutrition and lifestyle.

- Weekly Loom check-ins
- Full access to training app
- Custom meal plans (or macros)
- Custom training program/app
- Full custom supplement protocol
- Extensive goal setting
- Daily habit managing
- 24/7 contact via WhatsApp

COMP PREP COACHING

STAGE READY

Dedicated contest prep for athletes who want to bring their best physique to the stage.

- Everything in Premium, plus:
- 24/7 high-priority contact
- Custom meal plans
- Weekly or fortnightly face-to-face check-in
- Daily adjustments if necessary
- Posing analysis
- Full travel/backstage assistance

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COACHING
Online · athletes worldwide

Book a free call at **physiquesbyjonathan.com** to find the right package and discuss pricing.