

# **Minimalist Muscle**

***More Muscle In Less Time For Busy Guys***

**by Eric Bach**



**Module Two: Exercise Modification Guide**

## **Disclaimer**

This eBook provides information. It does not constitute medical, fitness, dietary or legal advice. Eric Bach and Bach Performance LLC will not assume any liability or be held responsible for any form of injury, personal loss, or illness caused by the utilization of this information.

***You must get your physician's approval before beginning this program.***

Ask your physician for a complete physical examination, especially if you high cholesterol, high blood pressure, are overweight, or have diabetes.

Discuss all dietary changes with your physician or a registered dietician.

This exercise and nutrition program is not a substitute for treatment, meal plans, prescriptions or professional advice made by your physician, dietician or other health care professional.

These recommendations are not medical guidelines to treat, diagnose, or cure any illness. This program is designed for individuals 18 years old and older in good health. All forms of exercise pose some inherent risks. The publishers and editors advise all readers of this eBook to take full responsibility for the risks of exercise and stay within their limits. Ensure all equipment being used is well maintained and in good shape. That means safe barbells, tightened dumbbells, strong collars, and the like

*Do not take risks beyond your level of experience and abilities.*

Don't lift heavy weights if you're alone, injured, fatigued, and inexperienced. Ask for instruction and a spotter for lifts to maximize safety. If you experience lightheadedness, dizziness, or shortness of breath while exercising, stop immediately and consult a physician.

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# Exercise Substitution Guide

I get it.

Sometimes you're traveling, stuck in a lousy hotel gym.

Or worse, just a gym-less hotel.

Or you're trying out a new gym and have your workout ready to go. But you find cleans and deadlifts trigger the dreaded "lunk alarm."

Or you have a pre-existing injury

Or you have no experience with an exercise in your workout program that prevents you from following the program to a T.

**Sound familiar? Then this guide is for you.**

While I strongly urge (hint, hint) you perform the *Minimalist Muscle* eCourse workouts exactly as they're written, I know that won't always be possible.

The workout substitutions in this guide give you options when equipment is limited.

You can switch exercises without screwing up the flow of your training and still unleash the athlete within.

## Exercise Substitutions: Lack of Equipment

You deserve to be training at a facility that allows Olympic lifts, dropping deadlifts, curse words on the radio, and all-around ass-kickery. But if you're not at one, you have to make

due. Whether it's travel, injury, or convenience keeping you from a better gym, you can make excellent progress with smart exercise substitutions.

The key?

Switching exercises to others that most closely resemble the movement patterns you're focusing on. After all, your body is the machinery behind the workout, whereas equipment is only a tool. When you're missing equipment, you'll replace exercises that are a similar movement pattern to the planned exercise.

That means a barbell squat should be switched with another squat pattern, such as a goblet squat and so on.

I've created the following movement bank to help you make the best exercise switches. Oh, and before I forget, you may substitute dumbbells for barbells when barbells are not available for all listed exercises.

## Take Me To The Bank

**Squat:** goblet squat, front squat, back squat

**Hinge/Deadlift:** sumo deadlift, conventional deadlift, barbell Romanian deadlift, dumbbell deadlift, dumbbell Romanian deadlift, kettlebell deadlift, tire-flip.

**Explosive/Olympic Variation:** barbell clean, barbell power clean, hang clean, hang power clean, dumbbell clean, dumbbell snatch, explosive squat

**Jump:** Broad jump, dumbbell squat jump, squat jump, multi-response squat jump

**Explosive push/throw:** Medicine ball/sandbell slam, bench plyo push-up, clap push-up, kneeling plyo push-up, rotational medicine ball throw, medicine ball back toss

**Single leg:** barbell lunge, dumbbell lunge, step back lunge, Bulgarian split squat, forward lunge, split squat

**Vertical Press:** barbell military press, barbell push press, handstand push-up, dumbbell military press, single arm push press, single arm military press

**Horizontal Press:** barbell bench press, incline barbell bench press, floor press, dumbbell bench press, dumbbell incline bench press, alternate dumbbell bench press, single arm bench press

**Vertical Pull:** chin up, lat-pulldown, rope climb, inverted row, suspension trainer row, inverted row, barbell bent-over row, single arm dumbbell row, dumbbell split row, chest supported row, batwing row

## Alternative Methods to Developing Power

Some exercises you may just not feel comfortable using. That's fine.

In that case, stick with the exercises that match the movement of the planned exercise where your technique is sound. Then, learn and practice the other lifts on the side.

Further, you may not have all the weights (you strong bugger you) you need to hit your numbers on a given day.

In either case, there are alternative methods to developing power. In all cases, exercise with maximum explosive intent. That means no matter the substitution you need make, lift with max speed on the concentric (up) portion of the lift.

Got it? Good.

### Dynamic Effort (DE) Compound Lifts

This method is based on Russian texts and the works of Vladimir Zatsiorsky and popularized by Louie Simmons of Westside Barbell club. The theory is based on lifting

submaximal loads with maximum explosive intent will develop explosive power and help you generate force faster.

Basically, you'll lift lighter loads as fast as possible to bridge the gap between strength and speed in your training.

DE training uses loads of 40-65% 1-RM lifted with maximum explosive intent, identified as the sweet spot for power development in most of the literature.

This has two huge benefits:

(1) You can easily use dynamic effort training with the squat and deadlift as replacement for the Olympic lifts. These movements are less complex than the Olympic lifts and not as prone to technical errors. This makes them a safer option if you're unsure on technique.

(2) Compound lifts like the squat and deadlift are easier to learn, making them a viable substitute if you don't have time to refine your Olympic lifting technique. Everything in training has a cost/ benefit ratio that should be taken into account. While I recommend learning the Olympic lifts, you may find it's the best use of your time to practice technique on the side while using the squat and deadlift as your explosive lifts.

So, rather than jacking up technique on the Olympic lifts, load up squats, deadlifts, and presses with lighter loads and lift with maximum explosive intent. You can generate high power outputs to improve explosive power.

## **Lift Weights With Maximum Concentric Speed**

Lift weights while focusing on maximum rep speed and applying force into the bar, kettlebell, or dumbbells. Think of lifting each rep like it's a maximum intent and speed, without sacrificing technique or eccentric control.

That means rather than going through the motions on warm-up sets . lift like you mean it. Develop force from the moment you pick up a weight. With this method, you can improve power with all movements, from dumbbell bench presses to squats to deadlifts to lunges.

Use maximum concentric effort on all sets to improve power output, especially if you're short on weight.

## Lightly Loaded Jumps and Throws

If you're traveling or stuck in a gym without much weight, there are a few exercises you'll still be able to do: lightly loaded jumps and explosive exercises.

Throws might be out of the question, but all you need is open space to perform squat jumps, broad jumps, explosive push-ups, plus a few light dumbbells for dumbbell jump squats.

These exercises work speed strength and pure explosive speed: two of the most commonly neglected areas on the force velocity curve. Focusing on these exercises before a main lift, or in replacement when equipment is tight, will build explosive power and athleticism.

Here are some common examples:

### ***Dumbbell Squat Jump:***

In the case of the dumbbell squat jump, use lightly loaded dumbbells (<10% body weight) and perform a squat jump.

Start tall with the feet shoulder width apart. Then, holding the dumbbells at your sides, drop your hips into a quarter/half squat position. Rapidly reverse the motion, jumping and fully extending through the hip, knee and ankle. Land flat footed with your head and chest up, in a squat position.

<https://vimeo.com/147194225>

password: Power Primer

Do 2-3 sets of 3-5 reps after your dynamic warm-up. Best on lower body days.

### ***Overhead Slam:***

The overhead slam is an explosive throwing movement to build a trunk resilient to explosive forces in sport and potentiating the nervous system during training.

Use a non-bouncy ball unless you want new dental work, and perform three sets of three to five reps with 60 seconds rest between sets.

<https://vimeo.com/147194381>

password: Power Primer

## **Explosive, Unloaded Movements**

### **Broad Jumps:**

Broad jumps are a great exercise for developing lower body power and athleticism. Load up with the feet shoulder width apart. Then, simultaneously swing the arms down while dropping the hips. Rapidly swing the arms forward and jump up and out, landing in an athletic position.

Do three sets of 3-5 reps with 90 seconds rest between sets.

<https://vimeo.com/147194442>

password: Power Primer

### **Bodyweight Squat Jumps:**

Start tall with the feet shoulder width apart. Then swing the arms down while dropping the hips into a quarter/half squat position. Swing the arms forward and overhead, jumping and extending through the hip, knee, ankle, trunk, and shoulder. Land flat-footed with your head and chest up, in a squat position.

<https://vimeo.com/137088478>

## **Pre-Existing Injuries or Conditions**

I said in the disclaimer, and I'll say it again. Get clearance from your physician before beginning any exercise program. Especially if you have pre-existing injuries or health issues, this is rule number one.

After that, all injuries must be handled on a case-by-case basis.

Make sure you're doing corrective exercises, mobility and soft tissue work, and following sound recovery protocols and nutrition to improve overall health.

As Strength and Conditioning coach, diagnosing and treating pain is outside my scope of practice. But I can suggest potential work arounds once you have the diagnosis in hand from a competent health care professional.

Here are some common problem areas, as exercise substitutions that **may** work for you.

### **Achy Shoulders Problem Exercises: Bench Presses**

*Potentially switch to:* Football bar bench press, neutral grip dumbbell press, or push-ups.

### **Problem Exercise: Overhead Pressing**

Potentially switch to: Landmine presses

### **Hips Problem Exercises: Wide Stance Squatting and Sumo Deadlifts**

*Potentially switch to:* conventional deadlifts, shoulder width high bar squats, split squats or lunges.

### **Back Problem Exercises: Kettlebell Swings, Deadlifts, Back Squats**

*Potentially switch to:* Front squats, goblet squats, stability ball hamstring curls, and limited range of motion Romanian deadlifts. Double-check form.

### **Wrists Problem Exercises: Bench Press or Overhead Press**

*Potentially switch to:* Neutral grip dumbbell bench, and overhead presses. Check form for a "joint stacked" alignment of the wrist and forearm.

Elbows Problem Exercises: Upper body pulling exercises such as cleans.

*Potentially switch to;* Fat Gripz or wider handles, lay off the direct arm work, clean high pulls and snatch grip high pulls instead of cleans and snatches.

## Conditioning Substitutions

“But Eric, can’t I just skip conditioning? I just want to get explosive and strong!”

Sorry pal, no can do.

Sure, you'll grow a smidge bigger by dumping all conditioning work, but the price you'll pay will be pathetic athleticism and gaining a spare tire over your waistline. While you can't skip conditioning, you can make substitutions as needed.

**Treadmill Sprints:** Whenever available, I'd recommend hill sprints outside, but cutting your work ratio in half, while keeping rest the same as dictated by your workout. That means if you're supposed to sprint 20 seconds, then rest 40 seconds, sprint for about 10 seconds, then follow your rest period. The big reason being you'll be running faster on a less steep hill outside. You'll need more time to neurologically recover to maintain technique. If neither is an option, opt for jumping rope 30 seconds on, 30 seconds off, as fast as possible for the number of sets dictated in your workout.

**Jump Rope:** I love jumping rope, but it can be damn near impossible (and stupid) with a foot or ankle injury. In this case, opt for bike interval sprints with the same work: rest ratio as dictated in your workout.

Just stink at jumping rope? Jumping jacks are an option, but suck it up and get better. Training isn't supposed to be easy. If you're bad at jumping rope you need to improve your rhythm, timing, and coordination: three underrated factors in athleticism.

**Bike Intervals:** Bike intervals are in your workouts to provide an impact free training method to give your hips, knees, and ankles a break from more intense training methods. For this reason, I don't recommend replacing bike intervals with either jumping rope or sprinting. Instead, opt for Versa Climber intervals, the AirDyne, rower, or as a last ditch option, the elliptical. Keep work-to-rest ratios the same as prescribed in your training.

## Additional Exercise Substitutions

*Beyond the injury-based changes recommended above, here is a list of other common, acceptable exercise substitutions. While not ideal, these exercise changes will still help you build a muscular, explosive body.*

**Barbell Cleans, Power Cleans:** Heavy kettlebell swing, high pull, dumbbell clean, dumbbell snatch, explosive squat

**Dumbbell Military Press, Push Press:** Explosive barbell bench press

**Barbell Bench Press:** Dumbbell bench press, Football bar bench press, floor press

**Barbell Snatch:** dumbbell snatch, dumbbell high pull, barbell high pull  
½ kneeling/ tall kneeling lat pull-down: chin-up, seated inverted row

**Barbell Bent Over Row:** Single arm dumbbell row, dumbbell split row, suspension trainer row

**Barbell Hip Thrust:** kettlebell swing, Romanian deadlift with 2-second glute squeeze at the top

**KB Swing:** deadlift, Romanian deadlift, hip thrust, goblet squat with glute squeeze at top

**Deadlift:** Romanian deadlift, back squat, trap bar deadlift

**Sumo Deadlift:** Wide stance back squat

**Plyo Push-up:** incline plyo-push-up

**Walking Dumbbell Lunge:** split squat, step back lunge, Bulgarian split squat

**Barbell Lunge:** dumbbell lunge, dumbbell step back lunge, goblet step back lunge

**Walking Lunge:** split squat, step back lunge, goblet step back lunge

**Forward Lunge:** step back lunge, split squat, goblet step back lunge

**Cable Curl:** dumbbell biceps curl, barbell curl

**Bulgarian Split Squat:** dumbbell split squat, barbell split squat, step back lunge

**Box Jump:** dumbbell squat jump, bodyweight squat jump

**Overhead Slam:** plyo push-up, jumping chin-up, cable pull-through

**Chin-up:** Lat pull down (explosive pull), bent over row, inverted row, assisted chin-up,

**TRX Row:** Inverted row, bent over row, single arm dumbbell row

**Remember: These exercise substitutions are last-ditch options, not the ideal plan for the Minimalist Muscle eCourse.**

Should you find it necessary to change exercises for good, stick with one variation of the exercise and train it consistently to ensure progressive overload and all-around gains in performance.

The Minimalist Muscle eCourse exercises were selected for optimal performance and will provide the best results.

Stick to the program as best you can.

You'll make real progress to unleashing your inner athlete.