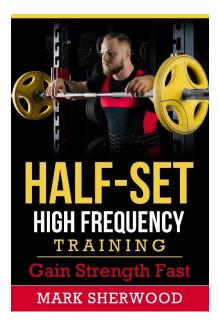


## Half-Set High Frequency Training

### Gain Strength Fast



Mark Sherwood For more information from the author visit:

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### **Table of Contents**

#### Introduction

- Chapter 1: Exercise Selection
- Chapter 2: Workout A and Workout B
- Chapter 3: The Five Day Schedule
- Chapter 4: Determining Poundages And Reps Per Set
- Chapter 5: Sets Per Exercise And Rest Between Sets
- Chapter 6: Warm-up Sets
- Chapter 7: An Overview Of The Workouts And Weekly Schedule
- Chapter 8: Testing for Max Reps
- Chapter 9: When to Add Weight
- Chapter 10: Modifications And Adjustments
- **Exercise Manual**
- About The Author
- Additional Resources

### Introduction

If you are in a hurry to gain strength, a good strategy for rapid strength gains is to use Half-Set High Frequency Training. It is a very simple approach to strength training that can be used with basic strength training exercises. The training is so simple that this book is more like a pamphlet because it doesn't take a lot of writing to explain it.

The idea behind half-set high frequency training is to choose poundages that range from about 70% to 85% of your single rep max. This means you will be using poundages that you can lift for six to twelve reps when pushing yourself to do as many reps as possible. However, you will not do as many reps as possible, but will do half-sets by doing half the number of reps you are capable of performing for each set. If you can do twelve reps, you will only do six reps per set. If you can do ten reps, you will only do four reps per set, and so on.

Why do you only do half the number of reps you are capable of performing for each set? The main reason is to reduce fatigue within a set. The reduction of fatigue has two benefits:

- Avoiding fatigue allows you to exert force and power into each rep. If you don't avoid fatigue and push yourself to do as many reps as possible, you will find that your reps get weaker, less forceful, and less powerful during the second half of the set. The idea behind strength training is to lift with force and power, not strain and fatigue.
- 2. By avoiding fatigue, you can recover faster and easier. When you recover faster, you can work out more often without overtraining. This is one of the reasons why some lifters are able to make rapid strength gains from high frequency workouts without overtraining.

If you have some basic weight training equipment, and have enough enthusiasm and discipline to train five days per week, you have most of what you need to get stronger through the use of half-set high frequency training. All you need is a little more knowledge, which you will gain when you read the rest of this book.

### **Exercise Selection**

If you want to get stronger, it is important to select exercises that work multiple muscle groups at the same time. The exercises should also recruit the strongest muscles of the body. Exercises that meet these requirements allow you to lift heavy weights. Five exercises that meet these requirements are recommended for this half-set high frequency program. These five exercises include:

- 1. Bench presses
- 2. Squats or Leg Presses
- 3. Bent-Over Barbell Rows
- 4. Deadlifts
- 5. Overhead Presses

Many of these exercises are done with barbells, however, there are weight lifting machines that are basically machine versions of the barbell exercises. For example, there are chest press machines that imitate bench presses. There are rowing machines that duplicate bent-over barbell rows, and there are overhead press machines that are similar to an overhead press with a barbell. If you prefer to use machines, please do so.

The exercises listed above are pictured on the following pages of this chapter. Instructions for how to perform each exercise will be provided in the *Exercise Manual* at the end of the book.

### **Bench presses**



#### **Muscles Worked**

The bench press works the chest muscles which are called the pectoral muscles. This exercise also works the front deltoid muscles of the shoulders and the triceps muscles at the back of the arms.

### **Do Squats or Leg Presses**

### Squats



#### **Muscles Worked**

Squats work the upper leg muscle including the quadricep muscles and hamstring muscles. They also work the gluteal muscle that make up your buttocks, and the lower back muscles. A wider stance with toes pointed out will tend to work the inner thigh muscles as well.

### Leg Presses



#### **Muscles Worked**

Leg presses work the quadriceps in the front of the upper leg and the hamstring muscles in the back of the upper leg. They also work the gluteal muscles of the behind. A wider foot placement with toes pointed out will work the inner thighs as well. The higher you place your feet on the foot platform, the more you will engage the hamstrings in the back of your legs, and the gluteal muscles of the behind. The further down you place your feet on the foot platform, the mose around the knees.

### **Bent-Over Barbell Rows**



#### **Muscles Worked**

Bent Over Rows work your lower back and the lats and most muscles in the back. They also work the rear deltoid muscles of the shoulders, and the biceps muscles of the arms.

### Deadlifts



#### **Muscles Worked**

Deadlifts work the legs, the gluteal muscles, most of the muscles in your back, the shoulder muscles, and your grip strength.

### **Overhead Presses**



#### **Muscles Worked**

Overhead presses work the whole deltoid muscle of the shoulders, plus they work the upper back muscles, the spinal erectors that support the spine, and the triceps muscles of the arms.

### Workout A and Workout B

The five exercises that make up the half-set high frequency program are designed to be split into two workouts as follows:

#### Workout A

Squats

Bench presses

Bent Over Rows

#### Workout B

**Overhead Presses** 

Deadlifts

### The Five Day Schedule

#### Workout 5 Days per Week

When using the half set high frequency program, I recommend that you train five days per week. Workout A should be done three times per week, and workout B should be done twice per week. The recommended schedule is listed below:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Workout A	Workout B	Workout A	Workout B	Workout A
Squat	Deadlift	Squat	Deadlift	Squat
Bench Press	<b>Overhead Press</b>	Bench Press	<b>Overhead Press</b>	Bench Press
Bent-over rows		Bent-over rows		Bent-over rows

### Determining Poundages And Reps Per Set

Weight selection for each lift is pretty simple and is divided into two categories which include:

- 1. Moderately heavy lifting
- 2. Heavy lifting

#### Selecting Poundages for Moderately Heavy Lifting

When doing workouts consisting of moderately heavy lifting, choose a weight that you know you can lift for 10 to 12 reps when pushing yourself to do as many reps as possible for the exercise you are doing.

#### 5 to 6 reps per set when Lifting Moderately Heavy

Even though you can lift a certain poundage for 10 to 12 reps when pushing for as many reps as possible, you should not do as many reps as possible, instead, you should only do 5 to 6 reps per set. To be clear, just do half the number of reps you are capable of performing for each set.

If you prefer to use percentages, the workouts consisting of moderately heavy lifting should be done with about 70% to 75% of your single rep max, which is the maximum weight that you can lift for a single rep. Do 6 reps per set when using 70% of your single rep max, and do 5 reps per set when using 75% of your single rep max.

#### **Selecting Poundages for Heavy Lifting**

When doing workouts consisting of heavy lifting, you should choose a weight that you know you can lift for 6 to 8 reps when pushing yourself to do as many reps as possible for the exercise you are doing,

#### 3 to 4 reps per set when Lifting Heavy

When lifting heavy weight that you can repeat for 6 to 8 reps when pushing for as many reps as possible, you should only do 3 to 4 reps per set for each exercise. Once again, just do half the number of reps you are capable of performing within each set.

If you prefer to use percentages, the workouts consisting of heavy lifting should be done with about 80% to 85% of your single rep max. Do 4 reps per set when using 80% of your single rep max, and do 3 reps per set when using 85% of your single rep max.

#### 3 Moderately Heavy Workouts and 2 Heavy Workouts per Week

I recommend that you do three moderately heavy workouts per week with 5 to 6 reps per set, and that you do two heavy workouts per week with 3 to 4 reps per set. I think it is best to spread the heavy workouts apart and do them on Mondays and Thursdays. The moderately heavy workouts should be done on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays. This is shown in the chart below:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Heavy workout	Moderately-	Moderately-	Heavy Workout	Moderately-
	heavy workout	heavy workout		heavy workout
Squat	Overhead Press	Squat	Overhead Press	Squat
Bench Press	Deadlift	Bench Press	Deadlift	Bench Press
Bent-over rows		Bent-over rows		Bent-over rows

### Sets Per Exercise And Rest Between Sets

#### Do 3 Sets per Exercise

The number of sets you perform must be enough to stimulate strength without being so many sets that you can't recover within twenty-four hours. With this in mind, most people will find that **3 half sets per exercise** will provide enough stimulation for strength gains. At the same time, most lifters can recover from three half sets per exercise, even when working out five days per week.

#### Rest 2 to 3 Minutes Between Sets of the Same Exercise

When the primary objective of your workouts is to gain strength, you need to rest two to three minutes between sets of the same exercise. You must rest long enough to fully recover your strength between sets. Moving too fast from set to set will create muscular fatigue during your workout, and fatigue will hinder your ability to lift in a state of maximum strength.

#### **Shorter Rest Time With Circuit Training**

If you want to switch from exercise to exercise as you proceed from set to set, you can do so in order to work out faster. For example, you can do a set of squats, followed by a set of bench presses, followed by a set of bent-over rows. This makes up one circuit of three different exercises. Repeat this procedure until you have performed three circuits, which means you will have performed three sets of each exercise. If you do this and rest 60 to 90 seconds between sets of different exercises, you will be resting at least three minutes between sets of the same exercise, and you will finish the workout faster.

### Warm-up Sets

Before using the required poundages for each set of each exercise, I recommend that you do some light warm-up sets for each exercise. The warm-up sets should be done using the same exercises that you do for your work-sets that are to be performed with the required poundages. You should understand that the warm-up sets are designed to be easy sets that prepare your muscles for heavy lifting without producing fatigue that will interfere with the heavier work-sets.

The following is a warm-up procedure that you can do for each exercise before you perform the worksets:

#### Warm-up Set 1

Do 10 reps with an unloaded bar or very light weight

#### Warm-up Set 2

Do 5 reps with about half the weight you will be using for your work-sets.

#### Warm-up Set 3

Do 3 reps with about 75% of the weight you will be using for your work-sets.

When your muscles are warmed up properly, you should be able to move freely without feeling tight or uncomfortable when you move through the full range of motion of an exercise. The increase in blood-flow from your warm-up sets is intended to increase the oxygen delivery to the muscles. This should cause your muscles to wake-up and help them to feel more energetic while reducing any feelings of sluggishness and lethargy. If you feel warmed up after three warm-up sets, then start doing your work-sets. In contrast, if your muscles feel sluggish, tight, or unprepared for your work-sets, do as many warm-up sets as needed until you feel prepared to do your work-sets.

Since the warm-up sets are light and easy, you should not need to rest any longer than it takes to change the weights from one warm-up set to the next. Once you finish your warm-up sets, you can begin doing your work-sets, however, make sure you rest two to three minutes between work-sets.

### An Overview Of The Workouts And Weekly Schedule

When you take all of the information that has been discussed throughout this book, you have the necessary components to plan each workout in a weekly schedule for half-set high frequency training. This is what you will see in the schedule that is presented below:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Heavy workout	Moderately	Moderately	Heavy Workout	Moderately
	heavy workout	heavy workout		heavy workout
Workout A	Workout B	Workout A	Workout B	Workout A
3 Exercises	2 Exercises	3 Exercises	2 Exercises	3 Exercises
Squat	Overhead Press	Squat	Overhead Press	Squat
Bench Press	Deadlift	Bench Press	Deadlift	Bench Press
Bent-over rows		Bent-over rows		Bent-over rows
Poundages	Poundages	Poundages	Poundages	Pounages
80% to 85% of	70% to 75% of	70% to 75% of	80% to 85% of	70% to 75% of
1 rep max				
Number of Reps				
Do 3 to 4 reps per	Do 5 to 6 reps per	Do 5 to 6 reps per	Do 3 to 4 reps per	Do 5 to 6 reps per
set with a weight				
that you can lift				
for 6 to 8 reps	for 10 to 12 reps	for 10 to 12 reps	for 6 to 8 reps	for 10 to 12 reps
Number of Sets				
3 sets				
per exercise				
Rest 2 to 3 min.				
between sets of				
the same exercise				

### Testing for Max Reps

After learning that you are to do half the number of reps you are capable of performing, you will fall into one of two categories:

The first category is that you already know the maximum amount of weight you can use for each exercise when pushing to failure for 12 reps, 10 reps, 8 reps, and 6 reps.

The second category is that you don't know the maximum weight that you can use when pushing to failure for 12 reps, 10 reps, 8 reps, and 6 reps. If you are in the second category, it would be beneficial to have a test week in order to select the proper amount of weight for each exercise.

#### Testing

If you don't know how much weight you can lift for any amount of reps, I suggest that you start by testing for your 12 rep max. You can do this by starting with a light weight that is very easy to lift and by lifting it for 12 reps for your first set. Then add whatever amount of weight you believe will make it moderately hard to do 12 reps for your second set. When doing your third set, add an amount of weight that you think you can lift for 12 reps when pushing for as many reps as possible. If you perform all 12 reps and think you can still add more weight while maintaining the ability to perform 12 reps, then add the amount of weight you think you need to add in order to find the weight that causes the twelfth rep to be the last rep that you are capable of performing. Perhaps you add weight and fall short of 12 reps, and only make it to 10 reps. This is good because now you know the maximum weight that you can lift for 10 reps with the reduced weight.

Once you know the maximum amount of weight you can lift for a certain number of reps, you simply increase or decrease the weight by 10 to 15 pounds to see if you can do more or less reps within the 6 to 12 rep range. Your goal is to adjust the weight up or down by 10 to 15 pounds until you find the amounts of weight you can lift for 12 reps, 10 reps, 8 reps, and 6 reps. It may take a few workouts to discover how much weight you can use for each amount of reps and each exercise.

When pushing yourself with maximum effort to do as many reps as possible for your test sets, I would suggest that you limit yourself to two maximum effort test sets per exercise within a given workout. Make sure you rest at least five minutes between test sets. After doing max reps for your test sets, it will probably take at least 48 hours to recover your strength before you can do any more test sets for the same exercise. When you complete the testing process, you should have an accurate determination of how much weight you should be using for your half sets.

### When to Add Weight

If you want to make long-term progress, it is important that you add weight at the right rate. This basically means that you only add weight when the weights start to feel easier to lift for three consecutive workouts. If you add weight too often, you will be adding weight faster than your rate of strength gain. The result will be that you will no longer be doing half sets, but will be doing more than half of the number of reps you are capable of performing. When this happens, fatigue will increase by the end of the set. This will cause a decrease in the amount of force and power that you are able to exert into each rep. In addition, the added fatigue will cause you to recover slower, and you will be at risk for overtraining when working out five days per week.

When you add weight, only add five to ten pounds at a time. Allow as much time as needed for the added weight to become easier to lift. Your workouts should eventually grow heavier, but they should not feel as though they are growing harder. In other words, your workouts should never feel as though they are harder than they were when you started the program because if they are, you are increasing the weight before you are increasing your strength.

Each person will progress at their own rate. Likewise, each exercise will progress at its own rate. Do not try to schedule strength gains because your body will gain at the rate it wants to gain. You will probably gain strength faster for the squat and deadlift compared to the overhead press. Simply add weight to a given exercise when the exercise feels easier for at least three consecutive workouts. There may be a certain day when you feel very strong and the weights feel easy to lift, but if this only happens for one day when you happen to feel good, don't add weight. Patiently wait until the weights feel easier to lift on a regular basis.

If you want to test your strength, you can go for a 6-rep max, or an 8-rep max, however, don't test every week, but test once every four to six weeks. If you test too often, the maximum effort testing for max reps will tire you out and interfere with your regular training. Once you test to see whether your strength has improved, adjust your weights in proportion to the amount of strength you have gained.

### Modifications And Adjustments

No two people are exactly alike. This being the case, it stands to reason that the workouts may need to be adjusted to fit your personal attributes. For example, the prescribed three sets per exercise may not be ideal for you. It may be better if you only do two sets per exercise, or four sets per exercise. If you feel a different number of sets would be better than three sets, then do what you find works best.

You may also find that your strength and energy suffer when you are not accustomed to five training sessions per week. If so, try skipping the Wednesday workout and just work out four days per week. If you can only tolerate three days per week, I would suggest that you do workout A on Mondays and Fridays, and that you do workout B on Wednesdays. After working out three days per week, it may be that your conditioning will improve and you will eventually do better by switching to four or five workouts per week. It is better to make changes when something isn't working than to feel obligated to follow a program that is not well suited to your personal physiology.

Since high frequency training is fairly demanding, you may find it helpful to reduce the number of training days every third week. For example, train five days per week for two weeks, and decrease to two or three training days the third week. Keep repeating the pattern of five training days per week for two weeks, followed by two or three training days the third week. Many of you will find that this is a perfect way to push your body often enough to stimulate strength, while occasionally providing more recovery time.

Remember that the half-set high frequency program is designed to help you gain strength quickly and is just one of many training options that you can try. If you try it and it works, keep doing it as long as it works. If it doesn't seem to work, or it stops working at some point, there are many other forms of strength training that you can investigate. If you want to get as strong as possible, you will have to be a lifetime learner. My hope is that the half-set high frequency program will bring you a step closer to your strength training goals as you strive to get stronger. May God bless you with the best of training.

# **Exercise Manual**

### **Bench Press**



### Muscles of Emphasis: Chest (Pectoral) Muscles, Triceps, and front Deltoids

#### **Exercise Instructions:**

1. Position yourself on your back on a bench press bench.

- 2. Use an overhand grip to grasp the bar with your hands a little wider than shoulder width apart.
- 3. Take the barbell that is on the bench press rack and push it up to arm's length above your chest.
- 4. Carefully lower the bar down until it is touching your lower chest.
- 5. Push the bar straight up to arm's length above your chest.

6. Repeat until you reach the desired number of reps and carefully put the bar back on the bench press rack that supports the barbell.

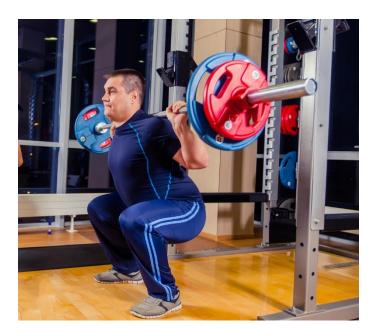
#### Variations

1. A wider grip with elbows wide to the side during the lift will emphasize the outer chest muscles. Caution, a wide grip with elbows wide to the side can be stressful to the shoulder joint if done too often or with weights that are too heavy.

2. A close grip will emphasize the triceps muscles. Keeping the elbows in close to the body will emphasize the inner triceps on the back of your arms and the front deltoid muscles of the shoulders. Flaring the elbows out to the side while using a close grip will emphasize the outer triceps muscles of the arms.

3. When using a chest press machine, the form is generally similar to the bench press in terms of hand placement and the lifting motion, but many machines require a sitting position instead of a flat lying position for the chest press.

### **Squats or Leg Presses**



### **Squats**

### Muscles of Emphasis:

### Upper leg muscles: (quadriceps and hamstrings) glutes, and lower back

#### **Exercise Instructions:**

1. In order to use sufficient weight for the barbell squat, you need a squat rack that will hold the barbell just below shoulder level.

2. Position your body under the bar so that the bar will rest across the back of your shoulders. Push your upper traps and shoulders up into the bar to lift the bar off the squat stands, take two steps back, and set up in a standing position with your feet about shoulder width apart.

3. Keeping your back straight, squat down until your thighs are parallel with the floor and return to a standing position. Repeat the exercise motion until the desired number of repetitions have been completed.

#### **Tips and Considerations**

The ratio between body parts can have a huge effect on how you squat. Lifters who possess short legs will generally find it easy to squat in an upright position. In contrast, someone with long legs and a long femur will tend to bend over much more. They will also be forced to allow their behind to stick out

behind them more in order to keep their balance. A person with very long legs may find that a wide stance is the only way to keep their upper body in a fairly upright position when squatting. Each person will have to experiment to find a way of squatting that is comfortable for them. If squatting seems very awkward for you, you may need to get help from an experienced lifter or a coach who understands your body structure and personal needs.

#### Variations

#### **Front Squats**

Squats can also be done with a barbell resting across the front of the shoulders instead of the back of the shoulders. This exercise is called front squats. Front squats require your body to stay more upright and will put more stress on the front of your thighs (the quadriceps). At the same time, less stress will be placed on the hamstring muscles of the back of the legs, and the gluteus muscles of the butt, as well as the lower back muscles. You can also substitute a kettlebell or a dumbbell for a barbell and hold the kettlebell or dumbbell against your upper chest when performing front squats. These are sometimes called **"Goblet Squats."** 

#### **Dumbbell Straddle Squats**

Another variation of squats is straddle squats where you grab a single dumbbell and let it hang down at arm's length in front of your thighs. With feet spaced about shoulder width apart, squat down into a sitting position. The dumbbell should travel straight down between your feet and touch the floor, or come close to touching the floor, then return to a standing position. Always keep your feet flat on the floor and do your best to keep the weight on the center of your foot instead of on the balls of your feet or your heals. It is very important to keep your back from rounding over when you do this exercise. Keep your back straight throughout the entire movement.

#### **Leg Press**



### Muscles of Emphasis: Quadriceps, Hamstrings, Glutes

#### **Exercise Instructions:**

1. Sit in a leg press with your behind firmly on the seat and your back centered flat against the back rest.

2. Place your feet about twelve to eighteen inches apart against the foot platform. The further up you place your feet on the foot platform, the more it tends to work the glute muscles of your behind along with the back of your thighs (your hamstrings). The further down you place your feet on the foot platform, the less it will work your glutes and hamstrings, while utilizing the quadriceps (front of the thighs) to lift the weight.

3. Many leg press machines have a safety bar that holds the weights in place. This requires that you grasp the handles to the safety bar which are usually located down by the side of your hips. You must then extend your legs into a straight position and rotate the safety bar handles outward.

4. Once you have extended your legs into a straight position, lower the weight until your legs are bent at a 90 degree angle to establish a starting position. From the starting position, extend your legs against the weight until your legs are straight, then return to the starting position. Repeat until you reach the desired number of repetitions. 5. Finish with your legs straight on your last repetition, then grasp the handles to the safety bar and rotate them back up into the starting position. Carefully lower the weights until they are caught by the safety bar.

### **Barbell Rows**



Muscles of Emphasis: Back, Biceps, and Rear Deltoids

#### **Exercise Instructions:**

1. While keeping your back straight (do not round your back), bend over a barbell that is on the ground and grasp it using an overhand grip with hands spaced about shoulder width apart.

- 2. While maintaining a bent over position, pull the barbell up until it touches the middle of your waist.
- 3. While maintaining a bent over position, lower the bar carefully to arm's length.
- 4. Repeat this motion until you have reached the desired number of repetitions.
- 5. Keep your back stable during the exercise; be careful not to jerk the weight up with your back.

### Deadlifts



Muscles of Emphasis: Thighs, Gluteus and Back

#### These instructions are for the CONVENTIONAL DEADLIFT:

1. Stand just behind a barbell with feet a little less than shoulder width apart. The bar should be one to two inches from your shins.

2. Bend over forward at the waist and hips while keeping your back straight and bend your knees while reaching down to grasp the bar.

3. Let your behind drift back as you bend over. At the same time, do not let your knees move forward over your toes or the bar. Do your best to keep your knees directly over your ankles so that your shins are straight up and down instead of slanting forward at the start of the lift.

4. Grasp the bar with your hands about shoulder width apart using an overhand grip with one hand, and an underhand grip with the other hand.

5. While keeping your back straight, straighten up into a standing position with the bar hanging down in front of your thighs. The bar should stay in close to your legs and body as you pull and straighten up.

6. Carefully lower the bar to the floor and repeat the exercise until the designated amount of repetitions have been completed.

#### Variations

Some lifters prefer the **sumo deadlift** technique which is done with a very wide foot spacing and toes angled outward. The upper body should only angle forward a slight amount and should remain as

upright as possible throughout the lift. When using the sumo deadlift technique, you should not feel as much stress on the lower back as you would when performing the conventional deadlift, and you will likely feel more stress on your inner thighs, hamstrings, outer hips, and glutes.

There is no rule that says you must use the conventional style or the sumo style of deadlift. Some lifters prefer an intermediate stance in which the feet are neither spaced narrow or wide as would be done with the conventional or sumo style deadlift. Instead, the feet are spaced somewhere in between a wide and narrow stance.

Lifters with long legs and a short upper body are more likely to prefer the conventional deadlift. Lifters with short legs and a long upper body are more likely to prefer the sumo deadlift. However, this is just a tendency, not a rule. Each lifter should do what is most comfortable according to their own leverages and strengths.

### **Overhead Press**



#### Emphasis: Deltoid Muscles (of the Shoulders), Triceps, and Upper Back Muscles

#### **Exercise Instructions:**

1. Use an overhand grip to grasp a barbell a little wider than shoulder width apart.

- 2. Sit down at the end of a bench with the barbell held just underneath your chin.
- 3. Push the barbell straight up until your arms are fully extended over your head.

4. Carefully, (avoid lowering the barbell down on your head) lower the barbell back into the starting position and repeat the lifting motion until the desired number of repetitions have been completed.

#### Dumbbells

You can replace a barbell with two dumbbells and use the same lifting motion by lifting the dumbbells from your shoulders to an overhead position before returning to the starting position with dumbbells at your shoulders.

### 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 <u>www.precisionpointtraining.com</u>. In addition, you can view more books on strength training that he has authored on the next page.

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Additional Resources

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