

Results speak louder than words! A PR Bench in a meet can be the greatest feeling a power lifter can feel, whether it's the IPF Worlds or a local meet. We all still seek the grail.

It's about Science. For years, we have read all of the theories out there on how to obtain the big three: size, strength, and power. Being open-minded to new ideas is a great way to obtain knowledge. However, without scientific backing for all of these theories, it just does not work. If you are a natural novice (which makes up most of the world's powerlifting population) I doubt that the program designed for those individuals who choose to use steroids (or 2 squat suits and 3 bench shirts) will work for you. Unfortunately, a clear line has not been drawn in our sport to differentiate between the real and the surreal. It is like comparing the WWF to NCAA wrestling. If you are a real lifter, READ ON!

Definitions

1. Size: Size is muscular hypertrophy, which, simply put, is added usable protein inside your muscle cells. This protein helps your muscles contract so you can move more weight. When you look at your program make sure you look at your muscle gain vs. fat gain. Get your bodyfat tested every four to six weeks by a certified fitness professional to see what your real results are. It is safe to say that the best body fat percentage for a powerlifter is between 8 to 15% (depending on your genetics). It is best to know what is going on in your body. Sometimes fat free weight gain is H2O, but you must enjoy your fluid-filled muscles because that adds leverage. Know your real results.

2. Strength: Maximum Strength is the amount of force that a muscle or a group of muscles can exert in

is in the first few inches of the lift, so it is the lockout that is the key to most shirt assisted benches. Make sure that your triceps are strong!

3. Power: Power can be simply put as fast or explosive strength. When training for the bench press, you must train for optimal bar speed as well as strength, so that you can achieve the best results. You must have strong muscles, tendons, ligaments, and bones to withstand the heavy weights for competition. Stay injury-free. However, it is the speed of the bar through the sticking point that often makes or breaks a great bench press. That is why I am sold on the benefit of training with the resistance bands. It allows you to lift fast through the sticking point.

Variation

I believe that the changing of your program every 4 to 6 weeks is the key to success. You have asked yourself. How do I change it? What exercises? How many sets or reps? How much weight?

Let's stop the insanity and make some simple sense out of a very complex science. Here are the things that I look at every day as an exercise physiologist when designing a program for my elite athletes, rehabilitates, or my 90 year old grandfather.

- 1. Mode** - What type of exercise
- 2. Frequency** - How many times per week
- 3. Intensity** - What percentage of my max that day
- 4. Duration** - How long is my workout

These are assistance exercises

Core lifts cycled	weeks	reps
	1-4	10-12
	5-8	8-10
	8-contest	6-8

PROGRAM EXERCISE CHOICES

BEGINNER INTERMEDIATE

DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4
-BP -DECLINE -MILITARY SN RAISE -DIPS(WT) TRICEP EXT CRUNCHES	-PULLUPS(WT) -RVRSE GRP PLDWN -BARBELL SHRUG LOW ROWS REVERSE HYPER BARBELL CURLS HINGING KNEE RAISE	-CLOSE GRIP -INCLINE DB PLATE RAISE ROTATOR CUFF HEAD BANGERS ROPE EXTENSION SIDE CRUNCH	-CHIN UPS -PULL DOWNS DB SHRUG DB ROW HYPERS DB CURL SIT UPS

The BENCH

Program Design for Size / Strength / Power - "A Guide for Drug Free Bench Pressers" as told by Joe McAuliffe Bs, MA, CSCS



A Great Environment = Great Intensity! Joe McAuliffe's Saturday Bench Buddies: (left to right) Mark Maher, Joe McAuliffe, Travis Rossler, Bart Lombardi, and (kneeling) Andrew Watkins, who do their training at Joe McAuliffe Training Systems, Inc., 766 Shrewsbury Ave., Jerral Office Plaza West, Tinton Falls, NJ 07724, 732-450-9590

one all out maximal effort. A maximal deadlift is the best demonstration of strength; look how long it takes when a bench press with a good shirt on. It is a much faster lift. This is more a demonstration of power. Remember the majority of the assistance from the bench shirt

SOME TYPICAL BEGINNER/CYCLED BP

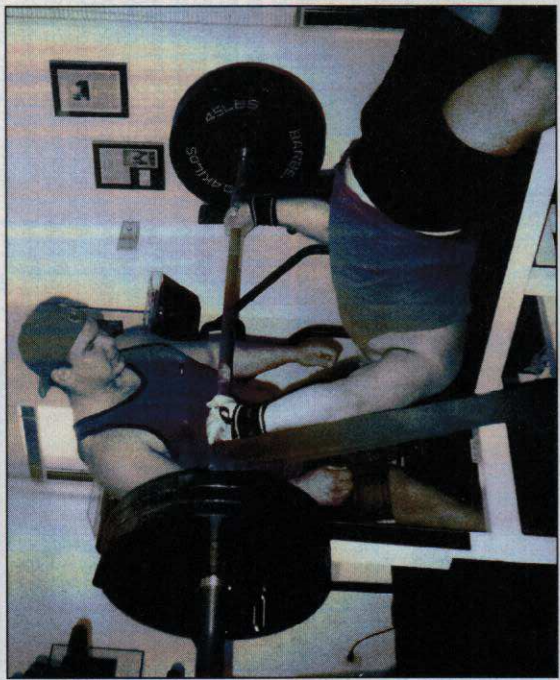
Week	Sets	Reps	% of 1 RM	Notes
1	5x	10	50	
2	4x	10	55	* Try Gradual Progression on all Assistance Lifts
3	3x	10	60	
4	3x	10	65	
5	5x	5	70	* All abdominal and lower back exercises
6	4x	5	75	3 sets of 15-25 reps
7	3x	5	80	
8	3x	5	85	
9	3x	3	90	
10	2x	2	95	
11	CONTEST			100

INTERMEDIATE

Week	Sets	Reps	% of 1 RM	Notes
1	3x	10	60	
2	3x	10	65	
3	3x	10	70	
4	3x	8	73	
5	3x	8	76	
6	3x	6	79	
7	3x	6	82	
8	3x	4	85	
9	3x	4	88	
10	3x	3	91	
11	3x	3	94	
12	3x	2	97	

5. Volume - Set, Reps, and Weight (tonnage)
Mode: Obviously, the best type of exercise for the bench press is the bench press and other free weight exercises. I feel the medicine balls, rubber bands, and other toys allow you variation for power.
Frequency: I have seen lifting programs where a muscle group is trained 1-6 days per week. All individuals recover differently. The only way to know which ones work for you is to experiment.
Intensity: For that day you must pay attention to how you feel. This is the natural lifter's best asset to insure progress and avoid over-training. Thank you to Rob Wagner for waking me up to this topic. A scenario: let's say that you are a 500 lb. bench and you are 3 weeks out. You have planned to do doubles with 485 for that workout. It just so happens your car broke down the night before on your way home from work. It was two hours before the tow truck arrived. You go home to no air conditioning in the humid New Jersey summer. There is a message on the machine from your girlfriend breaking up with you. You forgot your water bottle for work. You have poor nutrition. You are stressed out. You are tired. Are you 100% that day? You need to lift. It is the only day your partners can put your shirt on so it is better to go a little lighter or just to do a single with 485. On the fly adjustments will enable you to prepare for the meet no matter what life throws at you!

Duration: How long are your workouts? How much time do you spend resting between sets? I recommend between 1 and 2 hours per workout. Some research has shown that testosterone levels start to decrease between 60 and 90 minutes. You must account for warm-up time. I'm 35 and it usually takes me at least 20 minutes to feel warmed up enough to hit my big work sets. For the best strength and power results you should rest 1 to 3 minutes between sets. Pending individual fitness level, age, and/or number of people in your group. When in doubt, rest more for your bench press sets, and, if you need to shorten it up, do so on your supplemental lifts. When training for a meet, I sometimes spend 90 minutes on the bench press between wide grip, narrow grip, bands, and dumbbells. If it is longer than an hour and a half and you have done your bench pressing ... go home.
Volume: This is the amount of work you do. I only calculate this for my core lifts, I feel it is important for young lifters to pay close attention to this. If you have done 400 for 3 sets of 5 reps your bench press volume for that day would be 2000 lbs. x 3 sets or 6,000 lbs. As the meet gets closer, your volume should be lowering because your intensity is getting higher. **INTENSITY UP - VOLUME DOWN**
 In Closing, I believe that the individual art of program variation every 4 to 6 weeks is the key to developing a program that works for you. I would like to thank God, my family, and my friends for all of their support. After all is said and done, I will let my bench press do the talking, so look for my bench press book so that you can do the reading.
*** IF YOU ARE LOSING SPEED LIGHTEN WEIGHT**



Joe being spotted in his facility by Bart Lombardi (photos from Joe)

ADVANCED

Gradual Peak Power Cycle - Power Bench Press

1 RM = 1 Repetition maximum without Bench Shirt
 B = Heavy Blue G = Green 2xB = 2 Heavy Blue Bands

Week	Sets	Reps	% of 1 RM	Bands
1	10x	3	60	B
2	8x	3	64	B
3	6x	3	68	B
4	3x	1-2	90	Shirt
5	8x	3	60	BG
6	6x	3	64	BG
7	5x	3	68	BG
8	3x	1-2	95	Shirt
9	6x	3	60	2xB
10	5x	3	65	2xB
11	3x	1-2	99	Shirt
12	CONTEST			

DAY 1		
BLU BAND BP	Sets	Reps
BANDS	CLS GRIP	10x 3
	DB BP	5x 3-5
	RVRS HYP	3x 8
		3x 10

DAY 2			
BP (pause)	Sets	Reps	% of 1 RM
MOD GRIP	3x 8	3x 8	50-60
PLL DWN	3x 8	3x 8	Light
SHRUGS	3x 8	3x 8	H-heavy
HEADBNG	3x 6	3x 6	Heavy
DB CURLS	3x 8	3x 8	Heavy
ABDOMIN	3x 15-25	3x 15-25	Heavy