



Welcome to **Fight Club** — a 12-week strength cycle designed to kick off your year with a **beginner-friendly, foundational progression** built around the **Back Squat, Shoulder Press, and Deadlift**.

Over these 12 weeks, you'll **rebuild consistent movement patterns, restore strength capacity, and gain confidence under the barbell**—especially if you're newer, returning, or coming back after the holidays.

Instead of a single-day CrossFit Total, you'll **test each lift on its own** in **Week 1** and **Week 12**.

Separating the lifts means:

- safer attempts
 - cleaner data and clearer progress
 - better movement quality
 - dedicated warm-ups and full focus for each lift
- So you can show your true strength without the fatigue of testing all three in one session.

Each week, you'll also train barbell cycling by alternating **Snatch** and **Clean & Jerk**. The goal is to build skill, timing, and barbell fluency **without overwhelming you**, while setting you up for the **2026 CrossFit Open**: build a base early, stay intentionally light during Open weeks, then peak after the Open for new PRs.

Every strength piece is designed to fit **inside a 20-minute window**, so it fits smoothly into class while keeping you fresh, confident, and moving with purpose.

12-week cycle summary

Part 1: Open Prep (Weeks 1–6)

You'll establish a baseline by testing each lift, rebuild volume and confidence, and progress toward controlled heavier exposures—then hit a deload to stay fresh.

Part 2: Maintainer → Post-Open Max (Weeks 7–12)

You'll reduce intensity leading into the Open, keep lifting light and technical during Open weeks, then rebuild and peak before retesting each lift individually.

Weekly structure (4 strength days)

Your lift days may rotate week to week depending on the class programming.

- **Day 1:** Back Squat
 - **Day 2:** Shoulder Press
 - **Day 3:** Deadlift
 - **Day 4:** Barbell Cycling (Snatch ↔ Clean & Jerk)
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Brief breakdown of the cycle

Beginner-friendly New Year foundation (Weeks 1–3)

Your goal: rebuild consistency, lock in movement patterns, and create a safe strength base.

- **Week 1:** Test Back Squat, Press, Deadlift individually
- **Weeks 2–3:** Volume-focused strength at **60–70%**
- Barbell cycling stays light and skill-focused (**RPE 6**)
Why: after holiday inconsistency, you’re rebuilding structure and technique first.

Strength build + controlled heavy work (Weeks 4–6)

Your goal: start feeling heavier loads while keeping mechanics perfect.

- **Weeks 4–5:** heavier doubles/triples at **75–82%**
- **Week 6:** deload (move faster, stay sharp, same structure)
- Cycling focuses on bar path and timing
Why: you get stronger without overreaching before the Open.

Open-ready maintainer phase (Weeks 7–9)

- **Week 7:** moderate intensity to maintain strength (**≈70%**)
- **Weeks 8–9:** CrossFit Open → **very light** lifting (**55–62%**)
Why: your strength work supports your Open performance—it doesn’t compete with it.

Post-Open rebuild → peak (Weeks 10–12)

- **Week 10:** controlled return to moderate loading
- **Week 11:** heaviest exposures of the cycle
- **Week 12:** retest Back Squat, Press, Deadlift individually
Why: recover after the Open → rebuild → peak for new PRs.

How loading works (Percentages vs RPE)

Power lifts (Squat / Press / Deadlift): percentage-based

You’ll use percentages because these lifts are stable, repeatable, and predictable. That makes it easier for you (and your coach) to manage intensity, track progress, and build strength with clarity across 12 weeks.

Olympic lifts (Snatch / Clean & Jerk): RPE-based

You’ll use RPE because Olympic lifts depend heavily on timing, speed, mobility, and daily readiness. RPE helps you stay in good positions and move well—keeping barbell cycling fast, technical, and sustainable during Open prep.

RPE (RATE OF PERCEIVED EXERTION)

1 - NO INTENSITY

2 - VERY LIGHT

3 - LIGHT

4 - MODERATE LIGHT

5 - MODERATE

6 - MODERATE+

7 - MODERATE HIGH

8 - SUB HIGH = 80% effort

9 - VERY HIGH = 90% effort

10 - MAX INTENSITY = 100% effort

Scaling & athlete guidance

If you're a beginner or returning after the New Year

- Use **RPE** if percentages feel too rigid
- Choose **clean movement over load**
- Reduce heavy weeks by **5–10%** when needed
- Tempo reps are encouraged (**3 seconds down**)

If you're intermediate

- Follow the prescribed percentages
- Keep mechanics pristine
- Avoid grinding reps in **Weeks 4–5 and 11**

If you're a masters athlete

- Add **30–60 seconds rest** per set
- Swap Deadlift for **Trap Bar** or **RDL** if needed
- Keep cycling technique-focused

What you'll gain by the end

By Week 12, you'll:

- re-establish a strong base after the New Year
- move better and feel more confident under the bar
- go into the Open fresh, strong, and technically ready
- maintain strength through Open weeks without burnout
- peak post-Open
- retest higher 1RM numbers for Squat, Press, and Deadlift
- improve barbell cycling efficiency and timing

This cycle is your bridge from:

Starting the year strong → Navigating the Open → Peaking afterward

12-week cycle layout (athlete-facing)

WEEK 1 — TEST WEEK (Jan 5, 2026)

Your focus: establish starting numbers. You have 20 minutes of working time per test. **No grinders.**

Day 1 — Back Squat Test

Warm-up: Empty bar → 40% → 55% → 70% → 80%

Test: Build to **1RM Back Squat**

Day 2 — Shoulder Press Test

Warm-up: light strict pressing → 40% → 55% → 70%

Test: Build to **1RM Strict Press**

Day 3 — Deadlift Test

Warm-up: bar → 40% → 55% → 70% → 80%

Test: Build to **1RM Deadlift**

Day 4 — Barbell Cycling (Snatch)

Every 1:00 (8:00)

3 Power Snatches (singles) @ **RPE 6**

WEEK 2 — BASE BUILD 1 (Jan 12, 2026)

Your focus: build foundational volume, moderate load, clean tempo + bar path.

Day 1 — Back Squat

Every 2:30 × 5 sets

5 × 4 @ **65%**

Day 2 — Shoulder Press

Every 2:00 × 4 sets

4 × 5 @ **62%**

Day 3 — Deadlift

Every 2:30 × 4 sets

4 × 5 @ **65%**

Day 4 — Cycling (C&J)

Every 1:00 (8:00)

3 Power Clean and Jerks (singles) @ **RPE 6**

WEEK 3 — BASE BUILD 2 (Jan 19, 2026)

Your focus: add a little load, but keep movement quality #1.

Day 1 — Back Squat

Every 2:30 × 5

5 × 4 @ **70%**

Day 2 — Shoulder Press

Every 2:00 × 4

4 × 4 @ **65%**

Day 3 — Deadlift

Every 2:30 × 4

4 × 4 @ **70%**

Day 4 — Cycling (Snatch)

Every 1:00 (10:00)

2 Touch-and-Go Power Snatch + 2 Overhead Squat @ **RPE 6–7**

WEEK 4 — INTENSITY BUILD (Jan 26, 2026)

Your focus: first heavier exposure. Still submaximal. **No grinders.**

Day 1 — Back Squat

Every 2:00 × 4

4 × 3 @ **75%**

Day 2 — Shoulder Press

Every 2:00 × 4

4 × 3 @ **70%**

Day 3 — Deadlift

Every 2:00 × 4

4 × 3 @ **75%**

Day 4 — Cycling (C&J)

Every 1:00 (8:00)

1 Clean and Jerk @ **RPE 7**

WEEK 5 — INTENSITY PEAK (Feb 2, 2026)

Your focus: heaviest work of Part 1. Controlled doubles.

Day 1 — Back Squat

Every 2:30 × 4

4 × 2 @ **80–82%**

Day 2 — Shoulder Press

Every 2:00 × 5

5 × 2 @ **75%**

Day 3 — Deadlift

Every 2:30 × 4

4 × 2 @ **80–82%**

Day 4 — Cycling (Snatch)

Every 2:00 (10:00)

2 Touch-and-Go Power Snatch + 1 Overhead Squat @ **RPE 7**

WEEK 6 — DELOAD (Feb 9, 2026)

Your focus: get fresh. Move fast, hit great positions.

Day 1 — Back Squat

Every 2:00 × 4

4 × 3 @ **65%**

Day 2 — Shoulder Press

Every 1:30 × 4

4 × 3 @ **60%**

Day 3 — Deadlift

Every 2:00 × 4

4 × 3 @ **65%**

Day 4 — Clean & Jerk

Every 1:00 (10:00)

1 Clean + Jerk @ **RPE 6**

PART 2 — MAINTAINER → POST-OPEN MAX (Weeks 7–12)

WEEK 7 — PRE-OPEN CONTROL (Feb 16, 2026)

Your focus: reduce fatigue and feel fresh going into the Open.

Back Squat: Every 2:00 × 4 → 4 × 3 @ **70%**

Shoulder Press: Every 1:30 × 4 → 4 × 3 @ **65%**

Deadlift: Every 2:00 × 4 → 4 × 3 @ **70%**

Cycling (Snatch): Every 1:00 (10:00) → 3 Touch-and-Go Snatch @ **RPE 6**

WEEK 8 — OPEN WEEK 1 (Feb 23, 2026)

Your focus: technique + blood flow only. **Nothing heavy.**

Back Squat: 3 × 5 @ **60%**

Shoulder Press: 3 × 5 @ **55%**

Deadlift: 3 × 5 @ **60%**

Cycling (C&J): Every 1:00 (8:00) → 1 Clean + Jerk @ **RPE 5–6**

WEEK 9 — OPEN WEEK 2 (Mar 2, 2026)

Your focus: stay fresh for the Open.

Back Squat: 3 × 3 @ **62%**

Shoulder Press: 3 × 3 @ **57%**

Deadlift: 3 × 3 @ **62%**

Cycling (Snatch): Every 1:00 (8:00) → 2 Snatch (smooth singles) @ **RPE 5–6**

WEEK 10 — POST-OPEN REBUILD (Mar 9, 2026)

Your focus: moderate loading returns. Restore rhythm and positions.

Back Squat: Every 2:30 × 4 → 4 × 3 @ **72–75%**

Shoulder Press: Every 2:00 × 4 → 4 × 3 @ **70%**

Deadlift: Every 2:30 × 4 → 4 × 3 @ **72–75%**

Cycling (C&J): Every 1:00 (10:00) → 1 Clean and Jerk @ **RPE 7**

WEEK 11 — HEAVY PREP (Mar 16, 2026)

Your focus: final heavy exposures. **No misses.**

Back Squat: Every 3:00 × 3 → 3 × 2 @ **78–82%**

Shoulder Press: Every 3:00 × 3 → 3 × 2 @ **75–78%**

Deadlift: Every 3:00 × 3 → 3 × 2 @ **78–82%**

Cycling (Snatch): Every 2:00 (10:00) → 2 Touch-and-Go Power Snatch + 1 Snatch Balance @ **RPE 7**

WEEK 12 — RETEST WEEK (Mar 23, 2026)

Your focus: clean comparison to Week 1. You should feel powerful and ready.

Day 1 — Retest Back Squat

Warm-up: same as Week 1

Test: build to **1RM**

“FIGHT CLUB” Jan 5 – Mar 28, 2026

Cycle overview (12 weeks)



Day 2 — Retest Shoulder Press

Warm-up: same as Week 1

Test: **1RM Strict Press**

Day 3 — Retest Deadlift

Warm-up: same as Week 1

Test: build to **1RM**

Day 4 — Flush Cycling (C&J)

Every 1:00 (8:00)

2 Clean + Jerk @ **RPE 5–6**