



# HIGH TENSILE

**S T R E N G T H**

NEITHER BENT OR BROKEN

**GET STARTED  
GUIDE**

DEAN SOMERSET

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***DISCLAIMER:*** All physical activity programs contain specific risks, and as such you should contact your health care provider prior to assuming the risks of this program. Somerset Fitness & Marketing, LLC assumes no liability for any injuries that may be sustained during or result from attempting this program on your own.

# Why did I do this?

For a long time I knew I wanted to reach a larger audience than I could ever meet with in-person training. I began teaching workshops to other trainers to help them find better solutions to common problems, which lead to the development of seminars like Post Rehab Essentials, Ruthless Mobility, Advanced Core Training, and also my own website, [DeanSomerset.com](http://DeanSomerset.com).

This was great and I found it was having the desired effect of helping a lot of people. The downside I found was that while it was great to teach people some of the stuff I've come to learn, many people just want to be told what to do.

This is something I've seen with my own clientele. There are those who buy into the process entirely and follow all of my suggestions, seeing good progress along the way and more importantly taking ownership of their own health and fitness. There are also those who know they need to work out and will only do so when they have a session with me. Their eating is subpar, and other health habits are sorely lacking, but that's their own personal choice. They still show up to the gym for their sessions, follow along with the plan I lay out, and don't ask a lot of questions, using it more as a time to catch up like old friends, albeit friends in a slightly dysfunctional relationship where one pays the other to yell at them. I'm only slightly kidding here.

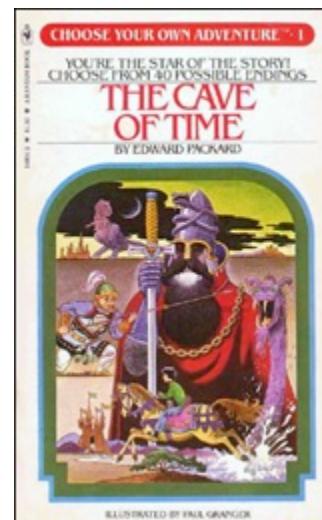
So this program was born out of a desire to help those looking for guidance, a plan to follow so to speak, so that they could just show up to the gym and get to work, knowing that they didn't have to overthink the workouts or design them themselves.

A big challenge with this idea is that everyone is different, yet showing similar situations, strengths, weaknesses, etc, and have different gym access. Some people are very athletic and some will be doing this as their very first exercise program. Some people may have a lot of mobility, no mobility, sore low backs with certain movements, are strong as an ox or are a dedicated cardio bunny. Some people will want to lose weight while others want to gain muscle. Do I make one program that pigeon holes everyone into the same program, or do I make it adaptable and malleable, much like a metal in a blacksmiths shop?

As a result of this I put together a self assessment so people could determine what workout program would be the best fit for them to make it as semi-custom as possible. Understandably, developing an individualized program for every single person who may purchase this product could prove to be next to impossible, but over the years I've found most people can fit well into a couple of groupings of abilities and movement characteristics.

The main idea of this program is to give people a “Choose Your Own Adventure” idea of exercise programming. You remember those old books, right? They gave you a couple of different scenarios to play out based on what you wanted to do. Do you go down into the cave or go back the way you came? Your decision would lead you to the next page of the story and the continuation, either to meet the knight who would fight you to your death or to the princess who needed saving.

This program is set up to give you a chance to pick a workout based not only on your own physical abilities, but also to what your goal set is (do you want to gain muscle or lose fat?), as well as how often you’re able to workout, and whether you have access to a commercial gym or would prefer to do more of a bodyweight home based workout.



The built-in variability of the program means you have 48 different programming options to pick from, and a simple self-assessment to figure out where to start. The assessment is the file marked **HTS Assessment Outline** in your main package, and will be where you go after reading this document to get you started. The assessment tells you where the story will start, but the rest is up to you.

Another big reason I wanted to put this program together is that most programs tend to focus on one or two things and leave everything else to the wayside. Say you want to get stronger. You start up on a powerlifting program and do nothing but barbell exercises. Your strength goes through the roof, but by the end you can’t touch your toes or scratch between your shoulders because you’ve neglected to train mobility. You probably also get winded climbing a flight of stairs because there’s no cardio training involved, so you’ve seen significant improvements in one dimension of health and a deficit in others. That doesn’t sound right.

Many manuals will tell you to see optimal benefits in something, you must train that specific entity and only that entity. I don’t agree with that very much. Sure, there’s a definite need to train strength to see improvements in strength, but there’s also a lot of benefits to strength from training mobility, and also from training endurance and metabolic systems. If you don’t have the shoulder mobility to grab a back squat, your shoulders are going to suffer every time you get under the bar, and will likely alter your position, leading to poor lifting performance. By having a better aerobic base, you can recover between sets much easier, meaning your training will be at a higher intensity and produce better results.

If you have a specialized sport like powerlifting, I get that. However, 99.99% of the population will never step on a competitive platform in their lives, so why should they train as a specialist when they are living as a generalist? I would rather involve some aspects of all types of fitness versus try to maximize only one or at best 2 at the expense of others. What good is squatting 500 pounds if you can’t get down and up from the floor to play with your kids? How fit are you if you can run a marathon but can’t carry grocery bags from the store to your car, or up to your apartment or into your house?

This was an idea that came out when I was walking my dogs alongside my wife one night. It just clicked. A semi-custom workout program that has a built-in assessment, goes for 6 months, has variability for those who need to go on vacation or travel for work, and helps people get fit, strong, mobile, athletic, and feel awesome. It sounds easy, but then putting up the 48 different pathways with 6 months of programming was definitely a challenge. Filming all 400 custom videos was ridiculous. Running a beta group through the program to make sure it was at least somewhat effective was a massive challenge. All told, this took over 15 months to put everything together with way more hours than I would care to calculate, and I couldn't be happier with how everything turned out.

## **How Is The Program Set Up?**

The program is set up as a progressive 6 month program with each month building off the previous month. Each month is set up as a 4-week cycle using a blend of linear periodization and daily undulating periodization. What this means is each week of the program repeats itself for a 4 week cycle, while each day of the week focuses on somewhat different skills and demands.

Month 1 is set up as more of an introduction with some movements designed to challenge the core, balance, and alignment. Imagine setting up for deadlifts, a very high demand exercise for the spine if not controlled, before we had a chance to go through something like how to brace your abs and maintain a neutral spine? Also, imagine trying to squat for some appreciable depth without doing some sort of squat pattern training to help you see what the available depth you could achieve would be? There would be round backs and quarter-squats everywhere!!

Month 2 and 3 start introducing more of the compound lifts and higher skill level exercises, and also increase the relative intensity and loading for each exercise. Month 3 is the only month that has a 5 week cycle, and that fifth week is known as a "deload."

A deload is a concept used in strength training that involves essentially lower volume and lighter loading to still get in some exercise, but to give your body a bit of a recovery from the previous phase and to give some time to prepare for the next phase. In many cases, this will involve a reduction in total volume by 30-50%, and a decrease in loading by about 20-30%. For example, imagine an exercise involving 4 sets of 10 reps, and you can do this with 100 pounds. That's 40 reps of total volume. The deload would involve reducing the volume by 12-20 reps (30-50%), meaning you would now do either 2 sets of 10 or even 3 sets of 8 to hit that volume, and the weight would be reduced to 70-80 pounds.

Many people will say "well, that's too easy. I want to feel like I'm getting a good workout and I don't think this is going to get me the results I want."

In honesty, the deload has little to do with the muscles, and everything to do with the other connective tissue and the nervous system. Muscles have built in satellite cells that help them recover rapidly from the workouts you're putting them through, which means 2-3 days of



recovery is all that the muscles need to get back in tip top shape and toss around more plates than a dishwasher at Denny's.

The ligaments and tendons don't have these specialized cells, and thus take a little longer to recover from workouts that are very strenuous. They can usually take more during the workouts than muscles before they get sore, but will take a lot longer to recover. From this standpoint, the reduced loading and volume during the deload is more beneficial to the connective tissues that don't recover as easily, and helps to keep them healthy for the following phases, plus give you a good mental break for a short time. Don't worry, you won't "lose fitness" in a week if you're still getting in some workouts. In fact, you'll likely have better performance from being more rested and recovered.

The volume in month 4 is a significant increase compared to the first 3 months, and months 5 and 6 see a large peak in loading to help you see some significant gains in strength, muscle growth, and performance after the initial adaptation phase (months 1 to 3) are completed.

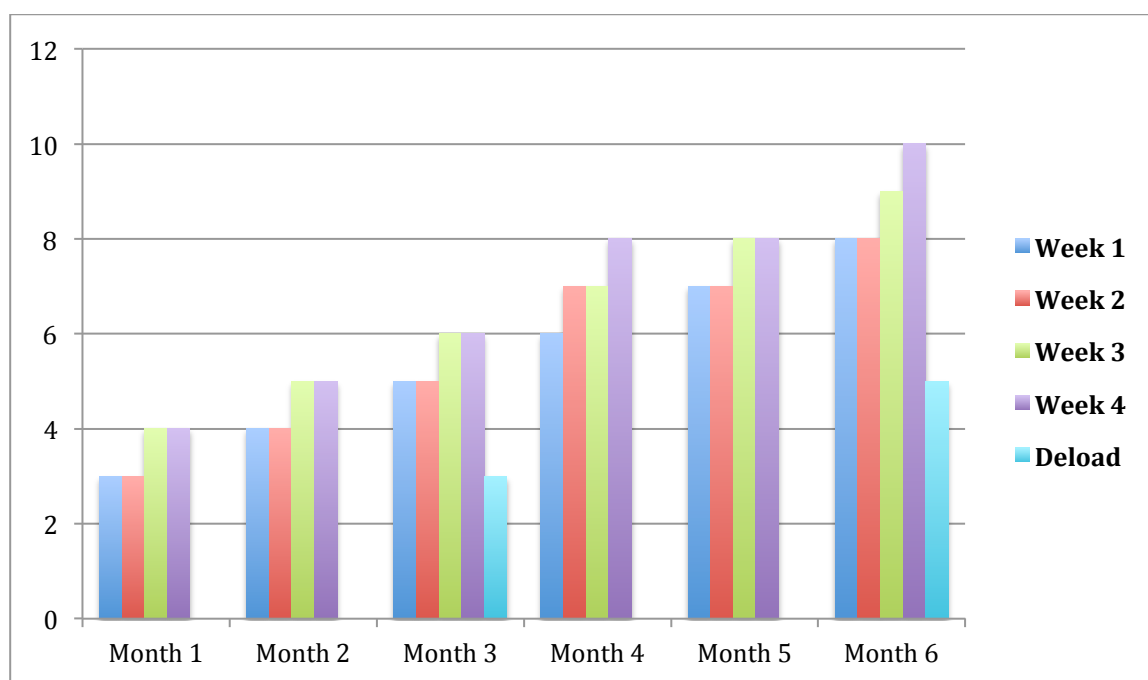


Figure 1: Example of Volume & Intensity Distribution

You can see the total volume and intensity increases significantly during the program, and a lot of that is due to the fact that you will be getting noticeably stronger over the next 6 months, plus able to tolerate a higher volume of work compared to the first month. There were people who went through the test group who were able to add 100 pounds to their deadlift or squat. And the men did well, too.

## Equipment Needed

High Tensile Strength is set up to use equipment that is commonly found in any commercial gym. The basics will include bands, barbells, dumbbells, kettlebells, an adjustable cable set, a stability/swiss ball, and either a smith machine or TRX. Pretty much every big box gym you could go to would have these pieces, and if not there's easy substitutions to help you do every exercise effectively.

Ideally, the space you use should have an assortment of kettlebells, from 4kg and up, depending on your strength. If your gym does not have kettlebells, you can do many of the movements using a dumbbell instead. If the facility you use doesn't have free barbells, as in some Planet Fitness facilities or other such chains, you could definitely switch to utilize a smith machine. The benefits will be similar, but nothing quite compares to the type of control needed to work with a loaded barbell.

For cable systems, any column that can be adjusted from high to low and vice versa would work. Ideally the weight selection should be enough of a range to allow you to successfully accomplish all of the exercises listed. Free Motion makes great machines that can go as low as 2.5 pounds and as high as 75 pounds per side, and many other manufacturers make similar weight ranges.

For a stability ball, many gyms have dozens of these, in varying sizes and states of inflation. In most cases, the size of the ball isn't too important, as each size will give you different challenges. I could spend the rest of this section sounding like Tom Brady talking about what he likes in his balls and how inflated or deflated they should be, but let's just simply say that use what's available, and if it doesn't feel right, find another one to use. It's an incredibly vague statement, I know, but it's meant to give freedom by a lack of structure.

For the home-based "Bodyweight" programs, there's very little required. In many cases, it will just be you, maybe a bench or object you could lay down on or hold on to for support. In later phases of the program, there will be some dumbbells used, and if you don't have them they are easy to find and buy, or you could even make a set using 1 gallon milk jugs.

If you fill a gallon jug with water, the jug will weigh approximately 10 pounds. 2 of these will work effectively as a light set of cheap and self-made dumbbells if you don't feel like buying weights. If you wanted more weight, you could fill the jugs with sand or small rocks.

A good, very adaptable set of dumbbells you could get if you're looking to invest in a small home gym would be an adjustable set of Power Block dumbbells. These are available from pretty much every large scale retailer like Wal Mart, Target, or other such stores and usually retail for less than \$100. More upscale versions could be a few hundred dollars, and if you're training hard with larger weights they would be a great option to go with. They should last for a lifetime, which makes them a very sound investment.



The only other pieces of equipment you may want to invest in would be an exercise band. These are also available relatively inexpensively from Wal Mart or other retailers, but higher quality ones can be found at most fitness equipment stores. Good ones will usually retail for between \$10-20 and come in an assortment of tensions. The great thing about a band is it can also travel extremely well whenever you have to travel for business or go on vacation, and helps you have a very portable gym, wherever you are in the world.

If you want a yoga mat to have on the ground to keep you from being on the hard floor, that would be great as well, but a towel would work just as well. Lastly, a basic foam roller and lacrosse ball can make a big difference in helping to work out tight muscles and get some blood flow to sore areas from previous workouts. Essentially, the entire home gym set up could come in at only \$100, and would only take up a very small corner of your space.

If you can't afford to get these small pieces of equipment, you could always do the movements without the band and still get a benefit. The band movements can still be effective without the resistance, although the resistance is best. The home made dumbbells can be a good option and are very low cost, plus you can drink the water after you're done, or during the workout and have decreasing resistance from the first set to the last!



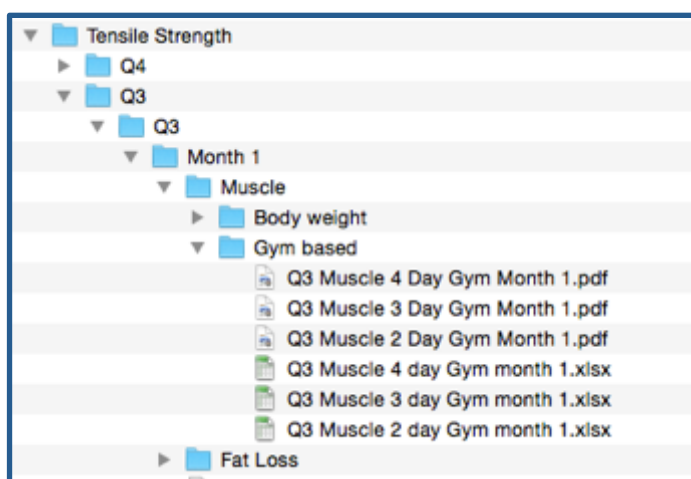
## Steps to Take to Get the Workout Started

**Step 1:** You've opened this manual. Good for you!!

**Step 2:** Open the file titled "HTS Assessment Outline" to determine which of the 4 Quartiles would work best for you. Follow along to create a composite score of your movements, and use the assessment video to determine whether you would be best in an extension or flexion program, and also whether you would respond to more of a higher mobility or lower mobility program.



**Step 3:** Once you've determined your Quartile, Open the folder corresponding to your quartile, whether that's Q1, Q2, Q3, or Q4. In there, you will find the workouts, organized by month and separated by whether you want to gain muscle or lose fat, work out in a gym or with primarily bodyweight, and whether you have time for 4, 3, or 2 days per week.



The workouts come in 2 different file types, an excel file to help you track your workouts without printing anything, and also a PDF if you don't have access to an excel file. The workouts are given as one week. To get to the full 4 weeks per month, just make 4 copies of the workout and take it with you.

A benefit of this filing system is you can easily look up corresponding workouts if needed based on whether your scenario changes. For instance, let's say you do most of your workouts as the bodyweight series, but you took a work trip and the hotel you're at has a full gym. Simply take the corresponding gym based workout to your current month, schedule, and goal set to keep on pace, plus throw in some new variables. For when you go from a gym based scenario to not having access to a gym, you can do the same thing with the bodyweight workouts.

**Step 4:** Review the workouts and all of the associated videos to see what is required. Each video is a custom coaching video that will help give you the finer points and cues to help you get the most out of the exercise while also identifying what you should try to avoid with the exercise.



	Sets	Reps	Weight	RPE/10	Rest
<b>Warm up</b>					
<a href="#">SMR lower body</a>	NA	1	NA	2	NA
<a href="#">SMR back arm line</a>	NA	1	NA	2	NA
<a href="#">Side plank</a>	NA	1	3 x 10 secs	6	NA
<a href="#">Foam roller T-spine extensions</a>	212	1	12	3	NA
<a href="#">ITYW shoulder raise</a>	212	1	10 each	7	NA
<a href="#">band pull aparts</a>	212	1	20	6	NA
<b>Working sets</b>					
1A <a href="#">Bench supported row</a>	212	4	8	7	NA

Once you've opened the workouts and seen what's involved, checked out the videos, and found where you're going to start, you'll need to know what all of the numbers mean. Open the file titled "Cracking the Workout Code" to learn how the different numbers and variables are arranged so that you can maximize your time in your workout and not spend time looking up what 212 in the Tempo section means.

**Step 5:** The workouts aren't set in stone. If there's an exercise that uses equipment you don't have available, or is either too advanced for you or doesn't challenge you sufficiently, you can change the exercise easily. Open the file titled "Exercise Glossary" to find a listing of the over 200

exercises used in all quartiles and all programs, and also a harder version and easier version of each exercise, and all arranged alphabetically.

**Step 6:** Get to work!! You have the workouts specifically set out for your own abilities, goals, schedule, and even type of facility, the flexibility to adjust exercises as needed, and the coaching videos to help you get exactly the right benefit from the entire thing. Now you just have to show up, follow the program, and get all the benefits.

If going through the workouts, you find they're a bit long, there's a couple of options you could involve. First, you could be spending too long on rest breaks, or moving with a tempo that is too slow. Try to keep yourself on pace as much as possible to get through the workouts efficiently. Most will be between 50-75 minutes long, if kept on schedule. If you find this timeframe just isn't happening, you can reduce the total volume of each workout by simply chopping one set off of each exercise in the main workout.

If you have any questions about the workouts, the process for selecting your workout, or about specific equipment, movements, or problems you might have with the workouts, please feel free to email me at [dsomerset@worldhealth.ca](mailto:dsomerset@worldhealth.ca) and I will do everything possible to help you get the best benefit from the workouts.

Yours in strength;

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DS', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Dean Somerset  
High Tensile Strength creator.