

# In-Season Strength: 4-Session Rotation (2 per week)

**Format:** 2 sessions per week, 25 to 30 minutes each, before Z2 endurance rides. A full cycle through all 4 sessions takes 2 weeks. **Same goals, more variety:** Core leads every session, so it stays a true 2x/week even as the other patterns rotate. Heavy bilateral legs anchor two days. Upper body is maintained for posture. Olympic and barbell-complex work add power and engagement.

**Note on frequency:** At 2 sessions per week, each movement pattern is trained once every 2 weeks. That is at the low end for strength maintenance but within the window (you can go ~3 weeks per pattern and still hold it). It is too low for Olympic-lift skill development, so treat the clean work as staying familiar, not getting better. Make skill a focus in the offseason.

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## Principles

- **Core every session, anti-movement focus.** Across the 2-week rotation you cover anti-rotation, anti-extension, anti-lateral flexion, dynamic control, and low-back endurance. No crunches.
  - **Heavy legs with explosive intent.** Squat day and hinge day, driven up fast. Bar speed is the power stimulus.
  - **Olympic and CrossFit-style work stays submaximal and low-rep.** Skill and power, full rest, never a gasser. Technique before load.
  - **Maintenance loads, 1 to 2 reps in reserve.** Stacks before Z2 only, never before a VO2, threshold, or race-sim day.
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## Warm-up (3 min, every session)

- Band pull-aparts x 15
- Banded lateral walks x 10 each direction
- Leg swings, arm circles, 5 scap push-ups
- 1 to 2 ramp sets of the day's main lift

## Session 1 — Squat + Core

Block	Exercise	Sets x Reps	Notes
Heavy leg	<b>Back Squat</b> (or <b>Front Squat</b> , alternate weekly)	3-4 x 5	Explode up. Rack + safeties
Superset	<b>Pull-up</b> (band as needed)	3 x 6-8	Pull / posture
	<b>Single-leg RDL</b> (DB or KB)	3 x 8 / leg	Form lift, hips square
Core (2-3 rounds)	<b>Barbell Rollout</b> or <b>Plank / Side Plank / Pallof Press</b>	8-10 / 30-40s / 10 per side	Anti-extension, anti-lateral, anti-rotation

## Session 2 — Olympic Power + Core

Block	Exercise	Sets x Reps	Notes
Power	<b>Hang Power Clean</b>	5 x 3	Submaximal (~60-70%). Bar speed over load. Reset each rep
Push	<b>Push Press</b>	4 x 4	Drive from the legs
Plyo	<b>Box Jump</b> (20") or <b>KB Swing</b>	4 x 3 / 3 x 12	Step down off the box, do not jump down
Core (2-3 rounds)	<b>Hanging Knee Raise / Suitcase Carry</b>	8-10 / 20-30 m per side	Dynamic trunk, anti-lateral flexion

## Session 3 — Hinge + Pull/Push + Core

Block	Exercise	Sets x Reps	Notes
Heavy leg	<b>Romanian Deadlift</b> (default) or <b>Deadlift</b>	3 x 5-6	RDL most weeks for lower residual fatigue
Superset	<b>One-arm DB Row</b>	3 x 8-10 / arm	Posture anchor
	<b>Bench Press</b> (DBs, or barbell in rack)	3 x 8	DBs until 45s feel easy, then barbell

Core (2-3 rounds)	<b>Turkish Get-up (KB) / Hollow Hold / Superman</b>	3 per side / 20-30s / 20-30s	Full-body stability, anti-extension, low-back
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## Session 4 — Barbell Complex (CrossFit-style) + Core

Block	Exercise	Sets x Reps	Notes
Complex	<b>Barbell Complex</b> , unbroken, rest 90s between rounds	4-5 rounds	Light to moderate, 2-3 reps in reserve, not for time
	Per round: Deadlift x5, Hang Clean x4, Front Squat x4, Push Press x4, Bent Row x5		Same bar, do not set it down mid-round
Optional	<b>Bulgarian Split Squat</b> or <b>Step-up</b>	3 x 8 / leg	If time allows
Core (2 rounds)	<b>Pallof Press / Side Plank with reach</b>	10 per side / 30s per side	Anti-rotation, anti-lateral flexion

**Complex loading:** One bar, one weight, the entire round. No plate changes, no setting it down. The load is capped by your weakest link, the push press, so pick a weight you can press for 4 clean reps with 2 to 3 in reserve. It will feel easy on the deadlift, front squat, and row, which is correct. Start with the empty Ohio bar or bar plus a pair of 10s or 25s to groove the transitions, then build conservatively.

## Lower-back decompression: the dead hang (finish every session)

Every session in this rotation loads your spine, so close each one by hanging from the pull-up bar. Passive hanging lets gravity pull your pelvis and legs down, creating traction that opens the vertebrae slightly so the discs rehydrate and the lower-back muscles release.

### How to do it:

- Use the 20" box to reach the bar. Overhand grip, hands a touch wider than shoulders.
- Lift your feet, let your legs hang straight beneath you, relax. Just enough core tension to stop swinging.

- Hold 20 to 45 seconds, 2 to 3 sets, accumulating about 60 to 90 seconds total.
- Step back down onto the box. Never drop or jump down.

**If grip gives out first:** keep your feet lightly on the box, let it carry some weight, then progressively unweight. Grip is usually the limiter, not the back.

**Consistency beats duration.** Short hangs done often beat occasional long ones, so a 30-second hang on rest days or after long rides is a good habit too. Benefits usually show within 2 to 4 weeks.

**Caution:** if you get radiating or worsening leg pain during or after a hang, stop and check with your doctor. Hanging suits general compression and stiffness, not every acute back issue.

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## Weekly placement (the part that protects your riding)

You do 2 sessions per week, so the 4 sessions span a 2-week cycle. Alternate heavy and technical so each week gets one of each instead of clustering both heavy days in one week:

- **Week 1:** Session 1 (squat) and Session 2 (Olympic power)
- **Week 2:** Session 3 (hinge) and Session 4 (complex)

Within each week:

- Put the 2 sessions on different days, both before your easiest rides.
- Keep them off the days before VO<sub>2</sub>, threshold, or race-sim sessions.
- Squat (S1) and hinge (S3) pre-fatigue the legs. Fine for Z2, never before intervals.
- Sessions 2 and 4 are the technical, nervous-system-heavy days. Give them the most buffer from hard bike work.

A workable layout if you ride quality on Tue/Sat: lift Mon and Thu, both before easy or Z2 rides. We can tune this to your actual week.

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## Time management

Each session is built for 25 to 30 min. If one runs long, trim in this order:

1. Core circuit to 2 rounds (never below 2)

2. Optional or accessory work (S4 Bulgarian, S1 single-leg RDL)

3. A set off the upper superset

Never cut the main lift or the core below 2 rounds.

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## **Olympic and complex work, safety notes**

- Learn the hang power clean light before loading. Film yourself or get eyes on it.
  - Drop the bar from the hang, do not lower it under control when heavy. Your bumpers and mat handle it.
  - The complex is a skill and power tool. If your heart rate is spiking and form is degrading, the load is too high or the reps too many. Back off.
  - If any technical lift feels off on a given day, swap it for KB swings or goblet squats and move on. No ego before a ride.
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## **Race-week adjustments**

- Pull strength back 7 to 10 days before a priority race (e.g., Dirty Dino). Drop to one light session early in the week, nothing in the final 5 to 6 days. Cut the Olympic and complex days first.
  - Never strength-train the 48 hours before a race.
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## **Bridge to your offseason block**

When ride volume drops, push the Olympic and complex work toward heavier loads and more skill volume, add progressive overload to the main lifts, and increase frequency so you hit all four sessions more often. This rotation becomes your strength base rather than maintenance. The anti-movement core stays year-round.