

Progress tracking

Written by trainer winny

Progress tracking is a **must**, if you want to build the **best physique of your life**.

So let me show you the **best** way in which you can track your progress.

All of the things that I will lay out in this document are things that **I use myself in every workout**.

So I'm very happy to share my knowledge with you today!

What do I use for tracking?

There are **2** different ways in which people track progress.

The first option is to use your phone, after all, there are thousands of apps that you can choose from.

The second option is to go with the **old-school method of pen and paper**.

And you will be surprised, but I recommend the second option here.

Sure, you might feel a bit weird when you bring a notebook to the gym, but there is just something **magical** about having a **paper notebook**.

I'm not saying you shouldn't use apps, feel free to do so, but a pen and paper just **feels more personal**.

You will always see your progress when you flip through the pages and realize how far you have come.

Plus minimizing your screen time is always welcome.

In this document, we will be focusing on tracking progress with the old-school pen-and-paper method, but the **same principles apply** to every other tracking app, so don't worry.

Basic tracking

There are **4** main things that we want to **track**.

1. Name of the **exercises**
2. Amount of **weight** used
3. Number of **reps**
4. Number of **sets**

There are also some other smaller things you will want to track, but more on that a **little later**.

So let me walk you through the tracking process step by step.

1. Name of the exercises

Because you are reading this document, you already have a **great training plan**, which is very **important**, because the first step is to **write down your exercises for the day**.

Write them down in the **order** that you will be doing them.

our example

bench press
incline bench press
cable fly
triceps pushdown
overhead extension

write them in order!

blank example

exercise1
exercise2
...
..
.

*These are just random exercises for the sake of this example**

It doesn't really matter **when** you write it down; at home, in between sets, in the locker room, just make sure **everything** is on that paper.

I personally write them down in between the sets as it's a bit more convenient for me that way.

1.5 Dates

I would also highly recommend you to **add a date** to each workout, so if you ever need to go back, you will have an **easy** time finding what you need, and seeing how much you have progressed since.

9/9/24	← add a date!	our example
	bench press	
	incline bench press	
	cable fly	
	triceps pushdown	
	overhead extension	
<hr/>		
date		blank example
	exercise1	
	exercise2	
	...	
	..	
	.	

2. Amount of weight used

After you have all of your **exercises** for the day **written down**, you can move on to the next step, which is writing down the amount of **weight** for each exercise that you will use for that day.

our example	
9/9/24	
bench press	/ 100lbs
incline bench press	/ ~lbs
cable fly	/ ~lbs
triceps pushdown	/ ~lbs
overhead extension	/ ~lbs

write down the weight

blank example	
date	
exercise1	/ weight
exercise2	/ weight
...	
..	
.	


And when you get that done, we can finally get to the **repetitions**.

You always hear me mention different rep ranges like 5-8, 8-12, etc.

So let me tell you how to work with them.

2.5 Pre-made rep ranges

But before I do that, I just want to note, that if you do not remember what kind of rep range you are supposed to be doing on each exercise, you can just **note it** somewhere on the side, because it will be pretty **important** to know what **rep range** you are working in.

9/9/24		our example	
(8-12)	bench press / 100lbs		
(8-12)	incline bench press / ~lbs		
(12-15)	cable fly / ~lbs		
(12-15)	triceps pushdown / ~lbs		
(12-15)	overhead extension / ~lbs		
	 add rep ranges		
		blank example	
date			
(rep range)	exercise1 / weight		
(rep range)	exercise2 / weight		
...	...		
..	..		
.	.		

*Random rep ranges just for the sake of this example**

3. & 4. Number of reps & sets

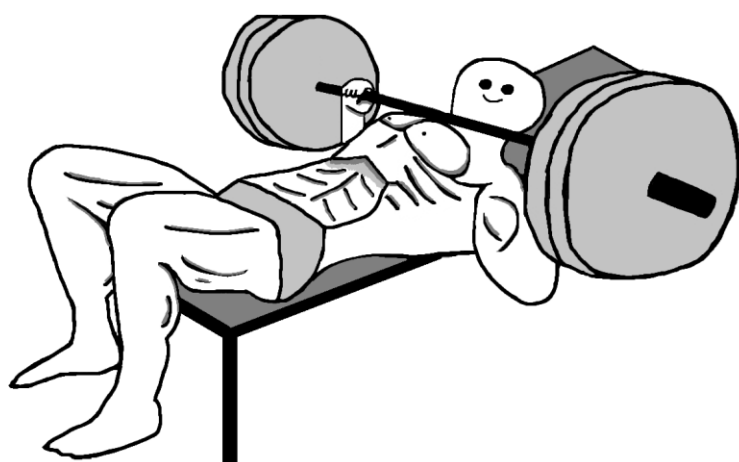
Alright, now let's take a look at how to track **reps and sets**.

So let's say, that you are doing a set of **8-12** reps on the bench press, with 100 lbs.

On the **first set**, you manage to get **10 reps**, so you write it down.

On the **second set**, you manage to get **9 reps**, you write it down again.

And on the **third set**, you manage to get just **8 reps**, and you also write that down.



set1-10reps
set2-9reps
set3-8reps

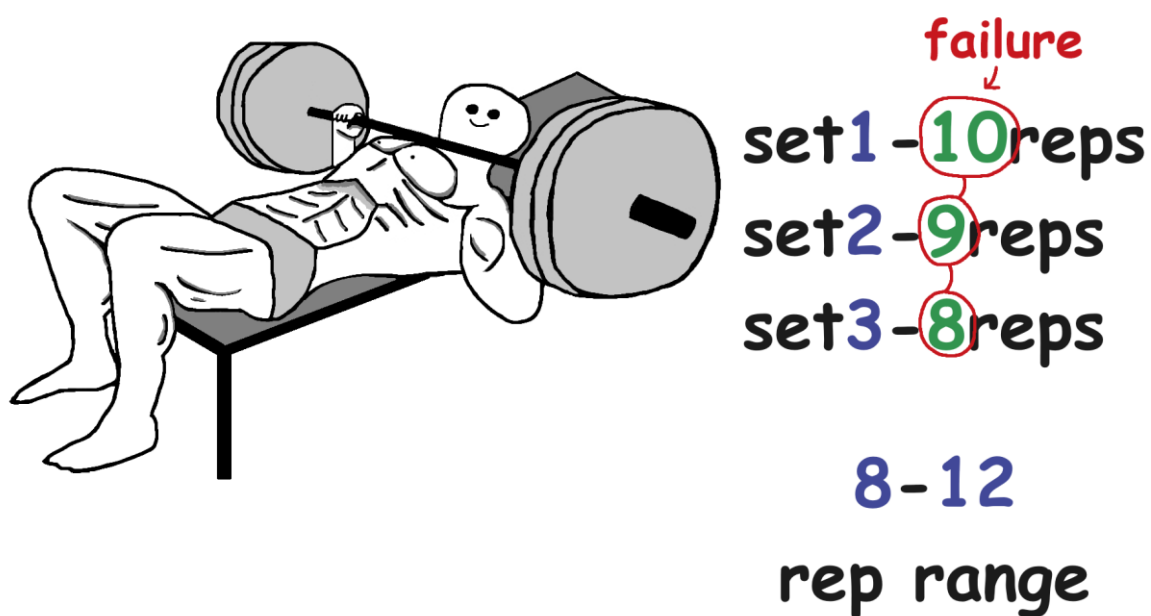
This is how it now looks like on paper:

9/9/24	our example			
(8-12)	bench press	/ 100lbs	/ 10reps	/ 9reps / 8reps
(8-12)	incline bench press	/ ~lbs	/ ~reps	/ ~reps / ~reps
(12-15)	cable fly	/ ~lbs	/ ~reps	/ ~reps / ~reps
(12-15)	triceps pushdown	/ ~lbs	/ ~reps	/ ~reps / ~reps
(12-15)	overhead extension	/ ~lbs	/ ~reps	/ ~reps / ~reps
date	blank example			
(rep range)	exercise1	/ weight	/ set1 reps	/ set2 reps / set3 reps
(rep range)	exercise2	/ weight	/ set1 reps	/ set2 reps / set3 reps
...	...			
..	..			
.	.			

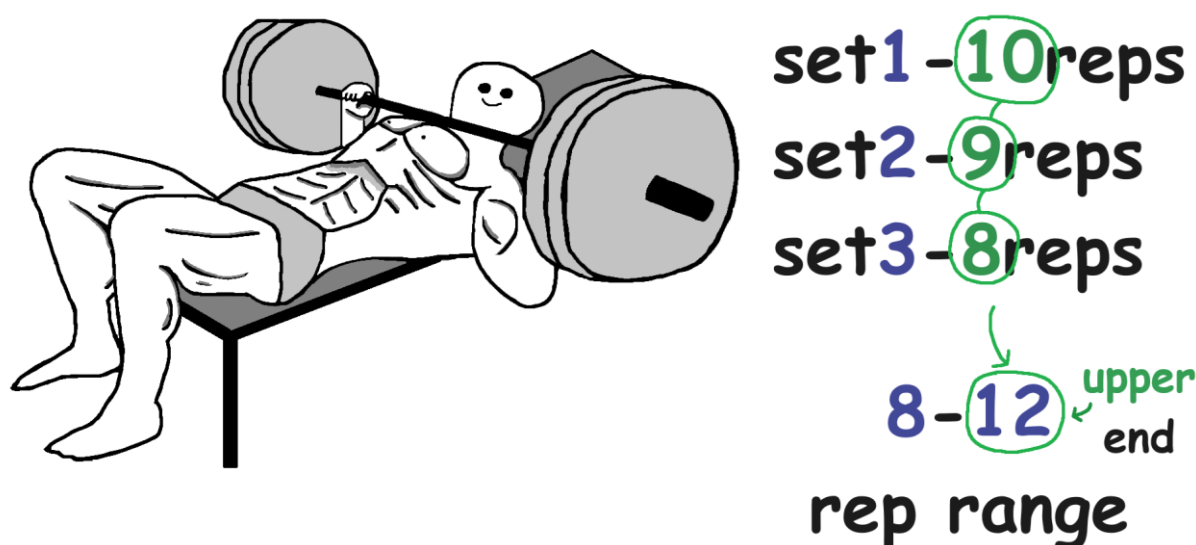
With this method that I'm showing you here, you should **always be going to failure**, unless you hit the **upper end of the rep range** - but more on that in a second.

In this **8-12** example, we stopped at the rep number **10** in the **first set**, because we **reached failure on that rep**.

In the **second set**, we reached failure at rep number **9**, and on the **third set** at rep number **8**.



You will continue to **add reps in each workout** until you reach the **upper end of the rep range** on all **3 of your sets**, that's the point where you can **increase the weight**.



5. Increasing the weight

Just to remind you, we were doing the **8-12** rep range in this example.

This means, that our ultimate goal, is to reach **12 reps on all 3 sets** because that is the **upper end** of the rep range.

8-12 rep range

set1 goal: → reach 12reps

set2 goal: → reach 12reps

set3 goal: → reach 12reps

This means, that when you are doing the **first set** of **8-12 reps**, and you reach **12 reps**, just **stop**, and **don't do any more reps** even if you can.

8-12 rep range

set1 → 12reps → stop! dont do more reps!

set2 → it would make you weaker

set3 → it would make you weaker

Because it would make you **weaker** for the **second**, and the **third set**.

Remember, your ultimate **goal** is to reach **12 reps on all 3 sets**, not 14 on the first set, and then 10 on the other ones.

8-**12** rep range

set**1** ↪ 12reps ✓ ↪ 14reps ✗

set**2** ↪ 12reps ✓ ↪ 10reps ✗

set**3** ↪ 12reps ✓ ↪ 10reps ✗

When you reach the upper end of the rep range, which in the case of the **8-12 rep range**, is **12 reps**, on **all 3 of your sets**, then you are **ready to add more weight**.

Most of the time, you should add the smallest plate you got available in the gym, and **continue in the same exact way as before**.

As you get more and more advanced, the rate at which you will be able to add additional reps or weight will slow down dramatically.

That is completely normal though, just be aware of that.

6. Tracking additional data

There is a lot more stuff that you can track, besides just the names of the exercises, the amount of weight used, the number of reps, and the number of sets.

Like for example, the **time between the sets**, or some type of **special technique** that you used on that exercise in particular.

When I use myo-reps for example, I always **note it next to the exercise**, so I know that the amount of reps was achieved using myo-reps.

When it comes to tracking rest times between the sets, I'm personally not that big of a fan of it, as it can quickly get **really inconvenient**.

Don't get me wrong, it's for sure good to know how long you are resting between the sets, but it just doesn't seem like something that you should write down after every single set, it just becomes a big burden after a while.

Once you are aware enough of how long you are resting between the sets, just **roughly estimating your rest times**, will be completely fine.

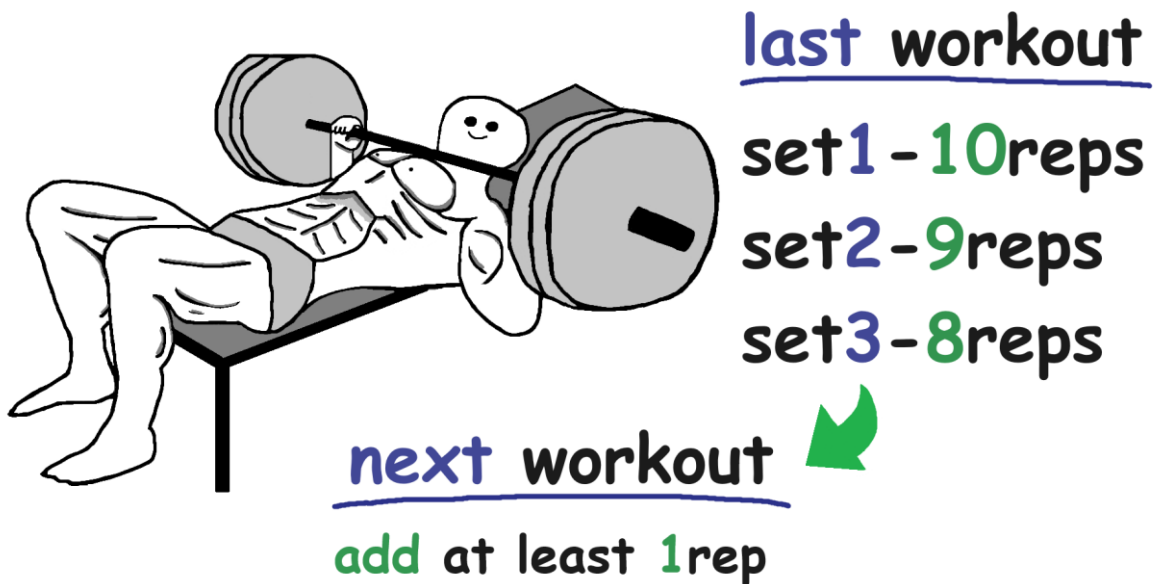
What you can also do, is **write different notes** next to the exercises, like for example „*My right shoulder was hurting*“ or something else that will **notify your future self**, that something is wrong, or that something needs to be changed in the **future workout**.

9/9/24	our example			
(8-12)	bench press	/ 100lbs	/ 10reps	/ 9reps / 8reps / <u>shoulder pain</u>
(8-12)	incline bench press	/ ~lbs	/ ~reps	/ ~reps / ~reps
(12-15)	cable fly	/ ~lbs	/ ~reps	/ ~reps / ~reps
(12-15)	triceps pushdown	/ ~lbs	/ ~reps	/ ~reps / ~reps
(12-15)	overhead extension	/ ~lbs	/ ~reps	/ ~reps / ~reps
date	blank example			
(rep range)	exercise1	/ weight	/ set1 reps	/ set2 reps / set3 reps / special
(rep range)	exercise2	/ weight	/ set1 reps	/ set2 reps / set3 reps / technique
...	...			or note
..	..			
.	.			

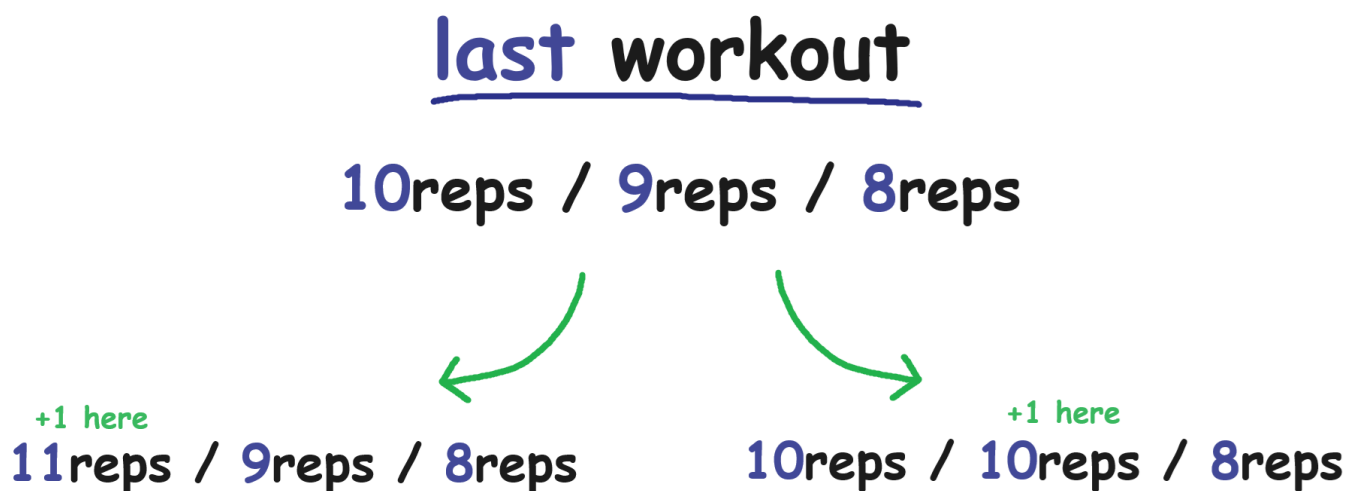
Because you will always be looking back at what you did in the last workout because you are trying to always **beat your performance from the last time, by at least 1 rep.**

For example, we can say that the last time we did bench press, we managed to get **10, 9, and 8** reps.

So our goal for the next workout should be to **surpass** one of these numbers by at least **1 rep.**



It doesn't matter in which way you progress, you can go from 10, 9, and 8 reps in the last workout to 11, 9, and 8 reps, or to 10, 10, and 8 reps.



It's basically the same thing, the most important part is that the **total number of reps goes up**.

If you are not sure if you have progressed, you can **check the total amount of reps** you did for that exercise, and **compare it** with the amount of reps you achieved **last time**.

So if we did 10, 9, and 8 reps in the last workout, that would be **27 reps combined**.

And let's say we managed to get 10, 10 and 8 reps in the next workout, which when we add it up, would equal **28 reps in total**, which is greater than the 27 reps you did last time, so that means you have **progressed**.

last workout

10reps / 9reps / 8reps = 27total reps

next workout

10reps / 10reps / 8reps = 28total reps ^{+1!}

You don't necessarily need to count it up like this, it's just something that you can do if you are not sure!

And this pretty much sums up everything that you need to know, in order to track your progress and get the best physique ever!

So take one more look at the **final product**, and now go ahead and start tracking in the same exact way yourself!

9/9/24	our example				
(8-12)	bench press	/ 100lbs	/ 10reps	/ 9reps	/ 8reps / shoulder pain
(8-12)	incline bench press	/ ~lbs	/ ~reps	/ ~reps	/ ~reps
(12-15)	cable fly	/ ~lbs	/ ~reps	/ ~reps	/ ~reps
(12-15)	triceps pushdown	/ ~lbs	/ ~reps	/ ~reps	/ ~reps
(12-15)	overhead extension	/ ~lbs	/ ~reps	/ ~reps	/ ~reps
date	blank example				
(rep range)	exercise1	/ weight	/ set1 reps	/ set2 reps	/ set3 reps / special
(rep range)	exercise2	/ weight	/ set1 reps	/ set2 reps	/ set3 reps / technique
...	...				or note
..	..				
.	.				