Load prescription cheat sheet

Choose by what the client can do reliably. Percentage of 1RM needs a recent tested or well-estimated max on a stable barbell lift, RPE suits lifters who rate effort consistently, and reps in reserve (RIR) is easiest to teach a newer lifter. Percentages earn their place in peaks and shared plans.

Load methods compared: who each suits, what it does well, and what to watch for.

Method	Suits	Good for	Watch for
Percentage of 1RM	Clients with a recent tested or well-estimated max on a stable barbell lift	Peaks, shared plans, and the same load every week	An out-of-date max, and days when 80% is not 80%
RPE	Lifters who rate effort consistently	Loads that follow the day, on any lift or equipment	Drifting ratings: new lifters rate high, and sets past 10 reps are rough guesses
Reps in reserve (RIR)	Newer lifters still learning to rate effort	One concrete question: how many good reps were left?	Guessing far from failure, and on high-rep sets

RPE 6-10 converted to reps in reserve. Clients' estimates of reps left are least reliable far from failure.

RPE	Reps in reserve	What the client says
10	0	That was all I had
9	1	One more, and it would have been slow
8	2	Two more, and the last would have slowed
7	3	Three more, all at the same speed
6	4	Four or more, and it felt easy

Educational template for qualified coaches. It does not diagnose or treat pain.