

# High Frequency Front-Loading 

A Method For Developing Size and Strength


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High Frequency Front-Loading: A Method For Developing Size And Strength
By Mark Sherwood

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## Introduction

High Frequency Front-loading is a strength training method that allows a lifter to benefit from the advantages of high frequency training while still including significant recovery time within the same week.

Front-loading refers to loading up on the amount of training that is done at the start of the week and doing a smaller amount of training towards the end of the week. In the context of high frequency frontloading, you will work your whole body on two consecutive days. In the beginning stages, you simply do a full body workout on the first day of the week followed by a full body workout the very next day on day two. Two days of rest are scheduled to take place on day three and day four of the weekly schedule and a third workout is performed on day five. The weekly schedule finishes with two days of rest which occur on day six and day seven. This schedule is repeated on a weekly basis.

The workouts are designed to last 40 to 55 minutes and should not be excessively high in either intensity or training volume. This allows you to maintain your strength throughout the whole workout and to recover within the short time span allotted between the workouts that occur on two consecutive days at the start of the week.

After your body improves to the point where you can easily recover from three workouts per week, you have the option of adding another workout at the start of the week. You do this by doing two separate workouts on the first day of the week, a third workout on day two, and a fourth workout on day five. The most advanced training would consist of two separate workouts on day one, two more workouts on day two, and another workout on day five for a total of five workouts per week.

Regardless of whether you do three, four, or five workouts per week, you will always schedule your workouts on days one, two, and five during the week. The rest days will be scheduled for days, three, four, six, and seven. By clustering at least two workouts into just a couple of days at the start of the week, you will ensure a significant breakdown of muscle tissue in order to stimulate strength and muscle growth.

If you look at the big picture of how this system works, you can see that you will be doing anywhere from three to five workouts within a week, but you will still have two separate recovery windows which each last about seventy-two hours within the same week. This system provides a combination of plenty of stimulation and plenty of recovery.

The specifics of how to design workouts and incorporate them into a front-loading training schedule will be explained in greater detail as you read through this book.

## Chapter 1

## The Basic Training Schedule

There are several factors that contribute to a successful experience when using the high frequency frontloading system. However, before some of the most basic contributors to weight training success are discussed, I want to start by presenting a couple of sample workouts and how they can be scheduled into a week of high frequency front-loading training. The rest of the training principles that make the frontloading system work will be discussed in future chapters along with adjustments and options that may be necessary to take your individual physiology and capacities into account.

In order to present an overview of how to create a front-loading program, you will first see two different workouts on the next page. These workouts are identified as Workout A and Workout B. The workouts will then be organized into three different weekly schedules as follows:

## Schedule 1: Workout Three Times per Week

If you choose the first schedule, you will work your whole body three times per week by performing workout A twice and workout B once, or vice versa according to your preference.

## Schedule 2: Workout Four Times per Week

If you choose the second schedule, you will train your whole body four times per week by performing workout A and workout B twice each.

## Schedule 3: Workout Five Times per Week

If you choose the third workout schedule, you will train your whole body five times per week. This will give you the option of choosing to perform workout A three times per week and workout B twice per week, or vice versa according to your preference.

Please continue to the next four pages to see workout $A$ and workout $B$, plus the three front-loading schedules that follow.

| 2 Workouts To Be Used For Front-Loading Schedules |  |
| :---: | :---: |
| Workout A | Workout B |
| CHEST | CHEST |
| Bench press 1 set $\times 6$ reps Dumbbell Bench Press 1 to 3 sets $\times 8$ reps | Decline Press <br> 1 set x 10 reps Incline Dumbbell Press 1 to 3 sets $\times 12$ reps |
| BACK | BACK |
| Seated Pulley Rows <br> 1 set x 6 reps <br> Lat Pulldowns <br> 1 to 3 sets x 8 reps | T-bar Rows <br> 1 set x 10 reps Seated Pulley Rows 1 to 3 sets $\times 12$ reps |
| LEGS | LEGS |
| Squats <br> 1 set x 6 reps Goblet Squats 1 to 3 sets $\times 10$ reps Standing Calf Raises 2 to 4 sets $\times 15$ reps | Leg Press <br> 1 set x 10 reps <br> Belt Squats or Straddle Squats <br> 1 to 3 sets $\times 12$ reps <br> Seated Calf Raises <br> 2 to 4 sets x 10 reps |
| SHOULDERS | SHOULDERS |
| Barbell Overhead Press 1 set $\times 6$ reps Dumbbell Side Lateral Raises 1 set $\times 8$ reps | Machine Overhead Press <br> 1 set x 10 reps Dumbbell Raises to the Front 1 set x 12 reps |
| ARMS and ABS | ARMS and ABS |
| Barbell Curls <br> 2 sets x 8 reps Triceps Press Downs <br> 2 sets $\times 8$ reps Planks <br> $2 \times 30$ seconds | Seated Incline Curls 2 sets x 10 reps Overhead Triceps Extensions 2 sets $\times 10$ reps Incline Board Sit ups 2 sets $\times 15$ reps |

\(\left.$$
\begin{array}{|c|}\hline \begin{array}{c}\text { Front-Loading Schedule \#1 } \\
\text { Three Workouts per Week }\end{array}
$$ <br>
\hline Day 1 <br>

Do Workout A\end{array}\right]\)| Day 2 |
| :---: |
| Do Workout B |




## Chapter 2

## Is Front-Loading Right For You?

We are all different. Some people need a lot of training to stimulate size and strength while others only need one hard set per week for each muscle group to gain size and strength. Some lifters need a lot of recovery time between workouts while others do better with high frequency training in order to keep their muscles constantly activated to gain size and strength.

The truth is that the high frequency front-loading method is just one option that you can try out of many different training schedules, and you will have to decide if the method works for you. The most basic rule of weight training is to do what works for your own body. If you are already using a training system that is delivering results, I recommend that you stick with it. However, if your current training is producing slow progress or nonexistent results, the front-loading system will provide you with an option that may consist of the right combination of training variables to stimulate progress.

It is possible that you try the front-loading system and find that your results are not favorable. If this occurs after the first week of training, don't jump to the conclusion that it doesn't work. I believe that the front-loading method will work for the vast majority of lifters if you do the right variation of front-loading. Sometimes a few adjustments can make a big difference in the effectiveness of your progress. This is why I will provide training options within the front-loading system that allow you to make adjustments based on your personal capacities. When the right adjustments are made, the right results often follow.

## Short-term and Long-term Options

It is possible that high frequency front-loading will jolt your muscles out of a training rut for a few weeks, but then it stops working. If this is the case, you can use it on an intermittent basis. For example, you can front-load for three weeks and use a different training system for six to ten weeks before returning to front-loading again.

Remember, no two lifters are the same, and each lifter must learn what type of training he or she responds to best. Those who find that front-loading provides the right combination of stimulation and recovery for consistent progress should keep doing it. Those who find that it works well for a few weeks should use it off and on as often as it works. Those who don't respond well to front-loading should try different variations to see if they work. If you can't find a front-loading variation that works, drop it from your training and focus on other types of training that prove to work better.

## Principles For Weight Training Success

If you want to succeed at any form of weight training, you must be open minded and be willing to try different training methods in order to determine the methods that work best for you. Regardless of what training method you choose, I believe there are some essential training principles that should form the basis of your workouts in order to ensure success. If you deviate too far away from these essential training
principles, your chances of experiencing subpar results will start to increase. What are these essential principles? The three most important principles are listed below:

Principle \#1: Use the best lifting form possible
Principle \#2: Train according to your capacity for intensity
Principle \#3: Train according to your capacity for volume

These three principles will be discussed in more detail in the next three chapters.

## Chapter 3

## Use The Best Lifting Form Possible

Anyone who wants to get the most out of their weight training efforts must learn to lift with excellent form. If your lifting form is subpar, your results will be subpar no matter what training method you use. The point here is to use good form on every rep, each and every time you lift. Good form means that the weight should always be under control when raising and lowering the bar, and the left and right side of the bar should be even. You should not squirm, jerk, or twist your body during the lift, nor should you heave the weight up with excessive body motion.

You may prefer fast, medium, or slower lifting, and each of these choices is ok. The main thing is to be consistent with your rep speed from rep to rep. Each rep of a set should look nearly the same in terms of rep speed and form. The worst thing you can do is to use fast, sloppy reps at the start of a set followed by slow, sloppy, grinder reps at the end of the set. Anytime you notice that your form or rep speed are compromised as you proceed through a set, it is time to stop the set.

One thing that makes it possible to use good lifting technique is to make sure that you always select poundages that allow you to lift with perfect form. If you are forced to use sloppy form and a partial range of motion when benching 225 pounds for five reps, but you can use perfect form when benching 175 pounds for five reps, then choose 175 pounds and use perfect form. Using perfect form will spare you from wear and tear on your joints and muscles, and it will activate your muscles to get bigger and stronger better than sloppy form. Reducing the weight to use better form may seem like it is keeping you from using heavy weights, but in the end, perfect form with lighter weights will help you to get progressively stronger, and you will eventually be able to lift more weight in an honest manner.

## Chapter 4

## Train According To Your Capacity For Intensity

Everyone has an ideal training intensity that they respond to best for long-term progress. I refer to this as your ideal training intensity. High intensity may provide a shock that produces rapid short-term gains, but most lifters end up in an eventual state of burnout if they perpetually use high intensity training. This is why I believe more lifters are better off leaving one to three reps in the tank, which means that you should stop one to three reps before reaching the point of max reps to failure. Notice that leaving one to three reps in the tank is based on a range, not an exact number. This is because the ideal stopping point within a set will vary from lifter to lifter.

## Finding Your Ideal Intensity

Some lifters may find that the best long-term progress occurs when they leave one rep in the tank. Others respond best to two reps in the tank, and some are best off if they leave three reps in the tank. If you don't know your ideal intensity, I recommend that you start by leaving two reps in the tank. If it works, keep doing it. If it doesn't work and you feel the need for a higher training intensity, try leaving just one rep in the tank by stopping one rep short of failure. It may be that you are on the other end of the spectrum and you feel over-trained when you leave one or two reps in the tank. In this case, you would be better off leaving three reps in the tank by stopping three reps short of max reps to failure. You will need to go through a process of trial and error to discover what works best.

## The Marker Rep and Stopping By Feel

In my own training, I repeat reps as long as I can maintain a steady even rep pace. Sometimes I go one rep further and stop after I reach a rep where rep speed starts to slow down. This is usually the point where I notice a sudden increase in the amount of effort it takes to keep repeating reps. I call this the marker rep as it marks the point in a set where rep speed starts to slow down, and it marks the point where it suddenly becomes more difficult to keep repeating reps. Stopping at this point usually equates to leaving two reps in the tank, but I go more by feel than by reps in the tank. You may find this to be true in your own case which means that you should simply stop a set when it feels right to stop.

I think it is important to point out that you will be training each muscle group up to five times per week. You must take this into account when determining your ideal training intensity. High intensity training may work well for you when you hit each muscle group only once or twice per week, but it will likely be overkill if you push each set to failure when hitting each muscle group with three to five workouts per week. Keep this in mind when seeking to determine your ideal training intensity.

## The Same Training Should Become Easier

I also want to point out that your ideal training intensity may change slightly as you improve. It is my belief that the same training should become easier before you make it harder. When using this system, you allow enough time for the same amount of weight and the same amount of sets and reps to become easier for a while. Once the same amount of weight and reps feel easier to lift on a consistent basis, you increase the weight and make it harder. For example, if it feels like you are leaving 1 rep in the tank when
bench pressing 205 pounds for 8 reps, keep repeating workouts with 205 pounds for 8 reps until it feels like you are not just leaving 1 rep in the tank, but 2 reps in the tank. This is evidence that the workout is becoming easier which means that you are gaining strength. When you can consistently lift the same weight with greater ease, add five to ten pounds to the exercise.

## Chapter 5

## Train According to Your Capacity For Volume

Just as each lifter has an ideal intensity that they respond to best for long-term progress, each lifter will also have an ideal amount of sets that they should perform for each muscle group. It took me years to figure out that the most consistent long-term progress came as a result of repeating sets for a muscle group as long as the muscle group was at full strength.

When a muscle group begins to weaken, stop doing sets for that muscle group. In my own experience, I can perform two to three work-sets at full strength. Everyone is different as some can do more than two to three sets at full strength. The most sets that I have ever observed a powerlifter perform at full strength within the same workout is eight sets of the same exercise. This would be considered a very high capacity.

## Normal Capacity is $\mathbf{2}$ to $\mathbf{4}$ sets per Muscle Group

My personal opinion is that most lifters have the ability to perform two to four sets at full strength for each muscle group, and a smaller percentage of lifters have the capacity to do more. Every lifter must learn how many sets they can perform for a muscle group or exercise before their performance begins to deteriorate.

## Stop When Your Strength Drops

My advice is to stop repeating sets when you reach a set where your strength has been compromised in comparison to your previous sets. You will know that this has occurred if you are not able to perform as many reps as you can usually perform when you are at full strength. Of course, you can only do this if you know ahead of time how many reps you can normally perform with a given weight when you are at full strength. If you don't know, you can quickly learn from experience.

## Rest 3 Minutes Between Work-Sets for The Same Muscle Group

I recommend that you rest three minutes between work-sets for the same muscle group. Warm up sets are different as it is perfectly ok to move quickly from set to set when doing easy warm up sets. However, work-sets are more demanding and create more fatigue. if you don't rest long enough between worksets, you will experience a decrease in strength by your second set when you actually have the ability to remain at full strength for more sets if you rest longer between sets.

## Consider Alternating Back and Forth between Muscle Groups

The front-loading strategy is designed to be done in conjunction with full body workouts in which you work your whole body in every workout. The workouts will take a long time if you only do one set every three minutes. This is why I recommend that you alternate back and forth between muscle groups. For example, alternate back and forth between chest exercises and back exercises, or do a circuit in which you do a leg exercise, followed by a chest exercise, followed by a back exercise. If you use this strategy and only rest one minute between sets for different muscle groups, you will have rested three minutes each time you return to a given muscle group. This strategy will enable you to finish your workouts faster.

## Chapter 6

## Starting A Front-Loading Program

If you have read all of the information leading up to this chapter, you should have a reasonable understanding of how to create a typical front-loading schedule. You should also be familiar with the recommended workouts and the foundational principles that lead to strength training success. Assuming you have gained this knowledge, you are ready to start a front-loading program.

## Start With Schedule 1

When starting a front-loading program, consider easing your way into the training. The way to do this is to simply start with schedule 1 which consists of three workouts per week. If you are like me, you are always in a hurry and would rather start with an advanced five day per week program than a beginning three day per week program. However, if you do not currently train the same muscle groups on consecutive days, the simple three day per week program will create a training stress that your body is not familiar with. The unfamiliar training stress will tend to create a stimulus that will shock your body and lead to added strength and size.

## Don't Panic if You are Weaker on Day 2

When starting the front-loading program, you may notice that you are weaker during your second workout compared to your first. Don't panic as your body will try to adapt to this by improving its strength and recovery ability to prevent a relapse of weakness when you proceed through the weekly schedule again. As you continue with the front-loading program, you will get better at doing two workouts on consecutive days and will eventually reach the point where you experience little if any weakness when you hit your second workout.

## The Option of Adding Workouts

As long as the basic schedule consisting of three workouts per week is working for you, don't feel as though you must add more workouts. At the same time, if you reach the point where you have no problems recovering from three workouts per week, you have the option of advancing to schedule 2 which requires the addition of another workout. When following the program for schedule 2 , you will do two workouts on day one, and one workout on day two. This amounts to three workouts within a short time span of only two consecutive days. You would then rest on day three and day four, followed by a workout on day five. Days six and seven would then be rest days.

If you reach the point where you have no problem with four workouts per week, you can add a fifth workout according to schedule 3 in chapter one. This requires two workouts on day one, another two workouts on day two, and a fifth workout on day five. Many people believe that five workouts per week is too many. However, if you stop your sets one to three reps short of failure, and you only repeat sets as long as you are at full strength, there's a good chance that you will be able to handle five workouts per week. At the same time, don't forget; your ability to handle five workouts per week is also based on taking the time to work your way up to it.

Don't get in a hurry. It will take most lifters at least three months of doing three workouts per week before they are ready to do four workouts per week. Likewise, it will probably take at least three months of doing four workouts per week before a lifter is prepared well enough to benefit from five workouts per week.

## Do What Proves To Work Best

If you work your way up from three workouts per week to five workouts per week, but you find that three workouts per week worked better than four or five workouts per week, then go back to three workouts per week and stick with it. It may be that you find four workouts works better than either three or five workouts per week. If so, then stick with four workouts per week. If you work your way up to five workouts per week and it proves to be the best option, then stick with five workouts per week. Follow results and do what works best, but also know that what works best is often a moving target and you may need to occasionally add or delete a workout in order to maintain consistent progress.

## Chapter 7

## Adjustment 1: A Recovery Workout

After you gain some experience with the front-loading system, you will start to notice a pattern in terms of how you recover. It is possible that you start with three workouts per week, but you don't feel as though you are recovering. If it becomes clear to you that you are suffering a loss of strength and energy when using the three day per week front-loading schedule, consider using the workout that you do on day five as a recovery workout.

A recovery workout is a low intensity workout that helps you to avoid both overtraining and undertraining. Overtraining occurs when you train beyond your capacities by training too hard or too often. Undertraining occurs when you go too long without training between workouts. The low intensity workout helps you avoid undertraining by providing enough workouts to keep your body from going into a state of atrophy, but it also helps you avoid overtraining by doing a workout that is easy enough to ensure recovery by the time you do your next hard workout.

The low intensity recovery workout is done by making a simple $10 \%$ to $15 \%$ reduction in weight for each exercise. If you reduce the weights and still don't feel like you are fully recovered when you start into the first workout on the first day of your training schedule, reduce the weight by another $10 \%$ to $15 \%$. If you still don't feel recovered after a second reduction of weight, see if it works better to eliminate the workout that you do on day five. If it works, keep doing it. If not, you can try a different option. These options will be discussed in the next two chapters.

## Chapter 8

## Adjustment 2: Add More Rest Days

It is possible that the timing of your recovery does not fit into a weakly schedule. There is no rule that says your schedule must fit into a seven day schedule. You may be better off scheduling three workouts into a nine or ten day period instead of a seven day period. You can easily do this by scheduling three consecutive rest days instead of two consecutive rest days anywhere in the schedule where two consecutive rest days are normally scheduled. This option is presented below:

| Add More Rest Days: Option 1 <br> Three Workouts Every 9 Days |
| :---: |
| Day 1 |
| Do Workout A |
| Day 2 |
| Do Workout B |
| Day 3 |
| Rest |

A second option is to switch the workout that is normally done on day two to day three. Day two then becomes a rest day. After your second workout which is performed on day three, you would take as many rest days as needed before doing the third workout. After you have done the third workout, finish the schedule by taking as many rest days as needed before repeating the schedule again. This option is shown below:

| Add More Rest Days: Option 2 <br> Three Workouts per Training Cycle |
| :---: |
| Day 1 |
| Do Workout A (the first workout of the cycle) |
| Day 2 |
| Rest |

## Chapter 9

## Three Workouts in Three Days

A final adjustment from the original front-loading schedule from chapter one is to work out three days in a row. The remainder of the week is simply used as rest days. If you feel you need another workout, you can do a light recovery workout on day number six. This plan is presented in the schedule below:

| Front Loading Schedule \#1 <br> Three Workouts per Week |
| :---: |
| Day 1 |
| Do Workout A |
| Day 2 |
| Do Workout B |
| Choose either workout A or B |
| Day 4 |
| Rest |
| Day 5 |
| Rest |

## Chapter 10

## Making It Work

The front-loading method that is explained in this book is based on sample workouts that are designed for lifters with fairly normal capacities in terms of how much intensity and training volume should be used. If you feel that front-loading would work better with more or less volume or intensity, then you should design a front-loading schedule that fits your needs. The bottom line is to make front-loading work for you by tailoring it to your goals and capacities.

Many lifters start out looking for the ultimate workout; a single workout that everyone should use because it works like magic for everyone who has ever tried it. Such a workout doesn't exist. Anyone who wants to succeed at weight training to the greatest degree possible is going to need to go through a process of trial and error.

Most lifters are going to need to try more than one training option in order to reach the highest potential they are capable of achieving, and you can use front-loading is one of those options. My desire is that the information that you have gained from this book will lead to more progress and help you to make the most of your training. I wish you much success and the best of training.


#### Abstract

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<br>Beginning Strength Training<br>Boom!<br>Bottom Up Loading<br>Converting The Marker Rep<br>Cluster Set Training<br>Density Responsive Lifters<br>Developing A Feel For Effective Workouts<br>Easy Progression With Mini Sets<br>Escalating Loading Ramps<br>Force And Frequency Training<br>Frequency Responsive Lifters<br>Frequent Training Preparation<br>Fusion 3: Book 1<br>Giant Pyramid Training<br>High Frequency Strength Training<br>High Frequency Front-Loading High Volume 5's<br>Heavy Frequency Training<br>Individualized Workouts For Hardgainers<br>Intensity Ratios<br>Intensity Responsive Lifters<br>Marker Rep Training<br>Minimalist Responsive Lifters<br>Never Miss A Lift<br>Overcoming Strength Training Plateaus<br>Overload And Acclimate

## Phase Potentiation <br> Precision Responsive Lifters

Quick Workouts For Quick Muscles
Ramp Up Your Strength
Ramp Up Your Training Volume 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 $1 \times 100$ Challenge
The 6-15 Marker Rep 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

