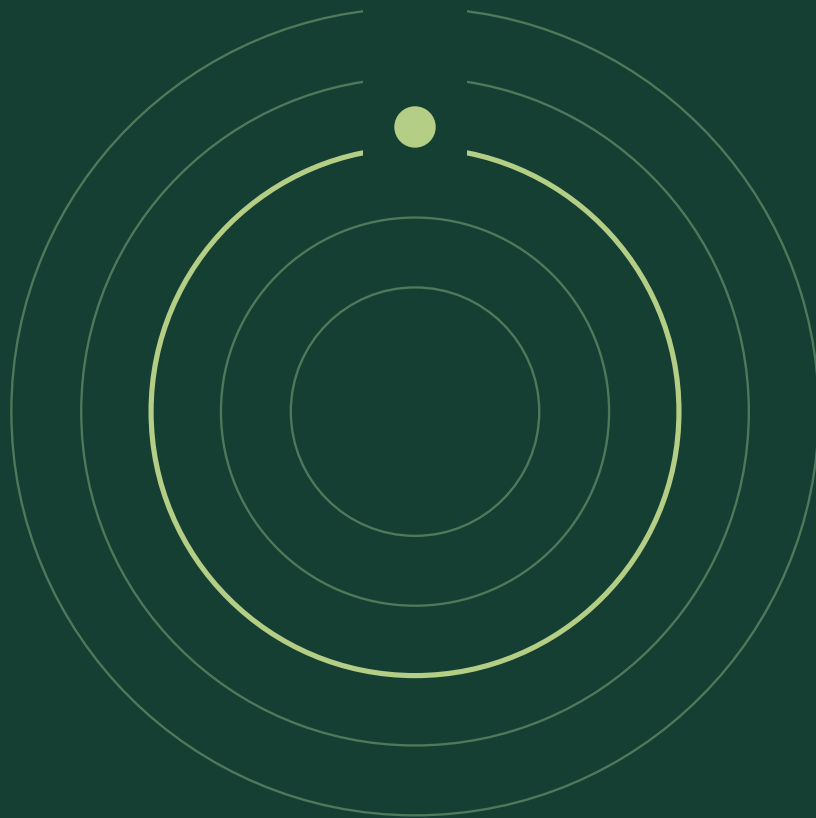

Keeping Clients Training Between Check-Ins



Two planned sessions and one optional session give low motivation clients a routine that can still fit a crowded week.

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The Gap Between Check Ins

A missed session is rarely caused by a lack of information. The programme may already contain exercise videos, technique notes and a carefully built progression, yet a client still opens the app at 19:40, sees a full session and postpones it until the week disappears. Sending another explanation usually gives them one more thing to avoid.

For an online strength coach, the awkward part is not writing the programme. It is the quiet stretch between check ins, when motivation dips, work expands, a missed session feels like evidence of failure and the client stops replying. The coaching relationship then gets pulled towards chasing, reassurance and fresh content, rather than training. A routine can be technically sound and still ask for more certainty, time and energy than a low motivation week can offer.

The Strength That Fits System gives that gap a practical structure. It treats consistency not as a personality trait or a library of reminders, but as a decision design problem: what counts as enough, what happens when the plan slips, and what information returns to the next conversation. The result is not a busier service. It is a clearer agreement that keeps training visible when the ideal week does not arrive.

1. Set the Minimum, Not the Ideal Week

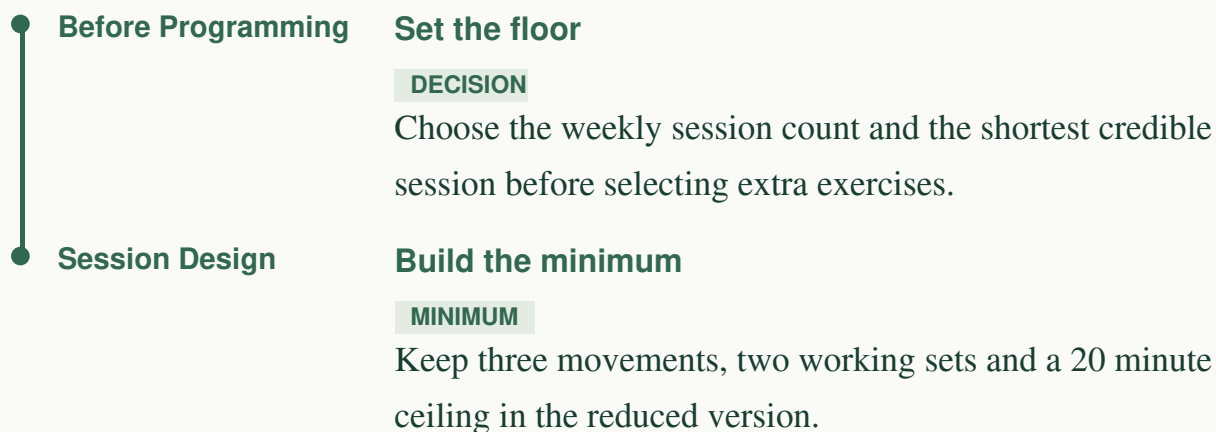
"A smaller session is not failure. It is the agreement working under pressure."

The programme is often designed around the week that looks good on paper: two complete strength sessions, an optional third, and enough energy to follow every instruction. That is the wrong starting point for a low motivation client. The useful question is not what training would be excellent. It is what commitment remains credible when work, sleep and attention are poor.

"A smaller session is not failure. It is the agreement working under pressure."

Define the minimum weekly commitment before adding optional work. In the Strength That Fits System, make two sessions the planned structure, then set the smallest acceptable version of each session. A minimum might be 20 minutes, three exercises and two working sets, recorded in the training log. The optional third session stays outside the agreement, rather than quietly becoming a missed obligation.

FROM IDEAL WEEK TO MINIMUM COMMITMENT



- **After the Minimum** **Add optional work**
OPTIONAL
Offer the third session and extra sets only after the required version is clear.
- **Programme Review** **Test the agreement**
CHECK
Remove any element that makes the minimum exceed the clients available time or equipment.

The common mistake is to call a full session the minimum, then label anything shorter as a compromise. That makes the first difficult week feel like failure before training begins. Write the reduced version into the programme itself, with its time limit, exercise count and recording method. Optional work should feel like capacity, not debt.

Someone who plans two 60 minute sessions and treats every shortened session as a miss can define a 20 minute version with three exercises. Training remains visible during crowded weeks.

SET THE FLOOR

Minimum commitment check before publishing: name 2 weekly sessions, set a 20 minute ceiling, choose 3 exercises, define 2 working sets, then place optional work after the minimum.

2. Choose One Action, Not the Whole Week

"A full programme creates choices. One agreed action creates a starting point."

Immediately after a check in, the tempting move is to resend the programme, add encouragement and explain every session. That creates another planning task. The useful move is narrower: choose the single training action most likely to happen before the next conversation.

"A full programme creates choices. One agreed action creates a starting point."

The error here is not insufficient detail. It is asking a low motivation client to hold three sessions, exercise choices, progression and recovery decisions in working memory. Record one clear action while the check in is still open, then place it in the same app or message thread within 24 hours.

✓

- Name one session and its start window, such as Tuesday at 18:30
- Set the smallest credible version, such as two lifts at RPE 6
- Define completion as the agreed action, logged in the app

✗

- Restate all two planned sessions and the optional third
- Prescribe the full session as the only acceptable outcome
- Make completion depend on finishing every exercise

Use this decision rule: if the action cannot fit a 30 minute window and be described in one sentence, it is still a programme, not a next action. Keep the exercise selection

familiar. Change only one variable, such as session length, start time or number of sets. Do not use the check in to redesign the whole week.

The next action is a bridge, not a verdict on commitment. A precise agreement leaves less room for postponement and gives the following check in something concrete to review.

Someone who leaves each check in with three full sessions can instead agree one 25 minute session, two familiar lifts and a Tuesday 18:30 start. The following conversation begins with a recorded action, not another explanation.

CHOOSE THE ACTION

Decision question: which one training action can be completed before the next check in, within 30 minutes, using familiar exercises?

"A smaller session is not failure. It is the agreement working under pressure."

3. Agree the Return, Not the Apology

"An apology explains the gap. A return agreement preserves the relationship."

A missed session becomes a coaching problem when the client has no agreed way back. By 19:40, the session itself may feel smaller than the shame attached to missing it, so silence protects them from having to explain. The error here is not poor motivation. It is leaving the response undecided.

"An apology explains the gap. A return agreement preserves the relationship."

Set the response before the first missed session. In Strength That Fits, the agreement should answer four practical points:

- A missed session is recorded as information, not a character judgement.
- The client sends one brief status message within 24 hours, even if the message is only "missed it".
- The coach replies with one return option, not a new lesson, revised programme or motivational speech.
- The next training decision is made at the next check in, using the existing record rather than an apology.

SHAME BASED RESPONSE	CONTACT PRESERVING RESPONSE
Explain why the session was missed	State what happened in one sentence
Recover the full session at the next opportunity	Choose the next available minimum session
Send more content to restore confidence	Keep the reply to one action and one time

Use a 24 hour rule for contact, then a 48 hour rule for the training decision. If the missed session is the first slip, offer the next minimum session as written. If two planned sessions are missed in the same week, pause progression and bring the pattern to the next check in. Do not add optional work to compensate.

The right question is not "How do we make them feel better?" It is "What response makes contact easier and training visible again?" A calm return agreement removes the performance of remorse. It keeps the relationship available for the next useful decision.

Someone who misses Tuesday's session and waits three days to reply can use a pre agreed 24 hour message: "Missed Tuesday, no replacement planned." The coach confirms the next minimum session within one reply. Contact resumes without a longer explanation.

RETURN AGREEMENT

Return agreement: within 24 hours, record the miss, name the next available minimum session, send one brief message, then bring repeated slips to the next check in.

4. Record the Week, Not Every Missed Session

The training record is not a diary of failure. It is a small signal system for the quiet days between check ins. The useful record shows three things: effort, completion and drift. It should take less than 3 minutes after a session, not become another piece of coaching content.

The common mistake is recording only whether the planned workout happened. That creates a blunt result, completed or missed, while hiding the difference between a shortened session at RPE 7 and a full session performed at RPE 10. The first may be workable. The second may be a warning.

- ☐ Record the session date and the number of exercises completed
- ☐ Write one effort score from RPE 1 to RPE 10
- ☐ Mark whether the minimum session was completed, shortened or missed
- ☐ Flag two consecutive changes in timing, exercise order or effort

Use one row per session in the client's existing tracker, such as Google Sheets, Trainerize or a paper log. Keep the fields fixed for 14 days. A changing form produces changing evidence, while a fixed record makes drift visible.

Read the record once during the week, not after every notification. Look for a pattern across two entries: later start times, repeated RPE 9 or 10 scores, fewer completed exercises, or a minimum session that keeps becoming shorter. That is [DRIFT], not a request for another explanation.

The purpose of Strength That Fits is not to collect perfect data. It is to preserve a clear

picture of what training looked like in an ordinary week. A three minute record often tells more than a longer message written after the week has vanished.

Someone who records only completed or missed opens the tracker after each session and adds date, RPE, completed exercises and session status. After 14 days, the pattern shows effort rising while completion remains steady.

WEEKLY RECORD

Record four items after each session for 14 days: date, RPE, completed exercises and session status. Review the rows once midweek for repeated changes.

5. Adjust the Programme, Not the Client

"Reviewing the record is not judging the week. It is editing the agreement."

The next check in is not a progress report. It is a design meeting. The training record shows where the current agreement met real life, so the useful output is one programme adjustment and one minimum commitment for the coming week.

"Reviewing the record is not judging the week. It
is editing the agreement."

The error here is not a client who needs more encouragement. It is a coach who treats every missed or shortened session as a motivation problem. A record showing one completed session, one abandoned session and no optional work does not call for another content drop. It calls for a smaller or better placed agreement.

NEXT CHECK IN

What single programme detail created the most friction?

Name the exercise, session length, day or delivery point

What one adjustment will be made before the next check in?

Change one variable only, such as volume, order or timing

What is the next minimum commitment?

State two planned sessions, or the smallest credible alternative

Use three rules when reviewing the record:

- Change one variable. Reduce a 45 minute session to 25 minutes, move the session to a reliable day, or remove one accessory exercise. Do not rebuild the whole programme.
- Tie the adjustment to evidence. "Too busy" is a starting description. "The session was opened at 19:40 and stopped after the second exercise" gives a usable design clue.
- Set the next minimum before adding optional work. The agreement might remain two planned sessions, with the optional third session kept outside the success measure.

The record earns its value when it changes the next week. A clear adjustment prevents the check in becoming a review of excuses, while the minimum commitment keeps the Strength That Fits System anchored to action.

A training record shows that the first session was completed, while the second was opened late and stopped after two exercises. The coach shortens the second session to 25 minutes and keeps two planned sessions as the minimum. The next check in has clearer evidence.

NEXT CHECK IN

Decision question: what single programme adjustment would make the next two planned sessions more credible, without adding another content drop?

What Changes Over Time

01

Week 1

Each client receives one minimum session, one clear action and an agreed way back after a missed session.

02

Week 2

Training records show completed minimums and returns, rather than a running list of missed sessions.

03

Week 3

Check ins contain clearer evidence about workload, friction and whether the programme needs adjustment.

04

Week 4

Clients spend less time deciding what counts and more time completing the next credible training action.

The Next Step

You now have a five part structure for the quiet stretch between check ins. It gives each client a minimum that can survive a crowded week, one action to prioritise, an agreed return after a missed session, a useful weekly record and a clear basis for adjusting the programme. The point is not to add more coaching material. It is to make the existing plan easier to use when motivation and time are limited.

This does not decide the right minimum for every client, rewrite every session or resolve technical, medical or programming questions. It also does not replace a proper review of exercise selection, loading, recovery and communication. Those decisions still need attention when the record shows repeated friction or a change in circumstances.

The next paid step is an implementation review of the system across your current coaching service. Bring a sample programme, check in process and training record. The work can identify where clients face unnecessary decisions, set practical minimums, define return rules and shape the information that comes back to coaching conversations.

A simpler agreement can give the next session somewhere to begin.

STRENGTH THAT FITS SYSTEM

Strength That Fits System

1. SET THE MINIMUM, NOT THE IDEAL WEEK

Minimum commitment check before publishing: name 2 weekly sessions, set a 20 minute ceiling, choose 3 exercises, define 2 working sets, then place optional work after the minimum.

2. CHOOSE ONE ACTION, NOT THE WHOLE WEEK

Decision question: which one training action can be completed before the next check in, within 30 minutes, using familiar exercises?

3. AGREE THE RETURN, NOT THE APOLOGY

Return agreement: within 24 hours, record the miss, name the next available minimum session, send one brief message, then bring repeated slips to the next check in.

4. RECORD THE WEEK, NOT EVERY MISSED SESSION

Record four items after each session for 14 days: date, RPE, completed exercises and session status. Review the rows once midweek for repeated changes.

5. ADJUST THE PROGRAMME, NOT THE CLIENT

Decision question: what single programme adjustment would make the next two planned sessions more credible, without adding another content drop?

STRENGTH THAT FITS SYSTEM

Keeping Clients Training Between Check-Ins