## BOTTON-UP <br> 

Make The Most Of Every Set


Mark Sherwood

## Bottom Up Loading

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Bottom Up Loading: Make The Most of Every Set
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## Introduction

Most weight training methods provide a plan for adding weight to work sets, but many neglect to provide a progressive plan for warm up sets. The emphasis of most training strategies is to take the hardest part of a workout and add more to it. In contrast, warm up sets tend to receive much less consideration and many lifters never bother to formulate a progressive warm up plan.

Of course the heaviest set of a workout (also known as the top set) is very important, and the ability to lift more weight when you reach the top set should be the obvious goal of any strength training program. However, what if you get stuck, and that top set won't budge?

If you have reached a sticking point, my advice is to be more intentional about a progressive strategy for your warm up sets. Instead of always trying to add to the hardest part of a workout, think about starting with the easiest part of a workout and slowly adding weight to it. As you add weight to your warm up sets, the over-all workload will increase which will start to push your strength upwards.

The concept of adding weight to your lightest warm up set first is called bottom up loading. It simply means to start the process of adding weight to your lifts by adding weight to your first warm up set, which should also be your easiest warm up set. You would then plan a second workout date for an addition of weight, which would apply to your second warm up set. A scheduled increase in weight would also be planned for your third warm up set, and you would continue the process of adding weight to your warm up sets until you are strong enough to add weight to your top set.

Every part of your workout can be treated in progressive manner that leads to strength gains; including your warm up sets. Take advantage of utilizing a progressive warm up plan by incorporating bottom up loading into your workouts. The purpose of this book is to provide the details that explain how to do this.

## Chapter 1

## The Reasoning Behind Bottom Up Loading



Bottom up loading is based on starting the process of loading by adding weight to your easiest sets first. This is done by adding weight to your warm up sets in order to gradually make them harder. At the same time, you will keep using the same amount of weight and reps for your top set until it becomes easier to lift. Why use this method? Because it works in agreement with the two basic goals that your body is trying to achieve when it gains strength. These two goals are listed below:

## Goal \#1:

Your body gains strength to keep gradual additions of weight from becoming more difficult to lift when gradually adding weight to an easy or moderately hard lifting stress.

## Goal \#2:

Your body gains strength to make it easier to lift a weight, or a set, that is difficult to lift.

## Goal \# 1 Applies to Your Warm up Sets

The first goal is relevant to the concept of gradually adding weight to your warm up sets. When done properly, warm up sets should range from easy to moderately hard in terms of effort. When performing easy to moderately hard warm up sets, it should not be difficult to perform a predetermined number of reps for each set. You should have no problem using a steady even rep pace for each warm up set without a sense of strain. If you gradually add weight to these sets from time to time, your body will gain strength
to keep the gradual additions of weight from becoming more difficult to lift. This is not a method that shocks your body into sudden gains, rather it is a long term strategy that leads to gradual gains.

## Goal \#2 Applies to Your Top Set and Work Sets

The second goal listed applies to your top set. When done properly, you should be able to maintain a steady even rep pace for all but the last rep of your top set. The last rep should be hard enough to cause your rep speed to slow down a little compared to the previous reps. When your top set is performed in this manner, the last rep is called your marker rep, because it marks the point in the set where your rep speed starts to slow down.

## The Marker Rep

The marker rep is substantially more difficult than the previous reps of a set. Since it is difficult, your body will want to gain strength in order to make it easier to perform the last rep without as much difficulty. You will know that your last rep has become easier when you can do it without needing to slow down in comparison with your previous reps. When you gain enough strength to consistently perform all of your reps using the same rep speed, including your last rep, you are ready to add weight to your top set.

Hopefully you can see that there are two basic strategies:

1. Plan on gradually adding weight to your warm up sets so that they become harder.
2. Don't add weight to your top set until it becomes easier.

If you follow these two strategies, you will be practicing bottom up loading, and you will be training in agreement with the two basic reasons that your body is trying to accomplish when it gains strength. The end result will be more strength.

If this methodology sounds different than what you have been taught, I recommend reading the books, Overcoming Strength Training Plateaus, and Strength Training Thresholds; The Key to Consistent Progress. These two books will help you to understand the reasoning behind the methods in this book.

## Chapter 2

## Four Bottom Up Loading Methods



Bottom up loading is a concept that can be applied in a variety of ways. The most basic aspect of bottom up loading is to plan on adding weight to each warm up set in the order that they are performed. You would add weight to the first warm up set first, the second warm up set second, and the third warm up set third, and so on. The weight would be added to each warm up set at an appointed date in separate workouts, not the same workout.

The amount of time before adding weight to successive warm up sets is based on your personal rate of gain. If you are a beginner and an easy gainer who is gaining strength at a rapid rate, you may be able to add weight to a warm up set every workout. If you have been working out for several years, you won't be able to gain as quickly. In this case, you may end up adding weight to one warm up set once every two to three weeks, and it would take you six to nine weeks to add weight to all of your warm up sets.

Regardless of whether you add weight to your warm up sets at a rapid rate, or a slower rate, there are four basic bottom up loading methods that will be discussed as you continue to read this book. These methods consist of:

Sequential bottom up loading
Bottom up loading waves
Bottom up volume loading
Dual bottom up loading

## Chapter 3

## Selecting Reasonable Warm Up Poundages



For any bottom up loading strategy to work, your warm up sets must be true warm up sets. Some lifters never really bother with warm up sets. They push themselves close to failure on their very first set, but they consider it a warm up set because it happens to be the lightest weight they will be using when working up to a heavier weight. The problem is that they are pushing out as many reps as possible starting with their very first set. Let's look at Sam as an example of someone who takes this approach when doing four sets of the bench press:

Set 1: 12 reps x 135 pounds
Set 2: 10 reps $\times 145$ pounds
Set 3: 8 reps x 155 pounds
Set 4: 6 reps $\times 165$ pounds
If you look at the poundages for each set in reference to Sam's bench press workout, you will notice that he only increases by ten pounds each set. The reason for this is because he is going almost all-out on his very first set of twelve reps. If he adds very much weight to his second set, he won't be able to complete a total of ten reps as planned, so he can only increase by ten pounds. The same holds true when advancing to his third and fourth sets; he can only increase by ten pounds and must go all-out to complete the amount of reps he planned. Sam may refer to his first three sets as warm up sets because they are lighter than his fourth set, but they are far too hard to be considered true warm up sets.

## Start Light and Easy

When doing warm up sets, the first set should not just be the lightest set, it should also be an easy set. Each set should be a little more difficult than the previous set. If Sam wants to work up to a top set with 165 pounds for six reps, he should start out much lighter on his first set. His first set with 12 reps should be done with a weight that would allow him to do 20 to 25 reps if he pushed himself (but he will only do 12 reps). His second set with 10 reps should be done with a weight that would allow him to do 15 to 17 reps if he did as many reps as possible. His third set with 8 reps should be done with a weight that would allow him to do 11 to 13 reps with maximum effort, however, Sam will not use maximum effort on any of his warm up sets because they are warm up sets, not work sets. What Sam needs to do is stick with his plan to do 12,10 , and 8 reps with weights that consist of appropriate poundages for warm up sets.

Sam's warm weights consisting of 135,145 , and 155 pounds are way too heavy. He needs to decrease the warm up weights in order to start out easy and work his way up to a hard top set. Sam would be much better off using the following warm up poundages while working up to 165 pounds for six reps:

Set 1: 12 reps $\times 95$ pounds
Set 2: 10 reps $\times 115$ pounds
Set 3: 8 reps $x 135$ pounds
Set 4: 6 reps $\times 165$ pounds
Notice that Sam is starting with only 95 pounds for his first set, whereas he was starting with 135 pounds for his first set in the previous example. He is starting his warm up with about $45 \%-50 \%$ of his single rep max instead of $65 \%-70 \%$ of his single rep max. If you look closely, all of the warm up sets are lighter in the second example. If Sam feels like the lighter warm up sets are making the workout too easy, he can do more work-sets with 165 pounds.

## How Many Work Sets?

How many work-sets with six reps should Sam repeat with 165 pounds? He should repeat work-sets as long as he is at full strength. If the sets start to become harder, he will know that he is no longer at full strength. The best indicator that the sets are becoming harder is that Sam's rep speed will start to slow down earlier in the set. Instead of his rep speed starting to slow down on his sixth rep, it will start to slow down on his fourth or fifth rep.

## Add Weight to the Top Set When It Becomes Easier

Sam's ultimate goal is to keeping repeating workouts with a top set of 165 pounds for six reps until the weight feels easy enough to add five pounds. He will know that he can add more weight to 165 pounds when he is able to do all six reps; especially the sixth rep, using the same rep speed. As long as Sam must slow down when he hits his sixth rep, he is not ready to add weight. When he gains enough strength to consistently perform six reps without slowing down on his sixth rep, he is ready to add weight.

In the meantime, Sam should be using realistic warm up poundages until his top set becomes easier. If his warm up weights are too heavy, he will not be able to add weight to them because he will already be using as much weight as he can handle. Once he selects the correct warm up poundages, he has room to add weight to them and to start the process of bottom up loading.

## Chapter 4

## Sequential Bottom Up Loading

In this chapter, an example will be presented where Sam uses bottom up loading. We are assuming that Sam is now using realistic warm up weights for three warm up sets consisting of 95,115 , and 135 pounds. He is now ready to form a basic bottom up loading strategy that covers four weeks as follows:

At the start of week one, Sam will add five pounds to his first warm up set.
At the start of week two, Sam will add five pounds to his second warm up set.
At the start of week three, Sam will add five pounds to his third warm up set.
If Sam's fourth set has become easy enough to perform all six reps using a steady even rep pace, he can add five pounds to his top set during week four. This example is shown with a week by week listing of each set across four weeks in the following table:

| Basic Sequential Bottom Up Loading |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Week 1 <br> Add to $1^{\text {st }}$ set | Week 2 <br> Add to $\mathbf{2}^{\text {nd }}$ set | Week 3 <br> Add to $\mathbf{3}^{\text {rd }}$ set | Week 4 Add to $4^{\text {th }}$ set |
| $\begin{aligned} & 1 \times 12100 \text { lbs. } \\ & 1 \times 10115 \text { lbs. } \\ & 1 \times 8 \quad 135 \text { lbs. } \\ & 1 \times 6 \quad 165 \text { lbs. } \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{array}{ll} \hline 1 \times 12100 \mathrm{lbs} \\ 1 \times 10 & 120 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ 1 \times 8 & 135 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ 1 \times 6 & 165 \mathrm{lbs} . \end{array}$ | $1 \times 12100 \mathrm{lbs}$. $1 \times 10120 \mathrm{lbs}$. $1 \times 8140$ lbs. $1 \times 6165 \mathrm{lbs}$. | $\begin{aligned} & 1 \times 12100 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ & 1 \times 10120 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ & 1 \times 8 \quad 140 \text { lbs. } \\ & \mathbf{1 \times 6} \mathbf{1 7 0} \text { lbs. } \end{aligned}$ |

If Sam's strength increases as planned, he can proceed to do another four week bottom up loading cycle with an additional five pounds as follows:

| Basic Sequential Bottom Up Loading Second Loading Cycle |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Week 1 Add to $1^{\text {st }}$ set | Week 2 <br> Add to $\mathbf{2}^{\text {nd }}$ set | Week 3 Add to $3^{\text {rd }}$ set | Week 4 Add to $4^{\text {th }}$ set |
| $1 \times 12105 \mathrm{lbs}$. <br> $1 \times 10120 \mathrm{lbs}$. <br> $1 \times 8140 \mathrm{lbs}$. <br> $1 \times 6170 \mathrm{lbs}$. | $\begin{aligned} & 1 \times 12105 \text { lbs. } \\ & 1 \times 10125 \text { lbs. } \\ & 1 \times 8 \quad 140 \text { lbs. } \\ & 1 \times 6 \\ & 170 \text { lbs. } \end{aligned}$ | $1 \times 12105 \mathrm{lbs}$. $1 \times 10125 \mathrm{lbs}$. $1 \times 8145 \mathrm{lbs}$. $1 \times 6170 \mathrm{lbs}$. | $\begin{aligned} & 1 \times 12105 \text { lbs. } \\ & 1 \times 10125 \text { lbs. } \\ & 1 \times 8 \quad 145 \text { lbs. } \\ & 1 \times 6 \quad 175 \text { lbs. } \end{aligned}$ |

What if Sam gets stuck and bottom up loading stops working? The next step would be to try bottom up loading waves. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

## Chapter 5

## Bottom Up Loading Waves



Bottom up loading waves can be used to accentuate the practice of bottom up loading. Each time you go through the process of adding weight to all of your warm up sets, you have completed a bottom up loading wave. However, instead of going through just one cycle of adding five pounds to warm up sets before adding weight to the top set, you can go through two cycles of adding weight to your warm up sets. This would be called a double wave. If you went through three cycles of adding weight to your warm up sets before adding weight to your top set, it would be called a triple wave, or a triple wave cycle. To illustrate how this works, we will return to Sam's original workout poundages which are listed below:
$1 \times 1295 \mathrm{lbs}$.
$1 \times 10115 \mathrm{lbs}$.
$1 \times 8135 \mathrm{lbs}$.
$1 \times 6 \quad 165 \mathrm{lbs}$.

## A Triple Loading Wave

Sam is going to add to these warm up poundages by using a triple loading wave. This time he is going to increase one warm up set by five pounds every workout. We will assume that Sam is bench pressing three times per week. If he adds five pounds to one warm up set per workout, it will take one week to add
five pounds to each warm up set because there are three warm up sets and three workouts. In this case, one week equals one loading wave. If Sam proceeds in this manner for three weeks, he will complete three waves, or a triple wave. This is shown in the chart on the next page:

| A Triple Wave |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Week 1: First Loading Wave |  |  |
| Day 1 Add 5 lbs to $\mathbf{1}^{\text {st }}$ set | Day 2 Add 5 lbs. to $2^{\text {nd }}$ set | Day 3 Add 5 lbs to $3^{\text {rd }}$ set |
| $\begin{array}{ll} 1 \times 12 & 100 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ 1 \times 10 & 115 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ 1 \times 8 & 135 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ 1 \times 6 & 165 \mathrm{lbs} . \end{array}$ | $\begin{array}{ll} 1 \times 12 & 100 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ \mathbf{1 \times 1 0} & 120 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ 1 \times 8 & 135 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ 1 \times 6 & 165 \mathrm{lbs} . \end{array}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 1 \times 12 \quad 100 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ & 1 \times 10 \quad 120 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ & \mathbf{1 \times 8} \mathbf{1 4 0} \text { lbs. } \\ & 1 \times 6 \quad 165 \mathrm{lbs} . \end{aligned}$ |
| Week 2: Second Loading Wave |  |  |
| $\begin{aligned} & 1 \times 12 \quad 105 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ & 1 \times 10 \quad 120 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ & 1 \times 8 \quad 140 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ & 1 \times 6 \quad 165 \mathrm{lbs} . \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 1 \times 12105 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ & \mathbf{1 \times 1 0} 125 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ & 1 \times 8 \quad 140 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ & 1 \times 6 \quad 165 \mathrm{lbs} . \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{array}{ll} 1 \times 12 & 105 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ 1 \times 10 & 125 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ \mathbf{1 \times 8} & \mathbf{1 4 5} \text { lbs. } \\ 1 \times 6 & 165 \mathrm{lbs} . \end{array}$ |
| Week 3: Third Loading Wave |  |  |
| $\begin{array}{ll} 1 \times 12 & 110 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ 1 \times 10 & 125 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ 1 \times 8 & 145 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ 1 \times 6 & 165 \mathrm{lbs} . \end{array}$ | $\begin{array}{ll} 1 \times 12 & 110 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ 1 \times 10 & 130 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ 1 \times 8 & 145 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ 1 \times 6 & 165 \mathrm{lbs} . \end{array}$ | $\begin{array}{ll} 1 \times 12 & 110 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ 1 \times 10 & 130 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ \mathbf{1 \times 8} & \mathbf{1 5 0} \mathrm{lbs} . \\ 1 \times 6 & 165 \mathrm{lbs} . \end{array}$ |
| The top set remains at 165 pounds for all three waves |  |  |

Notice that the warm up weights have all increased by ten pounds by the end of week three, but the top set has stayed the same throughout all three weeks. If Sam's top set becomes easy enough to add weight at the end of three weeks, he can increase his top set by five pounds at the start of week four. This will cause his top set to increase from 165 pounds up to 170 pounds as he heads into week four. The warm up sets will also be increased by five pounds above the original poundages consisting of 100, 115, and 135 pounds that he started with in week one. When you take all of this into account, he can start a new cycle of bottom up loading waves during week four with the following poundages:

## Week 4

$1 \times 12105$
$1 \times 10120$
$1 \times 8 \quad 140$
$1 \times 6 \quad 170$
What if Sam's top set hasn't become any easier at the end of week three when he competes his triple wave? In this case, he is not ready to add weight to his top set yet. Sam has two options for how to deal with this:

1. Drop the warm up weights back down to the original poundages and repeat the exact same triple wave loading cycle. The poundages would be exactly the same as the previous triple wave in order to allow more time for the top set to get easier before adding weight to it.
2. Sam's second option is to start a new double or triple wave that is five pounds heavier than the start of previous cycle. In other words, he should start at the second wave (i.e. week two) of the previous loading cycle where his poundages consisted of $105,120,140$, and 165 pounds.

Sam may need only one triple wave cycle in order to add weight to his top set. Regardless of how many loading cycles it takes, the top set must become easier before he adds weight to his heaviest set. When this happens, he can start a brand new cycle where every set is five pounds heavier than his previous starting point. Since he started with 100, 115, 135, and 165 pounds for his first triple wave, he will move up to $105,120,140$, and 170 pounds to start the next triple wave. From there, he can once again use bottom up loading waves until his top set becomes easy enough to move up to 175 pounds.

## Chapter 6

## Bottom Up Volume Loading

There is another way to use bottom up loading, but the loading is not done with weight, it is done with added sets. I refer to this as bottom up volume loading. In order to explain bottom up volume loading, we will again return to Sam's original bench press workout consisting of the following four sets:
$1 \times 1295 \mathrm{lbs}$.
$1 \times 10115 \mathrm{lbs}$.
$1 \times 8135$ lbs.
$1 \times 6165$ lbs.

## Select A Target Poundage

When using the bottom up volume loading method, one of the warm up poundages is selected as a target poundage. The target poundage will be performed for multiple sets while the other poundages will each be performed for one set. Since volume loading will be done from the bottom up, the bottom poundage is selected as the first target poundage that will be repeated for multiple sets.

Since the bottom warm up weight of 95 pounds is the easiest, it can be done for several sets without overtraining. In this example; 95 pounds will be done for four sets of twelve reps during the first week. The second warm up poundage of 115 pounds will be the target set during week two. Since 115 pounds is a little harder to lift than 95 pounds, it will only be done for three sets during week two. The third warm up poundage with 135 pounds is the hardest and will be targeted for only two sets during week three.

## Less Weight = More Sets

The basic idea is to do more sets when the warm up poundages are easier, and decrease the number of sets as the warm up poundages become heavier and harder. An example of how to do this across a three week period is shown on the next page:

| Bottom Up Volume Loading |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| $\begin{gathered} \text { Week } 1 \\ \text { Target } 95 \text { pounds } \\ 4 \text { sets } \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{gathered} \text { Week } 2 \\ \text { Target } 115 \text { pounds } \\ 3 \text { sets } \end{gathered}$ | Week 3 <br> Target 135 pounds $2 \text { sets }$ |
| $4 \times 1295 \mathrm{lbs}$. | $1 \times 1295 \mathrm{lbs}$. | $1 \times 1295 \mathrm{lbs}$. |
| $1 \times 10115 \mathrm{lbs}$. | $3 \times 10115 \mathrm{lbs}$. | $1 \times 10115 \mathrm{lbs}$. |
| $1 \times 8135 \mathrm{lbs}$. | $1 \times 8135 \mathrm{lbs}$. | $2 \times 8135 \mathrm{lbs}$. |
| $1 \times 6165 \mathrm{lbs}$. | $1 \times 6165 \mathrm{lbs}$. | $1 \times 6165 \mathrm{lbs}$. |
|  |  |  |

Another option is to do the added sets after your top set. This will insure that you are at full strength when you do your top set. When using this method, you will do the exact same number of sets that were listed in the last table of workouts, but the added sets are simply done after your top set. An example of this is shown in the table below:

| Bottom Up Volume Loading <br> Added Sets Come After The Top Set |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Week 1 Target 95 pounds 4 total sets | Week 2 Target 115 pounds 3 total sets | Week 3 Target 135 pounds 2 total sets |
| $\begin{array}{lr} \hline \mathbf{1} \times 12 & \mathbf{9 5} \mathrm{lbs} . \\ \mathbf{1 \times 1 0} & 115 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ \mathbf{1 \times 8} & 135 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ \mathbf{1 \times 6} & 165 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ \mathbf{3 \times 1 2} & \mathbf{9 5} \mathrm{lbs} . \end{array}$ | $\begin{array}{ll} \hline 1 \times 12 & 95 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ \mathbf{1} \times 10 & 115 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ 1 \times 8 & 135 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ 1 \times 6 & 165 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ \mathbf{2 \times 1 0} & \mathbf{1 1 5} \text { lbs. } \end{array}$ | $\begin{array}{ll} \hline 1 \times 12 & 95 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ 1 \times 10 & 115 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ \mathbf{1 \times 8} & \mathbf{1 3 5} \mathrm{lbs} . \\ \mathbf{1 \times 6} & 165 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ \mathbf{1 \times 8} & \mathbf{1 3 5} \mathrm{lbs} . \end{array}$ |

## Programming for Overcompensation

Starting with more sets at the beginning of a training cycle is a common powerlifting strategy. It is just as common to shift to less sets and heavier weight as you proceed to the end of a training cycle. The reason for the popularity of this strategy is because the higher training volume at the start of a cycle tends to improve one's overall conditioning. This makes it easier to recover when weights are increased and sets are decreased later in the training cycle. The final result is a more powerful training effect and a better response from your body when heavier weights are used at the end of the cycle.

## When to Add Weight to Your Top Set

When you have progressed through a whole cycle of loading volume to each warm up set, you must determine if your top set is easy enough to add more weight. If it is, then you can add five pounds to all of your sets, including your warm up sets. Your new poundages will consist of 100, 120, 140, and 170 pounds. If the top set has not become any easier, you can try another bottom up volume loading cycle with an additional five pounds to each target set. This will be explained in the next chapter.

## Chapter 7

## Dual Bottom Up Loading



If you go through a bottom up volume loading cycle and your top set doesn't get any easier, you can try doing a second bottom up volume loading cycle with an additional five pounds to your target poundages. This is called dual bottom up loading because you are combining two bottom up loading strategies over the course of two loading cycles. The first strategy consists of a bottom up volume loading cycle. The second strategy consists of adding five additional pounds to your target sets during your second volume loading cycle. An example will help to illustrate this concept.

We will start with the same example of bottom up volume loading that was used in the last chapter. This particular cycle takes three weeks to complete. However, at the end of the cycle, we will assume that the top set has not become easy enough for the lifter to add weight. This being the case, you will see a second three week cycle pertaining to weeks four, five, and six in the table on the next page, but each target set will be done with an additional five pounds during the second cycle:

| Bottom Up Volume Loading Cycle 1: Weeks 1-3 |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Week 1 Target 95 pounds 4 sets | Week 2 Target 115 pounds 3 sets | Week 3 Target 135 pounds 2 sets |
| $\begin{array}{ll} 4 \times 12 & 95 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ 1 \times 10 & 115 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ 1 \times 8 & 135 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ 1 \times 6 & 165 \mathrm{lbs} . \end{array}$ | $\begin{array}{ll} 1 \times 12 & 95 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ \mathbf{3 \times 1 0} & 115 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ 1 \times 8 & 135 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ 1 \times 6 & 165 \mathrm{lbs} . \end{array}$ | $\begin{array}{ll} 1 \times 12 & 95 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ 1 \times 10 & 115 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ \mathbf{2 \times 8} & 135 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ 1 \times 6 & 165 \mathrm{lbs} . \end{array}$ |
| Dual Bottom Up Loading Cycle 2: Weeks 4-6 |  |  |
| Week 4 <br> Add to first poundage Target 100 pounds 4 sets | Week 5 Add to second poundage Target 120 pounds 3 sets | Week 6 Add to third poundage Target 140 pounds 2 sets |
| $\begin{array}{cc} \hline 4 \times 12 & 100 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ 1 \times 10 & 115 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ 1 \times 8 & 135 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ 1 \times 6 & 165 \mathrm{lbs} . \end{array}$ | $\begin{array}{cc} \hline 1 \times 12 & 100 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ \mathbf{3 \times 1 0} & 120 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ 1 \times 8 & 135 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ 1 \times 6 & 165 \mathrm{lbs} . \end{array}$ | $\begin{array}{ll} 1 \times 12 & 100 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ 1 \times 10 & 120 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ 2 \times 8 & 140 \mathrm{lbs} . \\ 1 \times 6 & 165 \mathrm{lbs} . \end{array}$ |
| Note: The top set stays the same for both cycles. |  |  |

Assuming the top set poundage of 165 pounds becomes easier by the end of week six, add five pounds to your top set for week seven and start a new dual bottom up loading cycle. This means the poundages for week seven will consist of $100,120,140$, and 170 pounds when you start, and move up to 105,125 , and 145 pounds when you finish the dual bottom up loading cycle six weeks later.

## Chapter 8

## Adjustments

All of the bottom up loading concepts must be adjusted to the number of warm up sets and the length of time that you choose for a loading cycle. All of the examples in this book have consisted of three warm up sets which makes it convenient to utilize a three week cycle. Perhaps you have a different training style and prefer more or less warm up sets. For instance, we will imagine that you prefer to do five warm up sets in order to reach your top set on your sixth set. An example of this is shown below:

Set 1: 12 reps x 75 pounds
Set 2: 10 reps x 95 pounds
Set 3: 8 reps x 105 pounds
Set 4: 8 reps x 115 pounds
Set 5: 6 reps x 135 pounds
Set 6: 6 reps x 165 pounds
If you were to load weight to one warm up set per week, it would take a total of five weeks to complete a bottom up loading cycle. A five week loading cycle may be too long for some lifters who prefer a three week cycle. In this case, you can add five pounds to more than one warm up sets each week. An example of this is shown below:

Week 1: Add five pounds to the first and second warm up sets.
Week 2: Add five pounds to the third and fourth warm up sets.
Week 3: Add five pounds to the fifth warm up set.
We can also go in the opposite direction and look at a lifter who may want to complete a bottom up loading cycle over the course a cycle that takes more than five weeks. For example, a lifter who does five warm up sets may want to take eight weeks to complete a bottom up loading cycle. This could be accomplished by adding five pounds to a warm up poundage during five of the weeks, while bypassing the loading process during three of the weeks according to a lifter's choosing. An example of how this could be accomplished is shown below:

Week 1: Add five pounds to the first warm up set.
Week 2: Add five pounds to the second warm up set.
Week 3: Don't add weight to any warm up sets.
Week 4: Add five pounds to the third warm up set.
Week 5: Don't add weight to any warm up sets.
Week 6: Add five pounds to the fourth warm up set.

Week 7: Don't add weight to any warm up sets.
Week 8: Add five pounds to the fifth warm up set.

The bottom line is that adjustments will need to be made according to how many warm up sets you plan for each workout, and according to how long you want a bottom up loading cycle to last.

## Chapter 9

## Make The Most Of Every Set



Bottom up loading is a general concept, not a method that pertains to a precise amount of warm up sets and reps. You can plan your warm up sets according to your preference, but the main concept behind bottom up loading is to start adding weight to the first warm up set, followed by each successive warm up set as you proceed through a loading cycle.

Lifters may vary greatly in terms of whether they do a minimal warm up or an extensive warm up, but the main point is to plan a progressive warm up. You may not need bottom up loading if you are just beginning a weight training program for the first time. However, there will come a time when it becomes more difficult to keep making progress. This is when you will need a more thorough training strategy and would benefit from a progressive plan for each aspect of training, including your warm up sets.

Don't assume that you will immediately master bottom up loading the first time you try it. As with any training method, you must apply one of the bottom up loading methods and observe how your body responds to it. In the process, you will be able to fine tune your training and make adjustments to derive the greatest benefits possible from bottom up loading. If you do this, you will learn how to make the most out of every set of your workouts and accentuate your progress. 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 you view more books on strength training that he has authored on the next page.

# Additional Resources 

A Quick Guide To Strength<br>Beginning Strength Training<br>Cluster Set Training<br>Force And Frequency Training<br>Giant Pyramid Training<br>High Frequency Strength Training<br>High Volume 5's<br>Heavy Frequency Training<br>Individualized Workouts For Hardgainers<br>Never Miss A Lift<br>Overcoming Strength Training Plateaus<br>Quick Workouts For Quick Muscles<br>Rest-Pause Training<br>Strength Challenge 20/20<br>Strength Training Capacity<br>Strength Training Thresholds<br>Strength To The Max<br>Strength To The Max And Beyond<br>The $1 \times 100$ Challenge<br>The High Frequency Training Pyramid The Peak Strength Principle<br>12-10-8-6: A Workout Plan For Building Size And Strength

