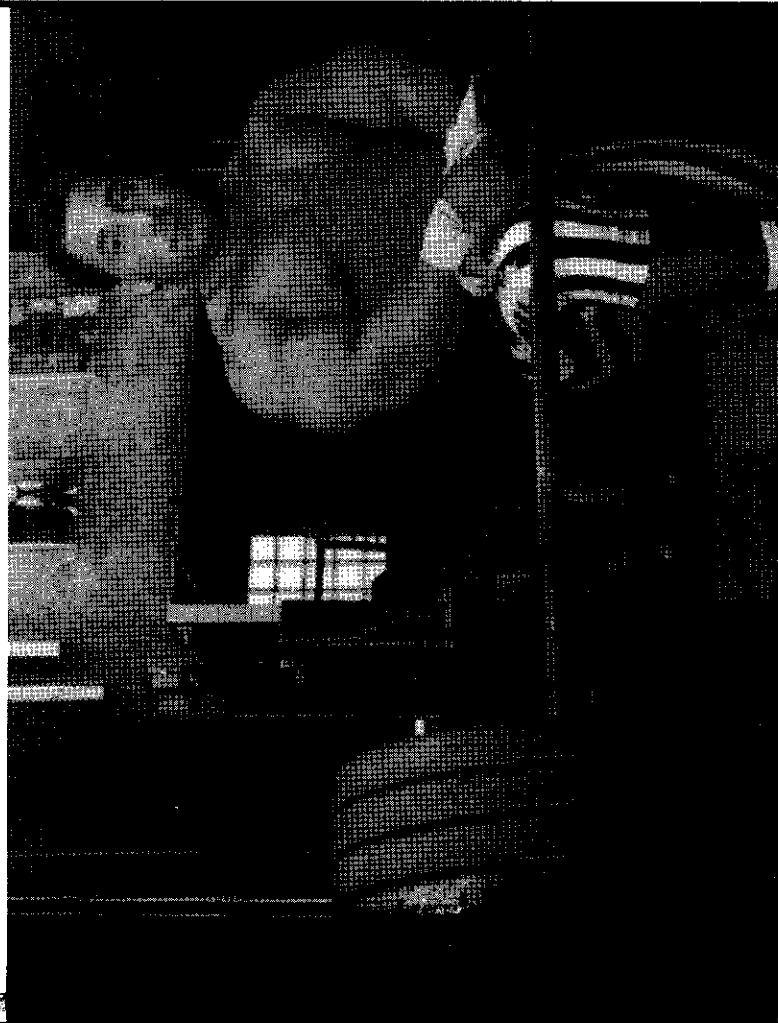


BUILDING THE
BIGGEST

BENCH PRESS

By Multi-World Record Holder
Chris "The Machine" Confessore



Courtesy of Iron Curtain Labs, Inc.

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Introduction

In just four short weeks, you too can add 300 lbs. to your Bench Press!! If you believe that, go back to school and get your diploma. The purpose of this book is not to make ridiculous claims like that, but to help you analyze and progress on America's favorite feat of strength: the Bench Press.

All of us are different. We differ genetically, in body structure, and psychologically as well as having altogether different lifestyles. The point I am trying to make is that all of these variables must mean we can not have the same grip on the bench, train the same, or accelerate at the same rate. We all must listen to our own bodies and experiment with different grips along with different exercises, at different times, until the right combination is found. A tailored routine, along with the right attitude and consistency are the key ingredients to progressing on your Bench Press and the other lifts as well.

The power game is ninety percent mental, as is life, so believe in your abilities and you will reach your lofty goals. Never doubt yourself before attempting a lift. Remember that doubt is responsible for failure. So, before attempting a crucial lift visualize yourself making that lift with ease, the judges white lights gleaming and GO FOR IT!!!

Something I once read about in one of Judd Biasiotto's great books, which I tried with much success, was Goal Reading. By this I mean to write down your goal for your upcoming workout on an index card. Say it's 300 x 5. Write it down, carry it around and read it to yourself throughout the day. This technique will condition your mind to accomplish your goal and, when the time comes, your body will follow. Good old mind over matter applies here people, so let's get Benching!

Please Note: Before performing this or any other athletic program, please consult your physician.

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Mechanics Of The Bench Press

How many times have you walked into the gym to see guys bench pressing who insist on letting the bar come crashing down like a ton of bricks, only to bounce it off their chests while kicking their legs around in ways Bruce Lee would envy? These are the same guys that have a training partner with traps the size of mountains. I've seen it often and have come to two conclusions. Either these people are performing suicidal acts or they are not aware how to properly perform a bench press. If this is you, swallow your pride and put on a weight you can handle by yourself without having your partner doing a shrug. In this section we will analyze the Bench Press from the start.

Before we even attempt a Bench Press, we must learn how to properly position our bodies on the Bench. There are many different styles and set ups but one thing must be certain in all of them and that is *proper body placement*. This means always be sure to align your body evenly on the bench. Try digging your shoulder blades into the bench after gripping the bar. I have experienced and seen many lifters miss attempts that were well within range due to balance problems. Foot placement and grip placement are two major concerns for developing that big Bench Press, which often go overlooked. Without proper foot placement you may be giving away anywhere from 15-30 lbs. in Bench Press strength. Grip placement differs from person to person depending on body structure, etc. World records have been broken with close grips as well as wide grips.

Your grip is something that should be experimented with during light training days. For instance, if you're extremely strong off the chest, but have problems locking out (as I do), a wider grip may be the answer. If you believe your triceps and shoulders have superior strength, as compared to your chest, than a closed grip may be the answer. Another option is the false grip as opposed to a closed grip. I have found that there are many differences between these two grips, in several areas.

The first difference is pressure is distributed to different parts of the body in different percentages. You will feel a difference when switching from one grip to the other. When I was experiencing shoulder problems, I found that the false grip placed less of a strain on the part of the shoulder that was bothersome to me. Anyone with shoulder problems might want to give it a try, but remember to start off light, very light. Another difference between these grips is your groove on bar path, when switching from one to the other, will feel different so be careful. The Bench Press requires more than just a strong chest and triceps. Many people fail to realize that, if performed correctly, every muscle from your heels to your arms can be utilized when performing a legal Bench Press. Let's go back to foot placement.

Your feet should be a solid foundation both glued to the floor and pushed through the floor throughout the drive phase of the lift. Once the Press signal is given, push those feet through the floor and squeeze out your lats. After grabbing the bar and setting your body evenly on the bench, set your feet to the sides of the bench in a spot where you feel the most tension throughout your body.

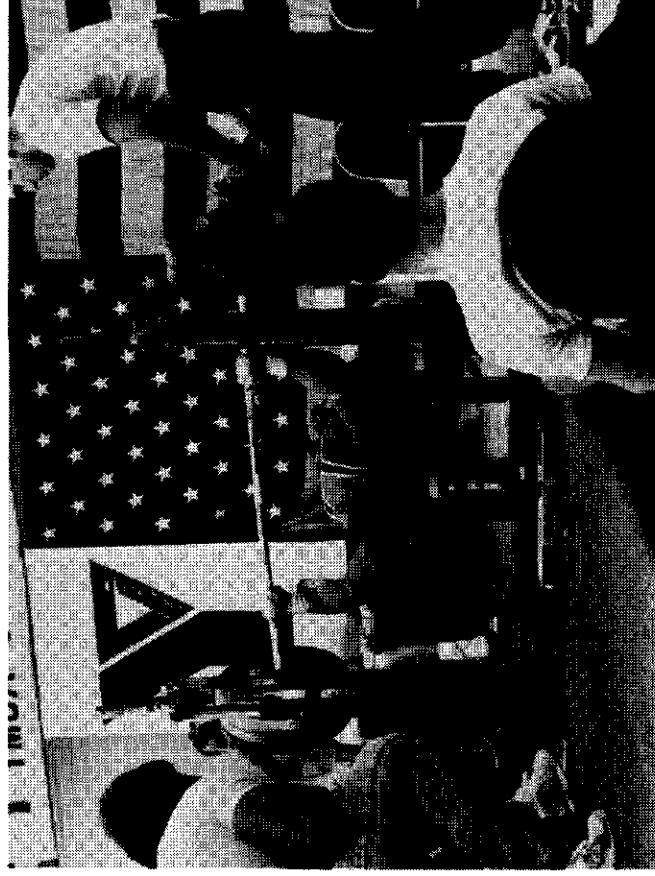
Foot placement is extra important for benchers with extreme back arches. Remember, without solid foot placement you will have problems employing your lats to assist that big Bench Press.

After getting our grip, bodies and feet set to bench we are now ready for a very crucial part of the lift; the descent of the bar. The descent of the bar can be the difference between a white light and a red one at the meet. Make sure to always stay in control of the bar when descending. Staying tight is the name of the game when it comes to successful Bench Pressing. Letting the bar come down too fast will add extra unwanted pounds to the lift and can really throw off your groove. The bar should be lowered like a coil spring, tightening every second with a sudden explosion upward after the judges pause.

Where should we land the bar? The best place to land the bar is in the mid to lower pectoral area at the nipple or below. Landing the bar high on the chest will diminish poundage on your lift and often throw off your groove. To fully utilize the chest, lats, and delts during the explosion the bar must be lowered to the mid to lower chest area. If and when you use a bench shirt this is of even more importance, otherwise, you will definitely lose your grip.

Now for the most crucial part of the lift; **THE DRIVE!** Now - you've just landed the bar nice and tight, on the perfect spot on your lower pec area and the judge says **press!** Let's squeeze that bar, drive the feet through the floor and explode with as much speed as possible as we attempt to throw that weight through the ceiling above!

The drive should be very explosive with an almost reckless type of aggression towards the bar while keeping your form throughout the lift. The initial drive should be straight up towards the ceiling, then at the $\frac{3}{4}$ mark drive it over your eyes. After smoking that lift in the contest, wait for the judges signal to rock it and then smile towards those white lights!



Contest Training

So, the meet is December 13th and today is September 13th. It's about that time to start getting your butt in gear for the big day. Generally, your contest cycle should start anywhere between 9-12 weeks before the meet day. That doesn't mean in the off-season you just suck down big beers and forget what a squat, bench or deadlift is! The kind of shape you are in will gauge how long your training cycle ought to be. If you did forget about lifting (for a short time, of course) and indulged in big beers, wild women and who knows what else, give yourself a little extra time to build back your base. But, if you are rock hard and ready to pound the iron, be careful not to drag the cycle on too long for fear of the old "burnout" or "bombout" syndrome. I have experienced both and believe me, they aren't much fun.

Start the cycle with sets of five repetitions as shown in the ten week cycle. I believe anything over five repetitions is just a waste of time to a seasoned powerlifter, such as yourself. Unless, of course, you're main goal at the contest is to be the most ripped lifter, which definitely indicates your confusion about which sport you are involved in, in which case you may as well throw this book out NOW. Following the routine, stay with sets of five for a couple of weeks. then down to sets of four, then triples, then doubles.

Every week the goal is to add weight without overtraining. If you don't have the power on a particular day, back off. By the same token, if your big set of the day was too easy, throw some more weight on the bar for extra muscle stimulation.

I believe warming up to two heavy sets per workout is sufficient without inviting our nemesis, overtraining. Assistance work is of vital importance and should be used wisely and trained with very high intensity. Remember, stop all assistance work at the last two weeks of your cycle.

Equipment And Use

During the training cycle I have a different view from most on when to use equipment. I believe when training for your meet, all equipment should be utilized throughout the entire training cycle. If you wear a bench shirt and wrist wraps in the meet, try using them from day one during your next cycle. Throwing that shirt on a week before the contest like some lifters claim to do can really throw off your groove. The bench shirt makes the lifter incorporate a different groove than without it and it will take time to adjust, so, throw it on early.

Another benefit in my eyes is if you can bench heavier with the shirt and handle heavier reps; why not train heavier? Try training with the shirt and you stand a better chance of being in one piece at the cycles end.

Confessore 10 Week Bench Cycle

Week 1 warm up to 2 sets of 5 then 1 set of 8-10 at 60%
Week 2 warm up to 2 sets of 5 increasing weight then 1 set 8-10 at 60%
Week 3 warm up to 2 sets of 4 increasing weight then 1 set 8-10 at 65%
Week 4 warm up to 2 sets of 4 increasing weight then 1 set 8-10 at 65%
Week 5 warm up to 2 sets of 4 increasing weight then 1 set 8-10 at 65%
Week 6 warm up to 2 sets of 3 increasing weight then 1 set 8-10 at 65%
Week 7 warm up to 1 set of 3 increasing weight then 1 set 8-10 65%
Week 8 warm up to 1 set of 2 then 1 set 8-10 65%
Week 9 warm up to 1 set of 2 then GO HOME & EAT
Week 10 - Opener or 93% of projected max

* All sets are to be done with max poundage each week

* If using Bench shirt - to be used all ten weeks except for light sets

* All assistance work to be dropped at end of week 8

* BENCH IS TO BE TRAINED ONCE PER WEEK!!!

MONDAY BENCH PRESS - follow cycle . Dumbell Bench Press 3 sets
Of 6-8 or ISO-Bench Press (*Alternate each week) 3 sets of 6 then
Pec-Deck 3 sets of 8-10 reps to flush blood into Pec area

MONDAY - Biceps - Preacher Curls - 4 sets of 8 reps.
Seated Dumbell Curls - 3 sets of 6-8 reps. Concentration Curls - 3 sets
of 8-10 reps.

TUESDAY - All leg work

WEDNESDAY- Off Day

THURSDAY - Shoulder & Triceps - Close Grip Bench Press - warm
up to 3 sets of 6 (could act like bench) Shoulder Press - 3 sets of 6
reps then Triceps Pushdown - 4 sets of 6-8 reps then Reverse One
Arm Pushdown - 3 sets of 6-8 then Front Dumbell Raise - 3 sets of
6-8 reps then Any Rear Delt Movement - 3 sets of 6-8.

FRIDAY - Back - Deadlift - 3 sets of 6 reps or Dumbell Row - 3 sets
of 6-8 reps then Reverse Grip Pulldown (hands about 8 inches apart)
3 sets of 8 reps then Seated Cable Row - 3 sets of 6-8 then Pulldowns
to the Back - 3 sets of 8 reps.

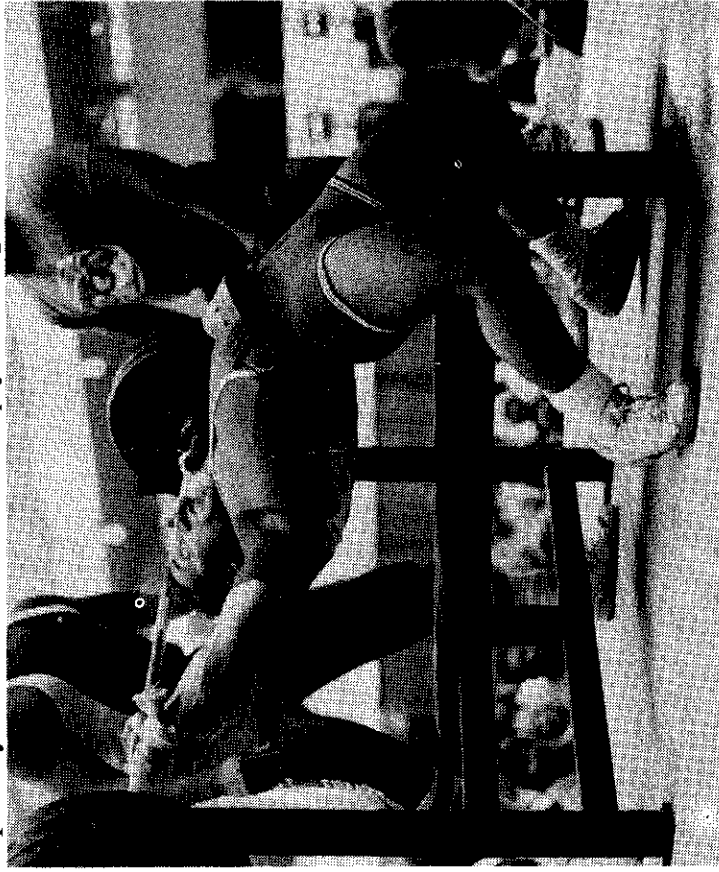
Saturday & Sunday - Off Days. Eat, Relax and Enjoy Life.

Remember, every body part is to be trained only once per week so be
sure to have very high intensity workouts. Recuperation is the key to
strength.

So You Want To Try A Single

So, you want to try a heavy single. If you are feeling like Superman and just smoked your best triple ever without blinking an eye, go for it! But, a heavy single is just that, not a maximum attempt. For instance, you just smoked 300 lbs. for a smooth three reps on the bench and now you feel pumped for more iron. Let's not throw on 350 and pray to get it. Put on a more reasonable 330 lbs. and smoke it for one easy rep. Heavy singles are good maybe every 3-4 weeks or to just to get the feel of the heavier weights. Be extremely careful when performing singles. They are very taxing on the body and can easily lead to overtraining or injury.

The toll singles take on the body is very rough while they really do not feel tiring at all, so be very careful. I have always enjoyed working up to a heavy single around week 7 of my cycles, but never a max! So remember, a single within your capability once in a while will keep you having fun.



Assistance For Your Bench Press

There are so many articles written by so many experts about Bench Press routines. Which one's for you? No one knows what routine is perfect for anyone, but you can be guided in the right direction with the help of this book and a few good exercises. Assistance work is a vital key to a strong Bench Press, but how much? When? What Exercises?

The season should determine how much and how often assistance exercises should be done. During the off-season, we can get away with bombing those triceps, pecs, lats and shoulders about twice weekly. During our competition season it would be more efficient to perform all assistance work once per week. Train that assistance work with the same intensity as you do that big Bench Press. The reason for cutting all assistance work to once per week is to ensure full recuperation from these heavy workouts.

Recuperation is the Key to Power. Try cycle training some of your heavy assistance movements with your Bench Press. For instance, if I was in week 4 or so in my cycle and I did a heavy triple in the Bench Press, I might go for a set of 4 or so in my close grips, etc. Assistance work can be done up to the last two weeks if you feel injury free.

If you are nursing an injury or feel like you are burning out, cut down or cut out assistance work to help your body recuperate. Always listen to your body for warning signals to avoid overtraining. Knowing when to perform assistance work is extremely important to your progress. Spread out assistance work to avoid overtraining. In other words do not train chest and shoulders on a Monday and come back the next day and bomb your triceps. When training chest and shoulders you are also indirectly bombing your triceps, so train triceps on a day later in the week to avoid overtraining.

Here are a few examples of productive assistance work for the Bench Press:

Half Bench Press - this is great for explosion off the chest

Iso-Metric Bench Press - great for any sticking point

Close Grip Bench Press - a must for triceps power

Reverse Grip Bench Press - great for triceps stimulation

Front Press - great for upper Pec-Deltoid development. A must for good explosion

Power Rack - great for heavy lockouts

Front Deltoid Raise - strengthens front deltoids

Barbell Curls - strengthens biceps and forearms for stability when benching

Front Pullups & Pulldowns - develops strong lats to help that bench

Staying Healthy - Injury Prevention

His arms steadied against the massive steel, and he slowly lowered the bar toward his barrel chest. Then there was a split second *RIP!* Was it his shirt? No, not this time. Looks like another powerlifting injury rears its big ugly head. That was the heartrending scene I witnessed at the APF Senior Nationals a few years ago. One unlucky competitor tore his pec during his second attempt Bench Press. Why did this happen? Was it too much weight? Was he overtrained? Was he dehydrated to the point of injury? Did he suck too much weight? We will never know the answer but we can cut down our chances of injury and still make maximum gains.

After being the victim of two minor shoulder surgeries, I have looked back at some of the reasons that definitely contributed to these minor misfortunes and setbacks. Let's see, it could have been benching heavy and maximum shoulder presses twice a week that led to my problems, or was it hitting every Bench Press competition on this side of the equator? This kind of brutal overtraining took its toll on me and will make you its next victim if you train this way. Whether you are the "young and the restless" or the "old and impotent", your body cannot withstand a secure heavy training program without sufficient time to recuperate.

The newcomers to the sport are ever so hungry to train six days a week, twice a day, to fulfill their hunger. To those lifters, TRY BODYBUILDING OR BEWARE! Sure, you will make gains at the start, but time will slow down this progress if you don't have the know-how to train wisely.

If you really want to live at the gym become a bodybuilder or, even better, buy the gym. For most of us four days in the gym is the maximum for complete recovery while some of the champions only train twice a week with great results.

Always listen to your body for signs of overtraining, but also take the time to evaluate on paper the training load you have been handling. Our bodies are not a fail safe barometer to beat overtraining so use your brains.

Before injuring my shoulder I was training heavy week in and week out. I felt great, showing no signs of overtraining, but I was walking that fine line between overtraining and injury. Unfortunately, I fell into the injury zone. It is a good idea to keep track of all your training poundage and habits throughout the year, so you can monitor when to go heavier or lighter, no matter how your body feels. This good habit could save you a lot of lost time due to overtraining or even save your lifting career. If you do feel you are at the point of overtraining or injury take some time to readjust your training.

If you are exhausted and aching take off a few days and start to back off a little with your poundage until you feel revived, then gradually increase the weight accordingly. If you have a minor injury that rest does not take care of and you still have to train for an upcoming meet try training around the problem area. If the pain or injury is still causing problems, forget that meet and get healthy for one of the many meets you will have in the future. Do not turn a minor injury into a career ending injury because of stupidity. Rest your body. Stay away from the movements that hurt the injury the most and try to incorporate some new exercises that put less stress on that area.

Try different grips on your exercises which might also place less stress on the problem area. I've found that the old phrase "No Pain..No Gain" does not apply when it comes to injuries.

Be careful with minor injuries so they don't become major. On the other hand, do not get confused between injury and good old muscle soreness. The latter is bound to happen when training hard-n-heavy.

When inflammation occurs in any area apply ice to those muscles as soon as possible. Never heat the inflamed area. Always use ice to bring down swelling. Advil and ice have done wonders for the aches and pains I have experienced after one of my heavy workouts. If constant inflammation occurs, consult your doctor; possibly a sports orthopedic. Train hard but train smart.



Off Season Bench Training

The off-season is a very crucial time for the powerlifter. At this time we can evaluate our progress and analyze our weaknesses. After realizing what the weak link in our Bench Press is, we can now target that area with specific assistance movements. For example, if our benches are flying off the chest, but stalling at the top, we must assume our triceps are the weak link. This does not mean that because you always miss a bench press at the top that your triceps are the weak link. If the bar is not getting sufficient explosion off the chest area and you miss it at the top the problem is really the beginning of the lift or the chest-deltoid region, not the triceps. So analyzing our weak link as the triceps area, we must now focus much of our energy to develop big, strong triceps power.

To do this, give triceps their own day and make sure not to have this day fall before Bench day, or the day after Bench day. In other words, do not Bench Monday and train triceps Tuesday or train triceps Monday and Bench Tuesday.

Going back to the chapter on Assistance work, you will see a few good triceps builders. One of the most effective is the Close Grip Bench Press with the width of your grip at approximately 10-12 inches apart. Gripping any closer will do nothing, but cause elbow and wrist trouble. Making this a main triceps exercise perform it first, then go on to other triceps exercises. Let's do 5 sets with a pause 6-8 reps. Next, could be Triceps Pushdowns, 4 sets of 6-8 reps with 45 second rest intervals. Next, let's do one arm Reverse Triceps Pushdowns for 4 sets of 6-8 reps again with 45 second rest intervals. Last but not least let's do Nosebreakers or Triceps Extensions with the curl bar for 3 sets of 6-8 reps resting 2 minutes between sets. Now, this may sound like a lot but we will only do this once per week with insane intensity and make those triceps grow during this off-season.

If explosion off the chest seems to be your sticking point on the Bench Press, pay close attention. After Bench Pressing try a movement called the Half Bench. Set up the same as for a Bench Press and drive the bar only about 6-8 inches off your chest area with a pause before each repetition. This movement will help add explosion to that Bench Press by isolating your pectoral-deltoid area stimulating growth and strength like never before. Do 4 sets of 6-8 reps and concentrate in driving that bar with great explosion after each pause. Flat Dumbbell Benches are also great for Bench Press power if performed correctly.

The best way to perform this movement is to perform it as close to that regular Bench Press as possible. In other words, set your feet, keep the dumbbells gripped like the barbell bench and bring them down slow and in control. Once down to the chest area, drive them up with great explosion.

Be sure to always stay in control and stay tight. A big Bench Press needs a big back to stabilize the heavy load and act as a foundation for the Bench. You must develop your back to help carry the load. Without a strong upper back you are giving away many wanted pounds in the Bench. In this off-season, try starting with semi-wide grip pull-ups, palms facing outward of your body. Try doing approximately 3 sets of 10 if possible. Add weight if you need to by using a dip belt or other apparatus. When doing pull-ups, do not swing your body and try pushing your elbows behind your back. When pulling your body up, this will ensure more isolation to the back area and less work on the arms. Remember, we are working back here, not biceps.

Next, do Seated Cable Rows, 4 sets of 8-10. When doing this exercise, as well as most back exercises, remember to push your elbows passed your back and squeeze your shoulder blades. Again, do not pull the weight with your arms and stay in control. Never swing the whole body into the exercise. If you feel most of the pressure is being channeled into your biceps, lower the weight and let your lats grow.

Next, try One Arm Dumbbell Rows with one knee on a bench for 3 sets. If you feel you can go heavier with straps, you can do so, but try not to become dependent on straps. If this happens you will lose the power in your grip. Grip the dumbbell and pull up in control. Squeeze your elbow behind your back and hold it for a second or two between repetitions.

Last, do some good old Pulldowns Behind the Back for 4 sets of 8 repetitions using the same form, pushing the elbows (not pulling) the arms behind the back. This will be plenty of back work during the off-season and your back will be ready for battle in the upcoming Bench Pressing season.

Shoulders play a very important role in exploding that Bench Press upward. Here are some great movements to shoulder up that Bench Press. Seated Dumbbell Press or Behind the Neck Presses are two great movements that could be used to start your shoulder workout. I suggest one or the other on shoulder day. Both of these combined will cause overtraining in time. Do 4 sets of 6-8 repetitions, staying tight on the descent of the bar or dumbbell and then be explosive when driving the weight upward. These are great exercises and build great power.

Next, try Front Dumbbell Raises. This exercise is a great front deltoid builder; a very important muscle for the Bench Press. Take the dumbbell, face palms down and slowly bring the weight up to shoulder height. Never swing or throw the dumbbells upward. Stay slow and deliberate and keep your arm straight. Do 4 sets of 8 repetitions.

These exercises along with close grip benches, flat benches, etc. are enough to develop big, strong shoulders. Big biceps are not a must for a big Bench Press, but strong ones are a plus to help support the descent of Bench Press. So, develop strong biceps by performing with good old basic curling exercises. Start off with 3 sets of Straight Bar Curls with repetitions in the 6-8 range.

Always perform strict curl movements. No swinging the whole body into the movements. Now, try 3 sets of Curl Bar Curls for 6-8 repetitions, squeezing every rep at the top. Next, 3 sets of Seated Dumbbell Curls for 6-8 repetitions.

Lastly, perform 3 strict sets of Dumbbell Concentration Curls, flexing that bicep at the end of each repetition. Now that we have gone over a good off-season training routine, don't forget to continue to listen to your body and don't burn out!

Sample Off Season Program (continued)

Sample Off Season Program

DAY 1

Monday - Chest & Biceps
C Flat Bench Press - 4 sets of 5-8 repetitions
H Half Bench Press - 4 sets of 8-10 repetitions
E Dumbell Bench Press - 4 sets of 8 repetitions
S Dumbell Fly or Pec Deck - 3 sets of 8-10 repetitions
T

A Straight Bar Curl - 3-4 sets of 6-8 repetitions
R Curl Bar Curls - 3 sets of 8 repetitions
M Seated Dumbell Curls - 3 sets of 8 repetitions
S Concentration Curls - 3 sets of 6-8 repetitions

DAY 2

Tuesday - Legs. All leg work.

Day 3

Thursday - Shoulders & Triceps
C Close Grip Bench Press - 5 sets of 6-8 repetitions
S Seated Dumbell Press or Military Press - 4 sets of 6 repetitions
T Triceps Pushdown - 4 sets of 6-8 repetitions
R Reverse Triceps Pushdown - 4 sets of 6-8 repetitions
T Triceps Extension - 3 sets of 6-8 repetitions
F Front Deltoid Raise - 4 sets of 6-8 repetitions

Day 4

Friday - *Deadlift & Back
*Deadlifts may be replaced by Bend Over Row
Deadlift - work up to 3 sets of 6-8 repetitions
Pullups - 3 sets of 10 repetitions
Seated Cable Rows - 4 sets of 8-10 repetitions
One Arm Dumbell Row - 3 sets of 6-8 repetitions
Pulldowns to Front or Back - 4 sets of 8 repetitions

Power Rack = RESULTS

So, that awesome Bench Press has finally become as stale as that first pair of knee wraps that you have sitting at the bottom of your gym bag. Not to worry, let's start to evaluate our training.

Are you injured or overtrained, under-nourished, undersexed, etc.? If the answer is Yes to any one of these, except the last, this manual has touched on it. If the answer is No, let's hit the power rack and get ROCKIN'! Power rack training has been used and abused since the early 1960's by all the legends. For some reason, a majority of the lifters today seem to have forgotten about this extremely potent cure to our sticking point. Now take a flat bench and simply place it inside a power rack. Laying on the bench, set up the pins to the height which is approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of your lockout. Now, set the second pair of pins just above your chest. Place an empty Power Bar on top of your bottom pins and lie on the bench placing your body in the exact same position as your regular flat bench.

Using your Bench Press grip, push the bar upward into the upper pins, touching the pins. Push with everything you have and hold that fire for approximately 5 seconds. Do 3 sets of 5 here. Remember, do not slam the bar into these pins unless you're looking to get injured.

It is a good idea to obtain a cylindrical piece of styrofoam or rubber to fit around the pin to absorb any vibrations and ensure the bar does not slide while driving into the pins. Now set the pins at the halfway point of the Bench Press and repeat this process for 2 sets of 5. Be sure to breathe during this exercise and go all out once touching those pins.

When should you do these? Because of the extreme pain and abuse this exercise can cause, try these every two or three weeks after the heavy Bench workout. It is a good idea to wear wrist wraps when performing this barbaric routine due to extreme pressure on the wrist area. Remember, there are no weights being used here, just the power rack itself.

If your gym's power rack is not bolted to the floor, as ours is, you will need people to stand on the rack to keep it from falling due to the tremendous force of yours! If it is bolted down, see who can get kicked out of the gym first for tearing the bolts from the ground!

This exercise is very easy to overtrain on so, remember, only try this every 2 to 3 weeks. My training partners and myself have seen tremendous results performing this exercise, so GO FOR IT!

General Diet

This diet is much like the detoxifying diet, but allows some dairy products and more protein for breakfast and lunch. It is a good general diet and is equally good for hypoglycemia, arthritis and many other conditions. It basically eliminates refined carbohydrates and substitutes fruit for desserts. In general eat all of the fruits and vegetables you need to comfortably fill you up, but do not overeat. Fruit juices during the day are good refreshments.

It is impractical to expect any one to strictly adhere to his/her diets, so don't feel bad if you occasionally feel the urge to have a favorite dish of ice cream, a soft drink or pastry. Try to stick to your diet at least 75 to 80 percent of the time and all should go well.

Breakfast Selected From: (include one from each group)

1. Quality Protein
 - a) Eggs (1 or 2)
 - b) Yogurt (at least ½ cup)
 - c) Cheese (2-3 ounces)
 - d) Cottage cheese (at least ½ cup)
2. Fresh Fruit
Choose your favorites individually, or combine them in a fruit salad and they can be mixed with the yogurt or cottage cheese.
3. Whole Wheat Bread
One-half or whole slice, if desired. Butter in moderation is okay.

General Diet (continued)

Mid-Morning Snack:

Can be fresh fruit, nuts, seeds or a combination of all of them. Eat only as much as necessary to quench the appetite.

Lunch Selected From: (should be the big meal of the day)

1. Protein
Can be fish, fowl or red meat, but the red meat should be limited to 2 times per week. Cottage cheese, brown rice or eggs can be substituted for meals if desired. Avoid smoked meats such as ham, bacon and sausage.
2. Vegetables
A large salad would be best, but lightly cooked vegetables and a small salad is okay. Salad dressings and butter as desired in moderation.
3. Whole wheat bread (as for breakfast)
4. Fresh fruit as dessert

Mid-Afternoon Snack:

Same as mid-morning snack

Dinner Selected From: (should be a fairly small meal)

1. Vegetables lightly cooked and/or salad
2. Fresh fruit, can be a salad or individual fruits
3. Pasta (2 cups cooked)

Before Bed Snack: (if hungry)

Should be only fresh fruit

Food Substitutions

- If you must use a sweetener, raw unprocessed honey is an excellent one. Honey may be used in place of refined sugar for jams, jellies, preserves, homemade ice cream and all pastries. If there is a glucose problem, granulated fructose is a perfect substitute for honey or sucrose, and may be used as you would sucrose.
- Condiments such as catsup, mustard, etc. can be used in moderation if they contain natural ingredients with no preservatives.
- Kelp or "Vegit" replaces the desire of salt (found in health food stores).
- Raw Nuts for snacks.
- All natural brown rice (long or short grain) or wild rice.
- Granola containing natural ingredients (no sugar or preservatives).
- Millet (hot cereal), 100 percent oatmeal, wheat germ, raw bran and many others.
- Bake, broil or steam your foods instead of frying.
- "Crude" or "cold-pressed" vegetable oils which are high in poly-unsaturated fats: Safflower, corn, peanut, soy, all-blend, etc. (from a health food store). They should be refrigerated to prevent rancidity.
- Butter used in moderation. Raw, unsalted is best.
- 100 percent peanut butter and other nut butters. Grind your own or shop in a health food store.
- Look for unsalted, non-hydrogenated oils.

Food Substitutions (continued)

- Coffee substitutes: There are several substitutes which taste very similar to coffee which contain all natural ingredients. Also, there is a great assortment of herb teas available to replace commercial tea which contains tannic acid.
- Fresh, raw juices are a great substitution for alcoholic beverages. Not only are they healthful, but they give you a natural high with no hang-over.
- Good substitutions for lunch meats might include avocado, cheese, a good quality tuna, fresh natural poultry, etc.
- Try making your own homemade soups. They are much more delicious and nutritious. Natural food cookbooks have numerous recipes.
- Use 100 percent whole grain breads to replace white bread. Whole wheat flour or whole wheat pastry flour can be used for all baking.
- Always try to eat fresh vegetables, salads and fruit. When food is recooked, warmed over, or has been sitting in the refrigerator for a few days, enzymes are destroyed as well as many vitamins and minerals. Therefore, you are consuming food with little or no nutritive value.

Guidelines For Weight Loss

1. Eat a lot of high fiber foods - you will chew more and eat more slowly, giving your body time to regulate your appetite. Also, fiber rich foods absorb and hold water and are therefore more satisfying in smaller amounts. Examples are fruits, vegetables and whole grains, which are good sources of natural carbohydrates.
2. Decrease salt consumption and eliminate sugar. (both table and added forms of sugar). Eat a low-fat diet and avoid processed foods.
3. Don't skip meals - eat a nourishing breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks. The reasons are as follows: Blood sugar drops if you skip a meal, causing a loss of energy. Small, frequent meals cause the body to be less efficient at storing fat, causing increased fat loss, decreased cholesterol, and improved carbohydrate tolerance. If you go a long time between eating food, the body thinks it's being starved and conserves its energy. If you eat a lot of calories at one time, the body is more likely to change food into fat and store it.
4. Take it easy - gradual weight loss is better for you, and more likely to be permanent. If you starve yourself, the body's metabolic rate decreases and it is harder to utilize the foods you do eat.
5. Drink a lot of water- 6-8 glasses a day. Drink fluids between meals, not during meals. Otherwise you will have a bloated feeling, and only be hungry later if you don't eat. Don't chew gum or suck on lifesavers, etc. because it stimulates the salivary glands, and can make you hungry.
6. Some good eating habits to get into are: Eat sitting down, at the table and relax. Serve restaurant style with portions. Limit eating to one place - i.e. kitchen or dining room table. Allow time between courses, especially between the entree and dessert.

Guidelines For Weight Loss (continued)

7. Eat on a regular timetable that is convenient and stick to it. Plan your meals and snacks - don't let them become an accident.
8. Shopping - take a shopping list, and don't shop for food on an empty stomach. The more natural foods you buy, the better. Make sure your environment isn't hazardous to your health - i.e. foods sitting out or easily available aren't good for you.
9. Weigh yourself once a week, the same time each day, preferably before breakfast, without clothes.
10. Exercise. Exercise burns up calories and puts your appetite on hold. It will also increase your metabolic rate. Do aerobic exercise everyday if possible, but at least 4 times a week.
11. Attitude is important. Keep and image in your mind of yourself as slim, energetic, younger looking. Don't think of yourself as being on a diet - it is an eating program, a change in lifestyle. It doesn't have to make you miserable - consider it a challenge to come up with satisfying meals. Be creative.

Reducing Fat Intake

1. Increase your intake of fruits, vegetables and whole grains as these are low in fat.
2. Cut down on red meats (beef, pork, lamb and veal), and substitute fowl and fish. When you eat chicken, remove skin, which contains most of the fat. When you eat fish, choose less oily varieties, like flounder, sole, haddock and halibut. Buy tuna packed in water, not oil.
3. Avoid processed foods. When you prepare your own foods, you know exactly what goes into it.
4. Read labels and be alert for hydrogenated or partially hardened fats and oils. Natural peanut butter, made from ground peanuts and nothing else, is not hydrogenated: most mass-produced peanut butters are.
5. Use low-fat dairy products - cottage cheese, skim or low-fat milk, low-fat yogurt.
6. When you eat out, be wary. Fast food restaurants offer a virtual transfusion of fats. Fried foods in classier eateries aren't any better.
7. Do not overindulge in treats like ice cream, pastries and chocolate bars. They are all high in fats.
8. Do not eliminate good foods that are high in fat like nuts and cheeses, but use in moderation.
9. Use butter instead of margarine, but use in moderation.
10. Use Teflon II or similar cookware so you do not have to use oils to cook or fry foods.
11. Chill all soups and stews with a beef or poultry base, and all potted meat and poultry dishes, to remove congealed fat that rises to the top of the container. Then pour stock through several thicknesses of cheese cloth to collect any remaining fat.

Reducing Fat Intake (continued)

12. When there is no time to chill cooked foods to remove fat, drop several ice cubes in the pot and remove the cubes and the fat that congeals on them, or you can try removing surface fat with a turkey baster, then strain through several layers of cheese cloth.
13. If 100 percent uncreamed cottage cheese is unavailable, look for cottage cheese up to 1 percent fat by weight, or rinse creamed cottage cheese in colander until water runs clear.
14. Experiment with hamburger patties to stretch them with vegetables and rice.
15. Make your own nonfat yogurt or nonfat buttermilk with a lowfat commercial starter. Afterwards, always save homemade yogurt or buttermilk to serve as a starter for the next batch.

Current All Time Bench Press Records

AS OF JUNE 10, 1994

MEN

114 lb. class
123 lb. class
132 lb. class
148 lb. class
165 lb. class
181 lb. class
198 lb. class
220 lb. class
242 lb. class
275 lb. class
SHW class

Andrzej Stanoscek (Poland) - 347.2 lbs.
Rick Couch (USA) - 370 lbs.
Doug Heath (USA) - 405 lbs.
David Bullock (USA) - 470.7 lbs.
Scott Werner (USA) - 500 lbs.
CHRIS CONFESSORE (USA) - 562.2 lbs.
Julian Lee (USA) - 600.8 lbs.
CHRIS CONFESSORE (USA) - 662 lbs
CHRIS CONFESSORE (USA) - 684 lbs
Craig Tokarski (USA) - 703.3 lbs.
Ken Lain (USA) - 722 lbs.



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