Missed a week? Getting back on track

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A missed week costs very little. The goal is to restart at your next scheduled session, a little lighter, without trying to make up for lost time.

Why it matters: Plans often end not with a decision to quit but with a missed week that turns into a missed month. Research on training breaks shows strength holds up well and comes back quickly (see "Taking a break from training").

Restart in five steps

1. **Pick your next session now.** Use your usual day and time. Don't wait for a Monday or a new month.
2. **Don't double up.** Skip the sessions you missed. Trying to catch up adds fatigue and soreness.
3. **Go a little lighter.** After about a week off, use your last weights. After two to four weeks, drop them by about 10% to 20% for the first session or two. After longer, treat it like a new start and use "Your first month."
4. **Expect some soreness** in the first session back, then less.
5. **Rebuild over a few sessions** to where you left off, then continue progressing.

Why it happened

A quick look helps prevent the next gap:

- **Time:** can you shorten sessions with supersets, or move one to a different day?
- **Illness or injury:** ease back in, and see "Soreness or injury?" for warning signs.
- **Travel:** a short bodyweight session in a hotel room keeps the routine alive.
- **Motivation:** see "When exercise stops being fun."

Make the next break smaller

- Keep a short "minimum" session ready, such as 20 minutes with one exercise per movement pattern, for busy weeks.
- Book your next session before you leave the gym.
- Tell a friend or training partner when you're restarting.

Related guides

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- Soreness or injury?
- When exercise stops being fun

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