Beginner Strength Plan

Two 20-minute sessions a week, six movements, no gym required — with the form cues that keep the first month from becoming an injury.

The two sessions

- ☐ **Session A (Mon):** squat, push-up, row, carry. Two sets each, 8–12 reps.
- ☐ **Session B (Thu):** hinge, overhead press, split squat, core. Two sets each, 8–12 reps.
- ☐ **Rest between sets:** 60–90 seconds. Stop a set when form breaks, not when you hit a number.
- ☐ **Warm-up:** 5 minutes of walking, then 10 bodyweight squats and 10 arm circles.

The six moves and their cues

- ☐ **Squat:** feet shoulder-width, sit back and down, knees track over toes, chest tall.
- ☐ **Hinge (deadlift pattern):** push hips back, soft knees, flat back, weight close to the shins.
- ☐ **Push-up:** hands under shoulders, body one line, elbows at 45°, chest to floor or to a counter.
- ☐ **Row:** pull shoulder blades back first, elbow to hip, no shrugging.
- ☐ **Split squat:** back foot light, front shin vertical, drop straight down.
- ☐ **Carry:** walk 20–30 steps with weight in each hand, ribs down, shoulders back.

How to progress

- ☐ **Weeks 1–2:** two sets, easy effort, focus on the cues.
- ☐ **Weeks 3–4:** add one rep per set before adding weight.
- ☐ **Week 5+:** add a third set, or slow the lowering phase to 3 seconds.
- ☐ **Soreness vs pain:** muscle soreness the next day is normal. Sharp, joint, or one-sided pain is not — stop and reassess.

What to buy first — and what to skip

- ☐ **Buy:** a set of resistance bands, or one pair of adjustable dumbbells.
- ☐ **Buy:** a mat if your floor is hard.
- ☐ **Skip:** belts, lifting shoes, and gadgets in month one.
- ☐ **Skip:** programs that promise daily training. Two days is enough to start.

> **Check with a clinician first** if you have uncontrolled blood pressure, a recent injury, or you have not exercised in years — especially before adding load.

General information for Texas readers, not medical advice. If this is an emergency, call 911. For mental health crisis support, call or text 988.