

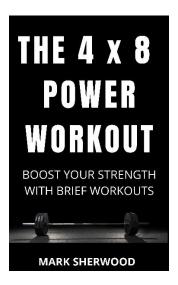
BOOST YOUR STRENGTH WITH BRIEF WORKOUTS



**MARK SHERWOOD** 

# The 4 x 8 Power Workout

# **Boost Your Strength With Brief Workouts**



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For more information from the author visit:

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The 4 x 8 Power Workout: Boost Your Strength With Brief Workouts

By Mark Sherwood

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### **Table Of Contents**

#### Introduction

Chapter 1: Selecting The Best Exercises

Chapter 2: The 4 x 8 Power Workouts

Chapter 3: The 4 x 8 Ascending Doubles Workout

Chapter 4: The 4 x 8 Max Single Workout

Chapter 5: Alternating Between Workouts

Chapter 6: Two Modifications

Chapter 7: 15 Minutes Per Week

Chapter 8: 20 Minutes Per Week

Chapter 9: 30 Minutes Per Week

Chapter 10: 45 Minutes Per Week

Chapter 11: When To Add Weight

Chapter 12: The 4 x 8 Power Workout Challenge

About The Author

Additional Resources

### Introduction

The 4 x 8 Power Workout is for people who want to gain maximum strength from a brief workout that takes 5 minutes per muscle group. In other words, if you work just one muscle group, the whole workout will take just 5 minutes. If you work two muscle groups, your workout will take 10 minutes, and if you work three muscle groups, the workout will take 15 minutes.

Many people erroneously believe that it takes several hours of training every week in order to get significantly stronger. Those who don't have this much time to invest in training each week will often dismiss any ambition of starting a weight training program. If you want to get stronger, but you only have a small amount of time to train, all it takes is the proper understanding of how to work out in a manner that is both fast and effective. *The 4 x 8 Power Workout* book will explain how to do this so that you can get stronger within 15 to 45 minutes of training per week.

### Selecting The Best Exercises

If you want to gain the most strength in the least amount of time, you must select exercises that produce the greatest results within the shortest amount of time. There are three basic classes of exercises that will help you accomplish this including:

- 1. Pressing exercises which require you to push against the weights when you lift them.
- 2. Pulling exercises
- 3. Leg press exercises or squatting exercises

The following chart lists various pressing, pulling, and squatting exercises that you can include in your workouts, and it explains which muscle groups are worked as you perform the exercises.

Pressing Exercises	Pulling Exercises	Leg Presses or Squatting
Chest press machines	Rowing machines	Exercises
Overhead press machines	Seated Pulley Rows	Leg Presses
Bench Press	T-Bar Rows	Barbell Squats
Incline Press	Lat Pulldowns	Barbell Front Squats
Decline Press	Deadlifts	Goblet Squats
Overhead Press		
Muscles Worked by	Muscles Worked by	Muscles Worked by Leg Presses
Pressing Exercises:	Pulling Exercises:	and Squatting Exercises:
Chest muscles	Back muscles	Frontal thigh (quadriceps)
Triceps muscles	Biceps	Rear thigh (hamstrings)
Deltoid muscles	Rear Deltoids	Glute muscles
		Abs as stabilizers

When you do the pressing, pulling, leg press, and squatting exercises listed, you will be working the biggest strongest muscles of the body, plus you will be using smaller muscles that assist the bigger muscles with the lifting. The result is that you will use the vast majority of the muscles in your body by selecting one pressing exercise, one pulling exercise, and one leg press or squatting exercise for a workout.

It is important to be clear in regard to the fact that there are several exercises listed from each category, but you should only select one exercise from each category for a given workout. In other words, you will choose just one pressing exercise, one pulling exercise, and one leg press or squatting exercise. You can switch to a different exercise for the same muscle group in a different workout, but do not do two or more exercises for the same muscle group within the same workout.

### **Full Body Workouts**

When considering the manner in which you organize the exercises for your workouts, one option is to do a full body workout. In this case, you would choose a pulling exercise, a pressing exercise, and a leg exercise, and do them all within the same workout.

#### **Split Routines**

You can also split the three different exercises into three different workouts. In this case, the first workout would consist of a pressing exercise, the second workout would consist of a pulling exercise, and the third workout would consist of a leg press or squatting exercise. Another option is to do upper body exercises in one workout and a leg exercise in a separate workout. For example, the first workout would consist of a pulling exercise and a pressing exercise, and the second workout would consist of a squatting or leg press exercise.

#### **How Often To Do Each Type of Exercise?**

How often should you do each exercise? I recommend that most people do each exercise two or three times per week based on the amount of time you have to train, and according to what proves to work the best for your own body. Just to be clear, I recommend that you press two or three times per week, pull two or three times per week, and do a squatting or leg press exercise two or three times per week.

There are some people who respond well when they train each exercise just once per week. If this works for you, then you only need to train each muscle group once per week. The manner in which you schedule your workouts will be discussed in more detail as you proceed through the book.

Once you know which exercises to perform, the next step is to select the amount of sets, reps, and weight that you will use for each exercise. The details of this are what make up the 4 x 8 Power Workout. All of these details will be explained as you proceed through the rest of the book.

### The 4 x 8 Power Workouts

The 4 x 8 Power Workout consists of 4 sets of 8 reps for each exercise selected. Since the workout is designed to emphasize strength and power, you will be working up to a heavy weight as you proceed through the workout. The reason for this is that heavy weights are superior for rapid strength development. There are two variations of the 4 x 8 Power Workout, although the variations are very similar. In fact, both workouts are the same except for a small portion of the workout. The first workout contains a portion referred to as ascending doubles. The second workout contains a portion referred to as the max single. The details of these differences will be discussed in the next two chapters.

#### **Understanding Percentages**

As you look at the workouts in the following chapters, you will notice that there are percentages listed next to the sets and reps. The percentages tell you how much weight you should be lifting in relationship to the maximum weight that you can lift for a single rep of the exercise you are performing. For example, if the percentage listed next to your first warm up set is 30%, then you should select a poundage that is approximately 30% of the maximum weight that you can lift for a single rep. This means if the maximum weight that you can lift for a single rep on a chest press machine is 180 pounds, then you should select a weight that is approximately 30% of 180 pounds, which would equal 54 pounds. You can round this off to a close approximation such as 50, or 55, or 60 pounds for your first warm up set.

The bottom line is that all of the percentages are designed to show you approximately how much weight you should be lifting for each set. As you look at the workouts listed throughout this book, you will notice that you work up to some heavy weights. When doing your fourth set of 8 reps, the amount of weight should make it challenging to complete 8 reps. This means that the weight should be light enough to allow you to complete all 8 reps, but it should also be heavy enough to make it challenging to do so. You may need to adjust the percentages in order to find the right amount of weight that makes it possible to lift 8 reps, while making it challenging to do so. If you feel you need to adjust a percentage that is listed, you should do so.

Those of you who perform each exercise three times per week should choose a weight that allows you to stop 2 reps short of failure. This means to push your set to the point where you could still do 2 more reps if you pushed yourself to do as many reps as possible. If you perform each exercise just once or twice per week, you should choose a weight that forces you to push to the point where you stop one rep short of the maximum number of reps you can perform, or you can push all the way to failure if it proves to work better. The basic concept is that the less often you work out, the more important it is to push yourself. In contrast, when you work out more often, you must be careful not to overdo it. If you are training each exercise three times per week, and you push as hard as possible in every workout, you will probably end up over training. Keep these things in mind as you read through the workouts that are listed throughout this book.

# The 4 x 8 Ascending Doubles Workout

In this chapter, we will take a look at *The 4 x 8 Ascending Doubles Workout* which is the first variation out of two 4 x 8 power workouts. The basics of the workout are outlined in the following explanation:

**The first set** of 8 reps is a light warm up set

The second set of 8 reps is a heavier warm up set

The third set of 8 reps is done as a rest-pause ascending set based on doing 2 reps followed by a rest-pause of 20 seconds before doing 2 more reps. This process is repeated until a total of 8 reps are completed. This basically means that you will be doing 4 sets of 2 reps with a pause of 20 seconds between each set of 2 reps. At the same time, you will ascend in weight by increasing the poundages as you proceed from set to set until you have completed 4 sets of 2 reps. By the time you reach your last set of 2 reps, the weight will be heavy.

When doing **the fourth set** of 8 reps, you will no longer be doing a rest-pause set, but will do a normal set of 8 consecutive reps. The fourth set is a work-set, which means that you should use a weight that makes it challenging to complete 8 reps.

#### **Brief Rest Time Between Sets**

After you have done all four sets, you will have completed a total of 32 reps for the exercise performed. This entire process should take no longer than 5 minutes for the exercise selected. The only way to accomplish this is to move quickly from set to set with very little rest time between sets. This means that you should do your best to keep the rest between sets to 20 seconds or less.

#### **Use Machines If Possible**

Since the rest between sets is so short, I recommend that you do the 4 x 8 power workouts with machines that have a weight selector pin. Switching weight with barbells and dumbbells will take longer and might make it hard to complete all of your sets and reps for an exercise within 5 minutes.

A weight selector pin allows you to simply pull the pin out from the weight stack and put it back into the weight stack according to the weight you select. You should have no problem completing 4 sets of 8 reps when using a machine that contains a weight selector pin.

If you are using barbells, the plates that you will need as you proceed from set to set must be stacked by the bar before you start the workout. The plates will then be immediately available to put on the barbell from set to set. Likewise, when using dumbbells, you must have the dumbbells you need within a short distance from where you are located in order to move quickly from set to set.

What does the workout look like when written out in the form of sets, reps, and percentages? Such a format is presented on the next page:

### The 4 x 8 Ascending Doubles Power Workout

#### Set 1:

Do 8 reps with 30% of your single rep max: rest 20 seconds

#### Set 2:

Do 8 reps with 40% of your single rep max: rest 20 seconds

### **Set 3: Ascending Doubles**

Do 2 reps with 50% of your single rep max: rest 20 seconds

Do 2 reps with 60% of your single rep max: rest 20 seconds

Do 2 reps with 70% of your single rep max: rest 20 seconds

Do 2 reps with 85% of your single rep max: rest 20 seconds

#### **Set 4:**

Do 8 reps with 75% of your single rep max

### **Adjust Percentages If Necessary**

When considering the percentages listed, recall that you may need to adjust the percentage for the last set of 8 reps in order to create the ideal amount of challenge to complete 8 reps. The ideal amount of challenge is based on weights that are light enough to allow you to complete 8 reps, yet heavy enough to make it challenging to do so. The same principle also applies to your last set of 2 reps, as the weight selected should make it possible, yet challenging to complete 2 reps.

### The 4 x 8 Max Single Workout

The same format from the previous chapter is used with a slight variation when doing the second workout which is *called The 4 x 8 Max Single Workout*. The max single refers to the portion of the workout where you will work up to a max single rep with the heaviest weight that you can lift while using a smooth nonstop lifting motion. There is only a slight difference between the first workout that has already been discussed, and the second workout. The difference comes on the very last set of ascending doubles as you will split the last set of 2 reps into 2 sets which will both consist of just 1 rep. The first single rep will be done with 80% of your max, and the second single rep will be done with approximately 90% of your max. I call it a max because it should be done with the maximum weight that you can lift using a smooth nonstop lifting motion that does not pause, stall, or slow-down in mid motion. When you take this change into account, the two workouts look very similar.

When viewing the workout, make sure to notice that two single reps are substituted for the last set of 2 reps that were listed in the first workout. The 4 x 8 Max Single Power Workout is listed on the next page:

### The 4 x 8 Max Single Power Workout

#### Set 1:

Do 8 reps with 30% of your single rep max: rest 20 seconds

#### Set 2:

Do 8 reps with 40% of your single rep max: rest 20 seconds

### **Set 3: Ascending Doubles**

Do 2 reps with 50% of your single rep max: rest 20 seconds

Do 2 reps with 60% of your single rep max: rest 20 seconds

Do 2 reps with 70% of your single rep max: rest 20 seconds

Do 1 rep with 80% of your single rep max: rest 20 seconds

Do 1rep with 90% of your single rep max: rest 20 seconds

### **Set 4:**

Do 8 reps with 75% of your single rep max

### Alternating Between Workouts

At this point, two variations of the 4 x 8 power workout have been presented including the 4 x 8 Ascending Doubles Workout, and the 4 x 8 Max Single Workout. Both workouts are good for developing strength and power, but the Max Single Workout is more severe and you should not do it every workout. Doing heavy single reps too often can cause over training which inhibits progress instead of enhancing it.

Assuming you will be doing each exercise twice per week, I recommend that you alternate between the Max Single Workout, and the Ascending Doubles Workout for each exercise. If you prefer to do each exercise three times per week, I would recommend that you do the Ascending Doubles Workout for the first two workouts for each exercise, and that you do the Max Single Workout for the third workout for each exercise. In other words, limit the Max Single Workout to one workout per week for each exercise, and do the Ascending Doubles Workout for all other workouts within the same week.

### Two Modifications

When doing the  $4 \times 8$  Power Workout, there are two slight modifications that you can make that will enable you to lift a little heavier.

### Option 1: Switch Exercises After Your 3rd Set

The first modification will give the muscles that were just worked a longer rest before performing your last set of 8 reps. This will enable you to lift a little more weight for your last set. The way to do this is to perform the first three sets of 8 reps as you normally would. However, after completing your third set of 8 reps, switch to a different exercise for a different muscle group and do the first three sets of the other exercise before returning to the first exercise for your final set of 8 reps. An example may help to clarify how to do this.

We will assume that you are starting out with the bench press for your first exercise. You would do 3 sets of 8 reps as follows:

#### **Bench Press**

#### **Set 1:**

Do 8 reps with 30% of your single rep max: rest 20 seconds

#### Set 2:

Do 8 reps with 40% of your single rep max: rest 20 seconds

### **Set 3: Ascending Doubles**

Do 2 reps with 50% of your single rep max: rest 20 seconds

Do 2 reps with 60% of your single rep max: rest 20 seconds

Do 2 reps with 70% of your single rep max: rest 20 seconds

Do 2 reps with 85% of your single rep max: rest 20 seconds

After completing your third set of bench presses your chest muscles, triceps, and deltoids will be fatigued. At this point, you would switch to a different exercise, such as seated pulley rows which works your back and biceps muscles. You would then do 3 sets of 8 reps for seated pulley rows, just as you did for the bench press. When you finish your third set of seated pulley rows, the chest muscles, deltoid muscles, and triceps muscles that were fatigued from the bench press will be fully recovered. You can then switch back to the bench press for your final set of 8 reps and you will be at full strength for your final set. After completing your final set of 8 reps for the bench press, you can return to seated pulley rows and do your final set of 8 reps. Once again, this procedure will facilitate recovery between sets and allow you to use slightly more weight for your final set of 8 reps for each exercise.

### Option 2: Only Do 1 Warm-up Set

A second option in regard to modifying the 4 x 8 Power Workout is to only do one warm up set instead of two. This means that your first set will be a warm up set and your second set will either be ascending doubles, or the process of working up to a max single rep. If you choose this option, both the third and the fourth set will be heavy work sets, and both sets should challenge you to complete 8 reps.

When choosing this option, you may need to reduce the weight of the fourth set in order to complete 8 reps. This is because the third and fourth sets are both difficult work sets with only 20 seconds rest between sets. The short rest time between these two difficult sets means that you won't have a chance to fully recover before doing your fourth set. Without full recovery, you will be experiencing weakness and fatigue from the third set while doing your fourth set and will have to reduce the weight of the fourth set. However, if you switch exercises between the third and fourth set as explained at the start of this chapter, you will recover more for your fourth set and won't need to reduce the weight as much, if at all.

Assuming you know how to perform the 4 x 8 Power Workout including the different training options, the next step is to create a training schedule. Examples of how to do this will be discussed in the next four chapters.

### 15 Minutes Per Week

There may be some of you who only have 15 minutes per week to dedicate to your strength training workouts. One way to accomplish this is to do all three exercises in a single whole body workout each week.

A second option is to do two workouts. The first workout would be an upper body workout that would include a pressing exercise and a pulling exercise. The second workout would be a leg workout that would be done on a separate day from the upper body workout. The leg workout would include a leg press exercise or a squatting exercise.

A third option is to do three workouts. The first workout would be for a pressing exercise. The second workout would be for a leg exercise, and the third workout would be for a pulling exercise.

These three options are shown in the chart on the next page:

		15	Minutes per W	eek					
		Train Each	<b>Exercise Once</b>	per Week					
			Option 1:						
		One	<b>Full Body Wor</b>	kout					
Monday	Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Su								
Full body									
workout									
					_				
			Option 2:						
		An Upper Body	Workout and	A Leg Workout					
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday			
Upper body			Leg						
workout			Workout						
				•		•			
			Option 3:						
A Pressing Workout, A Leg Workout, and A Pulling Workout									
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday			
Pressing		Leg	•	Pulling	•				
workout		Workout		workout					

### 20 Minutes Per Week

Your next option for training schedules is to select a schedule that requires 20 minutes of training per week. If you choose this option, I suggest that you do two workouts per week. The first workout would consist of a squatting exercise and overhead press. The second workout would consist of a bench press exercise and a pulling exercise. This schedule is shown below:

20 Minutes Per Week									
Workout #1: Leg Exercise Plus Overhead Press									
Workout #2: Bench Press Plus A Pulling Exercise									
Monday	Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday								
Do an over-	Do a bench								
head press	press								
and	exercise								
a leg			and a						
exercise			pulling						
			exercise						

Of course, you don't have to do your workouts on Mondays, and Thursdays. Simply choose two days out of the week that you would like to do your workouts.

### 30 Minutes Per Week

The next option is to work out for 30 minutes per week. For this option, you will choose three exercises and work each exercise twice per week. You can divide the exercises up into different workouts, or you can do a full body workout by doing all three exercises within the same workout. There are three schedules that are presented below that will help you understand these scheduling options.

30 Minutes Per Week										
Each Exercise Twice Per Week										
One Exercise per Day Over 6 Days										
Monday	TuesdayWednesdayThursdayFridaySaturdaySundaLeg exercisePullingPressingLeg exercisePulling									
Pressing	Leg exercise	Pulling	Pressing							
exercise		exercise	exercise		exercise					
			1: Upper Body							
			kout 2: Leg Wo							
		Do Each W	orkout Twice C	Over 4 Days						
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday				
Pressing	Leg exercise		Pressing	Leg exercise						
exercise			exercise							
Pulling			Pulling							
exercise			exercise							
			II Body Worko							
	Γ		Twice per Wee	1		Γ				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday				
Pressing			Pressing							
exercise			exercise							
Leg exercise			Leg exercise							
5 11:			5 11:							
Pulling			Pulling							
exercise			exercise							

### 45 Minutes Per Week

Your final option is to work out 45 minutes per week. When choosing this option, you will be working each exercise and muscle group three times per week. There are two basic ways to organize your workouts when working each muscle group three times per week. First, you can split your workouts up by doing three upper body workouts and three leg workouts, which will require six days of training per week. Second, you can do three full body workouts within each week. These options are presented in the chart below:

45 Minutes Per Week										
	Each Exercise Three Times Per Week									
	Workout #1: Upper Body Workout									
	Workout #2: Leg Workout									
		ach workout th	1	week across 6	days					
Monday	Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunda									
Upper body	Leg	Upper body	Leg	Upper body	Leg					
workout	workout	workout	workout	workout	workout					
		Fu	ll Body Workoເ	ıts						
		Thre	ee Times per W	eek e						
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday				
Pressing			Pressing		Pressing					
exercise			exercise		exercise					
Leg exercise			Leg exercise		Leg exercise					
Pulling			Pulling		Pulling					
exercise			exercise		exercise					

### When To Add Weight

Once you start the 4 x 8 Power Workout, you must be willing to add weight. There seems to be two basic types of people when it comes to adding weight:

The first is the person who is only partially motivated. These people have enough motivation to work out, but they are content to keep using the same amount of weight, year after year without any real ambition to increase their poundages. The result is that they are stronger than they would be if they never lifted weights, but after gaining a small amount of strength, they never continue to get stronger.

The second type of person can hardly wait to add more weight. They are always pushing as hard as they can to add as much weight as possible at the fastest rate possible. This strategy does seem to work at first as these lifters tend to improve at a rapid rate, however, there comes a time when their willingness to strain and struggle to lift as much as possible backfires and stifles strength gains due to overtraining.

### Add Weight When You Are Ready

There is also a third type of person who is less common. This is the person who is willing to increase the weights, but only when they are truly ready. In order to add weight, you must sense that the amount of weight that you have already been using for an exercise is becoming easier to lift on a regular basis. The whole goal that your body is trying to achieve when it gets stronger is to make it easier for you to lift the same amount of weight. If you are wise, you will let your body achieve this goal by sticking with the amount of weight you are using until it consistently becomes easier to lift.

#### **Get Better Before Adding Weight**

What should you be sensing in order to determine that your workouts are becoming easy enough to add weight?

Those of you who are stopping your work set 2 reps short of failure should keep using the same weight until you feel like you are stopping 3 reps short of failure.

Those of you who are stopping your work set 1 rep short of failure should keep using the same weight until it feels like you are able to stop your set 2 reps short of failure on a regular basis.

Those of you who start out pushing your sets all the way to failure should keep using the same weight until you are strong enough to stop your set 1 rep short of failure on a regular basis.

When the weight feels as though it is consistently easier to lift, you can increase the weight. Always get better at lifting the amount of weight you have been using before adding more.

#### **Be Progressive Yet Patient**

In order to get the most out of your training, you must be both progressive and patient. In other words, you must have enough ambition to increase your poundages when you are ready. At the same time, you must be patient enough to refrain from increasing your poundages until you are ready. Those who learn

to strike the long	e the proper g term.	balance	between	being p	orogressiv	e yet p	atient will	experience	more	progress

# The 4 x 8 Power Workout Challenge

The information in this book is designed to free you from the belief that you must give up most of your free time while straining away under heavy weights. Getting stronger does require effort and enough motivation to work out, but it does not require a large amount of time. If you have enough motivation to spend a small amount of time training each week, you can get stronger. All that is required is some basic knowledge which is presented in this book, and the willingness to apply that knowledge.

If you are short on time, you don't have time to read a long book, which is why this book is short, so you can stop reading and start training. So get started, train hard, and get stronger. 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 <a href="https://www.precisionpointtraining.com">www.precisionpointtraining.com</a>. 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** 

Boom!

**Bottom Up Loading** 

**Cluster Set Training** 

**Density Responsive Lifters** 

**Developing A Feel For Effective Workouts** 

Easy Progression With Mini Sets

Force And Frequency Training

**Frequency Responsive Lifters** 

Frequent Training Preparation

Fusion 3: Book 1

**Giant Pyramid Training** 

High Frequency Strength Training

High Volume 5's

**Heavy Frequency Training** 

Individualized Workouts For Hardgainers

**Intensity Ratios** 

**Intensity Responsive Lifters** 

Marker Rep Training

Minimalist Responsive Lifters

Never Miss A Lift

**Overcoming Strength Training Plateaus** 

**Phase Potentiation** 

**Precision Responsive Lifters** 

**Quick Workouts For Quick Muscles** 

Ramp Up Your Strength

**Rest-Pause Training** 

Self Adjusting Linear Periodization

**Short Cycle Mastery** 

**Speed Responsive Lifters** 

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 4 x 8 Power Workout

The High Frequency Training Pyramid

The Peak Strength Principle

The Redistribution Principle

4-Way Loading

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