

THE ATHLETIC DAD CHEAT SHEET

Simple rules. Consistent execution. Long-term performance.

Everything you need to eat right, train smart, and show up as the most capable version of yourself for your family.

No crash diets. No perfect workouts. No sacrificing your life to look good. Just the system that works.

INTRO The Four Pillars

01 How This System Works

02 The Scale and Data

03 Equipment You Need

04 Food Rules

05 Vegetables and Minimums

06 Eating Around Exercise

07 Exercise Requirements

08 Logging and Accountability

09 Finding Your Macros

10 Training Philosophy

11 How CT Programs Differently

12 The 3 Rules of Exercise Selection

13 Supplements That Actually Help

14 Sleep and Recovery

BONUS Media Diet

BONUS Your Sample Week

INTRO

The Four Pillars

Every program has to earn its place. If it doesn't check all four boxes, it doesn't make the cut.

Before you get into the system, you should understand why it's built the way it is. Every workout, every rep scheme, every exercise choice inside the Athletic Dad Collective comes back to four pillars:

Efficient. Effective. Athletic. Engaging.

01

EFFICIENT

Dads don't have extra time to waste in the gym. Every minute in a session has to have a purpose. Sessions run 45 to 60 minutes, warm-up included, which means there's a plan going in instead of winging it. Supersets keep you moving so you're not standing around between sets, and movements stay simple enough that you get the benefit immediately instead of spending weeks just learning the exercise.

02

EFFECTIVE

No fluff. No wasted volume. Every session is built around one compound upper body lift and one compound lower body lift, pushed within two reps of failure. That combination is proven to build strength and muscle. Everything else in the session, the accessory work and the athletic work, is built around those two lifts. Nothing is in there by accident.

03

ATHLETIC

The movements train athletic qualities: power, speed, strength, stability, and vertical jump. Dynamic training doesn't just make you strong in the gym, it makes you capable outside of it. Isometrics are built into every session for tissue and tendon health, and hop and jump variations show up often. It pulls from performance training, bodybuilding, hypertrophy work, and vertical jump training, and puts it together in one simple system.

04

ENGAGING

You should look forward to the next session, not dread it. Every set and rep gets tracked, and the goal next time is always a little more weight or a rep or two more than last time. We measure jumps too, vertical and horizontal, because beating your own number is fun. It pulls on the competitive piece every dad still has. Training should feel like progress, not punishment.

How This System Works

This is not a diet. This is not about perfection. This is a simple system built for consistency.

The goal of the Athletic Dad Collective nutrition approach is to help you train hard and train the right way, stay athletic, improve your body composition, and do it in a way that fits real life as a dad.

THE BIG IDEA

Your body does not change in 24-hour periods. It changes in 7-day periods. That means:

- One bad meal does not matter
- One bad day does not matter
- Panic reactions are unnecessary and harmful

Win enough weeks in a row and your body will change. Guaranteed.

How to use this guide: Read it once. Then reference it as needed. Follow the rules, track what matters, and remove emotion from decision-making. You do not need to do everything perfectly. You need to do the right things consistently.

The Scale and Data

Progress without emotion.

The scale is a tool. It is not a judgment of your discipline, effort, or worth.

WEIGH-IN RULES

Weigh in Monday and Friday	First thing in the morning
After using the bathroom	Before eating or drinking

THE RULE THAT MATTERS MOST

We do not react to single weigh-ins. We look for trends over time.

Stable week to week	Maintenance
Slowly trending down	Fat loss
Slowly trending up	Gain phase

No panic. No emotional decisions. Just data, adjustment, and consistency.

Equipment You Need

Non-negotiables.

You cannot manage what you do not measure. To follow this system correctly, you need three tools.

01**Bodyweight Scale**

Shows outcomes

02**Food Scale**

Shows inputs

03**Fitness Watch**

Shows activity and consistency

Guessing leads to frustration. Measuring leads to clarity. You do not need fancy equipment. You need accurate feedback.

Food Rules

What counts as food.

Nutrition does not need to be complicated, but it does need structure. The goal is not to eat perfectly. The goal is to eat real food most of the time and track it honestly.

What Is Considered Food

- Something you can pick
- Something you can grow
- Something you can catch
- Something you can kill

The 80/20 Rule

- 80% whole, unprocessed, natural foods
- 20% flexible foods
- 4 meals/day = 120 meals/month
- 96 quality meals. 24 flexible meals

If it is heavily processed or manufactured, it is not food. It is a food product. This does not mean you can never eat processed foods. It means they should not make up the majority of your diet.

WEIGH YOUR FOOD

All servings should be weighed using a food scale. Most people are not overeating intentionally. They are simply eating more than they think. Weighing food is not about restriction. It is about accuracy.

Vegetables

Minimums without overthinking.

85g

One Serving

One serving of vegetables

425g

Daily Minimum

Five servings per day

5

Servings Per Day

This is a floor, not a ceiling

Vegetables support digestion, recovery, health, and appetite control. They should be eaten at each meal with one exception. Skip vegetables in meals immediately around your workouts. Large amounts of fiber close to training can interfere with performance and comfort.

Fresh and frozen both count. Variety is encouraged, but simplicity works. If you hit your daily minimum, you are doing your job.

Eating Around Exercise

Fuel for performance.

Training performance matters. Food timing is not about fat loss tricks. It is about supporting your workouts and recovery.

Pre Workout	During Exercise	Post Workout
Finish your meal 1 hour before training. Keep it simple and easy to digest.	Only necessary when active beyond 120 minutes. Hydration always matters.	Consume within 1 hour of finishing. Supports recovery and next session prep.

If life gets in the way and you miss the window, do not panic. Get back to your normal eating pattern at the next meal. Consistency over time matters more than perfect timing once.

Exercise Requirements

The baseline. Non-negotiable.

Training is a requirement, not a suggestion. Nutrition supports performance, but results only happen when the work is done consistently.

3 hrs Minimum Per Week Exercise requirement	12 hrs Minimum Per Month Consistency baseline	7,500+ Steps Per Day Minimum daily movement
---	---	---

You do not need perfect workouts. You need repeatable effort. Missing a day occasionally is not a failure. Missing weeks at a time breaks progress. Show up. Do the work. Log it.

Logging and Accountability

Awareness drives results.

If you do not know what you are doing, you are not able to adjust it. Logging is not punishment. It is feedback.

Logging Rules → Log all food in MyFitnessPal → Log all workouts in Trainerize → This is non-negotiable	Why We Log → See how consistent you actually are → Understand how nutrition affects performance → Identify exactly where adjustments are needed
--	---

Most people are not failing because of effort. They are failing because they are unaware of patterns. You are not expected to log forever. You are expected to log until habits are built and understanding is earned. Honest logs lead to intelligent coaching.

Finding Your Macros

A simple starting point.

You do not need a perfectly calculated plan to make progress. You need a reasonable starting point that you can execute consistently.

0
1

Find Your Estimated Calories

Go to [TDEEcalculator.net](https://tdeecalculator.net). Enter your information honestly. Use the calorie number as an estimate, not a rule. It gives you a baseline for maintenance, fat loss, and muscle gain. It will not be perfect. It does not need to be.

0
2

Choose Your Goal

Maintenance: use the estimated calorie number. Fat loss: reduce calories by a small amount. Slow, controlled fat loss works best. Two weeks in a deficit, one week at maintenance keeps long-term progress on track. Muscle gain: increase calories slightly above maintenance.

0
3

Set Protein First

Protein is the foundation. Set protein at 1 gram per pound of ideal bodyweight. If your goal weight is 200 lbs, eat 200 grams of protein per day. This stays consistent whether you are maintaining, cutting, or building. Do not negotiate this number.

0
4

Adjust Carbs and Fats

Once protein is set, the remaining calories come from carbs and fats. Higher carbs support training performance and recovery. Higher fats support satiety and lifestyle flexibility. Adjust based on how you feel, how you train, and how you recover.

Want Your Exact Macros Calculated for You?

Athletic Dad Collective members receive a personalized macro prescription calculated specifically for their body, their goal, and their lifestyle. No generic formulas. No guesswork. Your exact numbers, built for you.

Join at theathleticdadcollective.com

Training Philosophy

How CT thinks about training. And why it works.

Most coaches program the way they want to train. I program the way YOU need to train. After 16 years of coaching athletes and adults, everything I do comes back to one idea: the best program is the one you will actually do.

THE CORE BELIEF

I do not need you making massive sacrifices to make a little bit of progress. Training has to fit your life, or you will never be able to commit the time and energy it takes to actually change. Three days a week. Forty five minutes a day. That is all we need to make massive progress over time.

THE CONCURRENT APPROACH

Most programs focus on one quality at a time. Build strength for 8 weeks. Then lose fat for 8 weeks. Then work on conditioning. That approach does not work for dads. Dads do not have time to stop being athletic, stop being strong, or stop being capable. So we train all qualities all the time. Strength, power, conditioning, and mobility every single week. All year round.

ATHLETIC DADS ARE CAPABLE DADS

I coach every single member as if they are an athlete. Because athletic dads are capable dads. You should be able to jump, run, throw, carry, and crawl. Not to compete. But to be capable for your children and your family. That is what we are training for.

How CT Programs Differently

What most coaches get wrong. And what we do instead.

<i>Most coaches train people the way they want to train.</i>	I base everything off the individual. If there are exercises I do not like but you love, those are the exercises we use. I have no ego when it comes to exercise selection.
<i>Most coaches chase soreness.</i>	The goal of my training is adaptation, not soreness. I train people as hard as they need to be trained to create change. Not harder. Soreness is not the goal. Progress is.
<i>Most coaches want to keep clients forever.</i>	I want to teach you everything I know so that eventually you do not need me anymore. That is the real goal of coaching. Your independence, not your dependency.
<i>Most coaches isolate muscle groups.</i>	Full body training every session. Compound movements that work multiple muscle groups at once. No upper body day. No lower body day. Efficient, effective, and built for the time constraints of a dad.
<i>Most coaches ignore the long game.</i>	I look super long term. You are only as good as your next workout. Longer, slower progression wins every time. Consistency over intensity. Playing the long game is the only game worth playing.

The 3 Rules of Exercise Selection

Every exercise in your program must check all three boxes.

Everybody needs to squat, lunge, hinge, carry, push, and pull. But the specific ways we do those movements are completely up to the individual. I do not force exercises on people. If you do not like doing it, you will not do it. Period.

RULE 01

It Must Stimulate Multiple Muscle Groups

Single-joint isolation exercises have their place, but they are not the foundation. Every primary movement in your program should recruit multiple muscle groups. More muscles working means more stimulus, more efficiency, and more results in less time.

RULE 02

It Must Be Loaded Through Long Ranges of Motion

Full range of motion is non-negotiable. Loading muscles through long ranges of motion improves flexibility, builds mobility, and creates more muscle damage per rep. This means your training improves how you move in real life, not just how much you can lift.

RULE 03

It Must Be Able to Be Progressed Over Time

If an exercise cannot be made harder over time, whether through added weight, more reps, slower tempo, or reduced rest, it has no place as a primary movement. Progression is how adaptation happens. No progression means no change.

ISOMETRICS AND PLYOMETRICS IN EVERY SESSION

Every program includes isometric work for tissue and tendon health, and plyometric work to build the store and release qualities of the tendons. These are not extras. They are built into every session because they are what keeps you healthy, athletic, and capable long term.

Supplements That Actually Help

The short list. Everything else is noise.

Supplements should supplement a solid foundation, not replace it. Once the fundamentals are in place, a few well-chosen supplements can make a real difference in recovery, energy, and performance.

Whey Protein	The most important nutrient for building muscle and recovering from training is protein. Most active men need 1 gram per pound of bodyweight per day. If you are struggling to hit your daily protein target, add a shake.
Creatine Monohydrate	5 to 10 grams per day. No loading phase needed. Creatine is one of the most researched supplements in sports science. It increases strength, improves power output, enhances recovery, and has potential cognitive benefits. Just take it consistently.
Vitamin D	Vitamin D acts more like a hormone than a vitamin. It influences testosterone production, immune function, bone health, and muscle performance. A large percentage of people are deficient. Get your levels tested.
Magnesium	One of the most commonly deficient minerals in modern diets. It supports muscle relaxation, sleep quality, nervous system regulation, and recovery. Take it in the evening.
Electrolytes	Water alone is not always enough. When you sweat, you lose sodium, potassium, and other electrolytes. Low electrolytes cause fatigue, cramping, and reduced performance. Sometimes the difference between a bad workout and a great one is being properly hydrated.

THE RULE: Before you worry about supplements, make sure you are lifting 3 times per week, eating enough protein, sleeping at least 7 hours, staying hydrated, and managing stress. If those things are in place, supplements sharpen the edge. If they are not, supplements will not fix the problem.

Sleep and Recovery

Where results actually happen.

Training breaks the body down. Nutrition provides the raw materials. Sleep is where the work actually gets done.

The Rule	During Sleep Your Body	Lack of Sleep Makes It Harder To
Minimum 7 hours per night. More is better. Less should be a short-term exception, not a lifestyle.	→ Repair muscle tissue → Replenish energy stores → Regulate appetite hormones → Reduce stress hormones	→ Recover from training → Build muscle → Lose fat → Stay consistent with nutrition

You cannot out-train or out-diet poor sleep. Protect sleep the same way you protect your training. Consistently sleeping less than 7 hours will eventually stall progress, no matter how disciplined you are everywhere else.

BONUS SECTION

Media Diet

Protecting your focus and your recovery.

What you consume mentally matters just as much as what you consume physically. Your phone, social media, and constant notifications all place stress on your nervous system.

Excessive scrolling keeps your body in a low-grade stress state even when you are physically resting. This directly interferes with recovery. Mindless scrolling increases mental fatigue, stress, comparison, and distraction. All of these elevate cortisol. Chronically elevated cortisol negatively impacts sleep, recovery, fat loss, mood, and focus.

PRACTICAL RULES

- Track how much time you spend on your phone. Most phones do this automatically.
- Limit social media before bed and immediately after waking.
- Replace scrolling with walking, stretching, reading, or time with family.

→ Less media equals better sleep, better recovery, and better results.

BONUS SECTION

Your Sample Week

One real week, pulled straight from the 3-Day Home Gym Strength program.

DAY 1**BLOCK 1**

Lunge ISO	2 x 30s
High Plank ISO	2 x 30s
Box Jump	3 x 5

BLOCK 2

Barbell Back Squat	3 x 6-8
Dumbbell Bench Press	3 x 6-8
Box Jump	3 x 5

BLOCK 3

Decline Sit-Up	3 x 10-12
Push-Up	3 x 10-12
Triceps	3 x 10-12

DAY 2**BLOCK 1**

Wall Sit ISO	2 x 30s
Dead Hang ISO	2 x 30s
Med Ball Slam	3 x 5

BLOCK 2

Barbell Deadlift	3 x 6-8
Dumbbell Overhead Press	3 x 6-8
Broad Jump	3 x 5

BLOCK 3

Dumbbell Side Bend	3 x 10-12
Single Leg RDL	3 x 10-12
Biceps	3 x 10-12

DAY 3

BLOCK 1

Skater Jump	3 x 5
Med Ball Rotational Throw	3 x 5
Glute Bridge ISO	2 x 30s

BLOCK 2

Dumbbell Reverse Lunge	3 x 6-8
Barbell Incline Press	3 x 6-8
Max Vertical Jump	3 x 5

BLOCK 3

Lateral Lunge	3 x 10-12
Hanging Knee Raise	3 x 10-12
Triceps	3 x 10-12

Want The Full Program?

This is one week. Inside the Collective, this progresses every week with your own numbers, your own equipment, and direct coaching from me. Join at theathleticdadcollective.com

YOU NOW HAVE THE FRAMEWORK.

What you are missing is your exact numbers.

Inside the Athletic Dad Collective, every member receives a personalized macro prescription calculated specifically for their body, their goal, and their current lifestyle. A custom training program built around their schedule, their equipment, and how they like to train. Ongoing adjustments as they progress. And a community of dads who are doing the same work.

Join The Athletic Dad Collective

Custom macros. Training program built around your goals. Direct access to Coach CT.

theathleticdadcollective.com

Simple rules. Consistent execution. Long-term performance.

Coach CT

The Athletic Dad Collective