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Thread: [Weightlifting strategy question - add weight vs remove weight \(order of events\)](#)

Hackers - February 7, 2026, 7:23 am

Question - do you prefer to start at a lower weight and increase as you go through sets, stay at same weight, or start at a higher weight and work your way down?

I started at 110LB on two-armed curl, so 55lb each. I did so many sets I don't even know how many, but curling for an hour on 3 different machines and at different hand grips for each, alternating sets. I ended up stressing over 40LB curls and then 30LB curls by the end of it until the point where I couldn't even get 110LB back up again. I worked my way down from 110 to 95, 80, 65, 50, 40, 30 with multiple sets on each. I did the most on 40LB, probably at least 15 sets of 5-10 reps.

Arms are jello now, great workout, but I want to know what ppl here think about adding weight as you keep going vs starting higher and removing as you go.

Sierra-117 - February 7, 2026, 11:39 am

Hey! This is a really cool question. For me I generally divide my workouts into two portions, the main lift and the accessory workout. The way I approach it is actually a mix of both increase and decrease, except it increases and decreases across the weeks and then increases or stays the same for a specific day.

As an example I run a 16-week weightlifting routine with 4 gym days a week, each one focused on a specific muscle group.

The first step is to figure out your 1RM (Rep Max), and then using that, figure out the TM (Training Max) as 90% of your 1RM.

Once I've calculated that I generally start off with 60% of my TM for the first week and go from there.

So to illustrate with some numbers for example, say my 1RM for Squat is 225, then my TM is 202.5. Next I follow the following:

(All sets go to failure for the very last set)

Week 1 - 5x10 @ 60%

Week 2 - 5x10 @ 67.5%

Week 3 - 5 Reps @ 50%, 3 reps at 60%, 1 rep at 65%, Go to failure @ 75%

Week 4 - 3x5 (40, 50, 60%)

Then I recalculate my new TM using some math based off week 3's last failure set (i.e how many reps over the goal (10 reps for first 4 weeks)) and use that for weeks 5 to 8. I shift the percentages up by 5% and keep going.

I repeat this for a full 16 week cycle and end up with doing 1 RM max on week 15 for each exercise that's used as the basis for the next 16 week cycle.

For accessory work (curls, dips, push-ups, triceps, cable-fly, hip thrusts.. etc etc) I generally go for doing whatever weight I can do for 3x6, if I feel like I can push more reps, I'll do that and the next

week I will increase the weight by 2.5/5lbs and try again.

So far this approach in general has worked really well for me and got me to about 260lb deadlift/squat and 125lb bench (my arms are just weak tbh) over the course of a year or so. I also gained some body weight and went from 140 to 170lbs, with some good diet and protein shakes.

Overall I think either approach can work but it mainly comes down to consistency and good diet. Oh and last thing is I always do main lifts first at the gym as opposed to end, I find that if I do accessory work first I can't even lift anything when it comes to main lifts, but that's not true the other way around. Hopefully that answered some questions?

Komodo - February 8, 2026, 7:42 am

Start at lower weight, then increase to your max.

You want to warm up your muscles / stretch. If you jump right into your max, you're going to tear something.