

RAW POWER

**Professional ironman triathlete
Brendan Brazier introduces a
workout for building muscle mass
and strength.**

LOWER BODY



Lunges: 3 sets of 15 reps

What it does

A good all-round exercise that helps develop the stabilizer muscles. Particularly important if you periodically run on uneven ground. Also serves as a good warm-up.

How to do it

With feet shoulder width apart and a dumbbell in each hand with your palms facing inward, take a giant step forward with your left foot so that your shin is perpendicular with the floor. Pause for two seconds. Slowly straighten your left leg. Repeat movement, switching legs. This is one rep.



Leg press: 3 sets of 6 reps

What it does

This is an ideal exercise to quickly increase overall leg strength without putting your back in jeopardy, as is common with squats.

How to do it

On a leg press machine, with feet shoulder width apart, slowly press the weight until your legs are completely extended, but without locking your knees. Pause for two seconds. Slowly lower the weight to starting position.



The following gym workout is for strength gain and is ideal for anyone who is struggling to maintain or build muscle tissue. While I devised the programme to help myself become a better endurance athlete, it is what enabled me to maintain muscle mass throughout my shift to a mostly raw diet about four years ago. It works exceptionally well for not only muscle maintenance, but also creates mobility and fluidity of movement. If you are an athlete, it will keep you lean and will improve strength-to-weight-ratio and therefore efficacy, endurance and ultimately running performance as a whole.

I perform this routine three times per week. It is extremely effective, but keep in mind that it was designed for someone who has been weight training consistently for at least a year. Tendons, ligaments and connective tissue need to adapt to a more advanced training programme such as this, so as not to cause injury. If you are new to weight training, I suggest a more basic programme to begin with that will gently allow for your body to adapt. Then you can give this one a try.

Nutrition is a vital part of physical training. Of course, what you eat becomes the building blocks used to reconstruct muscle tissue that the training has broken down. Make sure to consume a nutrient-packed, protein-rich raw smoothie after each workout. Quick and efficient recovery from each workout is key. The faster you can recover, the sooner you can train again. This is what leads to true gains and will improve your results more than any other single principle.

WORKOUT SPECIFICS Perform lower body exercises two times per week, immediately following intensive cardio training sessions. The upper body portion can be performed two to three times per week, on alternate days. Rest 90 seconds in between lower body exercises and 60 seconds in between upper body ones. You may choose to do abdominal exercise in between upper body sets. For all exercises, breathe in while lowering the weight, and breathe out while lifting it.



Leg extensions: 3 sets of 6 reps

What it does

Strengthens the knee-supporting muscles, thereby reduce the chance of developing knee injuries. Particularly important if cycling is not part of your cross-training routine.

How to do it

On a leg extension machine, slowly extend your legs completely without locking your knees. Pause for two seconds. Slowly lower the weight to starting position.



Ball hamstring curls: 4 sets of 15 reps

What it does

Builds hamstring strength and efficacy while boosting abdominal strength

How to do it

With shoulders and head on the floor, and feet on an exercise ball, tighten abdominal muscles. While maintaining tight abdominals, contract the hamstrings, drawing the ball towards you until your knee angle is about 90 degrees. Pause for two seconds. Slowly lower to starting position.



Calf raises: 3 sets of 15 reps

What it does

Strengthens them, and in doing so improves their efficiency with each toe-off.

How to do it

On a standing calf raise machine, with feet shoulder width apart, slowly raise yourself as far as you can. Pause for two seconds. Slowly lower yourself to starting position.



Crunch combined with reverse crunch: 3 sets of 15 reps

What it does

Strengthens core, and in doing so helps improve posture, form and breathing.

How to do it

Begin by lying on a mat with your left hand on the back of your head and your right hand on your abdominal area. While tightening your abdominal muscles raise legs as in picture. Slowly and simultaneously draw knees towards your head and bring head towards knees without jerking your head with your left hand. Pause for two seconds while keeping abdominals tight. Slowly return to starting position. <



UPPER BODY

Strengthens muscles, improves endurance and helps maintain proper form. In each case, do 3 sets of 15 reps.



Incline dumbbell press

Begin by lying back on a 45-degree incline bench. With a dumbbell in each hand and palms facing forward, slowly press the weight above your head, without locking the elbows. Pause for two seconds. Slowly lower to starting position.



Lat pull downs

Sitting at a lat pull-down machine, grab the bar with each hand about two inches from the end. Slowly pull down as you squeeze your shoulder blades together. Pause for two seconds. Let the bar slowly rise to the starting position as you resist it.



Dips

On a dip bar, with upper arms close to perpendicular, slowly extend your arms, pushing up. Do not lock your elbows. Pause for two seconds. Slowly lower yourself to the starting position.



Upright rows

With feet shoulder width apart, grab either a barbell or a curl bar with both hands. With your hands holding the centre of the bar, about 20cm apart (each hand about 10cm from dead centre), slowly draw the bar towards your chin, stopping at chest height. Pause for 2 seconds. Let the bar slowly rise to the starting position as you resist it.



Bicep curls

Start with your feet shoulder width apart and a dumbbell in each hand. With palms facing inward, and your upper arms remaining perpendicular to the floor, slowly curl your left arm as far as you can. Slowly lower it to the starting position. Repeat with your right arm.



Brendan Brazier (pictured) is a professional ironman triathlete, author of the best-selling book *The Thrive Diet*, and the creator of the award-winning Vega range of whole-food nutritional products. For more information, see BrendanBrazier.com and ThriveDiet.com. The book and the Vega range are available in the UK and Europe from Fresh-Network.com.