

The bench press requires more work than the squat and deadlift, the reason being the smaller muscles involved. In order for a lifter to reach his maximum potential in the bench press he must train his upper body utilizing an adequate amount of bodybuilding movements.

I've used the same basic bench press program for the last 8 years always emphasizing assistance work. Assistance exercises are important not only for added strength, but also for injury prevention. I bench press twice weekly with Tuesday being the light day and Friday the heavy day. The assistance exercises are the same for both days, the only difference being the assistance movements on the light day are 10% lighter. The exercises used are the following:

- Incline Press, 3x5 (shoulder width grip).
- Seated Military Press, 4x5
- Partial Close Grip Bench, 4x6 (done in power rack to pin set at 3" above chest with hands approximately 6" apart).
- Tricep Pushdowns, 3x8
- Dumbbell Curls, 3x8

On squat and deadlift days I work lats with front pulldowns to chest using an overhead pulley, 3 sets of 8 reps and bent rows with dumbbell - 3 sets of 8 reps.

The following program will be based on a hypothetical lifter with a cur-

WORKOUT of the Month

Rick Gaugler and His Record Breaking Bench Press Routine

rent max of 350 lbs. The training cycle will consist of 14 weeks using the unique cycling system I developed several years ago.

On light days use 75% of the max (350) for 4 sets of 5 reps, this light day will stay the same throughout the cycle using a 5 lb. increase every 5 weeks. In weeks 1 thru 8 the heavy days will consist of 3 sets of 3 reps using competition pauses. After these 3 sets drop 10 lbs. for 2 sets of 3 reps with 3 second pauses. The 3 second pauses are done with no arch or leg drive thereby putting all the stress required for an explosive start on the primary movers. (pecs, delts, triceps).

Do all lifts strictly! The bench presses and incline presses should be done with pauses. The first 8 weeks will go as follows: (based on max of 300 for 3 sets of 3 reps).

WK	LIGHT DAY	HEAVY DAY	3 SEC. PAUSES
1	260 4x5	265 3x3	245 2x3
2	260 4x5	280 3x3	260 2x3
3	260 4x5	295 3x3	275 2x3
4	260 4x5	310 3x3	290 2x3
5	265 4x5	270 3x3	250 2x3
6	265 4x5	285 3x3	265 2x3
7	265 4x5	300 3x3	280 2x3
8	265 4x5	315 3x3	295 2x3

For the last 6 weeks change to a program utilizing singles and doubles. The heavy day will consist of a single followed by a drop of 20 lbs. For 2 sets of 2 reps - these 3 sets are done with competition pauses. Then drop another 20 lbs. for 2x2 utilizing 3 second pauses. Remember the light day remains the same as well as the assistance movements. Push the assistance exercises as hard as possible on the heavy days throughout the

Rick Gaugler ...doing his thing in the bench press, where he has broken the world record before, on the day he set the world record in total at 165.

cycle. The peak bench press is done 2 weeks before the meet. On the last heavy day one week prior to the meet the weight used is 325 which is what would be used if a new cycle was being started. The normal light day is done on the week of the meet to maintain good muscle tone.

WK	LIGHT DAY	HEAVY DAY	3 SEC. PAUSES
9	270 4x5	320 1x1 300 2x2	280 2x2
10	270 4x5	335 1x1 315 2x2	295 2x2
11	270 4x5	350 1x1 330 2x2	310 2x2
12	270 4x5	365 1x2 345 2x2	325 2x2
13	275 4x5	325 1x1 305 2x2	285 2x2

14 275 4x5
Meet Attempts: 345, 365, 375-380

At the completion of this program you will have increased your bench press by at least 15 lbs. probably more. At the meet the opening attempt will be 345 which is what was used on the peak day for 2x2. The second attempt should be 365 and the third attempt go 375-380.

An added bonus of this program is the increased muscle mass gained throughout the upper body from the heavy weights used. This increase in mass will provide an excellent base to build on for future strength gains.

