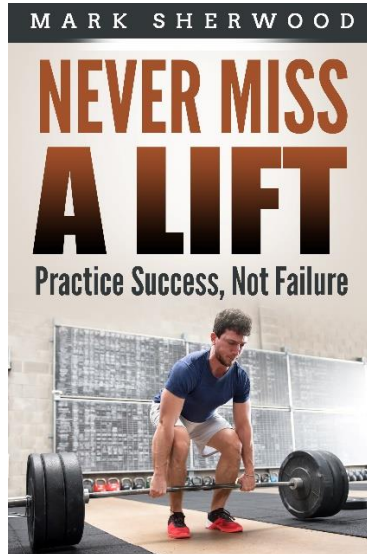


Never Miss A Lift

Practice Success, Not Failure



Mark Sherwood

For more information from the author visit:

<http://www.precisionpointtraining.com/>

Copyright © 2018 by Mark Sherwood

Never Miss A Lift: Practice Success, Not Failure

By Mark Sherwood

The author and publisher of the information in this book are not responsible in any manner for physical harm or damages that may occur in response to following the instructions presented in this material. As with any exercise program, a doctor's approval should be obtained before engaging in exercise.

Table Of Contents

Introduction

Chapter 1: In The Beginning

Chapter 2: Programming Your Body To Gain Strength

Chapter 3: How Many Sets And How Often To Train

Chapter 4: Increasing Weight

Chapter 5: Training Cycles

Chapter 6: A Sample Training Cycle

Chapter 7: If Workload Becomes Too Low, Add Volume

Chapter 8: A Weekly Workout Plan

Chapter 9: Plan To Never Miss A Lift

About The Author

Additional Resources

Introduction

Ed Coan is one of the greatest powerlifters of all time. Throughout his career he continued to grow bigger and stronger to the point where he was able to break world records across four different weight classes. His combination of great genetics and superior training enabled him to become the type of lifter who only comes along once in a lifetime. We can't borrow Ed's talent and genetic advantages, but we can borrow from his training methods and learn from his knowledge.

Ed has been known to say that he **never missed a lift** in his workouts. This simply means that he was always able to lift the intended amount of weight for the intended amount of reps. To be more specific, Ed would plan out a twelve to fourteen week training cycle by writing down the amount of weight and the amount of reps that he would do for every exercise of every workout. The plan was based on adding weight to his lifts every week throughout the cycle. As the cycle would progress, he never fell short of using the predetermined amount of weight and reps that he had planned for each exercise of every workout.

Each time Ed repeated a training cycle, he would be about five pounds stronger than the previous cycle. He realized that if he could repeat this for twenty cycles, it would take about five years to add an additional 100 pounds to his lifts. Little by little he added weight from one training cycle to the next. In the process, he never missed a lift, and he never failed to improve exactly as he planned. This went on year after year until he could squat over 1,000 pounds, deadlift 901 pounds, and bench press over 580 pounds.

How could Ed train year after year without ever failing to reach his training goals? One reason is that he always planned each cycle according to weights and reps that he was certain he could lift. He knew how to push himself hard enough to get stronger without pushing to the point of maxing out on reps or weight. The reason he didn't max out was **because he didn't need to** in order to keep getting stronger. In the long run, he felt this was the best strategy.

Lifters who keep going for max reps in order to keep setting new personal records will often fail to reach the number of reps they had hoped to perform with a specified amount of weight. On the other hand, if you can lift 280 pounds for a maximum of ten reps, but you only use 250 to 270 pounds for ten reps, you are not going to fail or fall short of ten reps. The question is this:

Can you get stronger by only using 250 to 270 pounds for ten reps, even though you can lift 280 pounds for ten reps with an all-out effort?

The answer is yes; and you can plan your training so that you never miss a lift by practicing success, not failure. You will learn how to accomplish this as you read through the rest of the book.

Chapter 1

In The Beginning

Before Ed Coan ever started to use training cycles, he simply pushed himself to lift as much weight as possible in his workouts. By using this strategy, Ed was able to make some rapid gains when he first began lifting. Most beginners and intermediates can use this same strategy.

If you have been lifting weights for less than a year, learn how to perform basic strength building exercises such as squats, deadlifts, bench presses, incline presses, overhead presses, bent-over rows, and seated pulley rows. You don't need to do all of these exercises in every workout, simply choose a squat or a deadlift in every workout, and also include one or two pressing exercises, plus a pulling exercise for your back. The easiest thing to do is to workout with these exercises by working your whole body two to three times per week. Start each exercise with two to three easy warm-up sets with lighter weights. After your warm-up sets, do two to three work-sets for each exercise and push yourself to do as many reps as possible with good form while using weights that permit six to ten reps.

If you start out using this strategy, you may be able to add five or more pounds every week or two. However, you will eventually reach a point where it will take at least three weeks before you can add weight. This will happen to everyone who lifts weights. For some, it will happen almost right away and others may be able to continue for a year or more before needing three or more weeks to add another five pounds. It is at this point that I recommend you transition from pushing your body to gain strength to programming your body to gain strength.

It may appear that programming your body to gain strength is a slower process than pushing your body to gain strength, but it works for a much longer period of time. The fact that it seems to work slower may sound unacceptable to some people. However, if you keep pushing for rapid gains, it will eventually lead to a never ending sticking point. This is worse than slow gains because a sticking point means no gains. If you are no longer making rapid gains and you want to gain as fast as possible, the best way to do it is to go slow and take your time by programming your body to gain strength.

Chapter 2

Programming Your Body To Gain Strength



Programming your body to gain strength starts with practicing exactly what you want your body to do in terms of:

1. Perfect exercise form
2. Quality Rep speed
3. Targeting your intensity level relative to the rep speed threshold.

Your goal is to program these qualities into your body to the extent that they become a set-point that your body will want to maintain as weight is gradually increased over time. If an increase in weight causes a slight increase in effort and intensity, your body will want to revert back to the previous level of intensity by growing stronger. We can look at an example of how this works:

If you have been regularly using 105 pounds for ten reps while maintaining quality form and quality rep speed, it will become a set-point of intensity that your body becomes accustomed to. When you increase to ten reps with 110 pounds, the weight is going to be a little harder to lift. Your body will be programmed to prefer the easier level of intensity that it is has grown accustomed from regularly using

105 pounds. For this reason, it will want to get stronger so that 110 pounds won't feel any harder than 105 pounds felt. Growing stronger is the mechanism that will make the training easier which will enable you to return back to the set-point of intensity that you have programmed into your body. What allows this to work is the concept of using strength training thresholds. If you want a deeper explanation of how and why these thresholds work, I recommend reading the free book, [*Strength Training Thresholds, The Key to Consistent Strength Gains.*](#)

You may occasionally exceed the rep speed threshold a slight amount by pushing just beyond your ability to maintain quality rep speed within a set. Your rep speed will slow down on the last rep of a set when this happens. However, the majority of your training will stay within the boundaries of using quality rep speed. You will find that this criteria will prevent you from going for max reps, because a set of max reps will usually end with slow grinder reps that do not represent quality rep speed.

If you have had the concept of high intensity effort drilled into your head as I once did, you may have a very hard time restraining yourself from maxing out with as many reps as possible. But I learned the hard way that it is not just effort that leads to progress, it is effort plus quality that leads to progress. Since quality is important, it needs to be discussed in more detail.

Quality Form

It is possible to base your training on a quality program that is well designed, but if you are using poor form on all of your exercises, the program won't work nearly as well. Quality exercise form allows you to fully engage the muscles that you are targeting to get bigger and stronger. Without quality form, some muscles get overworked, some muscles get underworked, and the muscles don't work in synch with each other. There will also be a failure to utilize the optimum mechanical leverages that would be most advantageous for your particular structure and proportions. Poor exercise quality will lead to poor results, so it is essential that you take the time to learn how to do each exercise with quality form.

The exact exercise technique that you should use for every exercise is beyond the scope of this book as the focus is on how to target the proper amount of exercise intensity until it is programmed into your body. However, if you want the best results possible from your training, study and experiment until you find the best way to perform each exercise. Always do the exercises perfectly until perfect form is programmed into your body and it becomes an automatic part of your workouts.

Quality Rep Speed

Quality rep speed refers to forceful lifting in which the same rep speed and rep pace are maintained from the start of a set to the end of a set. This cannot be done when going for max reps and training to failure because it will push you to a point of fatigue that causes a decrease in the quality of your rep speed. Instead of pushing a set to the point where rep speed starts to slow down, only repeat reps of a set as long as you can maintain the same rep speed that you started with at the beginning of the set. As long as you are performing your reps in this manner, you are doing **quality reps**. Another term that I often use interchangeably with quality reps is **strong reps**. If you keep repeating strong reps to the point where rep speed starts to slow down, you have transitioned over to **weak reps**.

Rep pace is also important. You may think you are lifting with adequate rep speed, but if you have to keep pausing longer and longer between reps in order to do so, your rep pace is slowing down. If this happens, you are no longer doing quality reps because quality reps refer to your capacity to maintain the same pace from rep to rep.

Target Your Rep Speed Threshold

You must have a well-defined range of training intensity that you stick to until it becomes a set-point that your body does not want to exceed. This is based on the rep speed threshold. You have reached the border of the rep speed threshold when you come to the last rep that you can perform while maintaining quality rep speed. If you decide to exceed this threshold by pushing yourself to do one more rep, you will notice that your rep speed or rep pace will start to slow down. This is the point where the quality of your reps begins to diminish. You may occasionally push one rep past your ability to maintain quality rep speed, but you should not habitually exceed this point.

Three things will happen if you cross the rep speed threshold and your rep speed starts to slow down:

1. An optimum nerve firing pattern will no longer take place and you will be programming your body to use nerve firing patterns that produce slower weaker reps.
2. You will exceed the capacity of your creatine phosphate energy system within your muscles to produce forceful muscle contractions. Exceeding the capacity of your creatine phosphate system will cause a transition to a greater dependence on the lactate system. This can confuse your body as to whether it should focus its adaptive power on improving your lactate system, or your creatine phosphate system. It is more desirable to program your body to focus its adaptive power on improving the creatine phosphate system because it is a superior energy system for producing strong muscle contractions.
3. When exceeding the rep speed threshold, the amount of effort required to keep repeating reps will suddenly increase. When effort is too high too often, the body can start to become overwhelmed with training stress. If your body becomes overwhelmed with excessive exercise stress on a habitual basis, it eventually stops gaining strength. Why does this happen? Because: **Why would your body want to gain strength and allow you to use even more weight if it is already overwhelmed with the amount of weight and reps that you have been using?** It wouldn't, so program your body with enough intensity to cause it to gradually grow stronger over time. However, do not program your body with so much intensity that it remains in a state of overwhelm to the point where it refuses to gain strength.

If you understand these principles, it will make sense for you to refrain from exceeding the rep speed threshold when training and you will never miss a lift. Every rep will look the same in terms of form and rep speed from the first rep to the last rep. You will program your body to lift in a state of power and strength, instead of struggle and strain.

Chapter 3

How Many Sets And How Often To Train



Quality form, quality rep speed, and the correct level of training intensity are all important factors that will help you to program your body to get stronger. However, if you do too many sets or not enough sets, there is a good chance that you will still fail to gain strength. The same thing is true if you train too often or not often enough.

The Optimum Number of Sets

Lifters vary greatly in terms of the optimum number of sets that they should perform. There are some lifters who only need one heavy work-set per muscle group. They start out with a light warm-up set and add weight from set to set. Each warm-up set grows a little more difficult than the previous set, but they are not pushing with the full amount of intensity that they are aiming for until they reach their final set. The final set is their single “work-set.” After working up to one work-set, they are finished working that specific muscle group.

One work-set is enough for some lifters, but it is not enough for everyone. Most lifters will probably benefit more from doing two to four work-sets for each muscle group, and some will be able to benefit from more.

Determine Your Capacity for Quality Sets

When determining how many work-sets to do, quality is the key. Quality sets refer to staying within the boundaries of repeating sets as long as a muscle group remains at full strength. This means to keep repeating sets for a muscle group as long as the muscle group stays as strong as it was when you started working it.

After performing warm-up sets, the most work-sets that I have ever observed a lifter perform at full strength is eight sets. This would be a very high capacity that is two to three times higher than most lifters. If you happen to work out with a lifter like this, don't assume that you should be doing the same number of work-sets that they are doing as there are many great lifters who only do one or two work-sets. Rest a muscle for at least three minutes between work-sets, and if that muscle group still cannot fully recover its strength between sets, quit working it. You can usually assume that a muscle group is no longer at full strength if you encounter any of the following conditions during a workout:

You can't do as many quality reps as you were able to do for your previous sets with the same weight.

You know from past experience that you can normally do more quality reps than you were able to perform for your last set.

Your rep speed starts to slow down in comparison with previous sets in which you were using the same weight.

Determine An Effective Training Frequency

Just as there are substantial variations in terms of how many sets each lifter should perform, there are also variations in terms of how often each lifter should work a muscle group each week. Some lifters only need to hit each muscle group once per week. Others thrive on high frequency training by squatting and/or benching every day.

The majority of lifters generally benefit most from hitting each muscle group two or three times per week. However, there is no rule for how often to train each muscle group except to learn from experience in regard to what works best. This means you must monitor your energy level and your strength level from workout to workout. Sometimes a specific training frequency will work for a while and then stop working. If so, try changing. It is also quite common for lifters to train different lifts using different frequencies. For example, a lifter may benefit from squatting every day and benching only twice per week, or vice versa. My advice is to start by training each muscle group two or three times per week. If it works, keep doing it. If it doesn't work, try different training frequencies until you find one that produces results.

Chapter 4

Increasing Weight



Once you are using quality form, quality reps, quality sets, and an effective training frequency, you should experience improvement. When addressing the subject of improvement, it will naturally lead to two basic considerations:

How do you know when to add weight?

When you add weight, how much should you add?

If you are a beginner, you can simply try to add five pounds every week or two while maintaining the ability to do six to ten reps. As long as you can succeed with this, keep doing it. Eventually you will stop gaining strength fast enough to add weight every two weeks. At that point, you can switch to a different strategy that I am going to recommend. It is a very simple system of giving yourself three weeks to stick with a specific number of quality reps that fits the amount of weight you are using for each weight and exercise. For example, we'll imagine that you will be doing ten reps when performing the bench press for the next three weeks. You have enough experience to know that you can bench **205 pounds for 10 quality reps**.

While benching within the same three week period, you should keep using 205 pounds until the end of the third week. When you reach the end of the third week, test yourself by increasing your workout weight by five pounds. The purpose of this is to see if you can still do the same number of quality reps that you have been performing with the additional five pounds.

If we look back at our example of doing ten quality reps when benching 205 pounds, you will increase the weight to 210 pounds at the end of the third week. You will either be able to do ten quality reps, or you won't. Even if you fail, you should still be able to do ten reps, but the last rep will be a slower weaker rep.

What happens if you succeed at using an additional five pounds for ten quality reps? Keep using the added weight for the next three weeks until you test yourself again. What happens if you fall short of ten quality reps when you test yourself with an additional five pounds? Go back to the previous weight you had been using before you tested yourself and use it for another three weeks before testing yourself again. Adding weight is simply a matter of starting at an intensity level where you are performing all quality reps and testing yourself with an additional five pounds every three weeks. After testing yourself with the added weight, you make an appropriate response by staying with the added weight or going back to the previous weight.

Chapter 5

Training Cycles



Many lifters use training cycles that start with the use of a moderate amount of weight for each lift. As the cycle continues, weight is added from week to week until heavy weights and low reps are used at the end of the cycle. This is often called **linear periodization** or **gradual progressive overload training**. Training cycles that follow this pattern can be planned to cover any length of time, but they are commonly designed to last six to twelve weeks.

The key to targeting the right amount of intensity for training cycles is to choose weights and reps that you are certain you can lift in every workout throughout the whole training cycle. Many lifters are overly ambitious and want to smash their personal best by 20, 40, or 60 pounds by the end of the cycle. This is often possible in the beginner and intermediate stages of lifting, but it is out of reach for lifters who have already been lifting for several years.

Realistic Goals

Ed Coan was one of the greatest lifters ever and he made consistent progress over many years. While he made rapid progress as a beginner, he eventually transitioned to a long term strategy in which the goal was simply to increase his strength by five pounds by the end of each twelve to fourteen week cycle. Ed understood the concept of realistic expectations and realistic progress. This is extremely

important because realistic expectations about your progress will form the basis for a realistic training strategy.

When a training cycle is designed according to unrealistic expectations, lifters overestimate what they can truly accomplish when planning out their weights and reps. They end up falling short of the number of reps they plan to lift at various points throughout the training cycle. **A realistic strategy is, The Never Miss A Lift strategy.** This strategy is utilized by planning a cycle according to weights and reps that you know you can lift successfully. You don't have to push your hardest by pushing to a point of failure because it will only cause you to fail. You can practice success by staying within the boundaries of quality training in order to gain a little strength by the end of a cycle. The next cycle can then be repeated with a realistic amount of added weight.

When weight is added from cycle to cycle, it shouldn't take more effort to lift the weights from one cycle to the next because strength is being gained to keep the added weight from becoming harder to lift. With this in mind, we will look at how to start planning a cycle with an emphasis on training with the right amount of intensity.

We'll assume that you are going to plan a twelve week training cycle consisting of four training blocks that each last three weeks. The four training blocks will each focus on a different number of reps as follows:

Block 1: Focus on 10 reps for three weeks

Block 2: Focus on 8 reps for three weeks

Block 3: Focus on 5 reps for three weeks

Block 4: Focus on 3 reps for three weeks

Determine Your Reference Weights

In order to set up a training cycle correctly, you must know the amount of weight that you can use for the amount of reps listed for each three week block. The only way to know this information is to test yourself to find out the amount of weight you can use for each amount of reps listed. It is absolutely imperative that you are doing quality reps on every single rep when testing yourself. This means that when you test yourself to find out how much weight you can use for ten reps, every single rep should be done with quality rep speed. If your rep speed starts to slow down at the end of the set, you are using too much weight. Be meticulous in finding out the right amount of weight.

Once you know how much weight you can use for the amount of quality reps listed for each block, you will use those weights as your **reference weights**. A reference weight is used as a reference point that allows you to plan how much weight that you will be using for each week of a training block. If you know your reference weight for each training block, you can plan an entire twelve week cycle. An example of how to do this will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

Chapter 6

A Sample Training Cycle



We'll imagine that David will be doing a twelve week training cycle for squats. The cycle will consist of four training blocks which will each last for three weeks. This cycle was listed in the previous chapter and is listed below again for review:

- 10 reps will be used for the first three week block,
- 8 reps will be used for the second three week block,
- 5 reps will be used for the third three week block,
- 3 reps will be used for the fourth three week block.

We will also imagine that David has taken the time to find out how much weight he can use for the amount of reps listed in each block. He knows that when he is going for max reps and training to failure, he can squat 260 pounds for 10 reps, 275 pounds for 8 reps, 295 pounds for 5 reps, and 310 pounds for 3 reps. However, these weights require an all-out max effort and are not used for training because training is based primarily on quality reps.

After taking the time to find the amount of weight he can use in conjunction with quality reps, David will use the poundages as **reference weights** that allow him to plan the poundages that will be used throughout each week of the cycle. The amount of weight that David can currently lift for each rep range is listed below:

Block1: David can use 245 pounds for 10 quality reps

Block 2: David can use 260 pounds for 8 quality reps

Block 3: David can use 280 pounds for 5 quality reps

Block 4: David can use 295 pounds for 3 quality reps

David's training strategy is to use progressive loading by increasing the weight from week to week throughout each training block. The manner in which he will do this is based on using the reference weights according to the following method:

1st Week of Each Training Block = 5 pounds below reference weights

During the first week of each training block, David will use poundages that are five pounds below the reference weights listed for each training block (This will equal: 240 x 10, 255 x 8, 275 x 5, and 290 x 3 for the first week of each training block respectively).

2nd Week of Each Training Block = Use the reference weights

During the second week of each training block, David will use the exact reference weights listed for each training block (This will equal: 245 x 10, 260 x 8, 280 x 5, and 295 x 3 for the second week of each training block respectively).

3rd Week of Each Training Block = Five pounds above the reference weights

During the third week of each training block, David will use poundages that are five pounds heavier than the reference weights listed for each training block (This will equal: 250 x 10, 265 x 8, 285 x 5, 300 x 3 for the third week of each training block respectively).

With the information given, David can plan his 12 week cycle as follows:

Block 1: 10 Reps

Week 1: 3 sets x 10 reps @ 240 pounds

Week 2: 3 sets x 10 reps @ 245 pounds

Week 3: 3 sets x 10 reps @ 250 pounds

Block 2: 8 Reps

Week 4: 3 sets x 8 reps @ 255 pounds

Week 5: 3 sets x 8 reps @ 260 pounds

Week 6: 3 sets x 8 reps @ 265 pounds

Block 3: 5 Reps

Week 7: 3 sets x 5 reps @ 275 pounds

Week 8: 3 sets x 5 reps @ 280 pounds

Week 9: 3 sets x 5 reps @ 285 pounds

Block 4: 3 Reps

Week 10: 3 sets x 3 reps @ 290 pounds

Week 11: 3 sets x 3 reps @ 295 pounds

Week 12: 3 sets x 3 reps @ 300 pounds

The Goal

David is using a cycle which is based primarily on quality reps. The goal of this is to enable him to gain strength while going through the whole cycle without missing a lift. Before starting the cycle, David only has enough strength to do 295 pounds for three quality reps. His goal is to be able to do three quality reps with 300 pounds by week twelve. His goal for the next cycle will be to finish at 305 pounds for three quality reps.

Obviously, the third week of every block will be the hardest weeks. When you get to the third week with ten reps, you should be able to do all ten reps, but you may find that only nine reps are quality reps and the tenth rep is slower than the rest. You may also encounter a slower last rep during your third week with eight reps. When you reach your third week with five reps, hopefully you will notice that the slowness of the last rep of each set is disappearing. By the third week of the fourth and last block (with three reps), you should be able to do quality reps for every rep of every set without slowing down to a slower rep speed at the end of each set.

If you target the level of training intensity correctly, you will be able to perform every set with the amount of weight and reps planned without missing a lift, and you'll be stronger by the end of the cycle. You can then start the cycle over with an additional five pounds and the added weight shouldn't feel any more difficult than the previous cycle; the weights go up, but the effort stays the same from cycle to cycle.

Adjusting for Quick Strength Gains

If you happen to gain strength at a faster rate than five pounds per cycle, it will probably show up in the first or second training block. You may notice that by the third week of the first training block that you can already hit all ten reps as quality reps. This means you will never experience any slower reps at the end of each set at any point during the first training block. If the same thing happens during the next three week block with eight reps, plan on adjusting the weight upwards by five pounds for your next two blocks. This means that when you reach the blocks with five reps and three reps, use five more pounds

than you had planned on using for each week of those blocks. After making these adjustments, you will be ten pounds stronger by the end of the whole cycle instead of five pounds stronger. As you can see, adjustments can be made as you proceed through the cycle. However, never adjust by increasing beyond your ability to perform quality reps during the first two weeks of each block.

Exceptions

The method used in this book for selecting the right amount of intensity and the right amount of weight from week to week is just one method. It will work for a lot of people, but there will be exceptions and some people will need to make adjustments when picking the right amount of intensity and weight. This will be discussed in another book titled, **Never Miss A Lift Part 2: Smart Loading.**

Chapter 7

If Workload Becomes Too Low, Add Volume



Training volume, intensity, and frequency are the basic elements of training. These three elements must be balanced correctly if training is to be effective. One of the problems with using a training cycle that starts with high reps and ends with low reps is that the training volume may become too low for too long by the end of the cycle.

If you are going to focus on heavy training that only permits one to three reps for more than two weeks, you may start to lose strength from lack of training volume by the third week. For example, if you are using a linear periodization program and you are targeting your intensity correctly, your strength may increase through the training cycle until you hit your third week of using three reps. At that point, the volume may be low enough for long enough that you suffer a loss of strength at the very time when you want your strength to be at a peak. There are a few methods that you can use to add volume in order to correct this problem. You probably won't need to utilize all of these methods, most likely you will only need to utilize one of the following methods:

Do More Warm-up Sets

The first way to add volume is to do **at least** six warm-up sets with five or more reps before doing your heaviest work-sets with three or less reps. These sets should be light enough to allow your strength to be at a maximum when you get to your heaviest work-sets. You can use warm-up sets to accumulate

volume, but you must be careful to avoid wearing yourself out with warm-up sets to the point where your strength is compromised when you reach your heaviest sets.

Do a Lighter Workout with More Reps Each Week

A second way to add volume when you are focusing on low rep training is to include a lighter workout with more reps each week. For example, if you train each muscle group twice per week, do one workout with ten reps and the other workout with three reps.

Another option when doing a lighter workout and a heavy workout within the same week is to do a speed workout with lighter weights for your lighter workout. This would be done by doing about ten sets of three reps using 55% to 65% of your single rep max for each basic exercise on your lighter day.

These two methods of combining a lighter workout with a heavier workout each week will keep your weekly volume from becoming so low that you begin to experience a loss of strength.

Include Assistance Exercises With 6 to 15 Reps

A third way to include sufficient training volume during the heavy weeks with low volume and low reps is to do assistance exercises with 6 to 15 reps. For example, you may be using linear periodization for squats, deadlifts and bench presses, but you can also include assistance exercises such as incline presses, goblet squats, seated pulley rows, hyperextensions, barbell curls and triceps extensions. When doing the part of a training cycle where low reps are used for your bench presses, squats and deadlifts, you can do higher reps for your assistance exercises. This will help to increase your weekly training volume in order to prevent a loss of strength when training volume is decreased to a low level for your basic power lifts.

The bottom line is that if you target your intensity correctly, but you don't seem to be making any strength gains, consider making adjustments to the other aspects of training. The correct intensity must be combined with the proper volume and frequency in order to work. It may take some time to figure out how to adjust each aspect of training properly, but when you do, you will be rewarded with strength gains.

Chapter 8

A Weekly Workout Plan



How does all of the advice given to this point actually work when applied to a weight training program? This question will be addressed with an example of a simple workout plan.

In this workout plan, we will assume that you will be using a twelve week linear periodization cycle to improve four basic strength exercises including:

1. The Bench press
2. Overhead presses
3. Squats
4. Deadlifts

When setting up your training schedule, you will be training your lower-body twice per week, and your upper-body twice per week. Three workouts per week will be used in order to accomplish this. If we only use the four exercises listed, each exercise will be organized into a weekly schedule as follows:

Monday: Squats

Tuesday: Bench press

Friday: Deadlift and Overhead press

Some of you may be looking at this program and notice that each exercise is only done once per week. For this reason, you may be thinking that it does not include two upper body workouts per week and two lower body workouts per week. However, I want to point out that the squat and deadlift both work your legs and lower back. Even though you will be doing each exercise just once per week, the squat and deadlift are done on different days so that you will still be hitting your legs and lower back twice per week. Likewise, the bench press and overhead press are different upper-body exercises. For this reason, they will be done on two different days in order to hit your upper-body twice per week.

Assuming that these four exercises will form your weekly schedule, it is a simple matter of setting up a twelve week cycle. Since previous chapters have already addressed how to set up a twelve week training cycle consisting of four training blocks, we will apply the same strategy to the lifts listed in the weekly schedule in this chapter. Just to review, the strategy is listed as follows:

Block 1: Do 10 reps for three weeks

Block 2: Do 8 reps for three weeks

Block 3: Do 5 reps for three weeks

Block 4: Do 3 reps for three weeks

Before starting the cycle, you must know the amount of weight that you can use for each exercise in regard to the amount of quality reps listed for each training block. These weights will be used as your reference weights. Once you know your reference weights for each exercise and each training block, you want to start five pounds below the reference weight the first week of a training block, then use the reference weight during the second week of a training block, and you will finish five pounds above the reference weight for the third week of a training block. This should be repeated for each block of different reps. If you are unclear about the details of how to do this, refer back to chapters five and six.

The number of sets that you should do for each exercise is dependent on how many sets you can do at full strength. If you reach a set where you can't do as many quality reps as you could for the previous set, stop doing the exercise. Learn from your workouts in order to know how many sets you can normally do at full strength.

Assistance Exercises

There are lifters who have managed to reach the elite level by doing just a few basic exercises without any assistance exercises. If you are like these lifters and find that the simple basics give you the best results, then stick with the basics. However, there are many lifters who would benefit from including some assistance exercises into the weekly routine listed at the start of the chapter. To address this, a sample schedule will be given. The schedule contains the same workout days and the same four basic

strength exercises as previously listed, but it also includes some assistance exercises. This schedule is presented below:

Monday

Squats: **Plan each week according to the 12 week cycle**

Back: Choose one exercise listed below and do 3 sets x 6 to 12 reps

Bent-over barbell rows

Seated pulley rows

Lat pulldowns:

Biceps Curls: 1 to 2 sets x 6 to 10 reps

Tuesday

Bench press: **Plan each week according to the 12 week cycle**

Close grip bench press: 2 sets x 8 to 10 reps

Abs: 2 sets x 15 reps

Friday

Deadlift: **Plan each week according to the 12 week cycle**

Overhead press: **Plan each week according to the 12 week cycle**

Incline dumbbell press: 2 sets x 8 to 12 reps

Bicep Curls: 2 sets x 6 to 10 reps

Triceps Extensions: 2 sets x 6 to 10 reps

When using this schedule, only the four basic strength exercises are used in conjunction with a 12 week cycle in which weight is added every week. The assistance exercises are done within more of a consistent rep range throughout the twelve week cycle. This is done to add variety to your training and to prevent low volume stagnation that can occur at the end of a training cycle.

Adjust According To What Works

The workout schedule listed is just an example. The exact number of times that you perform each exercise each week should be adjusted according to what you have found produces the best training response. Add or subtract workout days, exercises, and sets to match the capacities of your body.

Chapter 9

Plan To Never Miss A Lift



There are many training strategies that will produce strength gains. Some of them are based on pushing for max reps and training to failure on a regular basis. These forms of training may lead to quick strength gains, but the gains are not usually sustainable. Targeting your intensity according to quality rep speed and remaining at full strength does not shock your body into rapid strength gains, instead, it is based on the goal of achieving sustainable strength gains over a long period of time. If this is what you would like to accomplish, my hope is that the concepts in this book will bring you a step closer to your goals. Above all, remember to practice success, not failure, and plan your workouts so that you never miss a lift. Best of training to you.

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 www.precisionpointtraining.com. In addition, you can view more books on strength training that he has authored on the next page.

Additional Resources

A Quick Guide To Strength

Beginning Strength Training

Cluster Set Training

High Frequency Strength Training

Heavy Frequency Training

Individualized Workouts For Hardgainers

Overcoming Strength Training Plateaus

Quick Workouts For Quick Muscles

Rest-Pause Training

Strength Training Capacity

Strength Training Thresholds

Strength to the Max

The 1 x 100 Challenge

The High Frequency Training Pyramid

The Peak Strength Principle

12-10-8-6: A Workout Plan For Building Size And Strength