12-10-8-6

A Workout Plan For Building Size And Strength



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Introduction

Some weight training programs are designed to help you get bigger. Other programs are mainly designed to help you get stronger. The 12-10-8-6 program is designed to do both. If you want both size and strength, your training must include a sufficient amount of volume, intensity, and weight. The 12-10-8-6 program is a simple training method that helps you to accomplish this.

You will find that the program is easy to understand and easy to use, yet it is also based on training with precision according to your individual capacities. The one common factor in the 12-10-8-6 program is that everyone who uses it will be doing four sets per exercise consisting of twelve reps, ten reps, eight reps, and six reps. Many people would say to themselves, "What's so special about that? Don't a lot of people already do that when they train? I could figure out how to do the 12-10-8-6 program just by looking at the title of the book. Why bother to read it?"

It may be true that anyone could understand the concept of doing four sets consisting of 12-10-8 and 6 reps, but the program is based on more than just doing a predetermined number of sets and reps. One of the most important aspects of the training is that it is based on individualizing the program to match your own capacities. This is a huge key to successful training that many people overlook. When you learn how to individualize the 12-10-8-6 program, you will understand:

How to determine the exact amount of weight to use for each set. A table is provided that lists the amount of weight to use for each set according to percentages that are based on how much weight you can lift for six perfect reps.

How to identify your strength specific workload capacity in order to determine the right amount of sets for your workouts.

How to choose a training frequency that matches your own recovery rate.

How often to add weight at a rate that matches your own adaptive capacity.

The book includes nine workouts that are based on individual differences in training capacities. Once you understand how to individualize your workouts according to your own training capacities, you will be able to choose the best workout for your own physiology.

If your goal is to grow both bigger and stronger, you need the specific type of training that will lead to your specific goal. You will learn these specifics as you read, *12-10-8-6: A Workout Plan for Building Size And Strength.*

Balance Between Volume, Intensity, And Weight

One of the keys to building both size and strength is to have a proper balance between volume, intensity, and weight (or load). Using the 12-10-8-6 system will help you to achieve this balance. Let me give you the starting point for understanding the 12-10-8-6 system as it consists of doing four sets per exercise.

The first set is done with 12 reps

The second set is done with 10 reps

The third set is done with 8 reps

The fourth set is done with 6 reps

The amount of weight that use for each set is very important. The first set should be done with a light weight that makes it very easy to do twelve reps. Each successive set will be heavier than the last and should grow in intensity. By the time you reach your fourth set you will be doing six reps and the amount of weight that you use should make it challenging to perform six perfect reps.

I often refer to perfect reps as strong reps that can repeated using the same rep pace and rep speed from rep to rep. If you surpass your capacity for strong reps, the pace and speed at which you repeat reps will start to slow down and you will be doing weak reps. Although there are exceptions that will be discussed later in the book, I generally advise doing strong reps and to avoid doing weak reps. When you do this, you will be using the right amount of effort for you heaviest set, but it is also important to use the right amount of effort for all of your sets.

Determining The Exact Amount of Effort

Exactly how hard should each set be? This is an important question as many programs only address how hard the heaviest set should be. The problem with this is that it leaves a lot of room for error when it comes to the lighter sets. Some people may use weights that are heavy enough to cause them to push to failure (i.e. max reps) on all four sets. If you do this, you will probably have to limit yourself to one series of 12-10-8-6 for each muscle group or you will end up overtraining. In contrast, if you go light and easy on your first three sets, and you only go heavy and push hard on your last set, you will probably be able to do two or more series of 12-10-8-6 for each muscle group without overtraining.

As you can see, two different lifters can both do a series of 12-10-8-6 and it sounds like they are doing the same thing, but each lifter may be using a vastly different approach in terms of the intensity that they are using to perform each set. This means that if I recommend doing two series of 12-10-8-6 for each muscle group, a lifter who uses high intensity training for every set will greatly exceed their capacity for how much they should be doing within a workout. In contrast, the lifter who goes easy on their first three sets of each series may be training below their capacity. The only way to eliminate the guess work from how hard to push on each set is to be exact. This is why a specific amount of effort should be used for each set by using the following guidelines:

Set 1 with 12 reps: Use a weight that permits 25 reps, but only do 12

Set 2 with 10 reps: Use a weight that permits 18 reps, but only do 10

Set 3 with 8 reps: Use a weight that permits 12 strong reps, but only do 8

Set 4 with 6 reps: Use the maximum weight possible for 6 strong reps

For those who prefer percentage training, percentage tables are provided in the **Appendix** at the end of the book. The percentage tables list the amount of weight that you should use for each set. The percentages are not based on your single rep max, even though percentage training often is. Instead, the percentages are based on the maximum weight you can lift for six perfect strong reps.

Doing six perfect strong reps is not the same as pushing a set to failure, rather it is refers to doing six reps that are all done using excellent form and the same rep speed and rep pace for all six reps. If you find that your rep speed starts to slow down, or you start to pause longer and longer between reps in order to keep repeating reps at the end of the set, you are using too much weight. Experiment by testing yourself to discover how much weight you can use for six strong reps for every exercise that you choose to perform. You will then be able to use the percentage tables in order to know exactly how much weight to use for each set of each exercise.

Having emphasized that you should do six perfect strong reps, there are occasions when you can push to the point of hitting a weaker slower rep on your very last rep when doing six reps. This is explained in chapter 14 on *Progressing at the Right Rate*.

Once you understand how much weight to use for each set, you will have the correct balance between volume, intensity and weight. Perhaps you are uncertain as to the exact meaning of the terms *volume, intensity,* and *weight* (weight may also be referred to as *load*). The meaning and the role that these three terms play in the 12-10-8-6 program will be explained in more detail in the next three chapters.

Volume

Sufficient training volume is needed to produce maximum muscle size. Low amounts of training volume in combination with heavy lifting and high intensity training will not produce maximum muscle size in most people. Since volume plays an important role in developing muscle size, what exactly is training volume? High volume generally refers to doing a lot of sets and reps. Medium volume refers to doing a medium amount of sets and reps, and low volume refers to doing a small amount of sets and reps. When using the 12-10-8-6 program, the volume never goes super low because you will always be doing at least four sets that make up a total of 36 reps.

If you did two exercises using 12-10-8-6 for each major muscle group, you would be doing a total of eight sets for each muscle group which would be considered a moderate amount of training volume in this program. When hitting each muscle group with three exercises and using 12-10-8-6 for each exercise, it would equal a total of twelve sets per muscle group. I would consider this to be high volume training. Twenty sets or above per muscle group would be very high. The amount of training volume that you can use when doing the 12-10-8-6 program can summarized as follows:

Medium Low Volume = one series of 12-10-8-6 (4 sets) for each muscle group.

Medium volume = two series of 12-10-8-6 (8 sets) for each major muscle group.

High Volume = Three or more series of 12-10-8-6 (12 or more sets) for each major muscle group.

The exact amount of sets and training volume that you use will depend upon how many sets you can repeat while remaining at full strength. This will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 6 on personal workload capacity. The bottom line is that some people may respond best to one series of 12-10-8-6 for each muscle group, while others will respond best to two or three series of 12-10-8-6 for each muscle group. Some may even respond best to four or more series of 12-10-8-6. Each person must determine their personal workload capacity and learn the amount of training that leads to the best results.

Weekly Volume

Volume is often discussed in reference to how many sets and reps are done within a single workout. However, volume can also be thought of in terms of how many sets and reps are performed across a week of workouts. One lifter may only be doing one series of 12-10-8-6 for a muscle group, but if he is working the same muscle group every day, he will be doing a total of 24 sets per week. This is the same amount of training volume per week as a lifter who is hitting each muscle group with two series of 12-10-8-6 three times per week, or three series of 12-10-8-6 twice per week. In each case, the weekly volume is six series of 12-10-8-6, which equals twenty four sets per week.

The manner in which you split up your training volume over the course of a week will often depend upon your capacity for how many sets you can perform at full strength within a single workout. You may not have the capacity for much volume in a single workout, but the low training volume within each workout may allow you to recover much faster in order to work each muscle group more often. In the end, your training may include as much weekly volume as someone who does higher volume workouts, but they train each muscle group less often. The way you spread your training volume out across a week should always be individualized according to how many sets you can tolerate within each workout, and according to your recovery rate.

Optimum Intensity

Powerlifters and weight lifters often use the term, *intensity*, to define the amount of weight they are lifting relative to their single rep max. The closer the weight is to their single rep max, the higher the intensity. Bodybuilders often use the term intensity to define the amount of effort it takes to lift the final rep of a set. If it took a maximum all-out effort to squeeze out the last rep of a set, it would be considered *high intensity training*. Intensity is at its highest when a lifter pushes themselves to do the maximum number of reps possible, which is also known as training to failure.

The Relationship Between Intensity and Volume

Some may be wondering if the 12-10-8-6 program includes any high intensity sets. The answer is that it can if that is what you want to do, but I prefer recommending optimum intensity as opposed to high intensity. High intensity is a two edged sword. From one point of view, high intensity seems to be a good thing because it means you are forcing the muscles to work very hard. From another point of view, the amount of force being exerted into the bar decreases at the end of a high intensity set because rep speed slows down. The slower weaker reps are also an indication that the nervous system is no longer firing optimally and the muscles have lost their ability to contract forcefully.

Even though high intensity training is very intense in terms of the amount of effort it takes to squeeze out the last rep, the muscle contraction of the last rep is less intense in terms of how forcefully it is contracting. When you combine this with suboptimal nerve firing that occurs on the last rep, I don't believe high intensity training to failure is an optimal way to build strength. That being said, it can't be denied that many lifters thrive on high intensity training when making their initial gains, but it is hard to keep making progress on a consistent basis by training to failure. I believe that optimum intensity is a better long term alternative.

Optimum intensity means to repeat reps of a set as long as the same rep speed and rep pace can be maintained. When rep speed slows down, muscle contractions are being compromised. For this reason, pushing to failure is generally avoided when using the 12-10-8-6 program.

What is the Purpose of Easier Sets?

Those who are intensity minded may look at each set and wonder why some sets are easy and fairly low in intensity. Isn't this wasted energy that could be saved for more intense sets? No. Intensity is just one training variable that triggers strength and muscle growth. Another variable that triggers strength and muscle growth is training volume. The best way to accumulate volume is to use lighter weights without creating a lot of fatigue. When you push hard on every set, fatigue accumulates quickly and minimizes the amount of sets and training volume that you can perform in a strength specific physiological state. Once a muscle group grows fatigued to the point where it can't recover back to full strength for the next set, any additional sets can easily cause an endurance adaptation. An endurance adaptation will help you to improve at training longer, but it may interfere with the process of helping you to grow bigger or stronger.

The purpose of the easier sets in the 12-10-8-6 program is to contribute to your training volume while minimizing fatigue so that you will be able to do plenty of sets without overtraining. The easier sets also leave enough energy to allow you to train with plenty of intensity for your harder sets with heavier weights. Both volume and intensity are necessary in order to trigger maximum strength and muscle growth.

Weight

Within weight training circles, you will often find that the amount of weight on the bar is referred to as *load*. In the past, it was believed that heavy weights were needed to produce significant muscle growth. More recently, scientific research by Brad Schoenfeld and Stuart Phillips has demonstrated that light weights, medium weights, and heavy weights all produce similar amounts of muscle growth. However, even though light weights and heavy weights develop similar amounts of muscle mass, the heavier weights produced superior gains in strength. This is why the weight increases with each successive set when using the 12-10-8-6 program as it allows you to work your way up to fairly heavy weights in relationship to the maximum weight you can lift in order to build strength!

Hopefully at this point you can see the value of three important training variables that contribute to strength and muscle growth. The three variables include:

- 1. Training Volume
- 2. Training Intensity
- 3. Sufficiently Heavy Weight

The 12-10-8-6 program is designed to include sufficient amounts of all three training variables in order to provide a powerful stimulus for triggering both strength and muscle growth.

Personal Workload Capacity

One of the keys for maximizing the benefits the 12-10-8-6 program is to utilize it within the framework of your personal workload capacity for strength specific adaptations. A strength specific adaptation is most likely to occur when you find the limit for how much work you can do before your muscles begin to weaken from doing too many sets. If you continue to do sets beyond this point, your body may shift over to an endurance adaptation instead of an adaptation that produces strength and hypertrophy.

Many lifters will find that they can do two or three series of 12-10-8-6 for a given muscle group before it begins to weaken. Each series of 12-10-8-6 equals four sets, which means that two series will equal eight total sets, and three series of 12-10-8-6 will equal twelve total sets. A small percentage of lifters may have a very high workload capacity and do best with four or more series for at least sixteen sets. At the other end of the spectrum, some may only have the capacity for one series for four total sets. However, assuming that the 12-10-8-6 program is used within the guidelines of the prescribed amount of effort for each set, most people will probably be able to do two to three exercises for each major muscle group, which will amount to a total of eight to twelve sets per muscle group. This applies to major muscle groups such as chest, back, and legs.

Smaller muscle groups such as biceps, triceps, and deltoids will only need one or two series of 12-10-8-6 because these muscles will have already been worked by providing assistance to the major muscle groups when doing pushing and pulling motions.

Once again, the number of series of 12-10-8-6 that you do is based on your capacity to lift as long as you are at full strength. In order to know the point at which a muscle group is starting to weaken during a workout, you must have enough previous experience to know the amount of weight you can use for six strong reps at full strength for a given exercise. For example, if you already know that you can use 185 pounds for six strong reps when doing incline presses, but you reach the point where you can only do three or four strong reps in your workout, then you know you are not at full strength for incline presses. Ideally, you want to be able to hit six strong reps on your fourth set of every series of 12-10-8-6.

You may find that there are times when you are able to do six reps on your fourth set, but only five of the reps are strong reps, and the last rep is a weak rep. This will occasionally happen as you challenge yourself to use progressively heavier weights and is explained in chapter 14 on *Progressing At The Right Rate.* However, if you consistently find that you get to your third series of 12-10-8-6 and you can only do four or five strong reps with a weight that normally permits six strong reps when you are at full strength, it shows you are doing too many series of 12-10-8-6. In this particular example, you would need to cut back to two exercises in future workouts because three exercises is beyond your capacity to keep training at full strength. If you cut back on the number of sets and you don't feel like it is providing enough stimulation, try training the same muscle group more often.

Amount of Rest Between Sets

In order to be at full strength while doing the 12-10-8-6 program, you must rest long enough to fully recover between sets. If you move too quickly from set to set, you will weaken by the time you reach your fourth set. This will prevent you from being able to perform six strong reps with a weight that you can normally lift for six strong reps when you are at full strength. Fortunately, you don't need a long rest after your first and second sets. Assuming you are using the right amount of weight for each set, you only need about forty-five seconds of rest after your first set with 12 reps, and about seventy-five seconds of rest after your second set with 10 reps. Take at least two minutes of rest after your third set with 8 reps. After finishing your last set of the series with 6 reps, take at least five minutes before you work the same muscle group with another series of 12-10-8-6 using a different exercise. For example, if you just finished a series of 12-10-8-6 with barbell back squats, wait at least five minutes before doing another series of 12-10-8-6 for your legs with a different leg exercise.

Alternating Between Muscle Groups

My advice is to do a series of 12-10-8-6 for a given muscle group, and then do a series of 12-10-8-6 for a different muscle group before returning to the first muscle group to do another series of 12-10-8-6. For example, if you just finished a series of 12-10-8-6 for the bench press, don't just sit there and do nothing for five minutes while waiting for your chest muscles to recover. Do a series of 12-10-8-6 with seated cable pulley rows for your back muscles before doing another series of 12-10-8-6 for your chest muscles again. Keep alternating back and forth between chest and back after each series of 12-10-8-6.

One word of caution when alternating back and forth between muscle groups; do not alternate back and forth between chest muscles and triceps. This would require you to use your triceps for two exercises in a row and would compromise your strength and ability to perform pressing exercises for your chest. Likewise, do not alternate back and forth between biceps and back exercises. This would require you to use your biceps muscle for two exercises in a row which would compromise your ability to perform pulling motions for your back. It would also cause a problem if you alternated back and forth between chest exercises and deltoid exercises as it would weaken your deltoids and compromise your ability to perform pressing exercises for the chest.

Good Combinations for Alternating Muscle Groups

There are some muscle groups that work well together when alternating back and forth between muscle groups because there is very little overlap between the muscle groups that are being worked. Muscle groups that work well together when alternating back and forth consist of:

Chest and back Biceps and triceps Deltoids and biceps Any upper body exercise with a lower body exercise

Bad Combinations for Alternating Muscle Groups

Exercise combinations that cause too much overlap between muscle groups are poor combinations. Do not alternate back and forth between exercises for these muscle groups including:

Chest and triceps

Back and biceps

Deltoids (if you are using pressing motions) and triceps

Order of Exercises

Always do exercises for the major muscle groups such as chest, back, and legs, before doing exercises for smaller muscle groups such as biceps, triceps, and deltoids. I would also suggest that you do exercises that allow you to use the most weight for a muscle group before doing exercises that don't permit as much weight. For example, if you choose to do a chest workout consisting of bench presses, incline presses, and dumbbell incline presses, it would generally be best to do bench presses first because it is the most basic exercise and allows you to use the most weight. Incline presses with a barbell would be next, followed by incline dumbbell presses last. An exception to this would be if your upper pec development is weak and you decide to do incline presses first in order to emphasize the development of your upper pecs.

Abs and Calves

If you are a bodybuilder, you will want to hit your calf muscles hard and should do two to three series of 12-10-8-6 for your calf muscles. If you are a powerlifter, or you just want to focus on building up the major muscles of your body, then the calf exercises may not be important to you and would be optional. Likewise, if you are a bodybuilder, you will probably want to do some ab work to develop your abs. Some people prefer low resistance ab work in order to keep from building muscle mass into their midsection. These people could do four sets of twenty reps with exercises such as crunches, reverse crunches, various leg lifts, and timed planks. Others don't mind using resistance on ab machines or sit ups. For these people, the 12-10-8-6 system can be used for ab work. There are also people who may choose not to do any ab work as they are mainly concerned with building overall muscle mass.

Determining An Effective Training Frequency

Common Training Frequencies

Training frequency refers to how often you train the same muscle group over the course of a week. The two most common training frequencies are to train each muscle group two times per week, or three times per week. The specific training frequency that you choose depends upon three basic factors including:

1. How quickly the muscle group that has been worked can recover back to full strength after a workout.

2. How long your muscles stay activated for growth and how long they can retain new growth and strength after a workout.

3. The number of sets that you perform for a muscle group.

If you do three series of 12-10-8-6 for each major muscle group, then you will be doing 12 sets for each major muscle group. It will probably take longer to recover from 12 sets per muscle group than someone who only does two series of 12-10-8-6 for a total of 8 sets per muscle group. This is not a rule, just a general tendency. Some people may be able to do more sets and still recover faster than those who do less sets.

As a general guideline, most people who have the capacity to do 12 total sets for each major muscle group will probably be better off training each muscle group two times per week, however, there will be some people who can do twelve or more sets three times per week. Those who have a capacity for 8 sets for each muscle group will often be able to work each muscle group three times per week, but this is not a rule as some will not fully recover unless they limit each muscle group to two workouts per week.

The biggest factor that you are looking for in order to know if you are fully recovering between workouts is to simply assess whether or not you are at full strength from one workout to the next. If you are not at full strength, either you are working out before you have fully recovered, or it is possible that you are waiting too long between workouts and are actually losing strength before you work out again.

Experiment and Evaluate the Results

Choosing the right training frequency really comes down to a simple matter of running an experiment:

First you try training a muscle group twice per week for three to six weeks;

Second you try training each muscle group three times per week for three to six weeks.

You would then evaluate which training frequency brought the greatest benefit to your strength and size and choose the frequency that worked best.

Low Frequency Training

It is possible that you benefit most from training each muscle group only once per week. This will only work for people who have muscles that remain activated for muscle growth and strength for several days after a workout. In addition, they must be able to retain any new muscle growth and strength for up to a week. Most people don't have the ability to wait that long between workouts, but some of the best lifters in the world do.

A common misconception is that if you just take more time off by waiting a week between workouts for the same muscle group, then it will guarantee full recovery which will automatically lead to added strength and size. This is only true if your muscles remain activated for growth or you have the ability to retain new growth for an entire week of after a workout. If not, you will lose any new strength or muscle gains during a recovery process that is simply too long. Only experience can tell you whether you have the ability to work each muscle group once per week.

Not all successful low frequency lifters are the same in regard to the amount of training volume they use. It is not uncommon for bodybuilders to train each muscle group just once per week in conjunction with a very high training volume. They hit each muscle group with 20 sets in a single workout, which would be equivalent to five series of 12-10-8-6 for each muscle group.

Most powerlifters or strength athletes who hit each muscle group once per week would do two to three series of 12-10-8-6 for each muscle group. There is also a category of training called *minimalist training*, where only one series of 12-10-8-6 would be done for each major muscle group each week. The major muscle groups trained would include chest, back, and legs. Training the deltoid muscles would be optional. Specific exercises for biceps, triceps, abs, and calves wouldn't be done.

I don't advise you to use super high volume or minimalist training just because it sounds attractive or a famous lifter happens to use one of these methods. You can try it out, but you should only keep doing it if you are among the small percentage who respond well to it.

High Frequency Training

On the other end of the spectrum it is possible that your muscles only stay activated for muscle growth and strength for a very short time after your workouts. In addition, your muscles don't retain new strength or growth very long after a workout. If this is true of you, you may find that you need to work each muscle group more often than the normal frequencies consisting of two or three times per week. If you end up working each muscle group four or more times per week, you will be doing what is known as *high frequency training.*

The rules for high frequency training are not always the same as with other types of training. You may need to reduce the amount of training volume below your normal training capacity and just do one series of 12-10-8-6 for each muscle group in order to recover within 24 hours before your next workout. Some people would say that just one series is not enough, but it is if you are doing it almost every day. There may also be people who can do two series of 12-10-8-6 for each muscle group with high frequency training, but this should only be done by those who have the recovery capacity to make progress from it.

Start With The Norm And Adjust If Necessary

There are a huge range of training volumes and training frequencies that have been used among elite bodybuilders and powerlifters. When using the 12-10-8-6 method, the norm for successful lifting is 8 to 12 sets (i.e. two or three series of 12-10-8-6) per muscle group, and to train each muscle group two or three times per week. I suggest that you start with the norm first, and if it works, keep doing it. If not, try something outside the norm as a small percentage will not fit into the norm. The bottom line is to let results guide you when considering how much and how often you should train.

Exercise Selection

When it comes to exercises, there are a wide variety that you can choose from. The 12-10-8-6 program is intended primarily for developing strength and muscle mass. Because of this, the exercises that are recommended in this book are made up of basic compound exercises for major muscle groups as they tend to be the best exercises for building size and strength. However, isolation exercises for biceps, triceps, deltoids, and calves are also included in this chapter.

The exercise selection for a workout will depend upon three considerations including:

- 1. Which muscle groups you will be working in your workout;
- 2. Which exercises seem to work best for you;
- 3. Any weaknesses in a muscle group that you want to build up.

Choose the number of exercises according to the number of series of 12-10-8-6 you can perform while remaining at full strength as discussed in chapter 6 on *Personal Workload Capacity*.

I recommend you choose from the following exercises that are shown in the pictures below, although you may certainly choose exercises that are not pictured. At this point, the exercises shown in this chapter do not include instructions for how to perform the exercises, although there is an exercise guide at the end of the book that provides exercise instructions. Please refer to it as needed.

Leg Exercises

Squats



Leg Press



Front Squats



Kettlebell Straddle Squats



Deadlift Exercises

Conventional Deadlift



Sumo Deadlift



Chest Exercises

Bench Press



Incline Press



Incline Dumbbell Press



Dips



Back Exercises

Bent-Over Rows



Single Arm Dumbbell Rows



Seated Pulley Rows



Lat Pull Downs



Deltoid (Shoulder) Exercises

Overhead Press



Dumbbell Overhead Press



Dumbbell Lateral Raises



Upright Rows



Biceps Exercises

Barbell Curls



Dumbbell Curls



Triceps Exercises

Triceps Press-Downs



Lying Triceps Extensions



Calf Exercises

Standing Calf Raises



Seated Calf Raises



Abdominal Exercises

Crunches



Planks



A Summary of Guidelines For Optimum 12-10-8-6 Workouts

When you understand the guidelines for the 12-10-8-6 system, you will be ready to start formulating workouts that are suited to your individual capacities, goals, and preferences. The basic guideline that have been discussed so far are listed below:

1. Select basic mass building exercises for each muscle group.

2. The number of exercises that you select for a muscle group is based upon how many series of 12-10-8-6 you can perform for a muscle group while remaining at full strength. For example, if you can remain at full strength for two series of 12-10-8-6 when training your chest, then you would select a total of two chest exercises. If you can do three series of 12-10-8-6 at full strength, then you would do three chest exercises.

3. Do four sets for each exercise consisting of 12 reps for the first set, 10 reps for the second set, 8 reps for the third set, and 6 reps for the fourth set.

4. The amount of weight that you use for each set of an exercise is based upon the guidelines discussed in chapter 2 and the percentage charts listed in the Appendix towards the end of the book.

5. The number of times that you train a specific muscle group within a week is dependent upon three factors:

The first is how fast you can recover to full strength; this would determine the shortest amount of time that you would want to wait between workouts.

The second factor is based on how long your muscles stay activated for growth and how long they retain new strength and growth after a workout. The longer your muscles stay activated for growth after a workout, and the longer they retain new muscle growth and strength, the longer you can wait between workouts without experiencing negative consequences to your progress. The majority of people will tend to benefit most from training each muscle group two or three times per week when using the 12-10-8-6 system. However, there will be exceptions who receive better results from training each muscle group four or more times per week, while others will do best training each muscle group just once per week.

The third factor is based on how many sets you can do for each muscle group during a workout. In general, lifters who do more sets at full strength within a workout will take longer to recover, but this is only a tendency, not a rule.

6. Rest times between sets are as follows:

Rest 45 seconds after the first set with 12 reps.

Rest 75 second after the second set with 10 reps.

Rest at least two minutes after the third set with 8 reps.

After completing your fourth set with 6 reps, don't do another series of 12-10-8-6 for the same muscle group for at least five minutes.

7. After doing a series of 12-10-8-6 for a muscle group, switch to a different nonrelated muscle group for a series of 12-10-8-6 before returning the first muscle group.

8. Train your biggest muscle groups such as legs, chest, and back muscles before training smaller muscle groups such as deltoids, biceps, triceps, calves, and abs.

Select A Workout

The workouts are designed according to two basic factors which include:

- 1. The number of exercises you can do for 12-10-8-6 for a muscle group while remaining at full strength.
- 2. The training frequency that works best for you.

There are nine workouts listed in order to cover a wide variety of capacities, but I believe the majority of people will benefit most from the first three workouts listed. Look through the following workouts to pick the one that matches your personal capacities. If you are not sure which one matches your personal capacities, start by trying workouts 1, 2, or 3 and evaluate if one of these workout programs seems to match your capacities in terms of the number of sets and frequency. If you try a workout and it does not fit your capacities, try another one until you find one that does. Above all, let results be your primary guide.
Do 12-10-8-6 for Each Exercise

Do 2 Exercises for Each Major Muscle Group

Work Each Muscle 2 Times per Week

Further Instructions:

Select 2 exercises for each major muscle group including:

Legs

Chest

Back

Select 1 exercise for smaller muscle groups including:

Biceps

Triceps

Deltoids

Select 1 to 2 exercises for calves.

Abdominal work choices:

1. Do 3 to 4 sets of 15 to 30 reps of crunch variations

2. Hold planks for 30 to 60 seconds.

Training Frequency:

Work each muscle group 2 times per Week as follows:

Do a full body workouts twice per week, or:

Work each muscle group 2 times per week as follows:

Mondays and Thursdays: work chest, back, deltoids, and arms

Tuesdays and Fridays: work upper legs, calves, and abs

Do 12-10-8-6 for Each Exercise

Do 2 Exercises for Each Major Muscle Group

Work Each Muscle 3 Times per Week

Further Instructions:

Select 2 exercises for each major muscle group including:

Legs

Chest

Back

Select 1 exercise for smaller muscle groups including:

Biceps

Triceps

Deltoids

Select 1 to 2 exercises for calves.

Abdominal work choices:

1. Do 3 to 4 sets of 15 to 30 reps of crunch variations

2. Hold planks for 30 to 60 seconds.

Training Frequency:

Work each muscle group 3 times per week as follows:

Do a full body workouts three times per week, or;

Work each muscle group 3 times per week as follows:

Mondays – Wednesdays – Fridays: Work chest, back, deltoids, and arms

Tuesdays – Thursdays – Saturdays: Work upper legs, calves, and abs

Do 12-10-8-6 for Each Exercise

Do 3 Exercises for Each Major Muscle Group

Work Each Muscle 2 Times per Week

Further Instructions:

Select 3 exercises for each major muscle group including:

Legs

Chest

Back

Select 1 to 2 exercise for smaller muscle groups including:

Biceps

Triceps

Deltoids

Select 2 exercises for calves.

Abdominal work choices:

1. Do 3 to 4 sets of 15 to 30 reps of crunch variations

2. Hold planks for 30 to 60 seconds.

Training Frequency:

Work each muscle group 2 times per week as follows:

Mondays and Thursdays: work chest, back, deltoids, and arms

Tuesdays and Fridays: work upper legs, calves, and abs

Do 12-10-8-6 for Each Exercise

Do 3 Exercises for Each Major Muscle Group

Work Each Muscle 3 Times per Week

Further Instructions:

Select 3 exercises for each major muscle group including:

Legs

Chest

Back

Select 1 to 2 exercise for smaller muscle groups including

Biceps

Triceps

Deltoids

Select 2 exercises for calves.

Abdominal work choices:

1. Do 3 to 4 sets of 15 to 30 reps of crunch variations

2. Hold planks for 30 to 60 seconds.

Training Frequency:

Work each muscle group 3 times per week as follows:

Mondays - Wednesdays - Fridays: Work chest, back, deltoids, and arms

Tuesdays – Thursdays – Saturdays: Work upper legs, calves, and abs

Do 12-10-8-6 for Each Exercise

Do 1 Exercise for Each Major Muscle Group

Work Each Muscle 3 Times per Week

Further Instructions:

Select 1 exercise for each major muscle group including:

Legs

Chest

Back

Select 1 exercise for smaller muscle groups including:

Biceps

Triceps

Deltoids

Select 1 exercises for calves.

Abdominal work choices:

1. Do 3 to 4 sets of 15 to 30 reps of crunch variations

2. Hold planks for 30 to 60 seconds.

Training Frequency:

Do a full body workout three times per week

Do 12-10-8-6 for Each Exercise

Do 1 to 2 Exercises for Each Major Muscle Group

Work Each Muscle 4 or More Times per Week

Further Instructions:

Select 1 or 2 exercise for each major muscle group including:

Legs

Chest

Back

Select 1 exercise for smaller muscle groups including:

Biceps

Triceps

Deltoids

Select 1 exercise for calves.

Abdominal work choices:

1. Do 3 to 4 sets of 15 to 30 reps of crunch variations

2. Hold planks for 30 to 60 seconds.

Training Frequency:

Work each muscle group 4 to 6 times per week with full body workouts

Do 12-10-8-6 for Each Exercise

Do 2 or 3 Exercises for Each Major Muscle Group

Work Each Muscle Once per Week

Further Instructions:

Select 2 to 3 exercises for each major muscle group including:

Legs

Chest

Back

Select 1 to 2 exercise for smaller muscle groups including:

Biceps

Triceps

Deltoids

Select 1 to 2 exercises for calves.

Abdominal work choices:

1. Do 3 to 4 sets of 15 to 30 reps of crunch variations

2. Hold planks for 30 to 60 seconds.

Training Frequency:

Work each muscle group once per week as follows:

Mondays: work chest, back and abs

Wednesdays: work upper legs and calves

Fridays: work deltoids, biceps, and triceps

Do 12-10-8-6 for Each Exercise

Do 4 to 5 Exercises for Each Major Muscle Group

Work Each Muscle Once per Week

Further Instructions:

Select 4 to 5 exercises for each major muscle group including:

Legs

Chest

Back

Select 2 to 3 exercise for smaller muscle groups including:

Biceps

Triceps

Deltoids

Select 2 to 3 exercises for calves.

Abdominal work choices:

1. Do 3 to 4 sets of 15 to 30 reps of crunch variations

2. Hold planks for 30 to 60 seconds.

Training Frequency:

Work each muscle group once per week as follows:

Mondays: work chest

Tuesdays: Work upper legs and calves

Wednesdays: work back

Thursday: Work deltoids and abs

Fridays: work biceps and triceps

Workout Plan #9: Minimalist Training

Do 12-10-8-6 for Each Exercise

Do 1 Exercise for Each Major Muscle Group

Work Each Muscle Once per Week

Further Instructions:

Select 1 exercise for each major muscle group including:

Legs

Chest

Back

Training Frequency:

Work each muscle group once per week as follows:

Mondays: Do a pressing exercise for chest or shoulders

Wednesdays: work upper legs

Fridays: work back

Chapter 13

Variations and Adjustments

Even though the concept of training within your workload capacity and recovery capacity have been emphasized throughout the book, there are times when you may want to experiment with training outside of these boundaries. Don't completely throw out the idea of staying within your training capacities, but sometimes your body can tolerate short periods of increased or decreased training, even though it is slightly outside of your normal workload capacity or recovery rate capacity. That being said, this chapter will provide several training variations in order to help you make proper adjustments to your training, and to add variety to your training.

Different Volumes and Frequencies for Different Muscle Groups

One important variation that you may need to consider is that different muscle groups may require a different number of sets per workout, or a different number of workouts per week. For example, you may need to hit your upper body muscles three times per week and only train your legs once or twice per week, or vice versa. You may also find that your back muscles stay strong for three series of 12-10-8-6, but your chest and leg muscles only stay at full strength for two series, or vice versa.

Changing Volume and Frequency

It may be that you find it beneficial to change the volume and frequency of your workouts from week to week. For example, during the first week of training, you hit each major muscle group twice per week with three series of 12-10-8-6 (i.e. 12 sets). The second week you decrease the volume to two series of 12-10-8-6 (i.e. 8 sets), but you increase the frequency by hitting each major muscle group three times per week. Finally, during the third week, you hit each muscle group five or six days in a row, but you decrease the volume to just one series of 12-10-8-6 (i.e. 4 sets) per muscle group.

If you used this strategy according to the workout plans in chapter 11, the workout plans would be done in the following order:

Week 1: Workout Plan #3

Week 2: Workout Plan #2

Week 3: Workout Plan #6

The Pump

Perhaps the 12-10-8-6 workout doesn't have the right pace or intensity level in order to activate a pump as much as you would like. If you want more of a pump, you can vastly speed

up the pace of the workout by only resting twenty to thirty seconds between sets. The first set will be the same as always in terms of difficulty, but if you speed the workout up to a much faster pace, you won't recover as much between sets and it will make the second, third, and fourth sets more difficult than when doing a slower series of 12-10-8-6. You may need to use lighter weights than normal for your last set in order to be able to do six reps, but if you want a better pump, you may find the faster workout pace is better.

If you use this strategy, you don't necessarily have to use the faster pace on every series of 12-10-8-6. If you are doing two or three series of 12-10-8-6 for each muscle group, you may want to only do the last series of 12-10-8-6 at a much faster pace in order to finish with a pump.

Let Results Guide You

The biggest rule to follow in your training is to do what works. Experiment, try things out, and adjust according to your capacities and according to positive results. Lifters and bodybuilders who are able to make progress over the long term are usually very in tune with their bodies and learn to discern whether or not they are training within their capacity. They tend to be very good at discerning when a change or adjustment is going to produce positive results, and when it will produce negative results. In order for you to succeed, you will need to learn how to identify your capacities for volume and frequency, and you will need to become adept at discerning when your training is working, and when it is not, and how to adjust in order to produce positive results.

Chapter 14

Rapid Gains Are Great, But Then What?

One of the most difficult things to understand about weight training is that you cannot judge the overall quality of a training method by how fast it works. There are times when lifters gain very rapidly, but not only does the same training that produced rapid gains stop working, it prevents further gains. If you are going to gain quickly, it will occur when three conditions are present:

1. You are using a training program that fits your individual physiology.

2. You are an individual who has the capacity and ability to gain quickly (not everyone does).

3. You are in the early stages of training.

Sooner or later the rapid gains start to slow down and no matter how hard you push, it doesn't help you to gain any faster. Not only that, but pushing hard may even cause a training plateau. When this happens, you must be patient and learn to train with precision by training hard enough without training too hard.

If you don't train hard enough, your body will be able to handle the training stress in its current condition without needing to change and grow stronger. If you train too hard and overwhelm your body with too much training stress, your body will shut down its willingness to grow stronger. Constantly overwhelming your body is counterproductive. Why would your body want to grow stronger and allow you to lift even more weight when it is already overwhelmed with the amount of weight that you are currently using? It wouldn't. This is why I stress the need for optimum intensity as opposed to high intensity.

High intensity training may work really well in the context of short term training, but it can backfire when the goal is sustainable long term progress. When you reach the point where progress slows down, be realistic and do some math like powerlifting legend Ed Coan did. Ed realized that if he just got twenty pounds stronger every year, he would be 100 pounds stronger in five years, and he would be ridiculously strong in ten, fifteen, and twenty years. After making some initial rapid gains, Ed transitioned over to a long term plan that would bring gradual but consistent progress for many years.

The key to ongoing improvement is to get better little by little throughout each year, and to do it year after to year. So how do you do that? The next chapter will discuss how to make consistent progress, whether it is fast progress, or the slower progress that tends to come after you have been training for a long time.

Chapter 15

Progressing At The Right Rate

Whether you are a beginner, intermediate, or advanced lifter, you can use the same strategies for progression. The results may play out differently in terms of the rate at which you gain, but the basic strategies are still the same. The strategies for progression are based on the amount of intensity that you respond to best. This being the case, I will present three strategies that you can experiment with in order to find out which one your body responds to best. The three strategies will be listed first, followed by an explanation of each strategy.

- 1. Marker Rep Responsive Lifters
- 2. Loading Wave Responsive Lifters
- 3. Micro-loading for Strong State Responsive Lifters

The Starting Point

The starting point for each form of progression is to experiment in order to find out how much weight you can use for six perfect reps for any of the exercises you will be doing. Perfect means that every rep looks perfect in terms of form, rep pace, force, and rep speed. If your form looks sloppy, or you are straining and slowing down at the end of a set, the reps are not perfect and you are using too much weight. Don't use a weight that you can kind of, sort of, barely do for six perfect reps when you happen to be feeling very strong. Use a weight that you can positively lift for six perfect reps without any doubt on any given day whether you feel weak or strong. Once you have determined how much weight you can lift for the exercises you are doing, you can try out different forms of progression to see which one works best.

1. Marker Rep Responsive Lifters

Those who are intensity responsive should start out with a weight that allows six perfect reps in your first workout. Keep adding five pounds in each successive workout until you reach a weight where your sixth rep is no longer perfect. When the sixth rep is no longer perfect, I refer to it as a **marker rep** because it marks the initial point in the set where a less than perfect rep shows up. A less than perfect rep means that you are pausing longer than normal in order to gather your strength before doing the sixth rep, or the sixth rep will be slower than the previous five, or your body position and lifting motion will look sloppy or jerky. It is quite possible that you will reach this point the first time you add five pounds to some or all of your exercises.

When you reach a weight that causes you to hit a less than perfect marker rep, stop adding weight to the lift. Keep repeating workouts with this same amount of weight until you gain enough strength for all of the imperfect qualities of the sixth rep to vanish and go away. Once

you have gained enough strength to perform six perfect reps again, repeat the process. This means to start adding five pounds per workout until it causes you to encounter an imperfect marker rep on your sixth rep. At that point, keep repeating workouts with the same weight until enough strength is gained to do six perfect reps. This process should be repeated over and over again in order to add weight at a rate that corresponds to the rate at which your body is truly gaining strength.

Notice that if you use this method, most of your training will be done by consistently pushing to an intensity level that is just beyond your capacity to maintain the ability to do six perfect reps. The other forms of progression that will be discussed will not be quite as intense.

2. Those Responsive to Loading Waves

Lifters who are responsive to loading waves may be able to push to their marker rep on occasion, but they are better off if they work their way up to it by loading a little weight from workout to workout over the course of a few workouts. When you add weight over the course of a few workouts or a few weeks, you are using what is called a *loading wave*. For the purposes of the 12-10-8-6 program, the loading wave will last for either three workouts, or three weeks, whichever you respond to best.

Some people will respond to loading waves better than always pushing to their marker rep in almost every workout. The most important thing about loading is to start loading at the right level of intensity, and stop loading at the right level of intensity.

Your First Workout

When starting a loading wave, the first step is to know the amount of weight that you can use for six perfect reps. From there, reduce the weight by five to ten pounds for your first workout.

Your Second Workout

Add five to ten pounds for your second workout so that you using the exact weight that you can do for six perfect reps.

Your Third Workout

For your third workout, add five to ten pounds again. This will likely cause your sixth rep to be a marker rep that will be slower than the previous five.

Keep Repeating The Loading Wave

Once you have done three workouts with successively heavier weights, you have completed a loading cycle. Keep repeating this cycle over and over again until you gain enough strength to do six perfect reps when you reach the third workout of the cycle. Once this has been

accomplished, repeat the cycle with an additional five pounds as you proceed through the cycle again.

The 3 Week Loading Wave

The loading wave that is done for three workouts can also be done as a three week cycle. Instead of using a different amount of weight for each workout, a different amount of weight would be used each week.

The amount of weight that you used for your first workout would correspond to the weight that you would use throughout week one.

The weight that you used for your second workout would correspond to the weight that you would use throughout week two.

The weight that you used for the third workout would correspond to the weight that you would use throughout week three.

When you gain enough strength to do six perfect reps throughout all of week three, you are ready to repeat the three week cycle with an additional five pounds.

3. Micro-loading for Strong State Responsive Lifters

Some lifters are better off if they only stick with strong reps which exhibit the qualities of perfect reps. When these qualities are present throughout all six reps, the form, rep pace, and rep speed will look the same on all six reps. Adding enough weight to cause imperfect reps is altogether avoided. Weight is added in small increments of a pound or less to accomplish this. The use of these small additions of weight is called *micro-loading*.

When using this method of progression, the central objective is to keep adding a pound at a time without ever losing the ability to perform six perfect reps. If weight is added too quickly, the lifter will eventually be forced to use less than perfect form or a slower rep speed on his sixth rep. If this happens, he should back up five pounds and start adding weight in one pound intervals again.

Those who are easy gainers and have the ability to gain very rapidly may be able to add a pound three times per week for a year which would add up to over 150 pounds in a year. In contrast, lifters who have been lifting for several years will usually need to add weight at a slower rate. These lifters may only be able to add one pound every two weeks, which would still add up to a hundred pounds in four years. Micro-loading may seem slow and insignificant, but when done correctly, it adds up to big numbers if it can be repeated on a sustainable basis over a long period of time.

How to Get Fractional Weight Plates

Micro-loading can only be done if you have fractional weight plates. It is not hard to find them online and order them. All you need to do is use the search term, *"fractional weight plates"* when searching for them online, and you will have plenty of options to choose from.

Make Adjustments if Needed

You may find that different forms of progression work better for you according to the amount of training experience that you have. For example, you may be most responsive to marker rep training as a beginner or intermediate, and find that strong state micro-loading works better when you become an advanced lifter. If you have been using one form of progression and it seemed to work well for a while, but then it stops working, make adjustments until you find a progression system that works.

Chapter 16

Important Considerations When Adding Weight

Different Lifts Require Different Rates of Progress

Having discussed how to add weight to your lifts, there are important aspects of adding weight that still must be considered. You must know that you will be able to add weight at a faster rate to some exercises than others. Most likely you will be able to add weight at a faster rate to exercises such as squats, deadlifts, and bench presses. You will not be able to add weight as quickly to curls for your biceps, and triceps extensions for your triceps. It is also hard to add weight very fast to dumbbell lateral raises or upright rows. When adding weight, you must individualize it to the specific exercise by adding at a rate that corresponds to the amount of strength gained for that exercise. At the end of a year, you may end up adding 60 pounds to your squat, but only 10 or 15 pounds to curls and triceps extensions.

The Rate at Which You Can Add Weight Can Change

Another important consideration to be aware of is that the rate at which you can add weight will change over time. Remember that a beginner or an intermediate will usually be able to gain strength quickly. This will enable them to add weight at a faster rate than someone who has already added a lot of weight over several years of weight training. As you progress, make sure to add weight within the context of six perfect reps instead of just pushing your sets harder and harder in order to keep adding weight at a fast rate. If you push too hard and add weight too quickly, it may appear to work for a time, but it usually ends up backfiring in the end and leads to a plateau. In contrast, if you add weight when your body is truly ready, you will be able to keep on adding weight for a much longer time.

Add Weight to All Four Sets

A final consideration that should not be overlooked is that if you are using the percentage tables to determine how much weight to use for each set, you will find that a certain amount of weight will automatically be added to every set, including the lighter sets as you get stronger. Many lifters do their first couple warm up sets with nearly the same amount of weight no matter how strong they become. Don't just add weight to your heaviest set of an exercise, but make sure to add weight to all four sets, just as it is shown in the percentage tables.

Chapter 17

Precision Matters

The 12-10-8-6 program is a very effective strategy for building muscles size and strength. You can use it on a regular basis over a long period of time, or you can use it for a periodic training block according to your goals, needs, and preferences.

The key to making it work is precision and patience. If you are searching for a magic routine that delivers phenomenal results, but you don't take the time to zero in on your capacities in terms of how much weight to use for each exercise, and how many sets you can do while remaining at full strength, and how much recovery time you need between workouts to regain full strength, then the 12-10-8-6 program will not deliver the results you hoped for. Precision may not seem to matter much over the course of a month, but it will make a noticeable difference by the end of the year, and it will make a huge difference when considering long term progress.

Remember that the strength of the 12-10-8-6 program is that it provides an effective balance between training volume, intensity, and load. When you combine these factors together with precision training, you will find that the natural byproduct is to get is to get bigger and stronger. My hope is that the 12-10-8-6 system brings you another step closer to achieving your goals. Best of training to you.

Appendix

Weight Percentage Tables

How Much Weight To Use for Each Set

If you prefer to use percentages in order to determine how much weight to use for each set, this section provides data tables that are calculated according to the amount of weight that should be used for each set.

In order to use the data tables, you must know how much weight you can lift for six perfect reps. The tables are not based on the most weight you can possibly use when you grind and strain out six reps that are getting slower and sloppier with longer and longer pauses between reps as you proceed through the set. You will be using too much weight if you do this. Use weights that allow optimum intensity.

Optimum intensity training is based on optimum form, pace, and rep speed that stays the same throughout the entire set. If you want optimum results, you must set your ego aside and be honest enough with yourself to select the right amount of weight that allows you to train within your capacity to do six perfect reps. Start with perfection and add on to your weights while maintaining perfection.

Once you have experimented enough to know the amount of weight you can use for six perfect reps of an exercise, look through the top row of the tables until you find the amount of weight that matches how much you can lift for six perfect reps. After you have found the correct number on the top row, notice that four numbers are listed directly beneath the top number. These four numbers list the amount of weight you should be using for each set, starting with twelve reps towards the top, and proceeding downward to six reps at the bottom.

As an example, you can look at the data table shown below. In this example, if you can do six perfect reps with 260 pounds for a given exercise, look at the top row of the data table until you find 260. Four numbers are listed directly beneath 260. In this example, the four numbers for each set include 130, 180, 220, and 260. This means you would start out by using use 130 pounds for twelve reps, followed by 180 for ten reps, 220 for eight reps, and finish with 260 for six reps.

Но	w Much	Weight t	o Use For	Each Set	According	g To Your	6 Rep Ma	ax (for 6 P	erfect Re	ps)	
Find the	maximu	m weight	that you d	an lift for	six perfe	ct strong	reps in th	e top row	of the ta	ble. The	
four num	bers dire	ectly bene	ath your (5 rep max	(6RM) wi	ll tell the	amount o	f weight y	ou shoul	d be	
using for	using for each set in a series of 12-10-8-6.										
6RM	250	255	260	265	270	275	280	285	290	295	
1 st Set											
12 reps	125	130	130	135	135	140	140	145	145	150	
50%											
2 nd Set											
10 reps	175	180	180	185	190	195	195	200	205	205	
70%											
3 rd Set											
8 reps	215	215	220	225	230	235	240	240	245	250	
85%											
4 th Set											
6 reps	250	255	260	265	270	275	280	285	290	295	
100%								c			

You can use this same procedure for determining the amount of weight to lift for each set of all of the exercises that you choose for your workouts. The percentage tables for the amount of weight to use for each set are listed on the next several pages, starting with five pounds and ending 795 pounds.

Percentages Based on 5 to 50 Pounds

Но	w Much	Weight t	o Use For	Each Set	According	g To Your	6 Rep Ma	x (for 6 P	erfect Re	ps)
Find the	maximu	m weight	that you o	can lift for	six perfe	ct strong	reps in th	e top row	of the ta	ble. The
four num	bers dire	ectly bene	ath your (6 rep max	(6RM) wi	ll tell the	amount o	f weight y	ou shoul	d be
using for each set in a series of 12-10-8-6.										
6RM	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50
1 st Set			·							<i>(</i>
12 reps	2.5	5	7.5	10	15	15	20	20	25	25
50%										
2 nd Set										
10 reps	3.5	7	10	15	17.5	20	25	30	30	35
70%			8							8
3 rd Set										
8 reps	4	8	12.5	15	20	25	30	35	35	40
85%										
4 th Set										
6 reps	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50
100%										

Percentages Based on 50 to 95 Pounds

Ho	w Much	Weight to	o Use For	Each Set	According	g To Your	6 Rep Ma	ix (for 6 P	erfect Re	ps)
Find the	maximu	m weight	that you	can lift fo	r <mark>six perf</mark> e	ect strong	reps in th	ne top rov	v of the ta	able. The
four num	oers dire	ectly bene	ath your 6	5 rep max	(6RM) wil	l tell the a	mount of	weight ye	ou should	be using
for each s	et in a s	eries of 12	2-10-8-6.							
6RM	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95
1 st Set										
12 reps	25	30	30	35	35	40	40	45	45	50
50%										
2 nd Set										
10 reps	35	40	40	45	50	55	55	60	65	65
70%										
3 rd Set										
8 reps	45	45	50	55	60	65	70	70	75	80
85%			-							
4 th Set										
6 reps	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95
100%										

Percentages Based on 100 to 145 Pounds

Ho	w Much	Weight to	o Use For	Each Set	According	g To Your	6 Rep Ma	x (for 6 P	erfect Re	ps)
Find the	maximu	m weight	that you o	an lift for	six perfe	ct strong	reps in th	e top row	of the ta	ble. The
four num	bers dire	ectly bene	ath your (5 rep max	(6RM) wi	ll tell the	amount o	f weight y	ou shoul	d be
using for each set in a series of 12-10-8-6.										
6RM	100	105	110	115	120	125	130	135	140	145
1 st Set										
reps	50	55	55	60	60	65	65	70	70	75
50%			×							
2 nd Set										
reps	70	75	75	80	85	90	90	95	100	100
70%										-
3 rd Set										
reps	85	90	95	100	100	105	110	115	120	125
85%										
4 th Set										
reps	100	105	110	115	120	125	130	135	140	145
100%										

Percentages Based on 150 to 195 Pounds

Но	w Much	Weight t	o Use For	Each Set	According	g To Your	6 Rep Ma	ix (for 6 P	erfect Re	ps)	
Find the	maximu	m weight	that you o	can lift for	six perfe	ct strong	reps in th	e top row	of the ta	ble. The	
four num	bers dire	ectly bene	ath your (6 rep max	(6RM) wi	ll tell the	amount o	f weight y	ou shoul	d be	
using for	using for each set in a series of 12-10-8-6.										
6RM	150	155	160	165	170	175	180	185	190	195	
1 st Set											
12 reps	75	80	80	85	85	90	90	95	95	100	
50%											
2 nd Set					~						
10 reps	105	110	110	115	120	125	125	130	135	135	
70%											
3 rd Set		8						2			
8 reps	130	130	135	140	145	150	155	155	160	165	
85%											
4 th Set											
6 reps	150	155	160	165	170	175	180	185	190	195	
100%											

Percentages Based on 200 to 245 Pounds

Ho	w Much	Weight t	o Use For	Each Set	According	g To Your	6 Rep Ma	x (for 6 P	erfect Re	ps)
Find the	maximu	m weight	that you o	an lift for	six perfe	ct strong	reps in th	e top row	of the ta	ble. The
four num	bers dire	ectly bene	ath your (5 rep max	(6RM) wi	ll tell the	amount o	f weight y	ou shoul	d be
using for each set in a series of 12-10-8-6.										
6RM	200	205	210	215	220	225	230	235	240	245
1 st Set				n						
12 reps	100	105	105	110	110	115	115	120	120	125
50%										
2 nd Set				8						
10 reps	140	145	145	150	155	160	160	165	170	170
70%										
3 rd Set										
8 reps	170	175	180	185	185	190	195	200	205	210
85%										
4 th Set										
6 reps	200	205	210	215	220	225	230	235	240	245
100%										

Percentages Based on 250 to 295 Pounds

Но	w Much	Weight t	o Use For	Each Set	Accordin	g To Your	6 Rep Ma	ax (for 6 P	erfect Re	ps)	
Find the	maximu	m weight	that you o	can lift for	six perfe	ct strong	reps in th	e top row	of the ta	ble. The	
four num	bers dire	ectly bene	ath your (6 rep max	(6RM) wi	ll tell the	amount c	f weight y	ou shoul	d be	
using for	using for each set in a series of 12-10-8-6.										
6RM	250	255	260	265	270	275	280	285	290	295	
1 st Set											
12 reps	125	130	130	135	135	140	140	145	145	150	
50%											
2 nd Set											
10 reps	175	180	180	185	190	195	195	200	205	205	
70%											
3 rd Set											
8 reps	215	215	220	225	230	235	240	240	245	250	
85%		c		8							
4 th Set											
6 reps	250	255	260	265	270	275	280	285	290	295	
100%								c			

Percentages Based on 300 to 345 Pounds

Но	w Much	Weight t	o Use For	Each Set	According	g To Your	6 Rep Ma	ax (for 6 P	erfect Re	ps)	
Find the	maximu	m weight	that you o	can lift for	six perfe	ct strong	reps in th	e top row	of the ta	ble. The	
four num	bers dire	ectly bene	ath your (5 rep max	(6RM) wi	ll tell the	amount o	of weight y	ou shoul	d be	
using for each set in a series of 12-10-8-6.											
6RM	300	305	310	315	320	325	330	335	340	345	
1 st Set											
12 reps	150	155	155	160	160	165	165	170	170	175	
50%											
2 nd Set											
10 reps	210	215	215	220	225	230	230	235	240	240	
70%											
3 rd Set											
8 reps	255	260	265	270	270	275	280	285	290	295	
85%											
4 th Set				3							
6 reps	300	305	310	315	320	325	330	335	340	345	
100%											

Percentages Based on 350 to 395 Pounds

Но	w Much	Weight t	o Use For	Each Set	According	g To Your	6 Rep Ma	ax (for 6 P	erfect Re	ps)
Find the	maximu	m weight	that you o	can lift for	six perfe	ct strong	reps in th	e top row	of the ta	ble. The
four num	bers dire	ectly bene	ath your (5 rep max	(6RM) wi	ll tell the	amount o	f weight y	ou shoul	d be
using for each set in a series of 12-10-8-6.										
6RM	350	355	360	365	370	375	380	385	390	395
1 st Set										0
12 reps	175	180	180	185	185	190	190	195	195	200
50%			,				6			,
2 nd Set										
10 reps	245	250	250	255	260	265	265	270	275	275
70%										
3 rd Set										
8 reps	300	300	305	310	315	320	325	325	330	335
85%										
4 th Set										
6 reps	350	355	360	365	370	375	380	385	390	395
100%										

Percentages Based on 400 to 445 Pounds

Ho	w Much	Weight t	o Use For	Each Set	According	g To Your	6 Rep Ma	ax (for 6 P	erfect Re	ps)	
Find the	maximui	m weight	that you o	an lift for	six perfe	ct strong	reps in th	e top row	of the ta	ble. The	
four num	bers dire	ectly bene	ath your (5 rep max	(6RM) wi	ll tell the	amount o	f weight y	ou shoul	d be	
using for each set in a series of 12-10-8-6.											
6RM	400	405	410	415	420	425	430	435	440	445	
1 st Set											
12 reps	200	205	205	210	210	215	215	220	220	225	
50%											
2 nd Set											
10 reps	280	285	285	290	295	300	300	305	310	310	
70%			·								
3 rd Set											
8 reps	340	345	350	355	355	360	365	370	375	380	
85%									2		
4 th Set											
6 reps	400	405	410	415	420	425	430	435	440	445	
100%											

Percentages Based on 450 to 495 Pounds

Но	w Much	Weight t	o Use For	Each Set	Accordin	g To Your	6 Rep Ma	ax (for 6 P	erfect Re	ps)	
Find the	maximu	m weight	that you o	can lift for	six perfe	ct strong	reps in th	e top row	of the ta	ble. The	
four num	bers dire	ectly bene	ath your (6 rep max	(6RM) wi	ll tell the	amount o	of weight y	ou shoul	d be	
using for	using for each set in a series of 12-10-8-6.										
6RM	450	455	460	465	470	475	480	485	490	495	
1 st Set											
12 reps	225	230	230	235	235	240	240	245	245	300	
50%											
2 nd Set											
10 reps	315	320	320	325	330	335	335	340	345	345	
70%											
3 rd Set											
8 reps	385	385	390	395	400	405	410	410	415	420	
85%											
4 th Set		1						0			
6 reps	450	455	460	465	470	475	480	485	490	495	
100%	2				· · · · · ·						

Percentages Based on 500 to 545 Pounds

Ho	w Much	Weight t	o Use For	Each Set	According	g To Your	6 Rep Ma	x (for 6 P	erfect Re	os)	
Find the	maximu	m weight	that you o	can lift for	six perfe	ct strong	reps in th	e top row	of the ta	ble. The	
four num	bers dire	ectly bene	ath your (6 rep max	(6RM) wi	ll tell the	amount o	f weight y	ou shoul	d be	
using for o	using for each set in a series of 12-10-8-6.										
6RM	500	505	510	515	520	525	530	535	540	545	
1 st Set											
12 reps	250	255	255	260	260	265	265	270	270	275	
50%											
2 nd Set											
10 reps	350	355	355	360	365	370	370	375	380	380	
70%											
3 rd Set		5. SP		57							
8 reps	425	430	435	440	440	445	450	455	460	465	
85%											
4 th Set											
6 reps	500	505	510	515	520	525	530	535	540	545	
100%											

Percentages Based on 550 to 595 Pounds

How Much Weight to Use For Each Set According To Your 6 Rep Max (for 6 Perfect Reps)											
Find the i	Find the maximum weight that you can lift for six perfect strong reps in the top row of the table. The										
four numbers directly beneath your 6 rep max (6RM) will tell the amount of weight you should be											
using for e	using for each set in a series of 12-10-8-6.										
6RM	600	605	610	615	620	625	630	635	640	645	
1 st Set											
12 reps	300	305	305	310	310	315	315	320	320	325	
50%											
2 nd Set											
10 reps	420	425	425	430	435	440	440	445	450	450	
70%											
3 rd Set									9		
8 reps	510	515	520	525	525	530	535	540	545	550	
85%		á .			2				i.		
4 th Set											
6 reps	600	605	610	615	620	625	630	635	640	645	
100%											

Percentages Based on 600 to 645 Pounds

How Much Weight to Use For Each Set According To Your 6 Rep Max (for 6 Perfect Reps)											
Find the maximum weight that you can lift for six perfect strong reps in the top row of the table. The											
four num	four numbers directly beneath your 6 rep max (6RM) will tell the amount of weight you should be										
using for e	using for each set in a series of 12-10-8-6.										
6RM	600	605	610	615	620	625	630	635	640	645	
1 st Set											
12 reps	300	305	305	310	310	315	315	320	320	325	
50%											
2 nd Set											
10 reps	420	425	425	430	435	440	440	445	450	450	
70%											
3 rd Set	0				0				57 · · · · · ·		
8 reps	510	515	520	525	525	530	535	540	545	550	
85%		i									
4 th Set											
6 reps	600	605	610	615	620	625	630	635	640	645	
100%											

Percentages Based on 650 to 695 Pounds

How Much Weight to Use For Each Set According To Your 6 Rep Max (for 6 Perfect Reps)										
Find the maximum weight that you can lift for six perfect strong reps in the top row of the table. The										
four num	four numbers directly beneath your 6 rep max (6RM) will tell the amount of weight you should be									
using for each set in a series of 12-10-8-6.										
6RM	650	655	660	665	670	675	680	685	690	695
1 st Set										
12 reps	325	330	330	335	335	340	340	345	345	350
50%										
2 nd Set				5 						
10 reps	455	460	460	465	470	470	475	480	485	485
70%										
3 rd Set										
8 reps	550	555	560	565	570	575	580	580	585	590
85%										
4 th Set										
6 reps	650	655	660	665	670	675	680	685	690	695
100%										

Percentages Based on 700 to 750 Pounds

How Much Weight to Use For Each Set According To Your 6 Rep Max (for 6 Perfect Reps)										
Find the I	Find the maximum weight that you can lift for six perfect strong reps in the top row of the table. The									
four num	four numbers directly beneath your 6 rep max (6RM) will tell the amount of weight you should be									
using for e	using for each set in a series of 12-10-8-6.									
6RM	700	705	710	715	720	725	730	735	740	745
1 st Set										
12 reps	350	355	355	360	360	365	365	370	370	375
50%										
2 nd Set										
10 reps	490	495	495	500	505	505	510	515	520	520
70%										
3 rd Set										
8 reps	595	600	605	610	610	615	620	625	630	635
85%										
4 th Set			8				5-			8
6 reps	700	705	710	715	720	725	730	735	740	745
100%										

Percentages Based on 750 to 795 Pounds

How Much Weight to Use For Each Set According To Your 6 Rep Max (for 6 Perfect Reps)										
Find the	Find the maximum weight that you can lift for six perfect strong reps in the top row of the table. The									
four num	four numbers directly beneath your 6 rep max (6RM) will tell the amount of weight you should be									
using for (using for each set in a series of 12-10-8-6.									
6RM	750	755	760	765	770	775	780	785	790	795
1 st Set										
12 reps	375	380	380	385	385	390	390	395	395	400
50%										
2 nd Set								54		
10 reps	525	530	530	535	540	545	545	550	555	555
70%										
3 rd Set										
8 reps	640	640	645	650	655	660	665	665	670	675
85%										
4 th Set										
6 reps	750	755	760	765	770	775	780	785	790	795
100%										
Exercise Guide and Instructions

If you are not certain which muscle groups a specific exercise is working, or you are unfamiliar with how to perform a specific exercise, the exercise guide will provide the information and instructions that you need.

Exercises For Chest Muscles

Bench Press



Muscles of Emphasis: Chest (Pectoral) Muscles, Triceps, and front Deltoids

Exercise Instructions:

1. Position yourself on your back on a bench press bench.

- 2. Use an overhand grip to grasp the bar with your hands a little wider than shoulder width apart.
- 3. Take the barbell that is on the bench press rack and push it up to arm's length above your chest.
- 4. Carefully lower the bar down until it is touching your lower chest.
- 5. Push the bar straight up to arm's length above your chest.

6. Repeat until you reach the desired number of reps and carefully put the bar back on the bench press rack that supports the barbell.

Variations

1. A wider grip with elbows wide to the side during the lift will emphasize the outer chest muscles. Caution, a wide grip with elbows wide to the side can be stressful to the shoulder joint if done too often or with weights that are too heavy.

2. A close grip will emphasize the triceps muscles. Keeping the elbows in close to the body will emphasize the inner triceps on the back or your arms and the front deltoid muscles of the shoulders. Flaring the elbows out to the side while using a close grip will emphasize the outer triceps muscles of the arms.

3. When using a chest press machine, the form is generally similar to the bench press in terms of hand placement and the lifting motion, but many machines require a sitting position instead of a flat lying position for the chest press.

Incline Press



Muscles of Emphasis: Upper Chest (Pectoral) Muscles, Triceps, and Deltoids

Exercise Instructions

- 1. Position yourself on your back on an incline bench.
- 2. Use an overhand grip to grasp the bar with your hands a little wider than shoulder width apart.
- 3. Take the barbell that is on the incline rack and push it up to arm's length above your face.
- 4. Carefully lower the bar down until it is touching your upper chest.
- 5. Push the bar straight up to arm's length over your face.

6. Repeat until you reach the desired number of reps and carefully put the bar back on the rack that supports the barbell.

Dumbbell Incline Variation

This exercise is often done with dumbbells instead of a barbell. The same lifting motion that is used with a barbell is used with dumbbells except that you have the option of touching the dumbbells together at the top of the lifting motion in order to squeeze your pec muscles more.

Dips



Muscles of Emphasis: Chest (Pectoral) Muscles

Exercise Instructions

1. Position yourself between a wide set of dipping bars. Narrow dipping bars work triceps and very little chest.

2. Grasp the left dipping bar with your left hand and the right dipping bar with your right hand.

3. You can either begin in a bent arm position to start with, or you can start in a straight arm position and lower yourself until your elbows are bent at a 90 degree angle.

4. Do not let your elbows travel straight back or straight out to the side when lowering yourself. Half way in between straight back and straight out to the side is better.

5. From the lowered position, push your body upward until your arms are straight.

6. Keep repeating the process of lowering yourself into a bent arm position and pushing back up into a straight arm position until you have completed the desired number of repetitions.

Exercises For Upper Leg Muscles and Glutes

Squats



Muscles of Emphasis:

Upper leg muscles: (quadriceps and hamstrings) glutes, and lower back

Exercise Instructions:

1. In order to use sufficient weight for the barbell squat, you need a squat rack that will hold the barbell just below shoulder level.

2. Position your body under the bar so that the bar will rest across the back of your shoulders. Push your upper traps and shoulders up into the bar to lift the bar off the squat stands, take two steps back, and set up in a standing position with your feet about shoulder width apart.

3. Keeping your back straight, squat down until your thighs are parallel with the floor and return to a standing position. Repeat the exercise motion until the desired number of repetitions have been completed.

Tips and Considerations

The ratio between body parts can have a huge effect on your how you squat. Lifters who possess short legs will generally find it easy to squat in an upright position. In contrast, someone with long legs and a long femur will tend to bend over much more. They will also be forced to allow their behind to stick out behind them more in order to keep their balance. A person with very long legs may find that a wide stance is the only way to keep their upper body in a fairly upright position when squatting. Each person will have to experiment to find a way of squatting that is comfortable for them. If squatting seems very awkward for you, you may need to get help from an experienced lifter or a coach who understands your body structure and personal needs.

Variations

Front Squats

Squats can also be done with a barbell resting across the front of the shoulders instead of the back of the shoulders. This exercises is called front squats. Front squats require your body to stay more upright and will put more stress on the front of your thighs (the quadriceps). At the same time, less stress will be placed on the hamstring muscles of the back of the legs, and the gluteus muscles of the butt, as well as the lower back muscles. You can also substitute a kettlebell or a dumbbell for a barbell and hold the kettlebell or dumbbell against your upper chest when performing front squats. These are sometimes called **"Goblet Squats."**

Dumbbell Straddle Squats

Another variation of squats is straddle squats where you grab a single dumbbell and let it hang down at arm's length in front of your thighs. With feet spaced about shoulder width apart, squat down into a sitting position. The dumbbell should travel straight down between your feet and touch the floor, or come close to touching the floor, then return to a standing position. Always keep your feet flat on the floor and do your best to keep the weight on the center of your foot instead of on the balls of your feet or your heals. It is very important to keep your back from rounding over when you do this exercise. Keep your back straight throughout the entire movement.

Leg Press



Muscles of Emphasis: Quadriceps, Hamstrings, Glutes

Exercise Instructions:

1. Sit in a leg press with your with your behind firmly on the seat and your back centered flat against the back rest.

2. Place your feet about twelve to eighteen inches apart against the foot platform. The further up you place your feet on the foot platform, the more it tends to work the glute muscles of your behind along with the back of your thighs (your hamstrings). The further down you place your feet on the foot platform, the less it will work your glutes and hamstrings, while utilizing the quadriceps (front of the thighs) to lift the weight.

3. Many leg press machines have a safety bar that holds the weights in place. This requires that you grasp the handles to the safety bar which are usually located down by the side of your hips. You must then extend your legs into a straight position and rotate the safety bar handles outward.

4. Once you have extended your legs into a straight position, lower the weight until your legs are bent at a 90 degree angle to establish a starting position. From the starting position, extend your legs against the weight until your legs are straight, then return to the starting position. Repeat until you reach the desired number of repetitions. 5. Finish with your legs straight on your last repetition, then grasp the handles to the safety bar and rotate them back up into the starting position. Carefully lower the weights until they are caught by the safety bar.

Deadlifts

Deadlifts



Muscles of Emphasis: Thighs, Gluteus and Back

These instructions are for the CONVENTIONAL DEADLIFT:

1. Stand just behind a barbell with feet a little less than shoulder width apart.

2. Bend over forward at the waist and hips while keeping your back straight and bend your knees while reaching down to grasp the bar.

3. Let your behind drift back as you bend over. At the same time, do not let your knees move forward over your toes or the bar. Do your best to keep your knees directly over your ankles so that your shins are straight up and down instead of slanting forward at the start of the lift.

4. Grasp the bar with your hands about shoulder width apart using an overhand grip with one hand, and an underhand grip with the other hand.

5. While keeping your back straight, straighten up into a standing position with the bar hanging down in front of your thighs.

6. Carefully lower bar to the floor and repeat the exercise until the designated amount of repetitions have been completed.

Variations

Some lifters prefer the **sumo deadlift** technique which is done with a very wide foot spacing and toes angled outward. The upper body should only angle forward a slight amount and should remain as upright as possible throughout the lift. When using the sumo deadlift technique, you should not feel as

much stress on the lower back as you would when performing the conventional deadlift, and you will likely feel more stress on your inner thighs, hamstrings, outer hips, and glutes.

There is no rule that says you must use the conventional style or the sumo style of deadlift. Some lifters prefer an intermediate stance in which the feet are not spaced narrow nor wide as would be done with the conventional or sumo style deadlift. Instead, the feet are spaced somewhere in between a wide and narrow stance.

Lifters with long legs and a short upper body are more likely to prefer the conventional deadlift. Lifters with short legs and a long upper body are more likely to prefer the sumo deadlift. However, this is just a tendency, not a rule. Each lifter should do what is most comfortable according to their own leverages and strengths.

Exercises For Back Muscles

Barbell Rows



Muscles of Emphasis: Back, Biceps, and Rear Deltoids

Exercise Instructions:

1. While keeping your back straight (do not round your back), bend over a barbell that is on the ground and grasp it using an overhand grip with hands spaced about shoulder width apart.

- 2. While maintaining a bent over position, pull the barbell up until it touches the middle of your waist.
- 3. While maintaining a bent over position, lower the bar carefully to arm's length.
- 4. Repeat this motion until you have reached the desired number of repetitions.
- 5. Keep your back stable during the exercise; be careful not to jerk the weight up with your back.

Seated Pulley Rows



Muscles of Emphasis: Back, Biceps, and Rear Deltoids

Exercise Instructions

1. Not all equipment for seated pulley rows is the same. The essential concept is to face a pulley device and sit down close enough to grasp the handle (preferably a v-bar handle) at the end of the cable.

2. Legs should be slightly bent and positioned forward in front of the body with the feet placed forward on the foot platform or crossbar if it is available on the pulley device.

3. Make sure your upper body is positioned upright with the back straight and chest high.

4. Reach forward with both hands to grasp the handle at the end of the pulley cable.

5. Pull the handle towards your body until it touches the upper abdomen area.

6. Squeeze your shoulder blades together as you pull the handle into your body.

7. Lower the weight by returning your hands and arms to the starting position in front of your body.

8. Repeat pulling the handle into your body and returning it to the starting position for the desired number of repetitions.

Lat Pulldowns



Muscles of Emphasis: Back, Biceps, and rear Deltoids

Exercise Instructions:

1. Sit down on a lat pull seat and reach up with both hands and use a wide grip to grasp the lat pull bar.

2. While keeping your chest high and body stable, pull the bar down until it touches the middle of your chest.

3. Carefully straighten your arms back to the starting position. Repeat the exercise motion until the desired number of repetitions have been completed.

4. Do not jerk back while lifting, and do not round your back. Your chest should be held high in order to prevent this.

Variations

Lat pull downs can be done with a narrow grip. There are also bars or handles that allow you to use a narrower grip in order to put more emphasis on the lower lat and center of the back if you squeeze your shoulder blades as the bar is touching your chest.

Exercises For Deltoid (Shoulder) Muscles

Dumbbell Lateral Raises



Muscle of Emphasis: Outer Shoulder (Deltoid)

Instructions:

1. Grasp one dumbbell in each hand and start with your arms and dumbbells hanging down by your sides.

2. Raise each arm straight out to the side from the starting position until the dumbbells are at shoulder height. Palms should be facing down at the top of the movement.

3. Carefully lower your dumbbells and arms back to their starting position and repeat the exercise motion until the desired number of repetitions have been completed.

Shoulder Press



Emphasis: Deltoid Muscles (of the Shoulders), Triceps, and Upper Back Muscles

Exercise Instructions:

1. Use an overhand grip to grasp a barbell a little wider than shoulder width apart.

- 2. Sit down at the end of a bench with the barbell held just underneath your chin.
- 3. Push the barbell straight up until your arms are fully extended over your head.

4. Carefully, (avoid lowering the barbell down on your head) lower the barbell back into the starting position and repeat the lifting motion until the desired number of repetitions have been completed.

Dumbbells

You can replace a barbell with two dumbbells and use the same lifting motion by lifting the dumbbells from your shoulders to an overhead position before returning to the starting position with dumbbells at your shoulders.

Upright Rows



Muscle of Emphasis: Outer Shoulder (Deltoid) and Traps

Exercise Instructions

1. Use an overhand grip to grasp a barbell with your hands spaced six to twelve inches apart.

2. Start in a standing position with your arms hanging down while grasping the barbell in front of your thighs.

3. Lift the barbell up to the bottom of your chest, allowing the barbell to come out a couple inches from your body while lifting. Keep your upper body still; do not bend your body at the waist and swing or jerk upward to lift the weight.

4. It is very important that you lead with your elbows moving upward. Keep your elbows above your hands at all times when lifting to the top position as shown in the picture.

5. Carefully lower the bar back to the starting position in front of your thighs.

6. Repeat the lifting motion for the desired number of repetitions.

Biceps Exercises

Barbell Curls



Emphasis: Bicep Muscles of the Arm

Exercise Instructions:

1. Grasp a barbell with an underhand grip and allow your arms to hang straight down in front of you with the barbell just in front of the thighs.

2. Bend your arm at the elbow to lift the barbell up to your chest with your lower arm while keeping your upper arms stationary and in close to your sides.

3. Carefully lower the bar back to the starting position and repeat the exercise motion until the desired number of repetitions have been completed.

Triceps Exercises

Triceps Press Downs



Muscles of Emphasis: Triceps

Instructions:

1. Stand facing a triceps extension machine and grasp the triceps handle with palms down and upper arms and elbows close to your sides.

2. The arms should be bent at a 90 degree angle with the upper arms perpendicular to the ground and forearms parallel to the floor.

3. Press the triceps handles downward until your arms are straight down and the handle touches your thighs.

4. Carefully return the handle to the starting position and repeat the lift until the desired number of repetitions have been completed.

Abdominal Exercises

Planks



Emphasis: Abdominal Muscles of the mid-section

Instructions:

- 1. Assume the position that is shown in the picture above.
- 2. Make sure your body forms a straight line from your head to your feet.

3. Make a deliberate effort to tighten your thighs along with your stomach (abdominal) muscles, lower back, and glute muscles of the behind.

4. Make sure to maintain a steady breathing pattern while holding the plank position for thirty seconds.

5. Increase the time you hold the plank position little by little until you can hold it for 60 seconds.

Ab Crunches



Emphasis: Abdominal Muscles of the Stomach

Exercise Instructions:

- 1. Use an exercise mat or a soft surface to lie down on your back.
- 2. Place your feet on the floor so that your knees bend upward at a 90 degree angle.
- 3. Cross your hands across the front of your chest.

4. You will flex your spine forward into a rounded position by using your abdominal muscles to lift your head and shoulder blades off of the floor.

5. Carefully return to the starting position and repeat the exercise for the desired number of repetitions.

Variations:

There are numerous variations of abdominal crunches. Crunches can be done while twisting as you are raising up into a flexed positions so that you alternate raising up with one shoulder higher than the other. This variation will increase the training stress on the abdominal muscles on the side of the waist.

Another variation is the reverse crunch where the shoulders and upper back remain on the floor and the hips and lower back are lifted off of the floor by flexing your spine. This variation will put more stress on the lower abdominals.

Calf Exercises

Standing Calf Raise



Emphasis: Calf muscles (gastrocnemius) of the lower leg

Exercise Instructions

1. This exercise definitely works best with a standing calf raise machine and is initiated by positioning your shoulders under the shoulder pads of the calf raise machine while in a standing position.

2. Place the balls of your feet on the foot platform. Your midfoot and heals should be hanging of the back edge of the foot platform.

3. Let your heals descend as far as possible below the edge of the platform to lower yourself into the bottom position.

4. From the lowered position, raise up as high as possible onto the balls of your feet. Your heals should be much higher than the balls of your feet in the top position.

5. Carefully return to the bottom position.

6. Repeat this motion for the desired number of repetitions.

Seated Calf Raises



Emphasis: Calf muscles (soleus) of the lower leg

Exercise Instructions

1. Sit on the seat of a seated calf raise machine with your knees under the lifting bar, and the balls of your feet on the foot ledge, or foot platform.

2. Allow your heals to descend down as far as possible while the balls of your feet remain on the foot ledge.

3. Raise as high as possible onto the balls of your feet. Your heals should be raised significantly higher than the balls of your feet in the top position.

4. Carefully return to the bottom position where your heals are lowered as far as possible.

5. Repeat the lifting motion for the desired number of repetitions.

About The Author

Mark Sherwood is a long time fitness enthusiast who has pursued weight training and other fitness activities for over thirty years. His educational and professional background include a B.S. degree as an exercise specialist in physical education from the University of Wisconsin Madison, and positions as a fitness instructor and physical education teacher.

One of Mark's passions is to distinguish between strength training concepts that are consistently effective as opposed to those that are effective for a short time period. Through his education, research, and personal trial and error, he has endeavored to gain the necessary knowledge to share effective training strategies with those who desire to maximize their training results.

Mark resides with his family in Southern California. For more training resources from Mark, you can visit <u>www.precisionpointtraining.com</u>. In addition, you can you view more books on strength training that he has authored on the next page.

Additional Resources

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