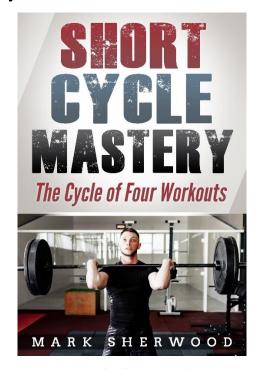
SIGHE Cycle of Four Workouts



Short Cycle Mastery

The Cycle Of Four Workouts



Mark Sherwood

For more information from the author visit:

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Short Cycle Mastery: The Cycle Of Four Workouts

By Mark Sherwood

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Introduction

Many people involved in weight training understand the value of changing workouts from time to time. This concept has been around as long as weight training has existed. At the same time, it is important to understand that random change often leads to random results. This is why most of the best lifters utilize strategic change instead of random change. They learn to make the right change at the right time within their training schedule. Each workout is carefully planned, and each change is carefully planned.

Some lifters plan changes to their training by using training phases that each provide different types of workouts. When phases are designed and sequenced correctly, each phase benefits the next phase and you end up with a greater end result in terms of strength gains. This was discussed in the book, *Phase Potentiation*, which is the first book of a series of three books listed below:

- 1. Phase Potentiation
- 2. Short Cycle Mastery
- 3. Boom!

Each book is based on the same four types of training which include:

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

Since *Phase Potentiation* is the first book of the series, you may find it helpful to read it first as it contains concepts that will help you to understand the content in this book. The books differ especially in regard to the length of the four phases as they can be modified to form long phases or short phases. In fact, many will find that the four phases can be condensed into four different types of workouts that can each be performed once to form a breif cycle. The cycle can be repeated over and over again and can also be designed to increase in weight over the course of three or four short cycles. This type of training is featured in *Short Cycle Mastery*.

For those who prefer to change their workouts often, the short cycle that is explained in this book is an excellent option. If you prefer short cycles, this book is designed for you.

Table of Exercises

You will find that the workouts presented in this book often refer to choosing exercises from *The Table Of Exercises*. This table is shown below and is intended to help you select effective exercises for your workouts.

	Table of Exercises	
Leg Exercises	Chest Exercises	Back Exercises
SQUATS	BENCH PRESS	DEADLIFTS
DEADLIFTS	DB bench press	Bent over barbell rows
Leg presses	Incline press	Seated pulley rows
Front squats	DB incline press	Lat pulldowns
Goblet squats	Wide grip dips	Bent over dumbbell rows
Hack squats	Decline press	Hyperextensions
Belt squats		Reverse Hypers
		Shrugs for traps
Calves		
Standing calf raises		
Bent over calf raises		
Seated calf raises		
Arm Exercises	Deltoid (Shoulder) Exercises	Ab Exercises
Biceps]DB Lateral raises	Curl ups
Any variation of barbell curls	Overhead presses with	Any ab machine exercise
Any variation of dumbbell curls	dumbbells or a barbell	Reverse curl ups or leg raises
	Upright rows	
Triceps		
Triceps press downs		
Lying DB triceps extension		
Overhead triceps extensions		

EXERCISES IN CAPS

Any of the exercises in this table can be used for General Volume Training and High Intensity Sets.

The exercises listed in capital letters (including **SQUATS**, **DEADLIFTS**, and **BENCH PRESSES**) should be used for Speed Specific Volume Training and Heavy Load Intensity Training. Any other exercise can also be used as assistance exercises to complement squats, deadlifts, and bench presses during Speed Specific Volume Training, and Heavy Load Intensity Training.

If you have a favorite exercise that is not listed among the workouts in the table of exercises, go ahead and do the exercises you prefer. Make sure to apply the amount of weight, sets, and reps listed in the workout templates to the exercises you decide to choose.

Chapter 1

Four Types Of Training

The short cycle presented in this book is based on four types of training including:

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

The order in which each type of training is listed is also the order in which each type of training should be applied as you progress through a workout cycle. Each type of training should be applied once to each muscle group which means that a short cycle will consist of four different workouts for each muscle group.

Since there are four types of training, they need to be defined. The basic guidelines for each type of training are outlined as you proceed through the next two pages:

1st Type of Training

General High Volume Training

The first type of training should be done once for each muscle group as you proceed through a cycle.

Choose two to three exercises for each muscle group from the Table Of Exercises.

Use **50% to 65%** of your single rep max for each set.

Do 8 to 12 sets per muscle group

Do Half Sets of **6 to 10** reps per set.

• Half sets are performed by pushing each set only half way to failure. This will result in the ability to perform approximately 10 reps when using 50% of your single rep max, and about 6 reps when using 65% of your single rep max.

Rest 1 minute between sets of the same muscle group.

2nd Type of Training

High Intensity Sets

The second type of training should be done once for each muscle group as you proceed through a cycle.

Choose one or two exercises for each muscle group from the Table of Exercises.

Use 65% to 85% of your single rep max for each work set.

Make the warm up sets for each muscle easy. Limit yourself to three warm up sets per muscle group.

Do 2 work-sets per muscle group as follows:

Set 1: Use a weight that ranges from 70% to 85% of your single rep max. This will result in the ability to perform 4 to 10 reps per set depending on the exact percentage used.

Set 2: Use 65% of your single rep max for 12 to 15 reps.

Push each work-set just a little short of failure. More will be explained about this in chapter 3.

Rest three minutes between sets of the same muscle group.

3rd Type of Training

Speed Specific Volume Training

Choose bench presses, squats, and deadlifts for speed specific volume training.

Do 10 to 14 sets of 3 reps for each exercise (which includes bench presses, squats, and deadlifts).

Use 50% to 65% of your single rep max for each set.

Strive to lift with **explosive speed and power** on each rep, but do not sacrifice ideal lifting form when doing so.

Rest 45 seconds between sets of 3 reps.

Additional Exercise Option

You have the option of doing more exercises than bench presses, squats, and deadlifts. If you choose to do more exercises, treat them as assistance exercises by doing the following sets and reps:

1 to 3 sets of 8 to 12 reps for each muscle group.

Rest 2 minutes between sets for the same muscle group for assistance exercises.

4th Type of Training

Heavy Load Intensity Training

Choose bench presses, squats, and deadlifts for heavy load intensity training.

Work your way up to a heavy single rep of 90% or more of your single rep max for each exercise (which includes squats, deadlifts, and bench presses). Do this using the following procedure:

- Do 1 set of 3 reps for each percentage using 50%, 60%, and 70% of your single rep max.
- Then continue with 1 rep for each percentage using 75%, 80%, and 85% of your single rep max.
- Finish with 1 rep using 90% or more of your single rep max.

Additional Exercise Option

You have the option of doing more exercises than squats, deadlifts, and bench presses. If you choose to do more exercises, do them as assistance exercises using the following sets and reps:

2 to 3 sets of 6 to 8 reps for each muscle group.

Chapter 2

Scheduling Your Workouts



The four types of workouts listed in chapter one can be scheduled as full body workouts or split routines according to your preference. Your training schedule will also be based upon a training frequency you choose. Training frequency refers to how often you train each muscle group and this must be based on your personal recovery rate as well as how long you are able to retain gains between workouts. The faster your recovery rate, the more often you can train each muscle group without overtraining. The longer you can retain gains between workouts, the less often you need to work each muscle group. All these factors vary from person to person which creates the need for different training frequencies and scheduling options. These options are discussed as you proceed through the rest of this chapter.

Low Frequency Option

Hit Each Muscle Group Once Per Week

The lowest frequency would be for those who obtain the best results by only hitting each muscle group just once per week. Those who do this would take four weeks to complete a cycle of the four types of workouts. The workouts can be performed as full body workouts, but most lifters prefer to split up their lifts or muscle groups into different workouts.

A Three Way Split

If you want to do a training split while working each muscle group just once per week, one option is to split your body into three different parts and to do three different workouts to cover each part of your body while performing General Volume Training during week 1. The same procedure would be repeated for the second type of training during week 2, the third type of training during week 3, and the fourth type of training during week 4. You could do this by following the schedule shown in the table below:

Triple Split					
Train Each Muscle Group Once per Week					
Mondays	Mondays Wednesdays Fridays				
Legs	Chest	Back			
Abs	Deltoids	Biceps			
Triceps					

Week 1: General Volume Training for each muscle group

Week 2: High Intensity Sets for each muscle group

Week 3: Speed Specific Volume Training for each muscle group

Week 4: Heavy Load Intensity Training for each muscle group

A Double Split

A double split is another option for those who prefer to use a split routine in order to hit each muscle group once per week. A double split simply means that half the body is worked with the first type of training in the first workout of the week. The same type of training is then done for the other half of the body in a separate workout that occurs later within the same week. The same procedure would be repeated for the second type of training during week 2, the third type of training during week 3, and the fourth type of training during week 4.

High Frequency Option

All Four Workouts Within a Week

Some lifters are the opposite of the low volume lifters and respond best to high frequency training. Such lifters would do all four types of training within the same week. Those who choose this method will probably end up working their whole body in each workout unless they workout twice per day to split up their lifts or muscle groups into different workouts. An example of a high frequency training schedule is shown in the table below:

High Frequency					
Do All 4 Types of Training Within The Same Week					
Monday Tuesday Thursday Friday					
Do a full body workout using:	Do a full body workout using:	Do a full body workout using:	Do a full body workout using:		
1 st type of training	2 nd type of training	3 rd type of training	4 th type of training		

Key

1st Type of Training: General Volume Training

2nd Type of Training: High Intensity Sets

3rd Type of Training: Speed Specific Volume Training

4th Type of Training: Heavy Load Intensity Training

Another high frequency option is to split up General Volume Training into two workouts so that you don't overwhelm yourself with a huge amount of volume within a single workout. You could then do full body workouts when performing workout types 2, 3, and 4 since the volume isn't so high. This option is shown below:

High Frequency							
	Do All 4 Types of Workouts Within The Same Week						
Monday	Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday						
Work upper body using:	Work legs using:	Do a full body workout using:	Do a full body workout using:	No Workout	Do a full body workout using:		
Workout	Workout	Workout	Workout		Workout		
Type 1	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3		Type 4		

Key

Workout Type 1: General Volume Training

Workout Type 2: High Intensity Sets

Workout Type 3: Speed Specific Volume Training

Workout Type 4: Heavy Load Intensity Training

Hit Each Muscle Group 2 Times Per Week

The majority of lifters will respond best to working each lift (or muscle group) two or three times per week. Those who hit each muscle group twice per week will be able to complete the cycle of all four workouts in two weeks. This is probably the most common way that lifters will schedule their training. An example of this is shown below:

	Split Routine: Wor	k Each Muscle Gro	oup Twice per Week			
		Week 1	- при			
	Workout types 1 and 2					
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday		
Workout type 1	Workout type 1	Rest	Workout type 2	Workout type 2		
for each muscle	for each muscle		for each muscle	for each muscle		
group listed:	group listed:		group listed:	group listed:		
Chest	Legs		Chest	Legs		
Deltoids	Back		Deltoids	Back		
Triceps	biceps		Triceps	biceps		
Abs			Abs			
		Week 2				
	W	orkout types 3 an	d <u>4</u>			
Monday	Tuesday	Tuesday Wednesday Thursday				
Workout type 3	Workout type 3	Rest	Workout type 4	Workout type 4		
for each muscle	for each muscle		for each muscle	for each muscle		
group listed:	group listed:		group listed:	group listed:		
Chest	Legs		Chest	Legs		
Deltoids	Back		Deltoids	Back		
Triceps	biceps		Triceps	biceps		
Abs			Abs			
		Key				
Workout type 1 = General Volume Training						
	Workout type 2 = High Intensity Sets					

Hit Each Muscle Group 3 Times Per Week

Those who hit each muscle group three times per week will be able to repeat the cycle of the four types of training every nine to ten days. You would be able to complete three short cycles of the four types of training over the course of four weeks. This type of schedule is shown below for those who perform full body workouts:

	3 workouts per Week						
	3 Short Cycles In 4 Weeks						
	1	1	Week 1		ı	1	
Monday	Tuesday	Sunday					
Workout type 1	No workout rest	Workout type 2	No workout rest	Workout type 3	No workout rest	No workout rest	
			Week 2				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	
Workout type 4	No workout	Workout type 1	No workout	Workout type 2	No workout	No workout	
			Week 3				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	
Workout type 3	No workout	Workout type 4	No workout	Workout type 1	No workout	No workout	
			Week 4				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	
Workout type 2	No workout	Workout type 3	No workout	Workout type 4	No workout	No workout	
	Key						
	Workout type 1 = General Volume Training						
	Workout type 2 = High Intensity Sets						
	Workout type 3 = Speed Specific Volume						
	Workout type 4 = Heavy Load Intensity Training						

Chapter 3

Refining The Workouts



Setting up a short cycle will only be beneficial if each workout is performed within the boundaries of your own capacities. Your capacities are based on basic training thresholds that relate to training volume, intensity, and heavy load lifting. Refining these training factors according to your individual capacities is explained as you proceed through the rest of this chapter beginning with refining your training volume first.

Refine Your Training Volume

The first and third types of training are volume based workouts which means they are designed to max out your capacity for the amount of sets you can perform without overtraining. A range of sets is given with the range consisting of 8 to 12 half sets for General Volume Training, and 10 to 14 sets of 3 reps for Speed Specific Volume Training. These ranges are based on an approximation of how many sets most lifters can perform before they start to lose strength.

The idea behind the training threshold for training volume is to repeat as many sets as possible while remaining at full strength. As long as you are at full strength, you are doing what are referred to as **strong sets**. If you exceed your training threshold for strong sets, you will be in a weakened state and any further sets are considered **weak sets**. It is ok to exceed your threshold capacity for strong sets by doing one or two weak sets for volume workouts, but I do not advise that you do three or more weak sets or it will tend to backfire by causing overtraining.

It is quite possible that some of you who are reading this have an exceptionally high capacity for training volume. If so, you will be able to perform more than 12 half sets without overtraining. If this is the case, increase the training volume as much as you can under the condition that it does not interfere with the process of gaining strength or size at any point during the cycle of the four types of workouts.

If you find that you have the capacity to do more than 10 to 14 sets of 3 reps when performing the Speed Specific Volume Training, increase the workload by doing more sets of assistance work for each muscle group instead of doing more sets of 3 reps. The guidelines for assistance exercises list a range of 1 to 3 sets for each muscle group. If you have a high a capacity for training volume, you may be able to perform 4 or 5 sets of assistance work for each muscle group and experience better results. However, make sure that if you increase your training volume you are doing so for the simple reason that it leads to better results.

Those who fall into the normal range of 8 to 12 half sets and 10 to 14 sets of 3 reps will need to experiment to determine a specific number of sets instead of a range. You may find that 8 half sets are better than 10 or 12 half sets. If so, do what works best. You may also find that 12 sets of 3 reps works better than 10 or 14 sets of 3 reps. It may also be that the optimum number of sets will vary according to the exercise and the amount of weight you are using.

If you feel tired, weak, and over-trained when using a specific amount of sets, cut back on the amount of sets. In contrast, if you don't feel like your muscles are getting enough work, increase the number of sets. It will take a certain amount of trial and error within the suggested range of sets to pin point a specific number of sets that works best for each type of workout. The same is true of how many sets to perform for assistance exercises for Speed Specific Volume Training and Heavy Load Intensity Training. The range is listed as 1 to 3 sets for each muscled group, but it is up to you to pin point the specific number of sets for each muscle group that delivers the best results.

Do Not Add More Sets to the 2nd and 4th Type of Training

When doing High Intensity Set workouts, or Heavy Load Intensity Workouts, I do not advise exceeding the amount of sets given in the guidelines, even though it may feel like a small amount of training to some of

you. High Intensity Set Training, and Heavy Load Intensity Training consist of low volume workouts on purpose in order to allow your body to easily recover and overcompensate from the previous higher volume workouts.

Refine Your Training Intensity

Perhaps the concept of intensity has been drilled into your head and you have been taught that you must always push each set to failure. There was a time when I believed this was necessary in order to make progress, but within the cycle of four workouts, the amount of intensity is purposely varied. In order to maximize training volume for General Volume Training, intensity is purposely kept low with half sets. This allows you to perform more sets and accumulate more training volume without overtraining. High intensity plus high volume in the same workout is a good recipe for overtraining. This means that you should not try to turn General Volume Workouts into high intensity workouts with a lot of sets. If you feel like you want the intensity to be higher during General Volume Training, try using a faster workout pace by reducing the rest time between sets.

Refining Intensity For High Intensity Sets

When performing High Intensity Sets for the second type of training, you may need to use a process of trial in error to find the exact level of effort that works best.

Training To Failure

You may find that since the training volume is very low when you perform High Intensity Sets for the second type of training, you can push all the way to failure on your work sets without overtraining. This simply means that you push yourself to repeat reps until you can't possibly repeat any more reps for your work sets. If this is what works best, then do it.

The Limit Rep

You will find that many lifters instinctively base their training intensity on the **rep speed threshold**. The rep speed threshold marks the transition point where a steady even rep pace can no longer be maintained. If you do as many even paced reps as possible and stop before your rep speed starts to slow down, you are stopping at your **limit rep**, which is the limit of reps you can perform using a steady even rep pace. The minimum amount of intensity that should be used when performing High Intensity Sets (the 2nd type of training) is to push to the limit rep.

The Marker Rep

If you push past your limit rep, the very next rep will be your **marker rep**, which marks the first rep where a steady even rep pace can no longer be maintained and rep speed clearly starts to slow down. Many lifters stop when they reach their marker rep and my personal recommendation is to start by using the marker rep when doing High Intensity Sets for workout type 2 and for your assistance exercises. If it works, keep doing it. If you feel like you get better results by pushing only to your limit rep, then do it. Likewise, if you feel that you get the best results by pushing all the way to failure, or one rep short of failure, do what works best.

Refine Your Heaviest Load

Some lifters may attempt an all-out five second grinder rep on their heaviest single rep during Heavy Load Intensity Training. These lifts are often marked by pauses, hesitations, shaking, and difficulty maintaining ideal lifting form. A second method is used by lifters who work up to a training threshold which is determined by the maximum amount of weight they can lift within the boundaries of maintaining ideal form and a smooth nonstop lifting motion. I recommend the second method as opposed to using so much weight that it causes slow strenuous grinder reps when doing your heavy load intensity workouts. I believe the second method is a better long term strategy than grinding. Nonetheless, results are the most important thing, and in the end, you should always go with what you find works best.

In the guidelines listed in chapter one for Heavy Load Intensity Training (workout type 4), the amount of weight you are to lift for your heaviest set ranges anywhere from 90% to 100% of your single rep max, but the exact percentage that works best for you can only be determined through your own trial and error. Another option is to try working your way up from 90% to 100% over the course of several cycles.

Chapter 4

Progressive Cycles



When progressing through a cycle of the four types of workouts, you can adjust the poundages so that they become progressively heavier each time you start a new cycle of four workouts. You can keep increasing the amount of weight used in each cycle for three to four cycles. This can easily be accomplished considering that a range of percentages are listed for each type of workout.

When doing each type of workout, you can start with the lowest percentage of your single rep max listed in chapter one for each type of workout. You simply increase each type of workout by up to 5% as you progress from cycle to cycle. For example, the range of percentages of your single rep max listed for the General Volume Training (workout type 1) is 50% to 65%. You can start with 50% in your first cycle, and every time you start a new cycle, you increase the amount of weight used for General Volume Training by 5% until you reach 65% across four cycles. An example of this is shown below:

How much Weight To Use For Workout Type 1 During Each Cycle of 4 Workouts					
Weight is Based on the Percentage of Your Single Rep Max Listed for Each Exercise					
Workout type 1	1 st cycle	2 nd cycle	3 rd cycle	4 th cycle	
General Volume	50%	55%	60%	65%	
training	8 to 12 sets				
	10 reps per set	9 reps per set	8 reps per set	6 reps per set	

This same concept can be applied workout chart on the next page:	to each type of workou	t to form four training	cycles as shown on the

Progressively Heavier Cycles Across 4 Cycles

Percentages listed refer to the amount of weight you should use in relationship to your single rep max.

Select exercises from the table of exercises.

Work out according to the guidelines listed in chapter 1 for each type of workout.

Organize the workouts into one of the schedules listed in chapter 2.

	1 st Cycle	2 nd Cycle	3 rd Cycle	4 th Cycle
Workout type 1	50%	55%	60%	65%
General Volume	8 to 12 sets	8 to 12 sets	8 to 12 reps	8 to 12 sets
Training	10 reps per set	9 reps per set	8 reps per set	6 reps per set
Workout type 2	70% & 65%	75% & 65%	80% & 65%	85% & 65%
High Intensity Sets	Set 1: 10 reps 70 %	Set 1: 8 reps 75%	Set 1: 6 reps 80%	Set 1: 4 reps 85%
,	Set 2: 14 reps 65%	Set 2: 14 reps 65%	Set 2: 14 reps 65%	Set 2: 14 reps 65%
Workout type 3	50%	55%	60%	65%
Speed Specific Volume Training	14 sets x 3 reps	13 sets x 3 reps	12 sets x 3 reps	10 sets x 3 reps
Workout type 4	90%	95%	97%	100% plus
Heavy load	Work up to a	Work up to a	Work up to a	Work up to a
Intensity Training	heavy single rep	heavy single rep	heavy single rep	heavy single rep

Assistance Exercises If Desired

You may include one to three sets of assistance exercises for each muscle group for workout types 3 and 4 if you find it beneficial.

The percentages are based on your single rep max at the start of the first cycle. Your goal for your final heavy load workout at the end of the fourth cycle is to exceed 100% (i.e.100% plus) of what you could perform at the start of your first cycle.

The training plan of four cycles can be modified and adjusted as desired in regard to the percentages shown in the workout chart. You can also adjust the number of cycles you perform before starting over again with cycle one, for example, you may wish to only do three cycles instead of four.

Chapter 5

Mastery Of The Workouts And Cycles Takes Time



If I were forced to recommend just one training schedule for everyone, I would recommend working each muscle group twice per week. You could then make it through the four types of workouts in two weeks. I would also recommend staying within the ranges of sets listed, and I would recommend that you stop at your marker rep for high intensity sets and for assistance exercises that accompany speed specific volume training and heavy load intensity training. When performing your heaviest single rep for heavy load intensity training, I would recommend using the heaviest weight possible within the context of maintaining ideal lifting form and a smooth nonstop lifting motion. At the same time, you are allowed to make adjustments to these recommendations if the adjustments work better.

Utilizing all four types of workouts discussed in this book can enhance your training progress, but each type of workout must be done within the context of your own training capacities and in conjunction with excellent exercise technique. All of these factors play a major role in successful training, and it may take a while to refine each of them, but with time, persistence, and thoughtful evaluation, you can master this method of training. The evidence of mastering any training method is consistent progress and it is my hope that the information in this book will help you to achieve this. 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

Phase Potentiation

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