

# WORKOUT of the Month

## The Tazmanian Devil Bench Press Workout

A new concept in weight training instruction. A workout by workout, set by set, rep by rep workout plan, with exact training poundages specified over the entire span of a strength training cycle, laid out for you by a top Powerlifting authority. Each month, a different lift is analyzed. For those of different strength levels than the starting poundage specified, simply increase or decrease the training weights in direct proportion. For example, if your lift is 400, and a starting lift for the program is 500, multiply the training poundages by .8 (400 divided by 500); if your lift is 600 multiply the poundages specified by 1.2 (600 divided by 500).

# RICK COUCH



Rick Couch, at the Malibu Classic, has overcome a serious malady to become a top bench in several classes.

Bench pressing is an up and coming sport. There are a lot of lifters specializing in one event. My sport is bench pressing. I have been competing since 1980. I think of this sport as my hobby as well as my profession. I love to train other lifters in this sport. I am a very patient lifter. I have learned this makes a true champion. I love this sport, for it has given me a chance to compete after a childhood filled with pain from rheumatoid arthritis. It has helped build muscle to prevent injuries on my weak joints and better my range of motion. I hope to give back to my sport what it has given to me. I have trained at least 50 different ways. I have narrowed my cycles to three, which I use for different contests, depending on the time allowed to train and my body chemistry. Looking at these factors will tell me what ways work better for me at that time. One must remember it is the accessory exercises that make your bench press stronger. Every body part is used during the bench press to give you your maximum poundage. For example, leg drive, lat push, abdominal push, and chest, tricep and shoulder drive. I believe these exercises will be the best and most helpful to your bench press program.

**Chest:** 1. Dumbbell press - it builds better size because your range of motion is deeper and it equals arm strength (remember to pause briefly). 2. Low Dumbbell incline. 3. High Dumbbell incline. 4. Flat or incline

dumbbell flies for stretching the entire chest and front deltoid area.

**Triceps:** 1. French press (close grip). 2. Pushdowns (close grip). 3. One arm dumbbell extensions. 4. Cable one arm pushdowns.

**Other helpful exercises for your bench:** 1. Front raises. 2. Hammer curls (lengthens your bicep). 3. Lateral pulldowns (wide and close grip). 4. Abdominal crunches (sets and reps).

**Sets - no more than 2 sets per exercise.** You should be able to tear yourself down in two sets plus this allows more recovery time, prevents injury and fatigue. **Reps -** I start my reps at 7-8, 8-10 weeks prior to the contest. I then switch to 4-5 reps 4 weeks prior to the contest. This is how I work my body parts: Monday/Thursday- chest, triceps, and abdominals; Tuesday/Friday- back, biceps and abdominals; Wednesday/Saturday- shoulders (light on Wed.), legs and abdominals; Sunday- abdominals. Remember to stretch each muscle group every day. This will keep the blood flowing, which will allow your to heal quicker. (Remember, if you can tear your muscle down in 2 sets, why go further) This will allow more rest time and will prevent fatigue.

**Positioning, Form and Leverage Techniques:** 1. Remain tight during the whole motion, control the bar, don't let it control you. 2. Create and practice a big arch, so the bar will not have to travel as far. 3. Tuck your legs to get better balance and drive.

4. I use no a thumb grip, which is dangerous, but allows you to use the stronger part of your forearm. 5. Position the bar at the bottom of your chest (the high point). 6. Your grip should be to the point that when the bar touches your chest your entire wrist lines up with the outer elbow. This gives you equal push between your chest, triceps and shoulders. 7. You should have a smooth and slow lift off to give you better feel and control of the bar. 8. Keep your belt tight to give your abdominals something to push against. Remember, your abdominals are the center of all muscle groups and the stronger they are the stronger all lifts will be! 9. Wrap wrists tight when going heavy to ensure safety. (If the wrists buckle during a heavy lift, it's over.) 10. My lifting motion is as follows: when taking off from my chest, I travel 3-4 inches straight up and then slowly move the bar back towards my nose. When I hit the lock out point, the bar is positioned directly above my nose. I use leg drive during the entire lift. 11. I train without the bench shirt to allow me to use my natural strength. I put the shirt on 3-4 weeks prior to the contest to practice with heavy weights. I practice good form and technique with the shirt to help prevent injury.

10 week Bench Press Cycle (starting maximum weight 300 pounds). I would do as follows:

**Week 1:** Mon- 135x8, 135x8, 185x2, 225x8, 225x8, 250x1;

Thurs- 135x8, 135x, 185x2, 225x5, 225x5, 250x1.

**Week 2:** Mon- 135x8, 135x8, 185x2, 230x7, 230x7, 255x1; Thurs- 135x8, 135x8, 182x2, 230x5, 230x5, 255x1.

**Week 3:** Mon- 135x8, 135x8, 185x2, 235x6, 235x6, 260x1; Thurs- 135x8, 135x8, 185x2, 235x4, 235x4, 260x1.

**Week 4:** Mon- 135x8, 135x8, 185x3, 240x5, 240x5, 265x1; Thurs- 135x8, 135x8, 185x3, 240x3, 240x3, 265x1.

**Week 5:** Mon- 135x8, 135x8, 185x3, 225x1, 255x2, 255x2, 275x1; Thurs- 135x8, 135x8, 185x3, 225x1, 250x2, 250x2, 275x1.

**Week 6:** Start using shirt. Mon- 135x8, 135x8, 185x3, 225x1, 265x2, 265x2, 280x1; Thurs- 135x8, 135x8, 185x3, 225x1, 260x2, 260x2, 280x1.

**Week 7:** Mon- 135x8, 135x8, 185x3, 225x2, 250x1, 275x2, 275x2, 290x1; Thurs- 135x8, 135x8, 185x3, 225x2, 250x1, 275x2, 275x2, 290x1.

**Week 8:** Mon- 135x8, 135x8, 185x3, 225x2, 250x1, 285x2, 285x2, 300x1; Thurs- 135x8, 135x8, 185x3, 225x2, 250x1, 285x2, 285x2, 300x2.

**Week 9:** Mon- 135x8, 135x8, 185x3, 225x2, 250x1, 270x1, 290x1, 310x1, 275x3; Thurs- 135x5, 135x5, 135x5, 135x5.

**Saturday contest attempts:** 1. 285; 2. 305; 3. 315-320. Take off Wednesday, Thursday and Friday before the contest to ensure healing. Don't forget to stretch!

**Mind Control:** You must remember to be sure of yourself. Practice thinking this way. For example, if you're thinking about going lighter because of doubt, go heavier and practice form. Eventually it becomes a habit and you will forget about all doubt. I also use ammonia before my lift to clear my head. Remember, if you keep trying what you think you can't do, even if you miss it you can walk away saying 'I tried.' Not 'I failed because I was afraid to try.' Be Bold! Your mind must push through all limitations to become successful. Fear has no place in powerlifting. Boldness means 'a deliberate decision.'

**Remember:** 1. Dumbbell press is the best exercise for strength and size. 2. Be confident and bold. 3. Stretching will help you recover quicker. 4. Diet and sleep is just as important as lifting. 5. Practice form and leverage, even in warm-ups. 6. Think 'speed' off your chest. 7. You control the weight. Don't let it control you.