

FOOTBALL S&C

A 2-day-a-week resistance training programme

Pre-season · In-season · Backed by peer-reviewed sports science

-0.94

correlation between
squat & 10m sprint

60%

fewer hamstring injuries
with Nordic hamstring

≥48h

minimum gap between
heavy lifting and match

HOW TO USE THIS PROGRAMME

Pre-season (6 weeks): Lift 3 x per week (Mon/Wed/Fri). Block periodised into 3 phases.

In-season (9 months): Lift 2 x per week. Tuesday heavy (MD-4), Thursday light (MD-2).

Every session: 5-10 min FIFA 11+ warm-up. Nordic hamstring never skipped.

Progression: Add 2.5-5 kg per set when you hit the top of the rep range.

Recovery: 48-72h between heavy strength and match. Non-negotiable.

THE SIX MOVEMENTS THAT MATTER MOST

- **Back squat** Base of strength — drives sprint speed and vertical jump
- **Trap bar deadlift** Posterior chain — powers acceleration
- **Bulgarian split squat** Single-leg control — football is played one leg at a time
- **Nordic hamstring** Injury prevention — cuts hamstring strains by up to 60%
- **Copenhagen adduction** Groin injury prevention — the second-most-injured area
- **Plyometrics** Converts strength into on-pitch explosive power

How to use the programme

For adult players in good health. Consult a coach or physio before starting.

Pre-Season Programme

6 weeks · 3 sessions per week · Mon / Wed / Fri

BLOCK PERIODISATION

Weeks 1-2
Anatomical adaptation
8-12 reps @ 70% 1RM

Weeks 3-4
Max strength
3-5 reps @ 82% 1RM

Weeks 5-6
Power conversion
3-5 reps @ 75% (fast)

DAY A — SQUAT FOCUS (Monday)

Exercise	Sets × Reps	Load / Notes
Back squat	4 × 5	70% wk 1-2 · 82% wk 3-4 · 75% wk 5-6
Bulgarian split squat	3 × 8 each	Moderate DBs
Nordic hamstring	3 × 5-6	Bodyweight, slow eccentric
Push-up or bench press	3 × AMRAP / 6-8	Bodyweight or ~75%
Front plank	3 × 30-60 s	Squeeze glutes hard

DAY B — HINGE FOCUS (Wednesday)

Exercise	Sets × Reps	Load / Notes
Trap bar deadlift (or RDL)	4 × 5	70% wk 1-2 · 82% wk 3-4 · 75% wk 5-6
Barbell hip thrust	3 × 8	Moderate-heavy
Single-leg RDL	3 × 6 each	Light DBs, focus on balance
Pull-up or inverted row	3 × 6-10	Bodyweight or add load
Pallof press	3 × 10 each	Light band or cable

DAY C — POWER & PLYOMETRICS (Friday)

Exercise	Sets × Reps	Notes
Jump squat (unloaded)	4 × 3	Max intent, full recovery
Broad jump	4 × 3	Grass or soft surface
Depth jump (30-45 cm box)	3 × 4	From weeks 3-4 onwards
Med ball rotational throw	4 × 5 each	Explosive
Turkish get-up	2 × 3 each	Light KB

PLYOMETRIC DOSE
Keep total foot contacts under 100 per session. That is the sweet spot from the research (Váczí et al., 2013).

In-Season Programme

2 sessions per week · MD-4 (Tuesday) and MD-2 (Thursday)

THE MATCH WEEK (Saturday match)

SUN
Recovery

MON
Rest / Football

TUE
MAIN LIFT

WED
Football

THU
Neural (light)

FRI
Activation

SAT
MATCH

TUESDAY (MD-4) — STRENGTH MAINTENANCE

45 minutes. Heavy but low volume. In and out.

Exercise	Sets × Reps	Load
Back squat OR trap bar deadlift	3 × 3-5	80-85% 1RM
Bench press OR push-up	3 × 5-6	75-80%
Nordic hamstring	2 × 5-6	Bodyweight
Single-leg RDL	2 × 6 each	Light DBs
Bent-over row OR pull-up	3 × 6	75%
Pallof press	2 × 10 each	Light band

THURSDAY (MD-2) — NEURAL / POWER

30 minutes. Sharp and snappy. No soreness the next day.

Exercise	Sets × Reps	Notes
Trap bar jump	3 × 3	Light load (20-30% BW)
Bulgarian split squat	2 × 5 each	Moderate
Broad jump	3 × 3	Full recovery
Face pull or band external rotation	2 × 12	Shoulder prehab
Copenhagen adduction	2 × 5 each	Groin prehab
Dead bug or Pallof press	2 × 10 each	Core control

THE 48-HOUR RULE

In a survey of 49 professional football S&C coaches, 74% left at least 48h between strength/power training and match kick-off. Only 2% lifted on match day. This is the rule you don't break. (Silva et al., 2022)

What NOT to Do

The classic amateur mistakes — every one backed by evidence

X Deadlift the day before a match.

Heavy hinge work fries the hamstrings, glutes and CNS. Lifts above 90% 1RM need up to 72 hours for full CNS recovery. Muscle glycogen in fast-twitch fibres can stay depleted 48+ hours. Leave at least 48h, ideally 72h, between heavy deadlifts and kick-off.

X Do endless bicep curls.

Zero transfer to football. Your training time is finite — spend it on movements that matter. If you want bigger arms, do chin-ups. You get the arm work and a stronger back at the same time.

X Chase soreness in-season.

DOMS is not proof a session worked. Soreness on match day = worse sprints, jumps, decision-making. If you regularly can't walk down stairs on Wednesday after Monday's lift, drop the volume.

X Skip lifting once the season starts.

The single most common mistake. Rønnestad's data (2011): players who dropped in-season lifting lost their pre-season strength, sprint and jump gains within 12 weeks. All that work — gone.

X Skip the FIFA 11+ warm-up.

It cuts total injury rate by 30-46% across every RCT that has tested it. It takes 20 minutes and needs no equipment. There is no reason not to do it.

X Run long, slow, steady state when you're already knackered.

The interference effect is real when aerobic volumes get high. In-season, keep steady-state running short — or drop it entirely and let matches provide the aerobic stimulus.

X Add strength sessions the week of a cup final.

Taper the load in the 3-5 days before a big fixture. The gains are already banked. Fresh legs win games.

KEY SOURCES

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