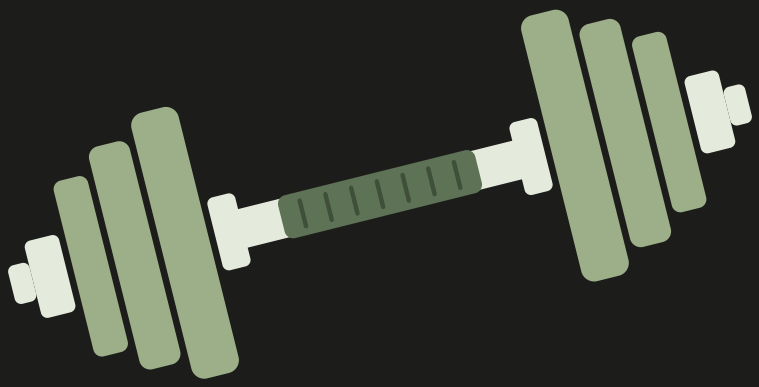
AJ Average Joe AI

FREE PLAYBOOK

Average Joe AI Fitness Playbook

Turn ChatGPT, Gemini, or Claude into your personal trainer. Workouts, nutrition, and sleep, built around your real life.



Wiped out today and my knee's acting up. I'm supposed to do legs.

Let's protect that knee. Upper body + core today, legs moved to Saturday, no lunges.

theaveragejoeai.com

START HERE

Your AI is ready to coach. Let's teach it how.

The AI app already on your phone can be a solid personal trainer. It doesn't charge $80 an hour, doesn't judge your form, and has never once posted a gym selfie. It just needs the right setup. This playbook shows you exactly what to tell it, so it coaches your workouts, food, and sleep around your real life.

It works with ChatGPT, Gemini, or Claude. No new app, no trainer fees, no fitness-bro gatekeeping.



AJ A NOTE FROM JOE

Everything in this guide, I tested myself. I've got a full-time job and four kids, and I'm in the best shape of my life. More importantly, I'm in the best health of my life. We all have a reason to get healthy. Mine is feeling good for my partner and being there for my kids for as long as I possibly can. Find your reason, read the guide, and build your trainer.

— Joe

How to use it: Open your AI in one window and this playbook in another. Work through Part 1 in a single chat, copying the prompts and filling in the brackets. It takes about 20 minutes, or roughly one episode of whatever you were going to watch instead. Everything after that is how you use your coach day to day.

What's inside:

1. **Set up your AI coach**
2. **Run the plan**
3. **Treat your AI like a trainer you can text any time**
4. **Nutrition without the food scale**
5. **Sleep, the part everyone skips**

A quick note: this playbook is general education, not medical advice. AI can be wrong. If you have an injury, a medical condition, or you're starting from zero, check with your doctor before you start, and tell your AI what they said.

01 PART 1 Set up your AI coach

The whole game is the setup. A chatbot that knows nothing about you gives generic plans; one that knows your body, goals, schedule and gear gives you a plan built for you. Skip it and you'll get the same plan as a 22-year-old with a six-pack and no job. Do these steps in order, in one chat.

STEP 1 Pick your AI

ChatGPT, Gemini, or Claude all work. Use whichever you already have and like talking to. The free versions are fine to start. Nobody's handing out medals for picking the "right" chatbot.

> Tip: Keep all your coaching in one dedicated chat or project, so your coach has the full history every time you come back.

STEP 2 Hire it, and make it honest

Tell it plainly what its job is.

COPY THIS PROMPT

I want you to be my personal trainer. You'll build my workouts, adjust them when life gets in the way, and keep me honest. Before you build anything, ask me questions until you understand my body, goals, schedule, and equipment.

Make it honest, not nice. AI chatbots have a known habit: they lean toward telling you what you want to hear. Ask "Can I skip legs for a month?" or "Is it fine if I barely eat this week?" and a people-pleasing AI may find a way to say yes. That's how you talk your coach into helping you cheat, or worse, get hurt. So set the rules up front:

COPY THIS PROMPT

Be honest with me, even when I won't like it. Don't just agree with me. If I ask for something unsafe, unrealistic, or that works against my goal, tell me plainly and explain why. If I try to talk you into it, hold your ground. My health matters more than my feelings.

Save this alongside your injury note (Step 5) so it sticks in every chat.

STEP 3 Choose a coaching style

Trainers aren't one-size-fits-all, and neither is your AI. Tell it how you want to be coached.

COPY THIS PROMPT

Coach me like a **[tough drill sergeant / patient teacher who explains the why / laid-back friend who keeps it simple / data nerd who tracks everything / disappointed-but-supportive dad]**. Keep your messages **[short and direct / detailed]**.

Not sure what style you need? Let it figure that out.

COPY THIS PROMPT

I'm not sure what coaching style works for me. Here's what I know about myself: I'm good at **[e.g. showing up once I start]** and bad at **[e.g. staying consistent past week three, eating at night]**. In the past I quit because **[reason]**. Based on that, what coaching style would work best for me, and why?

STEP 4 Give it your stats

Your coach needs the basics a real trainer would ask for on day one. Yes, your real weight. It's a chatbot. It's not going to tell anyone.

COPY THIS PROMPT

Here's my info: I'm **[age]** years old, **[height]**, **[weight]**. Activity level right now: **[e.g. desk job, walk the dog daily]**. Injuries: **[list]**. Allergies: **[list]**. Medical conditions or medications: **[list, or none]**.

> **Quick privacy check:** you're about to share health details with an AI company. Take two minutes to look at your app's data settings, such as whether your chats can be used to train its models and what its memory saves. Share only what you're comfortable with. Your coach still works with less.

STEP 5 Make it remember your injuries

This is the most important part of setup. An AI that forgets your bad knee will eventually program 100 lunges with a smile and hurt you.

COPY THIS PROMPT

Remember this permanently: I have **[injury, e.g. a left knee that flares up with deep bending]**. Never program exercises that aggravate it. Always offer a safe swap instead.

- **ChatGPT:** It may save this to Memory. Check under Settings → Personalization → Memory.
- **Gemini and Claude:** Put it in your saved info, custom instructions, or the instructions for a dedicated project.
- **No memory feature?** Paste your injury note at the top of each new chat.

If your AI ever suggests something that sounds sketchy for your injury, call it out. Then remind it.

STEP 6 Tell it what you're training for

Be specific. "Get in shape" gets you a generic plan. Round is a shape too.

COPY THIS PROMPT

My main goal is **[pick one]**:

- Lose weight (I'm a total beginner)
- Lose weight (I've trained before)
- Build muscle / bodybuilding
- Get stronger / powerlifting
- Run a **[5K / half marathon / marathon]**
- Feel better and move without pain

Why it matters to me: **[your reason]**.

STEP 7 Describe your setup

COPY THIS PROMPT

I work out **[at home / at a gym / both]**. Equipment I have: **[e.g. two adjustable dumbbells, a pull-up bar, a resistance band]**. *(If gym:)* I can realistically get to the gym **[X]** days a week, for about **[Y]** minutes each time.

STEP 8 Get a reality check

Here's where AI shines. Your goal and your schedule might not match, and a good coach tells you.

COPY THIS PROMPT

Be honest: with my schedule and equipment, is my goal realistic? If not, what should I expect in 3 months instead, or what would I need to change?

This is how you avoid quitting in week four because you expected abs by Tuesday.

STEP 9 (OPTIONAL) Add a specialty

Want bigger arms, a faster mile, or to do your first pull-up? Add it.

COPY THIS PROMPT

On top of my main goal, I want to focus on **[e.g. bigger arms / a sub-7-minute mile / my first pull-up]**. Work that in without wrecking my main plan.

STEP 10 (OPTIONAL, RECOMMENDED)

Set a short-term target

Training with no finish line can drag on forever. Give yourself a checkpoint.

COPY THIS PROMPT

Let's set a goal for the next **[8–12]** weeks: **[e.g. lose 10 lbs / deadlift my bodyweight / run 3 miles without stopping]**. Plan my training to hit it, and tell me how we'll know if we're on track.

When you hit it, you set the next one together. That's how you keep making progress instead of just "working out."

02 PART 2 Run the plan

Setup's done. Now your coach builds the plan, and you show up, report back, and let it adjust.

Have it map your workouts

COPY THIS PROMPT

Based on everything I've told you, build my weekly workout plan. For each day give me the exercises, sets, reps, rest time, and how long it should take. Explain any exercise I might not know in one sentence.

If something's unclear, ask it to explain, or ask for a link to a video of the exercise.

Give feedback fast

The sooner your coach hears what isn't working, the sooner it fixes it. Don't grind through a workout you hate or one that hurts.

COPY THIS PROMPT

Feedback on today: **[exercise]** felt **[too easy / too hard / painful in my lower back]**. I hated **[exercise]**. Swap it for something that works the same muscles.

Pain is not feedback to push through. Sharp pain, or pain in a joint, means stop and tell your coach. If it doesn't go away, see a doctor.

Set up a tracker in Google Sheets

Let your AI do the bookkeeping.

COPY THIS PROMPT

Create a simple workout tracker I can use in Google Sheets. Columns: Date, Workout, Did it (yes/no), Notes, and New PRs.

Depending on your AI and its connections, it may be able to update the sheet for you. Then all you do is say, "Did today's workout exactly as planned," and it logs it. If it can't connect, ask it to give you the rows to paste in, or a file you can download.

Track PRs, not every rep

Tracking every set and rep is useful for serious lifters. For everyone else, it's a fast way to turn working out into data entry. You already have a job.

The Average Joe way: only track your personal records (PRs), like heaviest lift, most reps, fastest mile, and your weekly weigh-in average. That's enough to see you're getting better.

Decide what's next

When you finish a block of training or hit your short-term goal, sit down with your coach and plan the next phase.

COPY THIS PROMPT

I finished my **[8]**-week plan. Here's how it went: **[results, PRs, what I liked and didn't]**. What should my next phase be: a cut, a bulk, a new goal, or more of the same? Explain the tradeoffs.

PART 3

03 Treat your AI like a trainer you can text any time

This is the part most people skip, and it's where the real value is. A human trainer sees you two hours a week. Your AI is there at 6am, on your lunch break, and at 11pm when you're staring into the fridge like it owes you money.

Check in like you would with a person

You don't need a perfect prompt. Just tell it what's going on.

TRY MESSAGES LIKE THESE

Slept 5 hours, feeling wiped. I'm supposed to do legs today. What should I do?

My shoulders are sore from Tuesday. Normal soreness or should I worry?

I've got 15 minutes and a hotel room. Give me something.

Haven't worked out in a week. Feel like I blew it.

A good coach adjusts the day, explains what your body is doing, and gets you back on track without a guilt trip. Your AI can do all three.

Joe tip: Building muscle, losing weight, feeling sexy: it's exciting. But it can get embarrassing to keep talking about it with your friends or your partner, or posting about it online, even when you want to. Guess who never gets tired of hearing about it? Your AI trainer. Fuel your excitement by texting it about your progress as much as you want.

Get better answers

- **Give context.** "I'm tired" gets a generic answer. "I'm tired because I slept 5 hours and worked a double" gets a useful one.
- **Ask why.** "Why this exercise instead of that one?" makes you smarter and catches bad advice.
- **Push back.** If something feels off, say so. "That seems like a lot of volume for a beginner. Are you sure?" Your AI should reconsider, not just agree. Watch the reverse too: if it caves the second you

push back on good advice, remind it of the honesty rule from Step 2.

- **Use photos.** Snap your gym's equipment, a confusing machine, or your home setup and ask what you can do with it.
- **Recap now and then.** Every few weeks, ask it to summarize your progress and what it knows about you. Correct anything it got wrong.

Know its limits: AI can be confidently wrong and leans toward agreeing with you, so keep the honesty rule on. It's a coach, not a doctor: sharp pain, chest pain, dizziness or anything medical goes to a real professional.

PART 4

04 Nutrition without the food scale

You can't out-train a bad diet. For weight loss, the basic math is simple: burn more calories than you eat. The hard part is doing it without crying into a plain chicken breast. That's where your AI comes in.

Tell it how you actually eat

Be honest. Your coach can't fix what it doesn't know about.

COPY THIS PROMPT

Here's what I usually eat on a normal day: **[breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks, drinks]**. My weak spots are **[late-night snacking / drive-thru lunches / beer on weekends]**. Foods I love and won't give up: **[list]**. Foods I hate: **[list]**. Find the easiest places for me to cut calories without feeling deprived.

You'll often find a few small swaps that add up, like a different coffee order or a smaller portion of one thing, instead of an entire new diet.

The Average Joe way: watch three numbers

Counting every calorie and weighing every chicken breast works, but most people last about as long as their New Year's resolution. Instead, pay close attention to three numbers on labels and menus:

1. **Calories:** keep them in check. This is the number that moves the scale.
2. **Saturated fat:** keep it low. Dietary guidelines recommend limiting it for heart health, and it's a quick way to spot food that's quietly working against you.
3. **Protein:** get enough. It keeps you full, and it's what your body uses to build and keep muscle while you lose fat.

That's it. No food scale, no macro spreadsheets, no weighing almonds like a jeweler. If you want more precision later, your coach can help you level up. Not sure how much protein you need? Ask your coach. It depends on your size and your goal.

Use your camera

This is one of the most useful things AI can do, and most people never try it.

- **Snap a nutrition label:** "Is this a good snack for my goal?"
- **Snap your plate:** "Roughly how many calories is this, and how could I make it lighter next time?"
- **Snap a restaurant menu:** "What's the best pick here for my goal?"

Photo estimates of a plate are rough, so treat them as ballparks, not gospel.

Weigh in the right way

Weigh yourself every morning, after you use the bathroom and before you eat or drink anything. Log it in your tracker.

Your weight will bounce around day to day because of water, salt, and sleep. That's normal, and it's why single weigh-ins are useless on their own. One salty taco night is not a crisis. **The trend is what matters.** Ask your coach for a weekly average.

COPY THIS PROMPT

Here are my weigh-ins for the past two weeks: **[numbers]**. What's the trend, and are we on track?

A word on drinking, from Joe

AJ **A NOTE FROM JOE**

Joe here. I know the last thing you want is another person telling you to quit drinking. I drank about two beers a day for 20 years. I stayed thin, but beer bloats you. If you're training seriously and really want a six-pack, quitting can completely transform your body. Once I got to a low body fat percentage, quitting made my muscles pop like never before. And if you're drinking a lot, those are empty calories adding weight and, as I found out the hard way, quietly wrecking your sleep.

You don't have to quit to start. Just be honest with your coach about it. Here are some prompts to help with your drinking habits:

COPY THIS PROMPT

Here's how much I drink in a typical week: **[e.g. 2 beers a night, more on weekends]**. Show me what that adds up to in calories, and how it might be affecting my sleep and my goal. Be honest, not preachy.

I want to **[cut back to weekends only / take 30 days off / quit for good]**. Help me make a plan, including what to drink instead and how to handle **[happy hour / watching the game / stressful nights]**.

Check in with me every week about my drinking. If I slip, help me figure out what happened without guilt-tripping me.

Heads up: if you drink heavily every day, talk to a doctor before you stop suddenly. Alcohol withdrawal can be dangerous, and a doctor can help you cut back safely.

05 PART 5 Sleep, the part everyone skips

Sleep is when your body actually recovers and builds muscle. Short on sleep, you'll have weaker workouts, more cravings (especially for junk), and less willpower to stick to the plan. Most adults need at least 7 hours a night. If you're doing everything else right and not seeing results, look here first.

Tell your coach your sleep habits

COPY THIS PROMPT

Here are my sleep habits: I usually go to bed around **[time]** and wake up at **[time]**. I get about **[X]** hours. I drink **[coffee, energy drinks, soda]**, and my last caffeine is usually around **[time]**. Before bed I usually **[scroll my phone / watch TV / eat]**. What should I change first?

Watch the caffeine

Caffeine sticks around in your body for hours after your last cup. That 3pm cold brew is still clocked in at bedtime. Ask your coach to help you set a caffeine cutoff and taper toward it, rather than quitting cold turkey.

When you can't fall asleep

- Keep the same wake-up time every day, even on weekends.
- Make your room dark, cool, and quiet.
- Put the phone away before bed.
- If you're lying awake for a long time, get up and do something quiet in dim light until you feel sleepy.

Joe tip: Can't shut your brain off? Count backward from 300 by 3s. It's just hard enough to crowd out racing thoughts and boring enough to put you out.

If you've struggled with sleep for weeks, talk to a doctor. Chronic insomnia is common and very treatable.

QUICK START

Your whole setup in one message

Already get the idea? Paste this into a new chat, fill in the brackets, and send. It covers all of Part 1 in one go. Afterward, save the honesty rule and your injuries to memory, as in Steps 2 and 5.

PASTE THIS INTO A NEW CHAT

I want you to be my personal trainer. Be honest with me, even when I won't like it: if I ask for something unsafe, unrealistic, or that works against my goal, tell me plainly and hold your ground. Coach me like a **[tough drill sergeant / patient teacher / laid-back friend]**.

About me: I'm **[age]**, **[height]**, **[weight]**. Activity right now: **[e.g. desk job, walk the dog daily]**. Injuries: **[list]**. Allergies: **[list]**. Medical conditions or medications: **[list, or none]**. Remember my injuries permanently and never program exercises that aggravate them.

My goal: **[lose weight / build muscle / get stronger / run a 5K / feel better]**, because **[your reason]**. In the next **[8–12]** weeks I want to **[short-term target]**. Bonus focus: **[optional, e.g. bigger arms]**.

My setup: I train **[at home / at a gym]** with **[equipment]**, **[X]** days a week, for about **[Y]** minutes.

My food, drinks and sleep: on a normal day I eat **[typical meals]**. I drink **[coffee, soda, alcohol, and how much]**. I sleep about **[X]** hours.

First, tell me honestly whether my goal is realistic with this schedule. Then ask me anything else you need and build my first week. Help me watch calories, saturated fat, and protein, not every bite.

STICK WITH IT

Now go open your AI and hire your coach.

You now have a personal trainer, nutrition coach, and sleep coach in your pocket, for the price of an app you already had. The plan only works if you use it, so:

Show up. A mediocre workout beats a perfect plan saved in your Notes app.

Lean on your coach. Tired, sore, unmotivated, traveling? Tell it. That's what it's for.

Keep the conversation going. The more your AI knows about how things are actually going, the better it coaches you.

For more ways to personalize your training, including prompts for specific goals like bigger arms, your first 5K, and losing the last 10 pounds, head to **theaveragejoeai.com**. It's all free.