

Before we get into Gary's actual bench press program, let's examine his ideas. Gary believes in listening to his body and never 'force feeds' heavier weights. He has never had a major injury and has steadily increased his totals every year. I'm not saying Gary doesn't train heavy, as his training weights can be enormous, but I am saying that when he takes them, he's ready. I've never seen Gary miss a lift outside of a meet and even during meets it's not unusual to see Gary go 8 for 9 as he did at the '89 APF Seniors. Gary only enters a couple of meets per year now as he feels his body will be better equipped to achieve higher totals by not putting year-round heavy stress on it. At this level getting 'meet' ready is all consuming. Gary follows one of the most well thought out training programs I've ever seen. To understand Gary's progress and phenomenal injury-free pace is to know how he trains.

Gary does not believe in working 'backwards' from his goal, as many lifters do today. He does have a goal of what he would like to lift, but does not work back from that weight to set up training poundages. Gary starts about ten weeks out and lifts what he's capable of and gradually increases his poundages and drops his reps as he approaches the meet. By doing this, he feels he is always going forward. Gary has seen too many people prepare their poundages in advance and bog down in the latter part of their cycle; usually right before the meet when you need success to reinforce your confidence. Gary believes in heavy basic movements that don't overstress the shoulder. He occasionally does overloads, but feels his body pays a price and does them only with intelligence. His heavy bench day is Monday along with heavy upper back. He then does medium to heavy shoulders and arms. Thursday he does lighter weights with the same body parts as Monday. Also on Thursday, bench work is done with higher reps (10 or more) and he does some bodybuilding movements like flies. Gary takes the weekend off and does his squat and deadlift training on Tuesday and Thursday. He emphasizes basic heavy movements and sufficient recovery time.

After Gary benches, he does front lat pulls in the same groove as his bench press along with close grip lat pulls. Gary says that his lat strength plays an important role in establishing his set up and drive position.

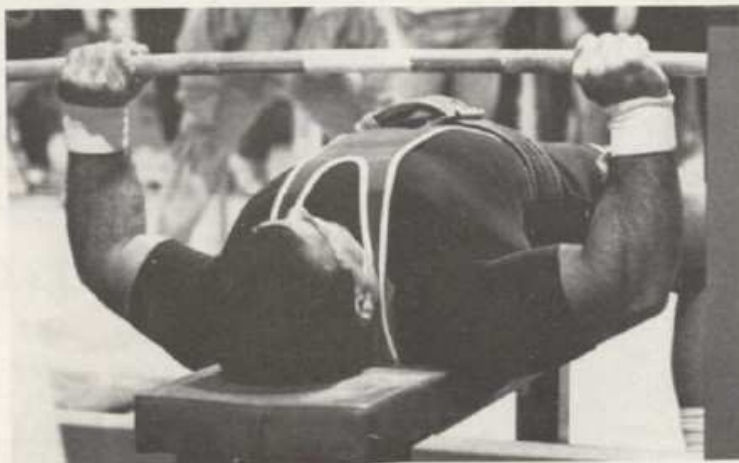
Gary's shoulder strength is incredible, but he feels most people overtrain this area. He stays away from exercises which put a great strain on this joint. For example, he doesn't do forward raises, which many benchers like, and he does very few lateral raises. He feels that pressing motions, whether overhead or bench press, work the anterior deltoid without putting it in a dangerously leveraged position. Gary routinely does seated presses with 265 lbs for ten. Again, Gary trains smart, staying with safe motions and handling a lot of iron. This shoulder work is only done on heavy days.

For tricep movements, again, Gary stays with exercises that approximate the bench press. He goes fairly heavy in close grip bench presses for 3 sets of 8, and does a lot of pushdowns and some heavy bodybuilding exercises on

WORKOUT of the Month

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).

The Drigo Program as told by BARRY HERMAN



GARY DRIGO, benching from a rock solid foundation at the Y Nationals.

his light days.

Biceps, being the strong antagonists to the triceps, are kept in shape with straight bar and high angle preacher curls (less elbow strain).

The following program is Gary's Monday and Thursday bench routine and was based on his 550 lbs. bench press. This is a pre-contest workout and he uses heavy weights. Gary trains shoulders on Monday, only during heavy pre-contest phase as explained above.

During off season training, Gary sticks to mostly fives and sixes in his training. Even when he's not contest training he doesn't do a lot of bodybuilding, but relies on power motions. He drops his weights down slightly, as he says, 'to let my mind and body heal'. He always trains strict and has done 440x10 pauses. Other off-season changes include some 'slight incline' presses. Gary doesn't do heavy severe incline presses and feels they put too much stress on the shoulder joint. The pec minor isn't fully worked and it really doesn't approximate the bench press motion. Gary does a lot of dumbbell decline bench presses and again uses the slight elevation position to build strong starting power.

Gary has been experimenting with some decline motions and feels they have a place in his workout. There is not a lot of wasted motion during a 'Drigo' workout, as he knows what works and what doesn't. He doesn't waste time on popular motions that do not produce for him. Gary believes

strongly in nutrition and supplementation, but again practices the same philosophy by staying with the basics, like quality aminos, etc. Gary uses the same drive and exactitude he shows in his training in overseeing the manufacture of his supplements, which you will find advertised elsewhere in this issue.

I wholeheartedly recommend his Power Plus line for both quality and price. Gary and I are currently putting together his complete training courses and hope to have them out soon. In the meantime, if you want Gary, you'll find him at Gold's Gym of Sunrise where he works and trains. Owner Ken Beley has just invested another 'small fortune' in a full line of 'Magnum II' equipment, making the best gym in South Florida even better. For more info call Gary at Gold's (305) 741-5511.

The 10 Week Drigo Program

10 weeks out. Monday, Chest - Heavy day. Heavy bench press, work up to top set; heavy decline, 3 sets 8, 6, 6 reps; Med weight, slight incline dumbbell press 3 sets 8 reps.

Upper Back - Heavy front lat pulldown to chest. Follow same groove as you bench on, pulldown 3 sets 10 to 12 reps, same grip as on the bench; Heavy front pulldown using V-bar palms facing. Stretch lats at top; 3 sets 10-12 reps.

Shoulders - Seated behind the neck military; 5 sets, 1st set is a warmup following 4 sets should use medium to heavy weight 6 reps.

Triceps - Close grip benches 3 to 4 sets med to heavy 8,6,6 reps. You can try close grips on an incline bench or decline bench; hits triceps in different angle! Pushdowns 3 sets 10 reps; seated pushdown dip machine isolates tricep, no stress on shoulders, 3 sets 10 reps; seated extensions, using dumbbell or on machine 3 sets 10 reps. Gary only does two tricep exercises because the tricep is getting worked enough off the bench. You do not want to overtrain the tricep. Same with shoulders. These two groups are much smaller muscles and are hit a lot from the chest workout.

Biceps - Standing straight bar curls, 3 sets 10 reps; Preacher curls on machine 3 sets 10 reps.

Thursday - light day. Same as Monday's workout, but using light weight. Cut out shoulder work, incline dumbbell press and close grip benches. The gym Gary trains at is equipped with many different machines. He uses them because it gives the stabilizer muscles a rest from Monday's workout. Base Thursday's workout on reps of 8 to 10 light. Just pump.

Here is Gary's workout cycle to break the 550 lbs barrier at the Seniors

Week 1: Monday - Bench Press. 1x10x135, 1x10x225, 1x5x315, 1x3x405, 2x5x440. Down set 1x10x365. Thursday - light bench 5 sets 10 reps, follow rest of Thursday's workout.

Week 2: Monday - 1x10x135, 1x10x225, 1x5x315, 1x5x375, 1x3x415, 2x5x455. Down set 1x10x375. Thursday - light work out.

Week 3: Monday - 1x10x135, 1x10x225, 1x5x315, 1x3x405, 1x2x440, 1x5x470. Down set 1x10x385. Thursday - light workout.

Week 4: Monday - 1x10x135, 1x10x225, 1x5x315, 1x3x405, 1x2x450, 1x5x485. Down set 1x10x395. Thursday - light workout.

Week 5: Monday - 1x10x135, 1x10x225, 1x5x315, 1x3x415, 1x1x465, 1x5x500. Down set 1x10x405. Thursday - Light workout

Week 6: Monday - 1x10x135, 1x10x225, 1x5x315, 1x5x385, 1x3x440, 1x1x475, 1x3x510. Down set 1x10x410. Thursday, light day workout.

Week 7: Monday - 1x10x135, 1x10x225, 1x5x315, 1x5x385, 1x3x440, 1x1x480, 1x3x520. Down set 1x10x420. Cut out shoulder work on Monday; shoulders need rest; also cut out incline dumbbell press. Thursday: Light day workout.

Week 8: Monday - 1x10x135, 1x10x225, 1x5x315, 1x3x405, 1x2x455, 1x1x495, 1x2x535. Down set 1x10x430. No shoulder work or incline dumbbell press. Thursday: light day workout.

Week 9: Monday - 1x10x135, 1x10x225, 1x5x315, 1x3x415, 1x1x465, 1x1x505, 1x2x545. Down set 1x10x440. No shoulders or incline dumbbell press. Thursday: Light day workout.

Week 10: Monday before contest - 1x10x135, 1x10x225, 1x5x315, 3x5x410. No down sets. Monday's workout should be medium weights; no shoulders or incline dumbbell press. No Thursday workout. Rest.

Meet Day: Lifts at Seniors: 1st attempt: 523; 2nd attempt: 551; 3rd attempt: 562; all successes!