

# Split Routines for Better Results in Your Training!

By Karen McCoy

**OK. So you're ready to hit the gym again after a hiatus,** and you're putting together a program, so you're naturally going to start with a whole body workout, right?

**Wrong.**

**Now answer this:** why are you doing a full-body workout? Is it because, a) that's what everyone does, b) that's the best way to ease back into things, c) that's what your trainer gave you, or d) you only want to train 3 days a week and you want to make sure you're getting the most bang for your buck.

OK. Let's back up. Which of these 4 scenarios would warrant a whole body program approach? You guessed it, none of them.

I'll recant here a bit, in some cases, working the whole body in one workout would be ok, but it's not essential you do so, even if you're out of shape and you want to ease into it.

I know I'm going to ruffle a few training feathers here, but I'll let you in on a little secret – if you want to make gains, the whole body workout has to go!

How can that be? Isn't that traditionally what you do, especially if you're just starting out?

Well, I always say just because it is tradition doesn't mean it is right. Besides, gyms encourage you to come back week after week because they're in the business of making money, so they start new clients out with a whole body program that lasts for weeks, even months. Sometimes clients never move away from it!

**Let's look at it another way.** You have 10 muscle groups on your body. When you do a full body routine, you're limited in how much effort you can put on each group given time and energy constraints. You're lucky if you can do 3 or 4 sets per body part – not enough to induce any real change. If you want decent results with the whole body routine, you'd have to do over 40 sets per workout *at least* which would have you training for well over an hour to get it done. (Generally, you want a single workout to consist of 20- 30 sets max and be done in under 1 hour).

Problem is, many people want to get their workouts done and over with and they think by doing a full body workout, you can hit all the muscles, get it over with, and be on your way. True, but you're working at such a low level that you won't see much in the way of results.

The other problem is you need to rest the muscles for 48 hours minimum before hitting them again, so with a full body workout, you're lucky if you can get 2-3 workouts a week in. Now for some people, this may be all you want, but if that's the case, you won't make much progress at all. You will at first, because anyone can make progress if they haven't moved their body in years, then suddenly they're training for a couple of days, but you top out pretty easy. Pretty soon, your body adjusts to this low intensity level of training and you're done.

**So what's the answer? The split routine.** In fact, all my clients start on a triple split routine (3 different workouts) and I switch back and forth between a triple (3-day) and a quadruple (4-day) split, depending on what season we're training in (yes, you have to train with the seasons). Why do I do this? Because I can get more volume on the muscles which results in more shaping and toning, hence more results faster!

Here's how: let's take the traditional Full Body workout and let's look at biceps. Remember, I have 10 muscles to work. That's a lot, and if I'm trying to keep it under 1 hour and keep it under 20-30 sets, that would mean only 2 or 3 sets can be done for biceps....you won't see much in the way of results with that little volume. Then, if you repeat the every



second or third day (remember, you've got to rest the working muscle), my biceps would get a total of only 6-9 sets per week! Heck, I do less than that in one bicep workout, and I work biceps sometimes twice in one week.

Now, with a split program, you've got three or four different workouts (see example below). Let's look at the 4-day split.

Day 4 is Arm day, so you only have 2 muscle groups to work (biceps and triceps), so you could easily do 6 or more sets for biceps. You do the same for triceps and the workout is done under 40 minutes! Naturally, a beginner would maybe only start with 4 - 6 sets and work up to more sets as they advance.

**With a split routine, you have more flexibility with training**, so you can do multiple days in a row or take a day off whenever you need and you won't go into over or under training like you would with the whole body routine (which is limited to max 3 days a week, and they have to be spaced out every 2 days at least). I can also train as many days of the week as I like, because with so many different workouts, each muscle is guaranteed to get the required 48 hour rest, and each muscle now can have a greater workload put on it, translating into better shaping and toning (and I'm spending the same amount of time or less per week training now. The only difference is I have to make 5 trips to the gym instead of only 3. If your only complaint is that the split routine means you're in the gym for more than 3 days a week, well, then you're not really serious about getting fit and changing the shape of your body).

So when I have a new clients, whether it's in person or on-line training, I put them right on a triple or quadruple split routine, but I too ease them into training by keeping the total number of sets down until their strength and recovery increases, but *the exercises remain the same for beginners or advanced*. They progress faster, they have a more flexible routine, they learn different kinds of exercises for each muscle group so they have more variety in their training!

So next time you hire a trainer, ask him or her to put you on a double or triple split program to start. If they're a good trainer, they'll know how to do it and they'll work with you to help you create a *rocking* physique!

**Sample Split Routines**

Triple Split	Quadruple (4-Day) Split
Day 1 - Legs and calves	Day 1 - Legs, Calves and Core
Day 2 - Chest, Back and core	Day 2 - Chest and Back
Day 3 - Shoulders and Arms	Day 3 - Shoulders, Glutes and Core
	Day 4 - Biceps and Triceps

**Note:** Intensity (volume) varies by number of sets, reps, and of course, amount of weight being used depending on client's experience level (Note: I do a 4, 5 or 6 day split routine depending on completion schedule.)

**Beginners** get 4 sets per muscle group, 15 reps

**Intermediate** get 6-8 sets per exercise, 12-15 reps

**Advanced** get 8-10 sets per muscle group

**Super Advanced (Competitive)** get 12-20 sets per muscle group, 8-12 reps

