

WORKOUT OF THE MONTH

Joe Ceklovsky's 4 x bodywt. BP Plan as told to *Powerlifting USA* by Tim Ferriss



Joe Ceklovsky drove up a world all time best 520 at 148 in Feb. 2005

"Then I do overhead triceps extensions with a 130 lb. dumbbell for 8-10 reps." Joe added nonchalantly. I paused and took a second to digest what I'd heard. Doesn't he only weigh 147 lbs.?

Joe Ceklovsky, age 31, is the best bench presser you've never heard of. Quiet and reserved, more than a few have missed his meteoric rise to the top of the lifting world. Six years ago, when he started training at 113 lbs. bodyweight, his bench was a respectable 175. Three months later, after consuming 20x his bodyweight in calories daily and a following a program of basics — 6-8 rep sets of bench, squat, deadlifts, weighted dips, and dumbbell triceps extensions — he topped off at a lean 142 lbs and was ready to take the stage. On February 19th 2005, with only three meets spread over one and a half years, he broke Markus Schick's all-time bench press record at 147.5 lbs. by locking out an unprecedented 520 lbs. In 2006, Joe is aiming for 550 and the seemingly mythical quadruple bodyweight bench. How could this all happen in such a short period of time? He took time to explain it all.

This article includes all three facets of his regimen: technique, nutrition and supplements, in addition to exact workout exercises and poundages.

Joe is a bench specialist and no longer performs squats, due to the stress they place on the elbows, nor deadlifts. He focuses instead on primarily triceps training and technique, in addition to building leg

drive with squat alternatives.

The weekly regimen is: **Mondays:** Bench Press; **Tuesdays:** Legs; **Wednesdays:** Off; **Thursdays:** Arms; **Fridays:** Back and Shoulders; **Saturdays:** Off; **Sundays:** Off

Joe's daily nutritional schedule on training days is simple and consistent: **7am:** wake; **7:15am:** protein shake; **(7:30am-5pm):** work; **9:15am:** yogurt and oatmeal; **12:15pm:** cold cut sandwich; **3:15pm:** protein shake; **5pm:** work ends; **5:30pm:** protein shake or sandwich (light snack before workout); **Immediately post-workout:** protein shake; **Post-workout dinner:** pasta, chicken, steak, baked potato

Joe does not use many supplements, but there are two that he has used with consistent and dramatic improvements in recovery and performance: **BodyQUICK®** (Cognamine) as a pre-workout product and **Overdrive Gearman** protein powder as a meal replacement and post-workout product.

"I've been using BodyQUICK since before I broke the all-time record, and I would not work out without it. If I take three capsules with grapefruit juice about 30 minutes before a workout, not only do I move more weight, but I literally don't tire between sets. It's like your whole nervous system is upgraded."

"Overdrive Gearman protein is exactly what a protein should be: simple, pure, and effective. With the volume necessary for a record-breaking bench, protein is one of my

highest priorities, and this is the best product I have found for filling my high protein needs."

The bench press is reserved for Mondays following two days of complete rest. Joe's technical checklist for each lift is as follows:

1. Set grip width with bar rings between the middle and ring fingers
2. Roll shoulders back and place the trapezius, not rear deltoids, on the bench for maximum elevation and arch
3. Walk feet towards the bar and underneath body until they are under the hips and the heels are approximately 6" apart. Joe does not set the feet first and then slide the hips forward, but does exactly the opposite.
4. Ensure that the glutes are in full contact with the bench prior to the hand off
5. Perform every lift, including warm-ups, with the "press" and "rack" commands from your training partner. It is critical to train under contest conditions, which corrects two primary errors of bench press athletes: beating the press command and losing control of the bar at full extension prior to the rack command.

The weight progression for three weeks from contest date is detailed below, with rest periods in parentheses. Notice how Joe tapers in maximum training weight as he approaches the scheduled meet.

Three weeks from contest, assuming a max attempt of 550 in the meet: 135 x 12 (30s.), 185 x 10 (30s.), 225 x 8 (30s.), 255 x 5 (30s.), 275 x 2. Add shirt — Joe uses only Inzer gear after an equipment failure with a max PR attempt. Using three 2x4 boards vertically on the chest: 315 x 3 (2 min.), 365 x 2 (2 min.). Using two 2x4 boards vertically on the chest: 405 x 1 (2 min.), 440 x 1 (5 min.), 520 x 1.

For two weeks out, the last set of 520 is dropped to 515 and then again to 500 the last Monday workout prior to the Saturday meet. Joe will only train up to his opening lift in the week prior to competition. Incline dumbbell press: 4 sets of 8 reps, 100 lbs. (2 min.). (Alternated with Hammer plate-loaded flat bench).

TUESDAYS - LEGS: Cybex Leg-Press (Feet parallel and 3" apart, bringing knees to chest): 400 x 12 (1.5 min.), 600 x 12 (1.5 min.), 800 x 10 (2 min.), 1000 x 10 x 2 sets (4 min.), 1100 x 10 x 2 sets (4 min.); Icarian Hacksquat (Thighs to parallel): 145 x 10 x 2 sets (3 min.), 195 x 10 (4 min.), 315 x 10 x 3 sets (4 min.); Leg extension: 60 x 10 (warm-up), 140 x 12 x 4 sets (4 min.)

THURSDAY - ARMS: Dips with Weighted Belt: BW x 12 x 3 sets (1 min.), 90 x 10 (1.5 min.), 135 x 10 (3 min.), 160 x 10 (4 min.), 170 x 8 (4 min.), 180 x 6. Dips are alternated weekly with board extensions using three 2 x 4 boards for lock-out development. The same rest progression for Monday is used: 135 x 12 x 2 sets, 225 x 10, 275 x 10, 315 x 8 x 2 sets, 340 x 5, 365 x 3, 375 x 2, 365 x 1 x 2 sets; Dumbbell Triceps Extension behind Head with Two Hands: 80 x 12 (1

min.), 100 x 10 (1 min.), 120 x 10 x 2 sets (2 min.), 130 x 8 x 2 sets (2 min.), 140 x 6 (DB extensions are alternated weekly with reverse-grip cable pressdowns for 4 sets of 10 reps); Seated Dumbbell Curls (non-incline, 1.5 min. rest between all): 25 x 10, 35 x 10 x 3, 40 x 10, 45 x 10; Straight Bar Curls (1.5 min. rest between all): 70 x 10, 100 x 10 x 2, 120 x 10; Hammer Preacher Curl (1.5 min. rest between all): 135 x 10 x 2, 185 x 10 x 2.

FRIDAY - BACK AND SHOULDERS: Unlike some bench specialists, Joe emphasizes NOT to direct much work to the shoulder musculature. "Don't go crazy. Conserve recovery ability for the bench." This is imperative for maximum performance on Mondays. Use 1.5 minute rest intervals for all exercises and sets. T-Bar Rows (performed by placing the end of an Olympic bar in a corner and using the V attachment for pull-downs): 90 x 12 x 2 sets (weight does not include weight of bar), 135 x 10, 180 x 10, 225 x 10, 250 x 8; Pull-downs to Chest using V Attachment (pause at chest): 80 x 10, 120 x 10, 160 x 10, 200 x 10; Hammer Row (weights indicated by poundages on either side): 90 x 10, 115 x 10, 135 x 10, 160 x 10 (Hammer Row is alternated weekly with DB rows: 100 x 6 x 1 set, 120 x 6 x 2 sets, 130 x 6 x 1 set); Dumbbell Front Raises: 20 x 10, 25 x 10, 30 x 10, 35 x 10, 40 x 10; Seated Dumbbell Lateral Raise (to 4" above parallel): 25 x 10, 30 x 10 x 2 sets, 35 x 10; Body Masier Reverse Pec Deck for Rear Deltoids: 40 x 10, 50 x 10, 60 x 10 x 2 sets; Dumbbell Shrugs: 70 x 15, 85 x 15, 100 x 15, 120 x 12.

This may be the first feature article about Joe Ceklovsky in PL USA, but it will certainly not be the last. He is built for benching and ready to take on the world, one pound at a time.

Timothy Ferriss is a guest lecturer at Princeton University, in addition to being a member of American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) and the Institute of Food Technologists. Additional interviews with world-class athletes and world champion powerlifters can be found at www.adaptagenix.com under "articles". He has been interviewed and featured in media worldwide, ranging from the New York Times to MAXIM magazine and MTV. Tim can be reached at timferriss@gmail.com



Joe Ceklovsky has found BodyQUICK to be beneficial in his training program. (T. Ferriss)