

There's a lot to be said about the best bench presser in the world, by formula, who has actually qualified for national competition. Sure, Ted Atcidi is the best bench presser by formula of all time, but has Atcidi ever qualified for national competition? Since powerlifting is made up of all three lifts, recognition should be extended to anyone who excels in any of the lifts, but still shows respect for the other two. Known for his prowess in the bench press and his extremely impressive physique, no one Jeff Magruder.

Jeff actually began his career in weights as a bodybuilder. Take a close look at him and you'll swear he's a bodybuilder. When Jeff was 15, he won Mr. Sunshine in his hometown of Washouton, Mr. North east, Mr. Pacific Coast and placed 5th in the Mr. USA contest, but Magruder confesses that his real love is powerlifting.

He is always recognized for his unbelievable bench presses, but is often overlooked as an all-around powerlifter. Most heavy bench presses are less than 200 lbs. well with the squat and deadlift, because as Jeff puts it, "The only competition on the bench." This 242 lb. bench in the fact that he can perform well in all the lifts, but he agrees that they (the squat and deadlift) are not as

WORKOUT of the Month

For different strength levels than the starting poundages specified, simply increase or decrease the training weight in the appropriate manner. 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).

Jeff Magruder's Bench Routine as told by his friend, JOHN COMERESKI

while recently at the 1987 APF Senior Nationals, he "smoked" 633 and 640, new APF world records. For those of you who were unable to attend this meet, it looked like a 650 was there.

Magruder was benching 500 pounds at a bodyweight of 198 at age 21. Now, 13 years later, Jeff continues his constant improvement. He is so highly respected in the bench pressing world that even those who have passed the 650 mark come to Mr. Magruder for benching advice.

Magruder always stresses the importance of assistance work. It is hard not to notice that he's done quite a bit. Seeing his large and defined pecs, delts and triceps, it becomes

clear that he can bench well over 600 pounds. Assistance exercises like front and side deltoid raises coupled with the neck presses, flies, lat work and tricep extensions round off a powerful muscular body capable of powerlifting or bodybuilding. He usually does 3.5 sets of each assistance exercise. Although his ab-dominals look conditioned, he says that he hasn't done any ab exercises for years, only when he was bodybuilding, but he does believe he should.

How much assistance exercise does Magruder do? "Where I'm at during training for a competition determines what amount of assistance work I do." Prior to a powerlifting competition, Jeff does an overwhelming amount of assistance exercise up to 4 weeks before the contest, then backs off in order to concentrate on the three power movements.

"You get results in strength when you back off. If you keep pushing assistance work, you're not going to get the residual effect."

This world-record holder strongly endorses a concept known as residual training. By this Jeff allows for full recuperation after weeks of very intense training before the scheduled competition. This, according to Magruder, "Adds strength and power to your trained muscles."



JEFF MAGRUDER...has had and continues to have one of the longest and most productive careers of any top bench. Photo courtesy Brian Halquist

Prior to an 8-week training program, Magruder partakes in an over-training regimen. This can include a large amount of negatives or simply picking a weight and performing 100 sets to failure. "I really believe in Joe Weider's Muscle Confusion Principle. Otherwise your body will adapt and you'll not get the response you want from your training."

Because benching is his baby, Jeff tries to confuse his muscles by going into this overtraining regimen. For instance, he has done 51 reps with 315 pounds in the bench press for a single set, followed by three additional sets of 20, 20, and 22 reps at the same weight. He then proceeds to perform high-rep sets with flies and dips. By the time he is ready to begin his 8 week training cycle, he has used over 1000 sets of bench, but the residual effect of this work produces benefits weeks later in his cycle. As he tells it, "Many people do not understand the residual effect of overtraining."

Magruder often takes time to help those interested in improving their bench press, and as he tells us, "The biggest problem I have found is that most bench pressers don't use their upper pecs sufficiently. There is a great deal of muscle to successful benching. Many keep their elbows in close to their body and use more triceps. Proper training techniques will allow a powerlifter to get more out of his assistance work."

Jeff's 8 week program consists of 5's on his light day and 5's or 3's on his heavy. His light day always stays the same (at 405 lbs.) with his heavy days consisting of 3.5 sets of 3.5 reps. His first 3 weeks need to be easy so the residual effect of his 4-week program will take effect. Substantial weight increases are made during 3's training. Rest time between bench press sets ranges from 2.3 minutes. "Taking longer rest leaves me cold and susceptible to injury," Magruder offers.

Because he doesn't want to over-train for his competition, this powerlifter is under the impression that with three weeks to go, his strength is already developed and only maintenance is needed. For the following two weeks he might hit a triple with 565 lbs. and a double with 585 lbs. The following week he may go 540 for 3 sets of 3's. "During this time," Magruder explains, "my body heals, while I keep my strength up." By his most recent 640 lbs. bench press (bodyweight of 242 lbs.), at the APF Senior Nationals, it is evident that he knows what he is doing.

Magruder thinks that it is important to understand what you are doing in order to be successful in benching. "There are too many who are strong and don't know what they are doing. Good eating, training, genetics and sufficient amino, vitamins and mineral supplements (of which Magruder now sells his own brand) coupled with a good mental attitude can make anyone better," he says. "And you need to believe in yourself or you are no good for anybody." If you have ever had the opportuni-

Jeff Magruder's 16 week Bench Press Program

Jeff performs all of these exercises indicated on Mondays (L for light) and Thursdays (H for heavy).

Weeks	SETS/REPS	SETS/REPS	SETS/REPS
EXERCISES	1-4	5-8	9-16
BENCH PRESS	-	L 4x5/5**	L 5x5
CLOSE GRIP BP	-	L 3x8	H 5x5, 5x3, 3x3†
HIGH NECK BP	-	H 3x3	-
INCLINES	3xmax*	L 3x8	5x6
FLIES	3xmax	H 3x5	-
PEC DECK	3xmax	-	-
CROSSOVERS	3xmax	L 4x8	4x6@
BEHIND NECK PRESS	3xmax	-	-
CLEANS	3xmax	L 3x8	-
SIDE LATERAL RAISE	-	H 3x6	-
FRONT LATERAL RAISE	-	L 3x8	3x6@
REAR LATERAL RAISE	-	H 3x6	-
DIPS	3xmax +	-	3x6@
TRICEP PUSHDOWN	3xmax ^o	-	3x6@
REVERSE TRICEP PUSHDOWN	3xmax	L 5x8	5x6@@
1-ARM TRICEP EXT.	-	H 5x6	-
LYING TRICEP EXT.	-	L 5x8	-
	-	H 5x6	5x6@@

Weeks 1-4: You will get weaker due to overtraining, but this is necessary for the residual effect to take place later. Poundages remain the same in each exercise throughout this phase. Weeks 5-8: This is an overload regimen that will add to your overtraining and allow for a more full residual effect. This phase of training concentrates on the muscle confusion theory whereby you are shocking your muscles in different ways. Weeks 9-16: This is the actual contest training phase. Here Magruder becomes more concerned with the weights he is handling. He also cuts out many of his assistance exercises.

* These maximum repetitions are performed quickly until Jeff reaches failure, where he cannot do another rep.

+ With this exercise Jeff does as many as 50 reps quickly, until he feels a "pump", then he slows his remaining reps until he reaches muscle fatigue.

^o This exercise is performed between 2 benches with 90 pounds placed on Jeff's lap. He will perform roughly 15 reps, until a "pump" is present, then he slows his speed and pauses each rep in the lowered position.

** Each of 4 sets is performed in super-set manner whereby Magruder performs reps, rests 10 seconds and then repeats this until 15 reps are completed. This 15-rep set is repeated 4 times. Jeff usually uses about 405 lbs. on the bar for these.

† Here Jeff adds anywhere from 60-80 pounds on his sets of 5's and performs forced reps with the help of his partner.

@ There are not performed during the last 4 weeks of this training phase.

@@ These exercises are cut-out for the last week of training.

†† These rep ranges are dependent upon where Magruder is in his training cycle.

Below is Jeff's contest training regimen (the last 8 weeks of the overall program) in specific detail. These exercises are performed on Mondays and Thursdays with the latter being the heavy day.

WEEK	HEAVY DAY	LIGHT DAY	COMMENTS
1	5x5x505	5x5x405	Heavy day should feel easy.
2	5x5x515	-	Light days remain constant throughout cycle.
3	5x5x540	-	-
4	5x500	-	-
	5x515	-	-
	3x5x540	-	-
5	5x515	-	-
	5x540	-	-
	3x5x550	-	-
6	3x500	-	-
	3x515	-	-
	3x540	-	-
	3x550	-	-
	3x565	-	-
7	3x500	-	-
	3x525	-	-
	3x3x545	-	-
	3x425	-	-
8	3x450	-	-
	3x475-500	-	-

This is Jeff's last tough heavy day. By now his power is already established.

Heavy days now used only for maintenance. This is when he experiences a residual effect. Full recuperation is facilitated.

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to see Jeff compete, you will see him head-butting to psyche up. He does this to help himself get adequately prepared, by feeding off the crowd when they become more attentive through this action. "Energy is

him usually fall prey to his confidence and capabilities. He has never lost a bench competition, and his accomplishment, becoming the fourth American to bench press 640 lbs. (and the first in the 242 lb. class) puts Jeff Magruder in a class by himself.