

# 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 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 poundage in direct proportion. For example; if your lift is 400, and the 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 1.2 (600 divided by 500).**

## Shawn Lattimer Bench Workout



Shawn Lattimer benched 700 - drug tested - at the WNPFL New Jersey Championships. (Notaras photo)

This workout is for benchers. It's great for anybody who wants to bench better, and move more weight. I have seen several individuals make 20 to 30 pound increases in 10 weeks or less. That is regardless of whether you are a full meet lifter or a bench specialist. Of course, I'm a bench specialist, so I would be hard pressed to give you a great workout idea for squatting and deadlifting.

Before getting to the meat of the workout, I have one basic item to address. As a bench specialist, I have two basic rules, which combined with the right bench workout, will help any benchers:

**Rule #1 - Do squats.** Even if you never plan to compete in squats, or never wear shorts in your lifetime, etc. Squatting builds a lot of back and hip muscles that play directly into benching, and the natural anabolic effects of squatting have been documented for years.

**Rule #2 - Do deadlifts.** Same as Rule #1, the deadlift works many muscles that help with bench. This is especially important if you have a

big arch, you will need strong back muscles to maintain the arch.

I don't mean that you have to perform a grueling workout for legs twice a week. Work them at least every week. Deadlifts can be done once a week, or some people seem to do well every other week. You can use any program you like, but try to keep it moderately heavy - work in some heavy triples or doubles if you like. If you are already working your squats and deads, or you are a full meet lifter, you are already ahead of the game.

The workout I will describe below is designed for a competitive benchers of any weight class or experience, who uses a bench shirt. It doesn't matter what kind of shirt, although I highly recommend checking the rules of your federation and buying the highest performance shirt they will allow.

I will warn you now, this workout is intense, and will leave most people worn out and tired. Many people need some time to become accustomed to the work volume used. For the first week or so, some lifters may

have to use lighter weights in order to make it through the whole workout. Whatever you do, don't sell yourself short and skip anything. It will simply take time to increase your work capacity. I have workout partners ranging from new competitors at 17 years old to veteran competitors in their 40s using this workout with great success. This workout can be used in 8 to 12 week cycles, depending on the lifter's preference. I typically compete 4 times per year, so 10 week cycles usually work out best for me. Also, don't be afraid to take 1 or 2 weeks off during the cycle. When your body says you need time off, skip the heavy day. Some lifters actually take every 4th week off to rest.

You will need some basic equipment for this workout, including either an adjustable squat rack, a power cage, or some ingenuity. Boards for the board press can be made fairly cheaply. Some decent dumbbells and a cable machine are helpful for assistance exercises, but they are not a requirement.

outs, press the bar, hold for a 1 count, and drop the bar back to the pins. Do not try to lower the bar slowly. The negative portion of rack lockouts can cause injuries. 75% $\times$ 5, 80% $\times$ 3, 85% $\times$ 3, 95% $\times$ 2, 100% $\times$ 2.

Depending on your level of experience, and where your weak points are, the last two sets may be impossible when you start out. If you cannot do the last two sets, repeat the 85% $\times$ 3. Over time, you will become strong enough to finish these sets.

**Floor press -** Floor press requires lying on the floor near a low rack or inside of the power rack. The bar is lowered until the elbows touch the floor, the pressed back up. The percentages used here are percentages of your raw max. 50% $\times$ 5, 60% $\times$ 3, 65% $\times$ 3.

The floor press is great for people like me who have a weak spot in their bench about 4-6" below lockout. If you have never done a floor press before, choose slightly lower weights until you are used to this exercise.

**Saturday - assistance day:** Warm-up in the same manner as on the heavy day workout. All weights on this day are percentages of your raw max. Close grips - Use as close of a grip as you can use and still maintain bar control. 40% $\times$ 8, 50% $\times$ 6, 55% $\times$ 5.

**Board press -** Use a slightly narrower grip, approximately 2" narrower than your competition grip. I use several sets of boards made from stacks of 2x6 lumber. I have two exercises and do the following as heavy as possible: First Exercise: 3 sets of 6-8 reps, as heavy as possible. Second Exercise: 3 to 4 sets of 6 reps, as heavy as possible.

As with any routine, each individual will require some tailoring of the percentages to match the weights and exercises to his or her ability. It is not uncommon for a person's raw bench to decrease more detailed than what is above, and will include actual weights for each exercise based on the information you give me. Take information from the lifter, such as age, weight class, experience level, and what you have tried in the past, and you can videotape your workouts. I can also critique and make recommendations on form, analyze your strengths and weaknesses, and further customize routines for a small fee. Additionally, if you are in the Southern NJ/Philadelphia area or would like to visit the area, I can do one on one coaching for bench press. If you are interested, please contact me by e-mail at slattimer@yahoo.com.

Shawn Lattimer  
Bench Specialist - 810 lbs.

dips, overhead dumbbell skull crushers, JM presses, and lying triceps extensions. I mix and match these exercises from week to week. Pick two exercises and do the following as heavy as possible: First Exercise: 3 sets of 6-8 reps, as heavy as possible. Second Exercise: 3 to 4 sets of 6 reps, as heavy as possible.

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If you are preparing for a meet on this program, you should keep a couple things in mind. First, it is always a good idea to cut out some assistance movements as you near a meet. I tend to cut out the assistance day altogether 2 or three workouts before the meet. I always take 10 days off before a meet to rest. The recovery actually makes you stronger than the workouts

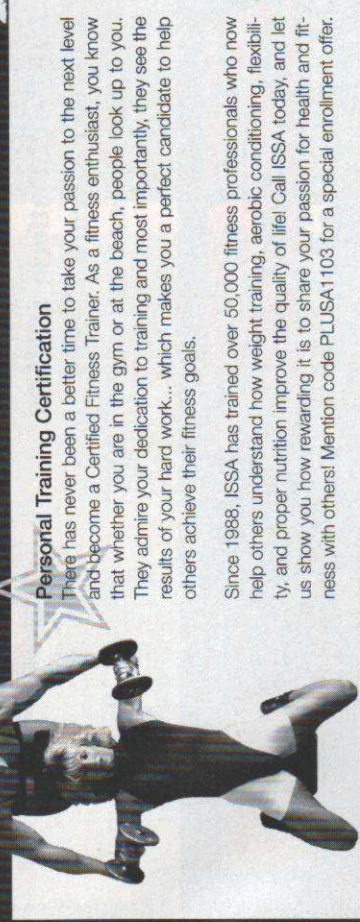
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