

# MARKER REP TRAINING



WORKOUTS  
AND  
PERIODIZATION

MARK SHERWOOD

# Marker Rep Training



## Workouts And Periodization

Mark Sherwood

For more information from the author visit:

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

Copyright © 2018 by Mark Sherwood

Marker Rep Training: Workouts And Periodization

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: What Is The Marker Rep?

Chapter 2: Easier Comes First; Harder Comes Second

Chapter 3: The Marker Rep Threshold

Chapter 4: Clarifying Marker Rep Training

Chapter 5: Strong Sets And Peak Recovery

Chapter 6: Different Applications of Marker Rep Training

Chapter 7: A Single Repeatable Routine

Chapter 8: Block Periodization

Chapter 9: Daily Undulating Periodization

Chapter 10: Adjustments

About The Author

Additional Resources

## Introduction

I began training with weights in 1979. At that time, I had very little knowledge about how to train and experienced very little progress. It soon dawned on me that I needed to learn more about weight training if I was ever going to make any significant improvement. In my quest to gain more knowledge, I began to buy bodybuilding magazines and books on weight training. The information helped me to adjust my training enough to quickly start gaining strength.

The most common thing that seemed to be stressed in the literature that I read was the need for training intensity. I took it seriously and believed that the only way to gain strength and muscle mass was to train to failure. The only rep that mattered was the last rep of each set, and the last rep had to be the last rep I could possibly do. I believed that anyone who was not willing to go all-out on their last rep was wasting his time with reps that didn't matter.

I must confess that training to failure did seem to be the initial key to gaining strength and size, but it eventually quit working. When it stopped working, I constantly tried to figure out how to push harder when I was already pushing my hardest. This mentality proved to be a dead-end road and caused me to look into other training methods.

I eventually tried various training cycles that consisted of varied intensities. Some workouts were designed to be fairly easy, others were moderately hard, but each training cycle always include some workouts in which I would go all out with max reps by training to failure. It seemed difficult to dial in on the right training intensity that was hard enough without being too hard. I could never figure it out until I understood how to identify what I refer to as the marker rep.

The marker rep turned out to be the key to training with an optimum amount of intensity. The marker rep can be used with a single repeatable routine, or it can be used in conjunction with different types of periodization programs. The purpose of this book is to help you understand how the marker rep can be used in conjunction with simple training routines as well as periodization methods consisting of more complex training. You will find out how this can be accomplished as you read the rest of this book.

## Chapter 1

### What Is The Marker Rep?



The marker rep marks the threshold point in a set where reps suddenly become more difficult to perform. This usually occurs two to four reps before reaching the point of max reps to failure. The marker rep can be identified by evaluating rep speed and the pace at which reps are repeated.

Lifters can generally maintain steady even rep pace throughout the beginning and middle part of a set. I call these even paced reps, **strong reps**. However, as fatigue accumulates towards the end of a set, rep speed will tend to slow down for a few reps before failure is reached. The slower weaker reps are called **weak reps**. The **marker rep** marks the initial point in a set where weak reps begin as evidenced by slower reps, and/or a slower rep pace.

The fact that there is a point in a set where rep speed starts to slow down is an indicator that there is a point where reps suddenly start to become more difficult. You can push a set to this point by repeating reps until you reach your marker rep. The increase in difficulty when reaching your marker rep will provide enough training stress to trigger strength gains. If you keep on repeating workouts where you stop at your marker rep, the marker rep will start to become easier as strength is gained. An example of this would be helpful.

We will imagine that John can squat with 225 pounds for ten reps when he goes all-out and pushes for max reps to failure. However, John will **not** be training to failure, instead, he is going to stop at his marker rep. His marker rep happens to fall on his eighth rep, which is the first rep that starts to slow down in

comparison with the previous reps. John keeps repeating workouts with 225 pounds for eight reps. In the process, he begins to gain a little strength and the eighth rep starts to become easier.

How does John know the eighth rep is becoming easier?

**Because the eighth rep will naturally speed up as it becomes easier,** and he will eventually be able to perform his eighth rep at the same speed as the first seven reps. John can then add five pounds and repeat this process until his marker rep becomes fast enough and easy enough to add weight again.

## Chapter 2

### Easier Comes First; Harder Comes Second



In the previous chapter, John was an example of a lifter who was using the concept of marker rep training to get stronger. His initial goal is not to make workouts harder, but to keep repeating the same workout until it becomes easier. Many people don't understand that strength is an adaptation that is designed to reduce the amount of stress you experience when lifting a given weight. They believe, as I once did, that lifting must always become harder and harder to keep on stimulating strength gains.

Finding ways to make workouts progressively harder does seem to work for a while, but there comes a time when the body rebels against it. Continuously training to failure with max reps will keep your body overwhelmed with a difficult training stress. A continuous pattern of overwhelming workouts is contrary to the strength training process. You must ask yourself why your body would want to keep getting stronger and allow you to lift even more weight when it is already overwhelmed with amount of weight, sets, and reps that you have been lifting.

**What your body really wants is for the same weight to become easier to lift.** If you constantly push to failure, you never allow the same weight to become easier to lift because you immediately add weight or reps to it. This sends a message to your body that strength gains will immediately lead to more difficulty, not less. Unfortunately this will result in the **pattern that kills progress**. The pattern that kills progress occurs when there is a contradiction between easier and harder; your body tries to get stronger in order to make a difficult training stress easier handle, but you keep making it harder. The eventual result is a sticking point.

It is important to point out that when you use marker rep training, you will eventually have to add weight to your lifts after gaining some strength, but adding weight to make your training harder should be the second thing you do, not the first. The first thing you should do is to allow time for the same amount



of weight and reps to become easier to lift. Once your body has had enough time to gain strength in order to accomplish this, a small amount of weight can be added.

## Chapter 3

### The Marker Rep Threshold



Marker rep training is based on a training threshold. The threshold helps you to identify the point in a set where training suddenly becomes more difficult. Training thresholds have two different sides consisting of an **easier side**, and a **harder side**. The beginning and middle of a set are on the easier side of the threshold. The set is easier before you reach the threshold because fatigue has not yet accumulated enough to make it hard to keep repeating reps; this allows you to maintain a steady even rep pace. However, when enough fatigue finally develops, you will cross from the easier side of the threshold to the harder side of the threshold. The harder side is more uncomfortable and is the point in a set where rep speed starts to slow down.

#### **The Limit Rep**

The threshold within a set falls between two consecutive reps consisting of the limit rep, and the marker rep. **The limit rep** is the last rep of a set that can be performed using a steady even rep pace. If you continue past the limit rep, you will cross over the threshold and the next rep will be the marker rep. The important point is that the limit rep is easier, and the marker rep is harder. The limit rep falls on the easier side of the threshold where the training stress is relatively comfortable, but the marker rep falls on the harder side of the threshold where training suddenly becomes more uncomfortable.

When using marker rep training, you push just past the threshold and stop at the marker rep, which falls on the harder side of the threshold. You then keep repeating workouts where you stop at the marker rep. As you do this, your body will gain strength in order to make it easier to perform the marker rep. The easier the marker rep becomes, the more the slowness of the marker rep will disappear until it can eventually be done at the same speed as a limit rep. When this happens, your body will have transitioned

from the harder side of the threshold (the marker rep side), to the easier side of the threshold, (the limit rep side).

Why is this important? Because it helps your body gain two benefits that it wants to attain when it gains strength:

First, your body gains strength in order to make it easier to lift the same amount of weight and reps.

Second, your body wants to transition out of the difficult side of the threshold in order to move to the easier side of the threshold where training is more comfortable.

Marker rep training has a compound effect as there are two benefits that cause the same training to become easier, which is exactly what your body is trying to accomplish when it gains strength. If you stop at any other place in a set besides the marker rep, and your body happens to get stronger, your body will perceive that that the same training has become easier, but this is only one benefit. If you stop at the marker rep and gain strength, not only will the same training become a little easier, but your body will transition out of the difficult side of the threshold to the easier side. In other words, it will accomplish two benefits from gaining strength instead of just one. Two benefits are better than one. The more benefits that your body perceives are occurring when it gains strength, the more reason it has to gain strength, and the greatest amount of benefits occur when you use marker rep training.

## Chapter 4

### Clarifying Marker Rep Training



At this point, it would be appropriate to bring up some common questions, misconceptions, or problems that can occur when using marker rep training.

#### **The Meaning of a Steady Even Rep Pace**

Perhaps the first misconception that lifters encounter occurs when they hear the term “*steady even rep pace*.” Using a steady even rep pace simply means to repeat each rep the same way in terms of rep speed. It does not mean that the upward and downward motion of the rep must take the same amount of time.

#### **Upward and Downward Variations**

A lifter may prefer two seconds down and one second up for each rep. Another lifter may prefer one second down and one second up. It may take longer to lower the weight than it does to raise the weight, or vice versa, but this is not important when it comes to maintaining a steady even rep pace. The important thing is to develop a rhythm in which each rep is performed the same way in terms of rep speed.

#### **Pausing Between Reps**

Some lifters may pause at the top of each rep, and others may pause at the bottom of each rep. Some lifters may pause at both the top and the bottom of each rep, and others may not pause at all between reps. All of these methods can be used while maintaining a steady even rep pace as long as each rep is done the same way each time. If a lifter pauses between reps, he should pause the same amount of time between each rep. A lifter who starts to pause longer between reps because of fatigue should stop. On the other hand, if a lifter needs to pause longer between a rep because his body or the barbell get a little off balance, he should pause a little longer to regain balance and resume using a steady even rep pace as long as possible.

Pausing between reps becomes a problem when a lifter keeps keeps changing the amount of time that he pauses between reps. In this case, the pace will be so uneven that it becomes impossible to identify where the marker rep occurs.

### **The Need To Practice A Steady Even Rep Pace**

Most advanced lifters have already learned to maintain a steady even rep pace when lifting. When their rep speed begins to slow down, it is usually because of fatigue, not because of lack of skill or focus. In contrast, beginners and intermediates may lack the skill to maintain a steady even rep pace. The weights might become a little off balance at times, and they may need to pause or slow down to regain balance or control over the weights. In some cases, the lifting motion, the range of motion, and the lifting groove may not be consistent from rep to rep. All of these problems will hinder the ability to maintain a steady even rep pace. In order to deal with these problems, lifters should practice perfect form, and should **make a deliberate effort to make a habit of using a steady even rep pace when working out.**

### **The Exceptions of the First and Last Rep**

I have seen a few powerlifters do a perfect job of maintaining a steady even rep pace for every rep except for the first and last rep of each set. Those who are working on the bench press may lower the bar very slowly and pause at the bottom before doing their first and last rep. The rest of the reps are done using a steady even rep pace without lowering the bar slowly and without a pause at the bottom of the rep. Why do these lifters do their first and last reps differently? Most likely they are imitating the required form that they will be using for a powerlifting meet. I have also observed a powerlifter use this same practice when performing squats. All of this is perfectly fine because the reps are done with enough consistency to make it obvious when a true marker rep is occurring.

### **Forceful Lifting Is Necessary**

Lifters who make a deliberate choice to lift forcefully and make a conscious effort to maintain a steady even rep pace will usually be able to do so. However, others try to pace themselves by holding back on the amount of force that they apply into their reps at the start of a set. They do this in order to have more strength left at the end of a set. **This approach to lifting will cause a very subtle decrease in rep speed throughout the set instead of an obvious decrease in rep speed at a specific point in a set.** An obvious decrease in rep speed is preferable when using marker rep training as it makes it easy to identify the marker rep. For this reason, I suggest that lifters start each set with forceful lifting, and maintain it as long as possible.

Marker rep training does not work very well for lifters or bodybuilders who prefer to perform very slow reps from the start of a set to the finish of a set. These lifters never reach a point where rep speed slows down because their rep speed is slow to start with. Marker rep training does not work as well with very slow training unless a lifter happens to have a feel for a point in a set where the reps suddenly start to become harder, and they use that point to determine their marker rep.

In most cases, I suggest you exert force, speed, and power into each rep. This will usually lead to an obvious point in a set when you can no longer maintain the same amount of force and rep speed, which will make it easy to identify the point at which the marker rep occurs. In order for marker rep training to work correctly, forceful lifting and the ability to maintain a steady even rep pace must be practiced until it becomes a habit.

## **The Same Workout vs. The Same Cycle of Workouts**

I often make reference to the fact that marker rep training is based on stopping when you reach your marker rep. You then repeat workouts with the same amount of weight and reps until the marker rep becomes easier. This can create the misconception that you are bound to the exact same workout when using marker rep training. However, there is a second approach in which you don't keep repeating the same workout, but you repeat the same cycle of different workouts.

When using the second approach, you might do three different workouts in a row within a week. The first workout may consist of using a weight that causes you to hit your marker rep on your tenth rep. The second workout may consist of a heavier weight that causes you to hit your marker rep on your eighth rep, and the third workout may consist of a heavier weight that causes you to hit your marker rep on your fifth rep. When this method, you are stopping at your marker rep for all three workouts, but the marker rep falls on a different rep for each workout. If you keep repeating this same weekly cycle of workouts, all three marker reps will eventually become easier, and you will be able to add weight to each workout. This allows you to vary your workouts when using marker rep training.

## Chapter 5

### Strong Sets And Peak Recovery



Using the marker rep is an important factor that contributes to successful training, but there are other training factors that must also be considered in order for marker rep training to be effective. You may be using marker rep training, but if you are using it in conjunction with too many sets, or too few sets, you may be wasting your training efforts. Likewise, if you work out too often, or not often enough, the benefits that you could derive from marker rep training may not amount to much.

#### **Strong Sets vs. Weak Sets**

The marker rep is just one training threshold. Another threshold revolves around your capacity to repeat sets at full strength for a specific muscle group. Every set that you perform for a muscle group while it is at full strength is what I refer to as a **strong set**. If you exceed your capacity for repeating strong sets and begin to weaken, you are performing **weak sets**. I recommend strong sets. If you repeat sets to the point where you experience a weak set, switch to a different muscle group, or stop the workout if you have trained all of the muscle groups that have been scheduled for your workout.

#### **Extremes and Typical Norms**

There is no single number of sets that all lifters should perform for a muscle group as it can vary greatly. Some lifters may only be able to do one set at full strength, and others may be able to do up to eight sets, but **the typical norm is in the range of two to four sets** at full strength.

How do you determine whether or not you are doing strong sets or weak sets? This is fairly simple when you repeat sets of the same exercise while using the same amount of weight and reps for each set. Assuming you are using marker rep training, your marker rep will keep occurring at the same rep as long

as you remain at full strength. If you reach a set where your marker rep occurs earlier in the set, you are in a weakened state and should stop. An example may help to clarify how this works.

We will imagine that you are using 185 pounds for the bench press and your marker rep falls on your tenth rep for your first three sets. In contrast, when you reach your fourth set, your marker rep falls on your ninth rep. You may still be able to do ten reps for your fourth set, but the marker rep occurs earlier on the ninth rep. In this example, your first three sets were strong sets and you were at full strength for all three sets. However, your marker rep dropped down to your ninth rep when doing your fourth set, which means you were no longer at full strength **and should stop!**

The ability to determine whether you are at full strength is a little more complicated if you switch the exercise or the amount of weight from set to set. If you keep switching exercises from set to set, you must know from past experience how many reps you can normally perform at full strength before reaching your marker rep when using the amount of weight you are lifting. The same concept holds true when switching weight from set to set, you must know from past experience where your marker rep normally falls when using the amount of weight you are lifting. If your marker rep falls where it normally does for the weight or exercise you are using, you are at full strength. However, if you can't do as many reps as normal before reaching your marker rep, you are in a weakened state and should stop.

### **Full Recovery Between Sets**

When determining whether you are at full strength, you must make sure that you are resting long enough between sets for the same muscle group to fully recover. If you are only resting thirty to forty-five seconds between sets for the same muscle group, you will probably begin to weaken by your second set, even though you may have the capacity to do three or four sets at full strength if you give yourself enough rest time between sets.

### **Rest a Muscle Group at Least 3 Minutes Between Sets**

Give yourself at least three minutes between sets for the same muscle group in order to fully recover between sets. If you do a chest exercise, don't exercise your chest again for another three minutes. You can exercise your back during the three minute time period in which you are resting your chest, but give the same muscle group at least three minutes of rest before working it again.

If you are resting long enough between sets, but you reach a point where you still begin to weaken, then you know you have truly reached your capacity for the number of sets you can perform at full strength.

### **Training Frequency**

Another vital factor that must be considered in order for marker rep training to work correctly is training frequency. Training frequency refers to how often you train a muscle group within a week. High frequency training refers to training a muscle group four or more times per week. Those who train each muscle group only once per week are using a low training frequency. The optimum training frequency tends to vary from lifter to lifter, but **the norm is two to three workouts per week** for each muscle group.

While most lifters will find it effective to work each muscle group two or three times per week, you can always experiment by working out more often or less often. Some lifters train each muscle group every



day and it works, others train each muscle group once per week and it works. The key is to try out a training frequency and go by your own results, not by the results that another lifter has experienced.

### **Peak Recovery vs. Weak Recovery**

If you work out too often and it causes you to grow weaker, you are experiencing insufficient recovery. If don't work out often enough and you begin to grow weaker, you are experiencing detraining and atrophy from insufficient training frequency. Both problems are a result of **weak recovery**, which simply means that the timing of your recovery is causing you to grow weaker. Your goal is **peak recovery**, which means you work out when your strength is at peak during the recovery period between workouts. If necessary, adjust your training frequency to experience peak recovery which will allow you to grow stronger over time.

When you apply the right number of sets and the correct training frequency to marker rep training, you will find that it works much better. Allow your own training results to be the primary guide in terms of making any adjustments to improve your training.

## Chapter 6

### Different Applications of Marker Rep Training



Marker rep training can be applied to several different types of training such as the three training methods listed below:

1. The use of a single repeatable routine
2. Block periodization
3. Daily undulating periodization

#### **A Single Repeatable Routine**

A single repeatable routine may be used by lifters who prefer to use the same basic routine on a regular basis. This is often frowned upon by those who consider themselves to be advanced lifters, but a single repeatable routine can be very effective when designed with the precision that accompanies marker rep training.

#### **Block Periodization**

Block periodization refers to time periods called **training blocks** that generally last three to four weeks. Each training block is designed to emphasize a different type of training or a different rep range. For example, a lifter may want to use a three week training block where ten reps are used. This would be followed by a three week training block in which eight reps are used. A third training block would be done in which five reps are used, and a final training block would be done that emphasizes three reps. When the blocks are arranged in order from lighter blocks to heavier blocks, it is often referred to as linear blocks, which is the type of block training that will be discussed in this book.

#### **Daily Undulating Periodization**

When using daily undulating periodization, the weights and the amount of reps are changed every workout for three to four consecutive workouts. The same sequence of reps may then be used again for another three to four workouts, or it may be slightly altered. For example, a lifter may perform three different workouts consisting of different rep ranges within the same week. In this case, the first workout could consist of eight reps, the second workout could consist of six reps, and the third workout could consist of four reps. During the next three workouts, the lifter could repeat the same sequence of reps, or they could change to seven reps, five reps, and three reps, across three different workouts.

Some lifters prefer a cycle of four different rep ranges where the reps undulate up and down from workout to workout. An example would be to do twelve reps in the first workout, five reps in the second workout, eight reps in the third workout, and three reps in the fourth workout. Some lifters may try to squeeze all four rep ranges into four workouts within a single week, but most would complete four workouts across ten to fourteen days in order to accommodate all four rep ranges.

The next three chapters will explain how to use marker rep training in conjunction with each type of training listed in this chapter.

## Chapter 7

### A Single Repeatable Routine



It is easiest to understand how marker rep training works within the context of a single workout first. Some people may choose to use a single repeatable routine which can easily be done in conjunction with marker rep training. An example of this will eventually be given, but first I must emphasize that marker rep training applies only to work-sets, not warm-up sets. However, a proper warm up should not be overlooked.

#### **Warm up Sets**

Warm up sets should start out light and easy. You may work your way up to heavier warm up sets, but the reps must be low to avoid fatigue and reserve your strength for your work-sets, which will be marker rep sets. An example of the amount of weight to use for your warm up sets for each exercise performed is listed below:

1<sup>st</sup> warm up set: Do 10 reps x 30% of your single rep max

2<sup>nd</sup> warm up set: Do 5 reps x 50%

3<sup>rd</sup> warm up set: Do 3 reps x 60%

4<sup>th</sup> warm up set: Do 1 rep x 70%

If you do more than one exercise for a specific muscle group, you only need to do warm up sets for the first exercise. If you do a second or third exercise for the same muscle group, the muscle group should already be warmed up and it is not necessary to do warm up sets for the second or third exercise.

When doing warm up sets, you shouldn't need a lot of rest time between sets. Forty-five to sixty seconds is enough rest time between warm up sets because the sets are not difficult and are easy to recover from.

### **Marker Rep Training and Weight Selection**

Once you have warmed up the muscle group you are working, you can begin with marker rep training. In order to perform your workout correctly, you must choose a weight that causes you to reach your marker rep when you reach the number of reps that you have planned for each set. For example, if you want to perform a set of six reps, you must select a weight that causes your marker rep to fall on your sixth rep.

In the chart on the next page, you will see an example of a single repeatable full body workout. Since the workout is designed for marker rep training, it is assumed that the lifter will be pushing to his marker rep on each set listed. You will also notice that workout consists of three sets for each major muscle group. This assumes that a lifter has the capacity to do three sets at full strength before a given muscle group begins to weaken. However, if you can do more sets at full strength, you should do so according to your capacity. If you can only do one or two sets at full strength, then just do one or two.

**An Example of A Single Repeatable Routine  
In Conjunction With Marker Rep Training**

**Instructions**

Do the designated number of reps listed for each set and select an amount of weight that will cause you to hit your marker rep on your last rep of each set.

**Basic Compound Exercises**

<b>Leg Exercises</b>	<b>Back Exercises</b>	<b>Chest Exercises</b>
Squats 2 sets x 6 reps	Seated Pulley Rows 2 sets x 6 reps	Bench Press 2 sets x 6 reps
Deadlifts 1 set x 12 reps	Lat Pulldowns 1 set x 12 reps	Incline Dumbbell Press 1 set x 12 reps

**Isolation Exercises**

<b>Arms</b>	<b>Side Deltoids</b>	<b>Abs</b>
Curls for biceps 1 set x 8 reps	Lateral Raises 1 set x 12 reps	Curl ups for abs 1 set x 30 reps
Triceps Extensions 1 set x 8 reps		

The last rep of each set should be a marker rep until you become strong enough to do every rep using a steady even rep pace. Once the marker rep speeds up to the same rep speed as the previous reps of the set, you can add five pounds to the specified lift.

Modify the number of sets according to your own capacity by doing the amount of sets you can perform at full strength for each muscle group.

Notice that legs, back, and chest are worked with three sets compared to just one set when doing isolation exercises for smaller muscles which include the biceps, triceps, side deltoids, and abs. The reason for this is because these smaller muscles will have already received a substantial amount of work when assisting with basic compound exercises that work the legs, back, and chest muscles.

The majority of lifters would benefit most from doing the routine listed on the previous page two to three days per week. Some would prefer to split up the muscle groups and work half of their body in one workout, and the other half in a second workout. A total of four workouts would be done in order to work each muscle group twice per week. You could also do six workouts in order to work each muscle group three times per week. These options are shown on the next page.

**Marker Rep Training  
Repeatable Workouts Using Split Routines**

Do the designated number of reps listed for each set and select an amount of weight that will cause you to hit your marker rep on your last rep of each set.

**Monday & Thursday Workout**

<b>Leg Exercises</b>	<b>Side Deltoids</b>	<b>Abs</b>
Squats 2 sets x 6 reps	Lateral Raises 3 sets x 12 reps	Curl ups for abs 1 set x 30 reps
Deadlifts 1 set x 12 reps		

**Tuesday & Friday Workout**

<b>Back Exercises</b>	<b>Chest Exercises</b>	<b>Arms</b>
Seated Pulley Rows 2 sets x 6 reps	Bench Press 2 sets x 6 reps	Curls for biceps 1 set x 8 reps
Lat Pulldowns 1 set x 12 reps	Incline Dumbbell Press 1 set x 12 reps	Triceps Extensions 1 set x 8 reps

Modify the number of sets according to your own capacity by doing the amount of sets you can perform at full strength for each muscle group.

If you want to work each muscle group three times per week, you would need to add two more workouts per week and work out six days per week. You could do this by working legs, deltoids and abs on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and work back, chest, and arms on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays.



## Chapter 8

### Block Periodization



There are several forms of block periodization, but the most basic form is to organize your training blocks according to the number of reps that you want to perform for each block. When using this type of block periodization, you start with higher reps and progress to more weight and less reps with each successive block. This is the type of block periodization that will be used in conjunction with marker rep training.

In the following example of block training, four training blocks will be used, but this can always be adjusted according to your preference by using more or less blocks. Each training block will last three to four weeks and will consist of a different number of reps. The four training blocks are listed below:

Block 1: 10 reps

Block 2: 8 reps

Block 3: 5 reps

Block 4: 3 reps

This type of block periodization is generally well suited to marker rep training because you can design your blocks to last long enough for your marker rep to transition into a limit rep. Beginners who are gaining strength quickly may only need one week for each training block. Those who have been lifting for a year

or more will generally need three to four weeks in order for the marker rep to transition into a limit rep. After the transition from a marker rep to a limit rep, you are ready to switch to a different block consisting of a different number of reps.

Remember that when you switch to a new block, you should start out using a weight that causes your last rep to be a marker rep. By the end of each block, you should be able to perform the last rep of each set with the same rep speed as the previous reps of each set.

An example of a block plan that uses four training blocks consisting of 10, 8, 5, and 3 reps is shown on the following page:

## Example of Block Periodization In Conjunction With Marker Rep Training

### Instructions

Select an amount of weight for each exercise that causes you to reach your marker rep when you reach the designated number of reps that you are to perform for the training block you are in.

Block 1 3 to 4 Weeks 10 Reps	Block 2 3 to 4 Weeks 8 Reps	Block 3 3 to 4 Weeks 5 Reps	Block 4 3 to 4 Weeks 3 Reps
------------------------------------	-----------------------------------	-----------------------------------	-----------------------------------

### Exercises

Leg Press: 2 sets  
 Deadlifts: 1 set  
 Bent over Rows: 2 sets  
 Lat Pulldowns: 1 set  
 Bench press: 2 sets  
 Incline press: 1 set  
 DB Lateral Raises: 1 set  
 Curls for biceps: 1 set  
 Triceps Ext: 1 set

Modify the number of sets according to your own capacity by doing the amount of sets you can perform at full strength for each muscle group.

When you reach block number four, you will only be doing three reps per exercise. This will cause your training volume to be very low and it may not provide enough total reps to stimulate strength for some lifters. If you find this to be true in your own experience, my suggestion is to add more warm up sets and reps, or to do your last set for each muscle group with 10 reps instead of 3 reps.

You can change the exercises listed according to your own preference.

You can use a full body workout to perform these exercises, or you can use a split routine as was shown in chapter six.

## Chapter 9

### Daily Undulating Periodization



Daily undulating periodization refers to changing the weight and reps from one workout to the next over the course of a week or two. If you were to work each muscle group three times per week, you would use a different amount of weight and reps in all three workouts. An example of this is shown below:

#### **1<sup>st</sup> Weekly training Cycle**

Workout 1: Do 10 reps per exercise

Workout 2: Do 8 reps per exercise

Workout 3: Do 5 reps per exercise

#### **Perform the 1<sup>st</sup> Weekly Cycle For a Total of 3 to 4 Weeks**

My advice would be to keep repeating the same weekly cycle and to keep the amount of weight and reps the same from week to week until your marker rep becomes easier for each workout. If it takes four weeks for this to occur, you can then add weight and stick with the same rep scheme that you have been using throughout each week, or you can change the weight and reps. For example, after performing 10

reps, 8 reps, and 5 reps each week for four weeks, you can switch to 8 reps, 5 reps, and 3 reps for the next four weeks as follows:

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Weekly Training Cycle**

Workout 1: Do 8 reps per exercise

Workout 2: Do 5 reps per exercise

Workout 3: Do 3 reps per exercise

### **Repeat The 2<sup>nd</sup> Weekly Cycle for 3 to 4 Weeks**

The weekly cycle listed above can be repeated until the marker rep transitions into a limit rep (hopefully within three to four weeks). You could then go back to the first cycle that you originally started with by doing workouts consisting of 10, 8, and 5 reps, or you can do an even heavier weekly cycle consisting of 6 reps, 4 reps, and 2 reps.

An example of daily undulating periodization is shown on the next page.

## Example of Daily Undulating Periodization In Conjunction With Marker Rep Training

### Instructions

Select a weight for each exercise that will cause you to reach your marker rep when you reach the number of reps assigned for each workout.

Work each muscle group three times per week according to the following schedule:

Weeks 1-4	Weeks 5-8	Weeks 9-12
3 workouts per week 1 <sup>st</sup> workout: 10 Reps 2 <sup>nd</sup> workout: 8 reps 3 <sup>rd</sup> workout: 5 reps	3 workouts per week 1 <sup>st</sup> workout: 8 Reps 2 <sup>nd</sup> workout: 5 reps 3 <sup>rd</sup> workout: 3 reps	3 workouts per week 1 <sup>st</sup> workout: 6 Reps 2 <sup>nd</sup> workout: 4 reps 3 <sup>rd</sup> workout: 2 reps

### Exercises

Leg Press: 2 sets  
 Deadlift: 1 set  
 Seated Pulley Rows: 2 sets  
 Bent Over Rows 1 set  
 Decline Press: 2 sets  
 Incline DB press: 1 set  
 Upright rows: 1 set  
 Curls for biceps: 1 set  
 Triceps Ext: 1 set  
 Curl ups for abs: 1 set of 30 reps

Modify the number of sets according to your own capacity by doing the amount of sets you can perform at full strength for each muscle group.

You can substitute the exercises listed for exercises that fit your own goals and preferences, and you may switch the exercises from time to time as desired.

You can use a full body workout to perform these exercises, or you can use a split routine as was shown in chapter six.

## Chapter 10

### Adjustments



The main idea behind marker rep training is to help you dial in on an effective training intensity. An effective training intensity consists of workouts that are hard enough to stimulate strength gains without being so hard that they undermine progress with overtraining, in other words, marker rep training. The type of training that you choose is also flexible as your preference may be to use a single repeatable routine, or you may prefer one of the periodization models described in this book. Regardless of which method you choose, you can use it in conjunction with marker rep training in order to facilitate the use of an effective training intensity.

Remember that marker rep training is not designed to shock your body into gains, you are not trying to hit a homerun with every single workout. The goal of marker rep training is to breakdown the process of gaining strength into a series of small steps. Small steps make the process easier and more repeatable for long term progress. A little gain is followed by a series of more little gains until they combine to form a big gain.

Understand also that the rep schemes in this book are only examples, they are not laws. You can choose the amount of reps according to your own goals, but the bottom line is to use it in conjunction with marker rep training.

One of the purposes of this book is to show you that marker rep training is flexible and can be applied to different forms of periodization. A couple of those methods were explained in this book. You can also

combine marker rep training with other forms of training including **bottom up loading** which is explained in another book on the Precision Point Training website. If you put marker rep periodization together with bottom up loading periodization, you will have an even more comprehensive form of periodization. I hope to write more about this in a future book.

The bottom line of all of the training explained in this book is not to urge you to train with more effort, but to train with more precision. When precise training is done correctly, the small details of training are not overlooked and will lead to small improvements that add up to a big improvements over time. If you keep this in mind and train accordingly, it will contribute to your ability to make strength gains for a long time to come. I wish you much success and the best of training.



## 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](http://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

Bottom Up Loading

Cluster Set Training

Force And Frequency Training

Giant Pyramid Training

High Frequency Strength Training

High Volume 5's

Heavy Frequency Training

Individualized Workouts For Hardgainers

Never Miss A Lift

Overcoming Strength Training Plateaus

Quick Workouts For Quick Muscles

Rest-Pause Training

Strength Challenge 20/20

Strength Training Capacity

Strength Training Thresholds

Strength To The Max

Strength To The Max And Beyond

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