

A man with a mustache and a tattoo on his left arm is working out on a gym machine. He is wearing a black tank top and is looking down at the machine. The background is a dark gym with a window.

THE PROTAGONIST ARC

Your starting point for getting in shape in a way that survives your actual life, and keeping it, because making the good choice stops costing you effort.

YOU ARE NOT BEHIND.

You've trained. You've eaten better. You've run the plan, and somewhere along the way it stopped making sense. What bothers you most isn't necessarily the mirror. For a lot of people it's being tired by two in the afternoon on most days.

That usually has very little to do with a lack of effort or ability on your part, because you've most likely put plenty of both in. You were handed a system built for a different life, and when it didn't survive your week you probably assumed the problem was you.

That doesn't mean it will be easy. It asks for real work, some weeks will be hard, and a few things you enjoy will have to get smaller for a while, but the effort goes into something built for your life, so it adds up instead of starting over.

The best plan in the world, abandoned in March, loses to a decent plan you still run in December.

▲ THE THREE ARCS



Get honest about the life you actually have, and build something that fits it.



Hold onto it once the novelty has gone and nobody is watching.



Until the good choices stop costing you effort.

A lot of people never quite get past the first one, because every attempt starts over instead of carrying on. The third is the one where it finally stops being a fight.

IF YOU REMEMBER NOTHING ELSE

- 01 Total calories decide which way your weight goes, and enough protein helps make sure what you lose is mostly fat rather than muscle.
- 02 Start with what you can actually manage, then build it up one step at a time.
- 03 Your weekly average matters far more than any single day.
- 04 Sustainable beats optimal every time you can't hold optimal.

START WHERE YOU ARE

Get honest about the life you actually have, and build something that fits it.

For years I'd get good results for a month or two and then slide back to where I started, so over a whole year not much had really changed. Nothing ever compounded, because every attempt was a fresh start built for a week I didn't actually have. What finally worked was starting from the week I did have, and that is where you start too.

YOUR FIRST FOUR WEEKS

- 01 **Week one, change nothing about your eating.** Do the session on page 5 twice, and write down what you eat the way you normally eat it. Typing it into an AI chat in plain words is the quickest way. You're finding out what normal is.
- 02 **Week two, the first adjustment.** Add up all the calories you logged in week one and divide by seven: that's your average day right now. If your weight didn't move, I'd eat about 300 to 500 kcal a day less than that, protein first. If it was already dropping, leave it for now.
- 03 **Week three, make it repeat.** Pick one or two meals you're happy to eat most days, so on most days dinner is the only meal you really have to think about.
- 04 **Week four, read the trend.** Look at your average weight over the week rather than single mornings, which jump around for all sorts of reasons, and change things step by step.

You're not designing for the person you wish you were. You're designing for the person who has to get through Tuesday.

FOUR HONEST ANSWERS BEFORE WEEK ONE

- 01 How many sessions can I keep in a bad week?
- 02 How many meals a week do I realistically make myself?
- 03 What broke the last three attempts: the plan, the schedule, or all-or-nothing thinking?
- 04 What am I unwilling to give up? Name it, then build around it.



Me, a few years apart.

Hold onto it once the novelty has gone and nobody is watching.

For many people the result gets lost in the weeks after the diet rather than during it. So come out on purpose: add about 100 to 200 kcal a day each week until your weight holds, and expect a kilo or two back, which is mostly water and food in your system rather than fat.

Until the good choices stop costing you effort.

By then you set your own targets and plan your own holidays. On my site the three have names: Get it, Keep it, Run it.

▲ THE IDEA EVERYTHING ELSE HANGS ON

SUSTAINABLE IS NOT THE SAME AS OPTIMAL.

You've probably done everything right for three weeks and then not managed a fourth. That has very little to do with willpower, and this page is why.

Optimal is what you'd do with unlimited time, energy and attention. Sustainable is what you'll still be doing when work explodes, someone gets sick, or it's simply February. Two ends of one dial, and everybody has a setting on it where the results are good and the cost is bearable.



TOO EASY

SUSTAINABLE: YOUR MIDDLE GROUND

OPTIMAL / PUNISHING

Too far left and not much happens. Too far right and you get results you can't hold, which is the same as no results with more suffering attached. It's a big part of why two people on the same plan get such different outcomes. Most people end up at a slightly different sweet spot, and finding yours is something you work out along the way: some do better with a tougher approach, others with a gentler one.

Getting fit is reachable, and so is losing weight. Getting there as fast as possible while keeping it comfortable is where it becomes very, very difficult.

▲ THREE PEOPLE, THREE SETTINGS

SHIFT WORK



Nights, broken sleep, eats at 2am.

Protein every day, two sessions on the same rest days each week.

NEW FATHER



No spare hours, cooks for a family.

Family meals, portion-led. Trains at home, 2×40 min.

TRAVELS WEEKLY



Hotels, client dinners, no kitchen.

Budgets around dinners. Trains hard on the two home days.

None of these is you, and that's the point: yours is a fourth setting, and working out where it sits is the actual job.

▲ LAYER ONE

TRAINING: WHAT ACTUALLY MATTERS

Fat loss is mostly made in the kitchen, by keeping an overall calorie deficit, so training isn't strictly required to lose fat. I'd still absolutely recommend it: it's good for your health, it shapes how you look at the end, it helps protect your muscle while you lose fat, and it burns a little extra. Honestly, I think the health benefits of muscle are hugely underrated, because they reach into almost everything, and being fit and strong is a bit like living anything physical on easy mode.

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
45 MIN	—	—	45 MIN	—	—	—

YOUR FIRST SESSION

EXERCISE	WARM-UP	HARD SETS
Squat or leg press	1 set	2 × 6–12
Romanian deadlift	1 set	2 × 6–12
Dumbbell press or push-ups	1 set	2 × 6–12
Row or lat pulldown	1 set	2 × 6–12
One you'd like to grow	1 set	2 × 6–12

Per exercise: pick a weight you can lift with good form for 6 to 12 reps. I tend to stay around 6 to 8 myself. Warm up with about two thirds of it, then do two hard sets that stop one or two reps before your form would break. They should feel genuinely hard, which is the part that's easiest to quietly skip.

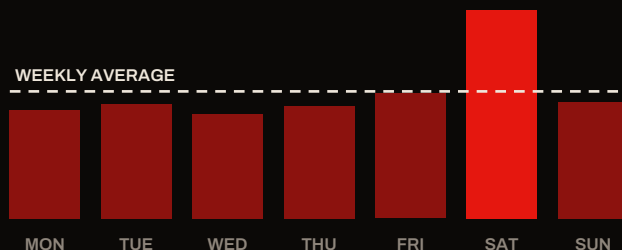
Every rep: I like a controlled lowering of two seconds or more, never just letting it drop, then up without swinging. Write down the weight and reps, so next time you know what to beat.

Next time: one more rep, or a little more weight at the same control. If two sessions a week is too much right now, start with one and add the second once it's a habit. Two held for two years beats five held for five weeks.

▲ LAYER TWO

CALORIES ARE A BUDGET

You don't have rules, you have a budget, and what matters is the weekly total rather than the individual purchases. **No food is banned. Nothing is cheating.** There is only what you spent and what you had to spend.



A big Saturday isn't a broken week, it's a planned purchase, paid for by the days around it.

SET THE BUDGET

Calories. Your average day from week one, minus about 300 to 500. Judge it on your weekly average weight.

Protein. About 1.8 g per kilo of bodyweight, or of your goal weight if you're carrying a lot of fat. At 85 kg that's roughly 155 g, spread over three or four meals. If that sounds like a lot, getting closer to it already makes a difference.

Everything else. Carbs and fats however you enjoy them, keeping at least around 50 g of fat a day.

Steps. Around 5,000 a day is a good start, and it's the cheapest way to make the budget bigger.

Pace. Around half a kilo a week is a good pace for most people. Faster is possible, but it tends to be a lot harder to hold onto.

Calories first, then protein, then food quality. Whole food isn't required, but it tends to fill you up more per calorie.

▲ WHERE THE WEEK GETS DECIDED

THE EVENING DECIDES IT

Most of my bad weeks didn't go wrong at lunch. They went wrong at eight, getting home hungry to an empty fridge, or at nine, eating after dinner because the day had used me up. Neither is easy to solve in the evening itself, so I'd rather solve it earlier, in the shop.

You don't need a plan for the evening if you have the ingredients for one.

WHAT "STOCKED" MEANS

A protein you don't cook: skyr, cottage cheese, tinned tuna, a ready-cooked chicken.

A protein that's done in one pan in five minutes: eggs, chicken strips, prawns, lean mince.

A carb that keeps: microwave rice, wraps, oats, potatoes.

Something frozen and green: a bag of mixed vegetables or spinach.

A sauce you genuinely like, preferably a lower-calorie one as long as it fits your macros, so it's a meal you'd happily eat again on Thursday.

▲ SPENDING IT WELL

FOOD YOU DIDN'T COOK

A takeaway doesn't have to undo your week. Decide what you're looking for before you open the app.

- **Anchor on the protein first**, and take the plainer cooking method where there's a choice.
- **Pick your regular orders once**, when you're not hungry, and then stop deciding.
- **When it's planned, leave the gap**, or absorb it across the days either side.

AN OVERSHOOT IS NOT A BINGE

A 500–1000 KCAL OVERSHOOT

Roughly 70 to 140 kcal a day across a week. Two or three normal days absorb it.

A 3000+ KCAL BINGE

Most of a week's deficit in one sitting, and it usually follows over-restriction.

WORK WITH ME ONE TO ONE

This guide is the map. The call is where we work out where you're standing on it. What a guide can't do is tell you which of these to change when week six stalls, and that is most of what I do one to one: build it around your actual week, check it with you every week, and change it before it breaks.

Michael, a friend I coached, went from five long gym sessions a week to three and finally started making progress, and my nephew Olaf got heavier, stronger and more muscular.

Apply through my site, and it's a short conversation to see whether we're a fit.

Carrying an injury or a complicated history with food? Involve a professional before adjusting anything.

roloperformance.com



Be the hero of your own story. Roeland, Rolo Performance Coaching