

THE VIKING GAMES

TRAINING PLAN



THE VIKING GAMES 2024

VERSION 1.0

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STEEL VIKING
FITNESS



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INTRODUCTION

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Welcome to my training plan which aims to prepare you for the Viking Games. When writing this plan, I had a think about what it means to be Viking fit. There's many interpretations but here is mine. The Vikings were marine warriors. This means that in all likelihood they had superior strength, endurance and muscular endurance alongside mental grit and fortitude all coupled with specific skills relevant to their trade.



WHAT MAKES A VIKING?

With that in mind, I believe they would have been what today is being referred to as hybrid athletes. This is an athlete that's more jack of all trades as opposed to a specialised athlete in either being as strong as possible like a powerlifter or being an endurance focused ultra distance runner. A hybrid athlete sits somewhere in the middle and is ready for everything. I believe this has a great transfer into everyday life. I like to refer to it as being able to look good, feel good and play good.

WHO IS THE VIKING GAMES FOR?

Don't worry though, if you are a specialised athlete or entering the games as a fitness goal. Some trials will be easier and others harder, training for the Games will result in benefits for your fitness discipline.

Only you can decide whether to focus on favoured trials, work on weaknesses, or both. If you're new to fitness, this program will help you reach the standard needed to confidently participate in the games.

PROGRAMME GOALS



Whenever you start a new training programme, you need to make sure that it aligns with your goals. A good training plan will be clear on the outcomes that can be expected and also needs to be clear on what the training plan is not.

What This Plan is Not

This plan is not a bodybuilding plan. The goal of this plan is not to get shredded or get ripped or to get you ready to get on stage in a bodybuilding competition. Don't get me wrong, you will see improvement in physique with this plan but not to the extent as you with a dedicated physique plan.

This plan is also not a power lifting plan. Whilst you'll see some similarities with power lifting in some of the exercise selection, the aim of this plan isn't to get you prepped for a power lifting meet and to get you physically strong at 1 rep max in squat, bench and deadlift. Again, you will get stronger on this plan but this is not a dedicated power lifting plan.

The Goal

Now that we've covered what this plan is not, let's have a look at what we are striving to achieve with this plan.

The aim is to meet a minimum standard by the end of 6 weeks to confidently attempt each of the trials in The Viking Games. In this way the plan is specific to those ends. Without the trials equipment at home or in a standard gym, we have therefore determined some placeholders to assess yourself against and to work towards.



THE TEST

Day 1 and 2 of your workout plan should include a test of where you currently stand. Before attempting strength sections of the test you should ensure you have proper form and complete warm-up sets, particularly on strength tests.

If you're not 100% sure of your fitness - we recommend testing, as you may surprise yourself that you're not as strong or fast as you were 6 months ago.

As this is a benchmarking exercise, on a scale of 1-10, you should be working at a 7-8 for these exercises - it's not comp day yet. Don't injure yourself maxing out and popping veins on these lifts before your training plan even begins. *On that note - if you can't complete any of the strength lifts safely, we recommend some sessions with a PT and just classing yourself as a Rookie without the need for testing.*

Exercise	Result (m)	Result (f)	Level
1.5 mile run (2.4km)	>14 min	> 15 min	Rookie
	10-14 min	11-15 mins	Competent
	<10 min	<11 mins	Experienced
BB Squat 1RM	<1xBW	<0.5xBW	Rookie
	1-1.5xBW	0.5-1.2xBW	Competent
	>1.5xBW	>1.2xBW	Experienced
BB Deadlift	<1.5xBW	<1xBW	Rookie
	1.5-2xBW	1-1.5xBW	Competent
	>2xBW	>1.5xBW	Experienced
BB Military Press	<0.5xBW	<0.3xBW	Rookie
	0.5-0.9xBW	0.3-0.6xBW	Competent
	>0.9xBW	>0.6xBW	Experienced
Farmers Walk 20m (weight in each hand)	<0.25xBW	<0.2xBW	Rookie
	0.25-0.5xBW	0.2-0.4xBW	Competent
	>0.5xBW	>0.5xBW	Experienced

Abbreviations: BB - Barbell, 1RM - 1 Rep Max, BW - Bodyweight, < - less than, > - more than

Scored Mostly Rookie

First off, don't panic. The goal of this training plan is to get you up to the "competent" standard as a minimum for taking part in the Games and to feel more comfortable participating. Complete the foundation weeks 1-2 before moving on to the main training plan.

Adherence to your planned workouts is going to be the key to success here, even if you need to make the workouts easier, getting the time in the gym is most important for you.

Scored Mostly Competent

We have confidence that you will reasonably attempt the trials. However, you signed up to the Viking Games to smash it, so use the training plan below to get in the best shape and get the best result.

Scored Mostly Experienced

Clearly you're an experienced gym goer and you'll be gunning for top spot in the Games. You may still wish to choose elements from the training plan below, especially if you're weaker in certain aspects, but we recommend you match this up with what you're doing and add some specificity to your current training plan for the trials.



6-WEEK PAN

Plan Structure

This plan is modular in nature because every body is different and there's no one size fits all cookie cutter plan that will suit everyone. Even then, the best plan is the one that has been built specifically for you, your current status, your time availability, equipment availability, skills and one that aligns with your specific goals. That said, the best marker for success is consistency and the person who shows up and puts in the work every day following a mediocre plan will outperform the person who has the perfect plan but is inconsistent.

The modularity around this programme means you can adapt it towards your needs. The main adaptation you can make is the training frequency but there is also scope for exercise substitution and changing the focus from strength and muscle to aerobic conditioning or anaerobic conditioning.

The Workouts

Strength and Muscle

The strength and muscle workouts will alternate between two sessions, focusing on overall strength and muscle growth. Sets and reps are given in ranges, offering flexibility based on time, focus, and daily condition.

Most exercises will have 3-5 working sets, following lighter warm-up sets. Aim for 5 sets for maximum development, but 3-4 sets are acceptable for heavier weights, if time is limited, the muscle group is not a priority, or you are fatigued or focused on aerobic fitness.

Repetition ranges determine load. For example, with an 8-10 rep range, choose a weight for 10 quality reps. If you hit 8-10 reps, maintain the weight; over 12 reps, increase the weight; under 6 reps, decrease the weight.

WORKOUT A:

Exercise	Sets	Reps	Notes
BB Back Squat	3-5	8-10	
BB Bench Press	3-5	8-10	
BB Bent-Over Row	3-5	8-10	
Pull-Up	3-5	8-10	If you can't get 10 reps, either do as many as you can or use an assist machine. If you can do more, add weight.
DB Hammer Curl	3-5	10-12	
Tricep Dips	3-5	10-12	

WORKOUT B:

Exercise	Sets	Reps	Notes
Sled Pull	3-5	15-25m	Hand over hand - substitute deadlifts if no sled available.
BB Overhead Press	3-5	8-10	
BB Deadlift	3-5	8-10	Substitute walking lunges if using deadlifts instead of sled pull. If form is an issue, take a look at the substitutions below.
Farmers Carry	3-5	50m	
KB Swing	3-5	15	
Plank	3-5	60s	

Abbreviations: BB - Barbell, DB - Dumbbell, KB - Kettlebell, 1RM - 1 Rep Max, BW - Bodyweight, < - less than, > - more than



Aerobic Workouts

LSS30 / LSS45 / LSS60: This is a long steady state cardio exercise for either 30 minutes, 45 minutes or 60 minutes. A steady state exercise needs to be done in what is referred to as Zone 2. This will most likely feel slow and if you don't know what your heart rate zones are, the best indicator is to focus on running/jogging at a pace that will allow you to do nasal only breathing.

This exercise should be a mix of running and swimming, but you can also substitute in cycling or a row.

Anaerobic Workouts

Hel's Revenge (HR): This is a short but brutal workout. Find a rugby pitch, football field or a track. Basically anywhere you can sprint 100 metres - this workout is best done outdoors under your own power.

10 Push-ups
 100m Sprint
 9 Push-ups
 100m Sprint
 8 Push-ups
 100m Sprint
 ...
 Down to 1 Push-Up

Berserker Blitz (BB): Another nasty but effective workout. Simple, not easy. Grab a Kettlebell and head to a track (or treadmill).

Kettlebell Swings x 60 seconds
 800m Run
 2-3 mins rest
 Repeat 5 times.

WORKOUT SCHEDULE

REMEMBER: Adherence, sticking to the plan, is the thing that's going to create some results in a short timescale. Experienced gym goers will tell you, some days we have bad days in the gym, some days are good, but most are somewhere in the middle. For 6-weeks, having the discipline to stick to the plan is going to get you ready.

Foundation

If you're a rookie, you'll want to spend the first two weeks conditioning yourself for tougher workouts. You should only complete 3 sets of each exercise and drop the weight so you can complete them with correct form before progressing to tougher workouts.

You should also ideally use PT, or if that's not an option, an experienced spotter and quality instructional videos ([Athlean X](#) generally has a good way of breaking down the mechanics of a lift).

Once you've completed your foundational weeks, move on to weeks 3-6 of the main plan.

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Week 1	Workout A	LSS30	Rest	Workout B	HR	Rest	Rest
Week 2	Workout A	LSS30	Rest	Workout B	BB	Rest	Rest



Main Plan

Here's the structure for a 5 day a week plan.

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Week 1	Workout A	LSS30	Workout B	Rest	Workout A	HR	Rest
Week 2	Workout B	LSS30	Workout A	Rest	Workout B	BB	Rest
Week 3	Workout A	LSS45	Workout B	Rest	Workout A	HR	Rest
Week 4	Workout B	LSS45	Workout A	Rest	Workout B	BB	Rest
Week 5	Workout A	LSS60	Workout B	Rest	Workout A	HR	Rest
Week 6	Workout B	LSS60	BB	Recovery	Recovery	Recovery	Recovery

Note: You can replace HR and BB with a LSS or switch them out for each other.

*LSS: Long Steady State, HR: Hel's Revenge, BB: Berserker's Blitz

Active Recovery - This is a long walk, or some functional movement in the gym at a much lighter weight just to keep moving. 4 days out from the event, minimum, should be mostly rest, to let the muscles recover and be on top form for the event.



TIPS, FAQs & FINAL THOUGHTS

The above programme is tried and tested and backed by scientific research. There are many ways to skin a cat just like there are many ways to get stronger, build muscle, increase VO2 Max and lose fat. The methods are many but the concepts are few. As long as you follow key concepts, you'll make progress.

The 9 main concepts of training: skill, speed, power (function of speed and strength), strength, hypertrophy (growing muscle mass), muscular endurance, anaerobic power (ability to produce and sustain work in short bursts), VO2 max (max heart rate), long-endurance (30+ minutes with no break)

Non-negotiables for any training program to work: (1) adherence (adherence is the number predictor of outcome), (2) progressive overload (number one mistake people make), (3) individualization (equipment availability, etc.), (4) choosing an appropriate target

People change exercises too frequently! Don't change anything for exercises for 6-12 weeks, then make changes or you won't see progress – it'll take about three weeks to find the right load and timing of movements

Interference effect has recently been debated but overblown – zone 2 cardio in and of itself will not blunt strength or hypertrophy – what matters more is your calorie supply and the type of cardio you're doing; running (constant eccentric pounding) will have a greater consequence than bike riding (See our article on it here: <https://www.steelviking.co.uk/post/the-importance-of-building-an-aerobic-base-for-strength-athletes>)

What should I eat?

The most important factors when looking to build strength and muscle whilst increasing aerobic capacity is to ensure you are eating enough protein and that your total calorie intake is in line with your goals.

As a rule of thumb, you want to take in about 2.2g/kg or 1g/pound of body weight. For a 70kg person, that equates to about 154g of protein per day. At a minimum you want to be at 1.6g per kg.

For your total caloric intake, you can use a total daily energy expenditure (TDEE) calculator. Omni Calculator is a good start: <https://www.omnicalculator.com/health/tdee>

Besides hitting your protein target, you want to be getting around 30g of dietary fibre per day. If you are hitting your protein target, your fibre target and your daily total calorie target, you'll be in a good place.

What supplements do you recommend?

Awesome Supplements is the official Supplements provider of the Viking Games: Get a 10% discount using [this link](#) and the code: **VIKING10**

In an ideal world, we'd be able to get all the nutrients we need from our food intake and diet. However, due to both busy lifestyles and the poor soil quality due to overfarming, it can be difficult to get appropriate nutrients without supplementation.

We recommend a good quality multivitamin to cover your bases. Beyond this, a protein supplement can be very helpful to hit your protein target and creatine monohydrate supplementation can benefit almost everyone and is safe and scientifically proven. For Creatine, the general standard is 5g per day.

Hydration before and/or after workouts is important for recovery and nutrient transport after a workout - especially after anything that's got you sweating hard. This is where supplements are useful to replenish electrolytes too.

How long should I rest between sets?

3 minutes on the bigger muscle group exercises (the first 3-4 in the workout) and then 2 minutes for the isolation moves.

How long does the workout take?

You should be in and out of the gym within the hour. If your workout is taking longer than an hour, then you are likely resting too long.

The main culprit for this is using your phone and doom scrolling through

InstaTok instead of doing your workout. Only use your phone for music and a rest timer. All the rest can be done outside of the gym. You are not only wasting your own time but everyone else's sat on a piece of workout equipment that somebody else could be using.

Put your phone away and put in the work. Nuff said.

How should I warm-up?

You can warm-up by spending 5-7 minutes on the rowing machine or treadmill. Then go through dynamic movements specific to the workout you are about to do and your own body. You know your own joints and body better than anyone else so spending some time focusing on your specific areas will help.

Why did you choose those rep schemes? Traditional strength workouts have 3-5 reps?

You are correct, an intermediate programme will have 3-5 reps when it comes to strength training and these will be based on knowing your 1 rep max and having a training max. If you are at intermediate level, I recommend you follow a programme specifically designed for you and your goals. This programme is designed for beginners looking to build strength, muscle and aerobic fitness in order to compete at the Viking Games. If you are looking for a specific strength based programme for powerlifting or an intermediate lifting programme, then please get in touch and one of our trainers can help you.

I don't have access to a gym, can I do this workout with dumbbells at home?

The workout above is built for a gym with some standard basic equipment. You can however substitute the exercises for their dumbbell equivalent or for a body weight movement. Please find a table below with substitutions. If you are doing body weight movements, you will need to do significantly more reps and progression will be hard due to limited ability to progressively overload.

Exercise	Dumbbell	Machine	Bodyweight
BB Back Squat	Goblet Squat	Leg Press	BW Squat
BB Bench Press	DB Bench Press	Chest Press	Push Up
BB Bent-Over Row	DB Row	Seated Row	Inverted Row
Pull Up	DB Upright Row	Lat Pulldown	Inverted Row
Tricep Dip	DB Tri Extension	Cable Pushdown	Diamond Pressups
BB Overhead Press	DB Shoulder Press	Shoulder Press	Pike Press Up
BB Deadlift	DB Deadlift	Cable Bar Deadlift	Back Extension

ABOUT ME



If you've read any of my blog posts or followed any of my training plans, you'll know that it's with the above philosophy of being a hybrid athlete that I train. My training history is varied ranging from starting off in the gym to just look good. This evolved into being fit and strong for thai boxing and BJJ. After that I discovered power lifting and focused on being strong in the big three whilst also focusing on functional fitness working with kettlebells, steel maces and steel clubs. After dabbling in olympic

lifting I'm shifted into training for hybrid fitness such as hyrox and am now embracing a new challenge by training for my first ironman triathlon adding endurance to my repertoire with swimming, cycling and running.

That being said, I tend to have a bias towards strength training and this will be reflected in this training plan. My training and fitness philosophy is to be functionally strong as well as ensuring that I'm able to keep up the fitness demands needed to be effective in my role as a reservist in the UK armed forces.

I'm a qualified personal trainer and nutrition coach but as someone who works full time, has hobbies, friends and a family, I like to write my training plans with a minimalist approach to ensure they are as time effective as possible.