

Health, fitness, lifestyle

# TAYLAKFITNESS WEIGHT LIFTING GUIDE

Strong, confident, capable

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***By Tayla Keating***

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[www.taylakfitness.co.uk](http://www.taylakfitness.co.uk)

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# INTRODUCTION

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## ABOUT TAYLAKFITNESS

This guide was created to educate and empower women to feel strong, confident, and at home in the gym. I know firsthand how intimidating it can feel walking into a gym when you're new — because I was once that girl too. I *hated* public gyms. I felt awkward, out of place, and convinced everyone was watching me. Feeling anxious in a gym environment is normal and human!

Fast forward to today, and I strut in like I own the place.

### **This guide will help you:**

- Understand how to train effectively and safely
- Build your confidence in a gym environment
- Discover how strength training can support your mental health just as much as your physical goals
- Learn how to celebrate progress beyond just the scales

The gym isn't a place for judgment — it's a space for growth. Everyone is there for the same reason: to better themselves. And you have every right to be there, take up space, and get strong 💪🌸

Because strength training isn't just about muscles.

It's about feeling powerful in your body.

It's about learning new things, watching yourself improve, and thinking, "I actually did that."

You're capable of so much my friend ❤️

# BENEFITS OF STRENGTH TRAINING FOR WOMEN



Strength training is one of the most powerful tools for women — not only for changing your physique, but also for supporting your mental wellbeing, energy levels, and long-term health.

## ♥ PHYSICAL BENEFITS

- Builds lean muscle and improves body composition
- Increases metabolism (more muscle = more calories burned at rest)
- Strengthens bones and joints, reducing risk of injury
- Improves posture, coordination, and overall function
- Helps support fat loss while preserving muscle

## 🧠 MENTAL & EMOTIONAL BENEFITS

- Boosts confidence and body image
- Supports better mood and reduces symptoms of anxiety or depression
- Teaches resilience, patience, and mental discipline
- Provides an empowering outlet for stress release

## 🌀 LONG-TERM HEALTH PERKS

- Increases insulin sensitivity and supports hormone health
- Helps maintain strength, mobility, and independence as you age
- Reduces risk of chronic illnesses (like osteoporosis, heart disease, and type 2 diabetes)

Strength training doesn't make you bulky — it builds a body that's strong, functional, and uniquely yours.

# MYTHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS



## ✗ “LIFTING WILL MAKE ME BULKY.”

➔ **Truth:** Women don’t have the same testosterone levels as men, so it’s very hard to get “bulky.” What lifting does do — especially when paired with nourishing, balanced eating — is help you become leaner, stronger, and more defined.

## ✗ “CARDIO IS BETTER FOR FAT LOSS.”

➔ **Truth:** Cardio burns calories in the moment, but strength training helps build muscle that boosts your metabolism all day long. Long-term results come from combining movement with smart nutrition and recovery.

## ✗ “I SHOULD LOSE WEIGHT FIRST, THEN START LIFTING.”

➔ **Truth:** You don’t need to “get fit” before you start lifting — lifting is part of the process! It helps preserve muscle while losing fat, making your results more sustainable and toned. Start now, and adjust as you go.

## ✗ “LIFTING WEIGHTS IS ONLY FOR ATHLETES OR BODYBUILDERS.”

➔ **Truth:** Strength training is for everyone. Whether you’re working on your mental health, chasing a new goal, or building confidence in yourself! ❤️

# REPS & SETS EXPLAINED



Understanding reps and sets is key to making strength training less intimidating and way more effective.

- **Reps** (repetitions) are how many times you perform a movement — like 10 squats.
- **Sets** are how many times you repeat that group of reps — for example, 3 sets of 10 reps.

So if you do 3 sets of 10 squats, you're doing 30 squats total — with a little breather between each set

## 🌟 QUICK GUIDE:

- 8–12 reps = great for building muscle tone & strength
- 4–6 reps = heavier lifting to build pure strength
- 12–15+ reps = builds muscular endurance & gives you that cute little burn

## 🌀 REST BETWEEN SETS:

- 30–60 secs for higher reps & endurance (Light-weight, high-rep) training
- 60–90 secs for moderate strength & muscle building
- 2–3 mins for heavy lifting & strength-focused work

🍎 **Real-life tip:** You don't have to go heavy straight away — choose weights that feel challenging by the last few reps, but still allow you to stay in control with good form

# PROGRESSIVE OVERLOAD



Progressive overload is the key to getting stronger, building muscle, and seeing results, both physically and mentally 🍌

It simply means gradually increasing the challenge over time, so your body keeps adapting (aka getting stronger and more capable!).

You can apply progressive overload by:

- Lifting heavier weights over time
- Doing more reps or sets
- Slowing down the tempo (e.g., taking 3 seconds to lower the weight)
- Shortening your rest time (in certain training styles)
- Improving your form and mind-muscle connection

## 🍌 REAL-LIFE TIP:

You don't need to max out every workout to make progress. Some days you'll lift heavier, some days you'll focus on perfecting form - **both are necessary!** Progressive overload isn't about guessing — it's about noticing improvements and building on them, slowly and sustainably 🍌🧘

## 🌟 HOW TO KNOW WHEN IT'S TIME TO PROGRESS:

- You're consistently completing all reps with good form and energy
- The weight feels noticeably too easy — you finish and feel like you could keep going forever
- You've been using the same weight for 2–3 weeks and you're craving a challenge
- You're no longer feeling the same muscle activation - it may be time to tweak or increase!

## 📌 PROGRESS ISN'T ALWAYS WEIGHT-BASED:

Progressive overload isn't just about going heavier. You can also:

- Increase reps (e.g. from 8 to 10)
- Add another set
- Improve range of motion
- Add a pause or slow the movement (tempo training!)

# WEEKLY STRENGTH TRAINING SPLITS



You don't need to train every day to see results - it's about working consistently, not obsessing!

This is a general guide if you're mainly strength training. If you're also doing running, classes, or other forms of cardio, your weekly structure might look a little different — and that's okay!

## EXAMPLE WEEKLY SPLITS:

### 3-Day Split

- Upper Body + core
- Lower Body
- Full Body or Glutes & Core

### 4-Day Split

- Lower Body quad focused
- Upper Body Push (Chest, Shoulders, Triceps) + core
- Glutes & Hamstrings
- Upper Body Pull (Back & Biceps) + Core finisher

### 5-Day Split

- Glutes & Hamstrings
- Push (Chest, Shoulders, Triceps) + core
- Quads & Calves
- Pull (Back & Biceps)
- Full Body or Mobility + Core Focus

## WHAT TO CONSIDER:

- 🌟 Your energy, schedule, and goals
- 🛌 Rest is part of progress - take 1-2 rest days per week
- 🔄 Core doesn't have to be its own day - short finishers 2-3x/week is enough!
- 🔄 Adjust based on where you are in your cycle or what feels best that week

## REAL-LIFE TIP:

Don't copy someone else's routine just because it looks "perfect" online. The best split is the one that supports your goals and fits your lifestyle 🌟

# A QUICK NOTE ON CARDIO



## A QUICK NOTE ON CARDIO

Cardio is an amazing tool for heart health, energy, and supporting your goals — but it shouldn't feel like a punishment. If you're dragging yourself through an hour on the stairmaster just because you feel like you "should," it's time to reassess. 🌟

Choose cardio you actually look forward to:

Long walks in nature

A fun dance class

Jogging to your favourite playlist

A sweaty spin class with friends

Hiking, swimming, cycling — whatever lights you up

The more you enjoy it, the more consistent you'll be. Forcing yourself to do anything will make you hate it = more chance of quitting!

# BALANCING STRENGTH TRAINING AND CARDIO



## HOW OFTEN SHOULD I TRAIN EACH MUSCLE GROUP?

For optimal strength and muscle progress, it's best to leave at least 48 hours between training the same muscle group again. Your muscles grow when you rest - not while you're training! 🧘🏻‍♀️

### Example:

- If you train glutes on Monday, wait until at least Wednesday or Thursday to train them again.
- If you're sore or still fatigued, rest longer. Recovery is productive

## DON'T FORGET TO REST YOUR LEGS

Your lower body carries you all day, so overtraining your legs can lead to fatigue, injury, and poor results.

### 🧑🏻‍🦯 Example of what to avoid:

- Monday: heavy leg day
- Tuesday: long run
- Wednesday: spin class
- Thursday: back to legs again

**That's a recipe for exhaustion and injury.** Even if you love cardio, give your legs true recovery time - low-impact walks or upper-body sessions are better choices on leg rest days.

## MIXING STRENGTH + CARDIO SAFELY

You can build muscle and enjoy cardio - it just takes balance 🧘🏻‍♀️

### How to combine without burning out:

- Low-intensity cardio (like walking or cycling) can be done on rest days or after weights. It supports recovery and step goals.
- High-intensity cardio (HIIT, running) is best done on separate days or after strength training, not before - to protect performance.
- Balanced routine: Try 3 strength sessions + 2 cardio sessions per week, with at least 1 full rest day.

# STRUCTURING YOUR WEEK BASED ON YOUR GOALS



## **IF YOUR GOAL IS TO BUILD MUSCLE & STRENGTH:**

- Strength train 3–5x per week, mixing upper, lower, and full-body days.
- Add in core work 2–3x weekly (short but consistent is key).
- Light cardio or walking 1–2x a week is great for circulation and recovery.
- Make sure to rest your legs — avoid stacking leg day, running, and cardio without recovery in between to prevent injury and overuse.

## **IF YOUR GOAL IS FAT LOSS OR GENERAL FITNESS:**

- Combine 3x strength sessions with 2–3 cardio sessions weekly (**but make it enjoyable, don't do 30 minutes on the stair master if you absolutely hate it, find a form of cardio you enjoy doing**)
- Fast walking that gets your heart rate into zone 2 (a steady, challenging pace where you can still hold a conversation) is excellent for fat burning and sustainable fat loss
- Mix it up: intervals, steady jogs, incline treadmill walks, and outdoor walks.
- Always pair your training with proper nutrition and adequate rest to support your goals.

## **IF YOUR GOAL IS MENTAL CLARITY AND ENERGY:**

- Move in a way that makes you feel good — not just for results.
- Try 2–3 strength workouts, add light cardio like walks or a short jog, and one fun movement session (dance, hike, class).
- Even 10–20 minutes of movement counts!
- Strong bodies help build strong minds — and both need rest.

## **REAL-LIFE TIP:**

You don't need to train for an hour to make it count. A focused 20-minute session or a brisk walk with intention is powerful. Consistency beats perfection — every time.

# FORM AND TECHNIQUE



## FORM & TECHNIQUE BASICS 🍎

Learning proper form isn't about being perfect — it's about staying safe, building strength effectively, and feeling confident in every move.

- Start with bodyweight or light weights until you nail the movement pattern.
- Record yourself or train near a mirror to check alignment.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help — even experienced lifters ask for form checks!
- Focus on control, not speed. Controlled reps = better muscle engagement and less risk of injury.
- Quality > quantity. 6 well-performed reps are better than 12 sloppy ones.
- Core strong, chest proud — most movements are built on this posture. Stay tall, brace your core gently, and move with intention.

**💬 *And remember: I'm always just a message away if you ever want form tips, guidance or a confidence boost - you're never doing this alone 🍎***

## 💡 **REAL-LIFE TIP:**

Everyone starts somewhere — even the strongest people in the gym were once learning the basics. Your form is your foundation

# STRUCTURING A STRENGTH TRAINING SESSION



Having a solid structure helps you stay focused, track progress, and get the most out of your training time — no matter your level. A well-structured session should feel empowering, not overwhelming.

## ❖ **BASIC SESSION BREAKDOWN:**

### **Warm-Up (5–10 mins):**

- Light cardio (e.g., fast walk, cycling), mobility drills, or dynamic stretches to increase blood flow and prep joints.

### **Main Lifts (Compound Movements):**

- These are your big lifts that require multiple muscles to work in your body (squats, deadlifts, presses, rows). Aim for 3–4 sets of 6–10 reps. Focus on strength here.

### **Isolated movements:**

- These help support your main lifts and target specific muscles (e.g., glute bridges, kickbacks, lateral raises). 2–3 sets of 10–15 reps.

### **Core Work (Optional):**

- Planks, dead bugs, leg raises, etc. 2–3 quick sets at the end if you want a finisher.

### **Cool Down & Stretch (5–10 mins):**

- Static stretches and deep breathing to help bring the heart rate down and support recovery.

## 💡 **REAL-LIFE TIP:**

Sessions don't need to be long to be effective. 30–45 minutes of focused training is better than 90 minutes of scrolling between sets 🙄



# WARMING UP EFFECTIVELY

## WHY IT MATTERS:

- Boosts circulation & joint mobility
- Activates the muscles you'll be using
- Sharpens focus so you feel ready to lift 🙌

## 🌀 SIMPLE WARM-UP ROUTINE:

### 🧘 Mental Check-In (1–2 mins):

Take a deep breath, shake off the day, and set your intention for the session. You've got this.

### 🎧 Grab a Playlist:

A good playlist can set the tone for your entire workout — energising, empowering, and confidence-boosting from the first rep!

### 🏃➡️ Light Cardio (3–5 mins):

Treadmill walk, cycle, or elliptical — just enough to get your heart rate up and body warm.

### 🧘 Dynamic Mobility (3–5 mins):

Do 3–5 exercises for 30 seconds each, targeting your major joints:

- Arm circles & shoulder rolls
- Hip openers or bodyweight lunges
- Cat-cow or thoracic spine rotations
- Glute bridges or leg swings

### 🏋️ Movement Prep (2–3 mins):

Do bodyweight versions of your main lift. For example:

- Bodyweight squats before barbell squats
- Wall push-ups before chest press

## 💡 REAL-LIFE TIP:

Warm-ups don't have to be complicated. Move in ways that feel good and get your body ready for what's next — even dancing around for 5 minutes counts!



# COOLING DOWN EFFECTIVELY

## WHY COOLING DOWN MATTERS:

- Helps prevent dizziness and light-headedness
- Promotes recovery and reduces muscle stiffness
- Allows your heart rate and breathing to gradually return to baseline
- Supports flexibility and mobility
- Gives you a moment to feel proud of your effort

## COOL-DOWN IDEAS (5-10 MINUTES):

 Light walking or gentle cycling to gradually lower your heart rate

### Static stretching:

- Hold each stretch for 20–30 seconds (hamstrings, quads, glutes, chest, shoulders)

### Deep breathing:

- Inhale through your nose, exhale slowly through your mouth

## REAL-LIFE TIP:

Your body worked hard — give it the same love during the cool-down as you do during your workout. This moment of intention is where recovery really begins.

# CONQUERING GYM ANXIETY



Walking into a gym can feel intimidating, especially if you're new to lifting, unsure about the equipment, or feel like all eyes are on you — trust me, I've been there too.

## ♥ **BUT HERE'S WHAT I WANT YOU TO REMEMBER:**

Everyone started somewhere, and most people are far too focused on their own workout to be watching you. And if someone is looking, it's usually subconscious — they might be zoning out, checking if you're looking at them, admiring your form, or simply just as nervous as you are.

You are not being judged — you're learning, growing, and showing up. And that's powerful.

## 📌 **TIPS FOR OVERCOMING GYM NERVES:**

### 🎧 **Make a confidence playlist**

- Put on your favourite tunes that make you feel strong and unbothered. Music changes your whole vibe.

### 👕 **Wear what feels good on you**

- When you feel comfy and confident in your gym fit, it changes how you carry yourself.

### 📱 **Go in with a plan**

- Use your **TaylaKfitness** guide or notes app to know exactly what you're doing. No guessing, no hovering.

### 🕒 **Choose quieter times if needed**

- Early mornings or late evenings are usually calmer — perfect for easing in.

### 💬 **Don't be afraid to ask**

- Everyone had to ask at some point. If you're not sure how a machine works or want feedback on form, I'm always just a message away.

### ★ **Keep showing up**

- Confidence builds through repetition. One day you'll walk in and feel like you own the place — I used to avoid gyms, and now I strut in like it's nothing 😊

**Doing something every day that scares you is what makes you grow**



# SUPERSETS, TRISSETS AND DROPSETS

## ★ SUPERSETS

A superset is when you pair two exercises and do them one after the other—no rest in between. Think of it like a mini challenge for your muscles and your mind!

### YOU CAN:

- Work the same area to really feel the strength building (like squats + glute bridges 🍑)
- Or use opposite muscle groups (like rows + push-ups 🤪) for a balanced combo

## 🌈 TRISSETS

A triset is when you group three exercises together in a row—like a power trio! You can keep it playful or go deep into one area if you're in the mood for a good challenge.

### EXAMPLES:

- Same muscle group: shoulder press → lateral raise → front raise ❤️
- Full-body trio: squat → push-up → plank

## 💪 DROPSETS ❤️

A gentle push past your comfort zone

A dropset is when you do an exercise, then lower the weight and keep going—no rest. You can repeat this 2–3 times, or even more, each time dropping the weight and continuing the movement.

### ★ EXAMPLE:

- Bicep curls: 8 reps with 6kg → drop to 4kg for 6–8 more → drop to 2kg for a final burn 🔥

# FINAL THOUGHTS




## EVERYONE STARTS SOMEWHERE.

Stepping into the gym – whether it's your first time or your hundredth — is a huge win in itself. I want you to know that feeling unsure or nervous is totally normal... but also temporary. The more you show up for yourself, the more confident and capable you'll feel.

Remember, I was once the girl who hated going to public gyms — now I strut in like I own the place 😊 That didn't happen overnight, but the more I learned, the stronger I felt, inside and out. And I want the same for you ✨

Whether you're working toward aesthetic goals, building mental resilience, or simply finding joy in moving your body — you are already doing something incredible. Strong is beautiful, and every rep, every rest day, every bit of progress matters.

### ***A reminder from TaylaKfitness***

I'm always just a message away if you ever need help, support, or a reminder of how amazing you're doing 

You're doing great, friend  