

ZUGKRAFT PROGRAMS

Review against the 2026 ACSM position stand and the WHO guideline

Review of the strength programs, the progression rule and the conditioning programs

Zugkraft reviewed the programs itself against the position stand of the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) and the guideline of the World Health Organization (WHO). Neither ACSM nor WHO has reviewed, confirmed or endorsed the programs.

01 What we checked

Zugkraft contains 134 fixed training programs. 89 of them are strength training. The paper covers general strength and muscle building, so we leave out 48 programs with a clear focus: skills such as handstand or planche, athletics, single body parts, single exercises, single pieces of equipment, programs for teenagers and the specialty programs. We checked 41 programs (muscle building 20, home 12, calisthenics 6, women 3). HIIT, fat loss, sport and mobility (45 programs) fall outside this paper. Chapters 06 and 07 review them against other guidelines, and chapter 05 covers the progression rule of the app.

02 The yardstick

The source is the position stand "Resistance Training Prescription for Muscle Function, Hypertrophy, and Physical Performance in Healthy Adults: An Overview of Reviews" (Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise, April 2026). It replaces the 2009 paper. We use the key points that ACSM lists in its infographic for the paper:

- 1 Train all major muscle groups, on at least 2 days per week.
- 2 Strength: 2 to 3 sets per exercise.
- 3 Muscle growth: about 10 sets per muscle group per week.
- 4 Build up gradually.
- 5 A gym is not required. Bodyweight, bands and home training work as well.

03 Results

At least 2 training days per week

Every program has at least 2 training days, 36 have 3 or more.

41 of 41

All major muscle groups in the plan (legs, chest, back, shoulders, at least 4 sets per week each)

In 23 of 41 programs each of the four groups is even trained on at least 2 separate days.

41 of 41

(100%)

At least 2 sets per exercise (guide for strength: 2 to 3)

72% sit within the guide of 2 to 3 sets. 189 exercises (28%) have 4 or more, 24 of them 5 or more across 8 programs.

100%

of exercises

About 10 sets per muscle group per week (muscle growth)

13 of 20 reach the value for at least three of the four groups. Direct sets count in full, work in other exercises counts half. Strength, strength-endurance and beginner programs use less volume on purpose.

12 of 20

programs for all four groups

Build up gradually

After each workout the app suggests weight or repetitions based on the logged sets. 10 programs also carry a fixed weekly progression in the plan.

41 of 41

No gym required

16 programs need no equipment, 7 only dumbbells or a kettlebell, 18 a gym.

23 of 41

04 What is not checked

- Intensity (share of the one-rep max) is not part of the plan. The app derives it from the user's own logged sets. The paper names about 80% of the max for strength, and we did not test that value.
- We checked plan structure: days, sets, spread across muscle groups. An external expert reviews exercise selection, order, technique and suitability for beginners. This is planned and not yet complete.
- Programs with a focus and the sport programs (meant as a supplement) are not part of this report.
- The paper covers healthy adults. Zugkraft does not replace medical advice.

Counting method: we count the sets of the base week in each program. The major groups are legs, chest, back and shoulders. A group counts as trained from 4 sets per week, and assisting groups count half. We share the script and raw data on request.

05 Progression rule of the app

The yardstick is the 2009 ACSM position stand on progression in strength training: raise the load by 2 to 10 percent once 1 to 2 repetitions above the target are possible. After a workout the app raises the weight by at most 10 percent of the working weight, in whole plates: 1.25 kg below 25 kg, 2.5 kg above. If a single plate is already more than 10 percent, it rounds up to that plate.

WORKING WEIGHT	STEP	STEP AFTER TWO EQUAL RATINGS
8 kg	1.25 kg (16 %)	-
20 kg	1.25 kg (6 %)	-
30 kg	2.5 kg (8 %)	-
50 kg	2.5 kg (5 %)	5 kg (10 %)

06 Mobility

The yardstick is the 2011 ACSM position stand on quantity and quality of exercise: stretching for the major muscle-tendon groups on at least 2 days per week, 60 seconds in total per exercise.

At least 2 days per week

The programs call for 3 to 5 sessions per week.

6 of 6

At least 60 seconds per stretch and session

Total time per exercise 60 to 100 seconds, with holds of 25 to 50 seconds per set.

6 of 6

07 Contribution to the WHO weekly recommendation

WHO recommends adults 150 to 300 minutes of moderate or 75 to 150 minutes of vigorous activity per week, across all activity combined. No single program replaces that. We show how much each contributes.

HIIT (10 programs)

Median per week, lower bound for vigorous activity: 75 minutes. 3 of 10 programs exceed it on their own.

64 min

Fat loss (10 programs)

Median per week, lower bound for moderate activity: 150 minutes. None of the 10 programs reaches it on its own.

93 min

Sport programs and programs with a focus are supplements to the main program and are not built around the weekly recommendation.

Calculated from sets, work time and rest, without warm-up. The duration shown on the program cards can be higher. Sources: ACSM, Resistance Training Prescription for Muscle Function, Hypertrophy, and Physical Performance in Healthy Adults, 2026 (infographic: [acsm.org/effective-resistance-training-program-infographic](https://www.acsm.org/effective-resistance-training-program-infographic)). ACSM, Progression Models in Resistance Training for Healthy Adults, 2009. ACSM, Quantity and Quality of Exercise for Developing and Maintaining Fitness in Healthy Adults, 2011. WHO, Guidelines on Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour, 2020.