PHASE POTENTIATION

Synergistic Phase Sequencing
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Mark Sherwood

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Phase Potentiation: Synergistic Phase Sequencing
By Mark Sherwood

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Introduction

Phase Potentiation is a term that some lifters use to explain the way that training phases should be designed to work together. When training phases are set up correctly, each phase sets up the next phase to work better. Another way to explain it is that each phase potentiates (i.e. amplifies, augments, accentuates, boosts) the effectiveness of the next phase.

The whole idea behind training phases should be to set them up strategically so they interact synergistically to produce a greater end-result. In contrast, if you fail to organize your training cycles correctly, the synergistic interaction between phases will be lacking. It is even possible that one phase will interfere with another phase if the individual phases are not constructed properly and sequenced together correctly.

A sound training plan will create the necessary synergy between phases that will cause each phase to potentiate the effects of the following phase. This can only be accomplished by designing each phase with sound training principles and by ordering the phases in the proper sequence.

The purpose of this book is to help you understand how to construct each phase and how four different training phases can be sequenced to potentiate the effects of one another. The rest of the information in Phase Potentiation will provide the details for how you can accomplish this.
Phase potentiation is based on a very simple training concept which can be stated as:

Start with a phase consisting of a lot of volume and moderate intensity, and transition to a phase consisting of low volume and higher intensity.

Of course, in order to understand this concept, you must understand the basic meaning of volume and intensity.

**Volume**

Training volume refers to the cumulative amount of reps you perform for a muscle group over the course of a workout. If you perform a lot of total reps, your training volume is high. If you don’t do very many reps within your workout, your training volume is low.

You can also add the amount of weight used into the equation. For example, two lifters may both perform ten sets of ten reps for a total of 100 reps for the same exercise. This would be considered a substantial amount of training volume for both lifters, but if the first lifter averages 100 pounds per rep, and the second lifter averages 200 pounds per rep, the second lifter is doing twice the amount of work in terms of the total workload lifted. Many would say that the training volume of the second lifter is higher than the first lifter. On the other hand, if they both were using 60% of their single rep max to perform ten sets of ten reps, their volume would be equivalent in relationship to the strength level of each lifter. They both used a lot of training volume relative to their level of strength.

**Intensity**
Training intensity basically refers to the amount of effort needed to perform a rep. The amount of effort needed to perform a rep will be high if a high degree of fatigue has developed at the end of a set. It will also be high if a lifter is using a lot of weight relative to his or her level of strength.

**Training Volume Causes Metabolic Acceleration and Enhanced Recovery**

The basic rule for phase potentiation is to start with a high volume phase and then follow it with a low volume -- high intensity phase. The benefit of starting with the proper amount of high volume training is that it accelerates the metabolism and tends to accentuate recovery, unless you over train, as overtraining inhibits recovery instead of enhancing it.

Why does high volume training accelerate the metabolism and enhance recovery? Because during a high volume phase, a substantial amount of muscle fiber damage and energy expenditure occurs. In order to adapt and compensate for this, the body must increase its rate of protein synthesis to rebuild damaged muscle tissue. It must also increase the rate at which it replenishes the muscles with glycogen and creatine phosphate to reload the muscles with energy for muscle contractions. These physiological changes enable the body to recover better and faster than it would if it hadn’t been exposed to a high volume training phase.

**Cut Back On Volume To Cause Over-Compensation**

Once you have enhanced your recovery ability with high volume training, switch to a phase in which you cut back on volume and focus on more training intensity. The benefit of reducing volume is that your body will actually be programmed to resynthesize protein and reload energy according to the high volume training that was done in the previous phase. You will then enter into a low volume high intensity phase with a body that will synthesize protein and reload energy at a rate that is greater than the reduced demand of the low volume workouts. This will cause your body to over-recover and over-compensate with added strength and muscle size. The big take away here is that the volume phase potentiates the intensity phase.

So far two types of training have been discussed. The first type places an emphasis on training volume, and the second type emphasizes intensity. However, these two types of training can be broken down even further into two types of volume and two types of intensity to form four training phases. This shall be addressed in the next two chapters.
In order to maximize the effects of phase potentiation, two types of volume training will be done including:

1. General volume training
2. Speed specific volume training

Within a four phase training cycle, general volume training will make up the first phase, and speed specific volume will make up the third phase. The specifics of both types of volume training will be addressed as you proceed through the rest of the chapter.
The primary goal of general volume training is to accelerate your metabolism and recovery ability in order to enhance the effects of the next phase. This is done by accumulating a substantial amount of reps for each muscle group without overtraining. In order to perform a lot of reps without overtraining, it is to your advantage to abide by the following guidelines:

1. Use fairly light weights that range from 50% to 65% of your single rep max for the exercises you are performing.
2. Do half sets which means to do half the amount of reps that you can perform when pushing close to failure. This translates into six to ten reps per set while using 50% to 65% of your single rep max.
3. Do 8 to 12 sets for each muscle group, although this is subject to modification if needed.
4. Train each muscle group two to three times per week.

If these guidelines are ignored during a volume training phase, over ambitious lifters will be tempted to use too much weight which will cause them to push close to failure on every set while doing a lot of sets and reps for each muscle group. Most lifters who make this error will find themselves in an over trained state. If you want to accumulate a lot of volume without over training, you must not overdo it in terms of the amount of weight and intensity you use during your workouts. Stick with relatively light weights and half sets.
Speed Specific Volume Training

Speed specific volume training is focused more on stressing the creatine phosphate energy system (also known as the CP system) within your muscles. At the same time, the use of the lactate system which is triggered through the accumulation of a substantial amount of fatigue is minimized within each set. Each set is short and explosive consisting of only a few reps that are to be performed with maximum force and speed. The majority of your sets should be done with 50% to 65% of your single rep max, which is the same amount of weight that is used for general volume training.

The speed specific volume phase prepares your muscles for the high amount of force and effort you will need when you transition into an intensity phase based on brief sets consisting of heavy lifting and only one to three reps per set.

When doing a speed specific high volume phase, I recommend the following guidelines:

1. Do 10 to 14 sets for squats, bench presses, and deadlifts, or variations of those lifts. Only do three explosive reps per set. This will add up to 30 to 42 total reps per exercise.
2. Use 50% to 65% of your single rep max for the majority of your sets. You may use up to 20% of added band tension (at the top of the lift) if desired.
3. As an option, the workout can be concluded with three single reps that grow progressively heavier until you reach 80% of your single rep max on your last single rep. If you choose to do this, use 70% for your first single rep, 75% for your second single rep, and 80% for your third single rep.
4. Only do speed specific volume training for basic lifts including:
   - Squats, or variations of squats;
   - Deadlifts, or variations of deadlifts;
   - Bench presses, or pressing variations
   - Seated pulley rows
5. If you feel you need more volume, you can add assistance exercises such as incline presses, dumbbell bench presses, seated pulley rows, lat pulldowns, leg presses, hyperextensions, triceps extensions, and curls for biceps. Do one to three sets of eight to twelve reps for each muscle group when using these assistance exercises.

Each type of volume training sets up the body for intensity training. Two types of intensity training will be discussed in the next chapter.
Chapter 3

Two Types of Intensity Training

Volume training is followed by intensity training and there are two types of intensity training consisting of:

1. High intensity sets. Use 65% to 80% of your single rep max.
2. Heavy load intensity training. Work up to 90% or more of your single rep max.

The meaning of each type of intensity is discussed in more detail as you proceed through the chapter.
High intensity sets require a lifter to push at least to the point of doing as many even paced reps as possible. Lifters who continue beyond a steady even rep pace can generally squeeze out another two to three reps at a slower rep pace before reaching a point of failure where no more reps can be performed.

**Optimum Intensity: The Marker Rep**

I recommend doing as many even paced reps as possible, plus one more rep, which I refer to as the *marker rep* because it marks the initial rep in a set where rep speed starts to slow down. Nonetheless, I know that some lifters prefer to push all the way to failure instead of stopping at their marker rep. One problem with training to failure on a regular basis is that it can lead to burnout and overtraining for a lot of lifters. However, remember that high intensity sets make up only one phase that will comprise approximately one fourth of your overall training. In other words, if you train to failure, it will not be a continual strategy, it will only be an intermittent strategy. Under these circumstances, you may find that you can train to failure for some or all of your workouts during phase 2.

**Trial And Error**

Once again, my personal suggestion is to stop at your marker rep. If it works, keep doing it. If you are not satisfied with the results, you can try pushing all the way to failure, or stop one rep short of failure. After trying out various levels of intensity, analyze the results and stick with what works best.

**Only One To Two Sets**

Remember that the training volume should be reduced when you make the transition from high volume training to high intensity training. This being the case, you should only do one or two work sets when doing a workout consisting of high intensity sets. This will make it easy to recover from high intensity training; especially (and this is important) if it has been preceded by a high volume phase.

**Guidelines for High Intensity Sets**

When doing workouts consisting of high intensity sets, it will be to your advantage to use the following guidelines:

1. Do your best to keep your warm up sets and reps to a minimum, but don’t cut back so much that you fail to warm up adequately.
2. Only do one to two high intensity sets for each muscle group.
3. If you choose to do two sets per muscle group, I recommend doing 5 to 7 reps for the first set with around 80% of your single rep max. The second set should be lighter and allow you to perform 12 to 15 reps with about 65% of your single rep max.
4. At a minimum, the intensity of a set should be high enough to force you to keep repeating reps as long as you can maintain a steady even rep pace, but you should push beyond this point if it works better.
5. You may find that you can increase your training frequency without overtraining when switching over to a lower training volume. If you find that a higher training frequency works better for low volume training, do it.
Heavy Load Intensity Training

The second type of intensity training is **heavy load intensity training** which should follow speed specific volume training. Heavy load intensity training should be the final phase of a four phase training cycle. The goal of phase four is to maximize your strength through the use of heavy single rep training.

The heavy load intensity phase should be done by working up to a single rep consisting of 90% or more of your single rep max for powerlifting exercises such as squats, deadlifts, and bench presses. I recommend the following guidelines for the heavy load intensity phase:

1. Start out fairly light on your warm up sets and work your way up to a heavy single over the course of six to ten sets. Only do one to three reps per set. An example is listed below:
   - 1 x 3 50%
   - 1 x 3 60%
   - 1 x 3 70%
   - 1 x 1 75%
   - 1 x 1 80%
   - 1 x 1 85%
   - 1 x 1 90% or more
2. Use 90% or more of your single rep max for your heaviest lift, but do not use so much weight that you grind or pause in the middle of your lifting motion.
3. Only do heavy load intensity training for powerlifts including:
   - Squats, or a variation of squats;
   - Deadlifts, or a variation of deadlifts;
   - Bench presses, or a pressing variation.
4. I would suggest the inclusion of assistance exercises such as incline presses, dumbbell bench presses, seated pulley rows, lat pulldowns, leg presses, hyperextensions, triceps extensions, and curls for biceps. Do two to three sets of six to eight reps for each muscle group when using these assistance exercises.
5. You may find that you can increase your training frequency without overtraining during a heavy load intensity phase. Let results be your guide.
6. Do not do a heavy load intensity phase for more than two weeks at a time.
The synergistic effects of phase potentiation work best when the phases are placed in the proper order. This being the case, the four phases that have been discussed should be ordered as follows:

1. General Volume Training
2. High Intensity Sets
3. Speed Specific Volume Training
4. Heavy Load Intensity Training

Notice that the training volume will start out highest in the first phase and will zig zag up and down from phase to phase.

Higher volume training is emphasized during phases one and three, and volume is deemphasized during phases two and four.

Intensity is emphasized during phases two and four and is deemphasized during phases one and three.
If you are looking carefully at these guidelines, you will see that when volume is high, intensity should be low. In contrast, when volume is low, intensity should be high.

When looking at the training phases, it should be evident that only one training factor is stressed at a time. If you try to use a lot of training volume in conjunction with a lot of high intensity sets or a lot of heavy single reps within the same workout, each training factor will start to interfere with the other and will lead to overtraining. If you stress one training factor in each phase, and put the training factors in the proper order, the training factors will have a synergistic effect on one another. Quite simply, proper sequencing causes the phases to benefit one another instead of interfering with one another. This is the goal of phase potentiation.
There are weight training concepts that can be applied to everyone, but the specifics of how those concepts are applied must be individualized. To put it another way, every lifter can benefit from the four types of training discussed in this book, and every lifter can benefit from organizing the phases in the correct order. At the same time, every lifter must individualize their training in terms of their own capacities. In order to do this, the following matters must be considered:

**Adjust Volume As Necessary For Phase 1**

Phase one is a volume phase. I have recommended eight to twelve sets per muscle group in phase one for general volume training. However, if you can do more than twelve sets without losing muscle size or growing weaker, then feel free to do as many sets as you can possibly do without experiencing a loss of strength or muscle size. At the same time, if you try to increase beyond twelve sets and experience a decrease in strength or muscle size, reduce the volume and stay within a range of sets that has a positive effect on your strength and muscle size.

**Do Not Adjust Volume for Phase 2**

I do not recommend adjusting the volume for phase two unless you increase from one set to two sets per muscled group. The volume must be low to experience an overcompensation effect from the previous phase. If you don’t feel like you are getting enough volume out of two sets, I recommend doing one heavy set for five to seven reps with 80% of your single rep max, followed by a lighter set with only 65% of your single rep max for twelve to fifteen reps.

**Add Assistance Exercises If Necessary to Phases 3 and 4**
Some lifters may find that they don’t need assistance exercises during phases three and four. These lifters will benefit most from simply sticking with squats, deadlifts, and bench presses. However, it is possible that only performing the simple basics will not provide enough training volume without assistance exercises. Let your results determine whether you need to add assistance exercises or not. If you can progress through phases three and four and get stronger without using assistance exercises, then don’t use them. If you don’t seem to be making progress without assistance exercises, then follow the guidelines for adding in assistance exercises. Make sure to stay in the eight to twelve rep range for your assistance exercises during phase three, and cut back to the six to eight rep range for phase four.

**Adjusting Intensity**

My suggestion for intensity for phase one is to do half sets which means that you only push half way to failure on each set. By limiting each set to a half set, you will reduce the intensity and fatigue created by each set. The reduction in intensity may sound like a bad thing to intensity minded lifters, but it is what allows you to perform eight to twelve sets without overtraining. This being the case, I would not alter the intensity during phase one. If you feel the workouts are not hard enough and you need to make adjustments, do so by adding sets, not intensity. Save the increase for intensity for phase two.

I recommend pushing to your marker rep during phase two, but if it works better to push to failure, do it. Adjust according to what works best. Likewise, I generally recommend that you go heavy for your heaviest single rep in phase four, but not so heavy that you must squeeze out a slow strenuous grinder rep to get the weight up. Stick with good form and a smooth continuous lifting motion. However, if you seem to respond well to grinder reps, or reps where you are grinding a little bit, then adjust your training according to what works best.

**Adjusting The Warm up Sets for Heavy Load Training**

When entering the heavy load training phase, it may take time to adjust your warm up sets when working your way up to a heavy single rep. While I suggest only one to three reps per warm up set, you may find the need to do more reps on your first couple of warm up sets in order to be fully warmed up. I also suggested reaching your heaviest weight somewhere between your seventh to tenth set, but beginners and intermediates who are not lifting very much weight may be able to reach their top set by their fourth or fifth set.

**Adjusting Training Frequency**

If you look at top powerlifters, you will find that different lifters vary greatly in terms of training frequency. Some train certain lifts every day. Others only train each lift once per week. Most train each muscle group two to three times per week. The best training frequency is the one that works best for you, and you can only find out what works best through trial and error. Remember also that the best training frequency may vary as you may find, as I have, that it is beneficial to increase the training frequency during phases two and four.

If you are not sure how often to train each muscle group, a good starting place is to hit each muscle group two or three times per week. If you feel the need to adjust by training more or less often, then do so, but don’t do so to imitate other powerlifters, do so because it works for you.
### Choose Quality Exercises

When planning out a cycle of phases and workouts, it is important to choose quality exercises and to learn them and perform them with excellent form for all of your workouts. Don’t try to get fancy with all kinds of exotic exercises. Basic squats, presses, pulls, and variations of these movements should be the focus of your workouts. You can also add in isolation exercises for your biceps, triceps, deltoids, abs, and calves. I recommend choosing from the following exercises for your workouts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leg Exercises</th>
<th>Chest Exercises</th>
<th>Back Exercises</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Squats</td>
<td>Bench press</td>
<td>Deadlifts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leg presses</td>
<td>DB bench press</td>
<td>Bent over barbell rows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front squats</td>
<td>Incline press</td>
<td>Seated pulley rows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goblet squats</td>
<td>DB incline press</td>
<td>Lat pulldowns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hack squats</td>
<td>Wide grip dips</td>
<td>Bent over dumbbell rows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belt squats</td>
<td>Decline press</td>
<td>Hyperextensions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deadlifts</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reverse Hypers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Calves</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Shrugs for traps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standing calf raises</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bent over calf raises</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seated calf raises</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arm Exercises</th>
<th>Deltoid (Shoulder) Exercises</th>
<th>Ab Exercises</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Biceps</strong></td>
<td>Lateral raises</td>
<td>Curl ups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any variation of barbell curls and dumbbell curls</td>
<td>Overhead presses with dumbbells or a barbell</td>
<td>Any ab machine exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Triceps</strong></td>
<td>Upright rows</td>
<td>Reverse curl ups or leg raises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triceps press downs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lying DB triceps extension</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overhead triceps extensions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assuming you have an appropriate selection of exercises to use for your workouts, you can plan a workout cycle using the four phases that will set you up for phase potentiation. A sample plan is shown on the next four pages:
### Phase 1
General High Volume Training

#### Instructions
Do this phase for two to three weeks. The example shows three weeks, but you may cut it to two weeks if it works better.

Work each muscle group two to three times per week.

I recommend split routines by working half your body in one workout and the other half in the next workout.

#### Exercises
Choose two to three exercises per muscle group using the exercises listed at the start of the chapter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Week 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 to 12 sets per muscle group</td>
<td>8 to 12 sets per muscle group</td>
<td>8 to 12 sets per muscle group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 to 12 reps per set</td>
<td>8 reps per set</td>
<td>6 reps per set</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use 50% of your single rep max for each set.</td>
<td>Use 60% of your single rep max for each set.</td>
<td>Use 65% of your single rep max for each set.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest 1 min between sets of the same muscle group.</td>
<td>Rest 1 min between sets of the same muscle group.</td>
<td>Rest 1 min between sets of the same muscle group.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Phase 2
## High Intensity Sets

### Instructions
Do this phase for two to three weeks. The example below shows three weeks, but you may cut it to two weeks if it works better.

Work each muscle group two to three times per week, although you may find that you can work each muscle group four or more times per week for phase two.

You may either do split routines by working half your body in one workout and the other half in the next workout, or you may do whole body workouts where you work your whole body in each workout.

### Exercises
Choose one or two exercises per muscle group using the exercises listed at the start of the chapter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Week 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 to 2 sets per muscle group</td>
<td>1 to 2 sets per muscle group</td>
<td>1 to 2 sets per muscle group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 to 9 reps at 75% for set #1</td>
<td>6 to 8 reps at 77% for set #1</td>
<td>5 to 7 reps at 80% for set #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 to 15 reps at 65% for set #2</td>
<td>12 to 15 reps at 65% for set #2</td>
<td>12 to 15 reps at 65% for set #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest 3 minutes between sets of the same muscle group.</td>
<td>Rest 3 minutes between sets of the same muscle group.</td>
<td>Rest 3 minutes between sets of the same muscle group.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Phase 3

### Speed Specific Volume Training

#### Instructions

Do this phase for two to three weeks. The example shows three weeks, but you may cut it to two weeks if it works better.

Work each muscle group two to three times per week.

You may either do split routines by working half your body in one workout and the other half in the next workout, or you may do whole body workouts where you work your entire body in each workout.

#### Exercises

Focus on bench presses, squats, and deadlifts when doing sets for speed specific volume training. Choose one assistance exercise for each muscle group if you choose to do assistance exercises.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Week 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speed Training</strong></td>
<td><strong>Speed Training</strong></td>
<td><strong>Speed Training</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 to 14 sets of 3 reps for:</td>
<td>10 to 14 sets of 3 reps for:</td>
<td>10 to 14 sets of 3 reps for:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bench press</td>
<td>Bench press</td>
<td>Bench press</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squats</td>
<td>Squats</td>
<td>Squats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deadlifts</td>
<td>Deadlifts</td>
<td>Deadlifts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use 50% of your single rep max.</td>
<td>Use 55% of your single rep max.</td>
<td>Use 60% of your single rep max.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest 45 to 60 sec. between sets.</td>
<td>Rest 45 to 60 sec. between sets.</td>
<td>Rest 45 to 60 sec. between sets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assistance Work</strong></td>
<td><strong>Assistance Work</strong></td>
<td><strong>Assistance Work</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do 1 to 3 sets of assistance exercises for each muscle group if it proves beneficial.</td>
<td>Do 1 to 3 sets of assistance exercises for each muscle group if it proves beneficial.</td>
<td>Do 1 to 3 sets of assistance exercises for each muscle group if it proves beneficial.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do 12 reps per set for assistance exercises.</td>
<td>Do 10 reps per set for assistance exercises.</td>
<td>Do 8 reps per set for assistance exercises.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest 2 minutes between sets.</td>
<td>Rest 2 minutes between sets.</td>
<td>Rest 2 minutes between sets.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You may add band tension to your speed sets for bench, squats, and deadlifts. The band tension should add on about 20% to the percentages listed when you reach the top of your lifting motion.
**Phase 4**

**Heavy Load Lifting**

**Instructions**

Do this phase for two weeks.

Work each muscle group two to three times per week, although you may find it beneficial to increase your frequency to four or more workouts per week for each muscle group during phase four.

You may either do split routines by working half your body in one workout and the other half in the next workout, or you may do whole body workouts where you work your entire body in each workout.

**Exercises**

Focus on bench presses, squats, and deadlifts during the heavy load lifting phase. Choose one assistance exercise for each muscle group if you choose to do assistance exercises.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Week 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 x 3  50%</td>
<td>1 x 3  50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 x 3  60%</td>
<td>1 x 3  60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 x 3  70%</td>
<td>1 x 3  70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 x 1  75%</td>
<td>1 x 1  75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 x 1  80%</td>
<td>1 x 1  80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 x 1  85%</td>
<td>1 x 1  85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 x 1  90% or more</td>
<td>1 x 1  90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Add weight to your heaviest set as you feel your strength increasing.

**Assistance Work**

Do 2 to 3 sets of assistance exercises for each muscle group if it proves beneficial.

Do 8 reps per set for assistance exercises.

Rest 2 minutes between sets.

Add weight to your heaviest set as you feel your strength increasing.

**Assistance Work**

Do 2 to 3 sets of assistance exercises for each muscle group if it proves beneficial.

Do 6 reps per set for assistance exercises.

Rest 2 minutes between sets.

The idea in phase four is to start at about 90% of your single rep max in your first workout and keep on adding an additional five pounds to your heaviest set in any future workout where you feel comfortable doing so.

An alternative is to try and max out during week one of phase four and use week two as a de-load week where you only use 80% to 85% of your max. Then try to peak and max out again during week three.
Chapter 7
Learning From Experience

When developing a training cycle consisting of different phases, you must understand that there is no single cycle that is ideal for every lifter. Each lifter must take responsibility for adjusting the workouts to their own individual capacities for volume, intensity, and frequency. Each lifter must also master the lifts in a manner that is ideally suited for their personal strengths and leverages.

The guidelines for setting up a cycle have been outlined in this book, and the guidelines are designed to help you avoid unnecessary errors, but it will still take time to perfect a training cycle that is perfectly suited to your individual physiology. You can do this by starting with a plan based on sound weight training principles. Then execute the plan, evaluate the results, and make adjustments as needed. This process will help you to improve if you have the patience and discipline to make it work.

At some point, you may want to alter the length of the cycle, or to integrate the cycles which is called daily undulating periodization. These principles will be discussed in other books based on the four types of training that have been addressed in Phase Potentiation.

My hope is that the information in this book will bring you a step closer to achieving your weight training goals. 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. 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
Easy Progression With Mini Sets
Force And Frequency Training
  Fusion 3: Book 1
Giant Pyramid Training
High Frequency Strength Training
  High Volume 5’s
Heavy Frequency Training
Individualized Workouts For Hardgainers
  Intensity Ratios
  Marker Rep Training
  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
  The Redistribution Principle
12-10-8-6: A Workout Plan For Building Size And Strength