

DEADLIFT TRAINING – Part II

Louie Simmons

There are approximately 65 700lb benchers and 35 1000lb squatters. But when one looks at the deadlift, there are only 8 900+ deadlifters. The incredibly strong Eddie Coan made 901 at 220 in 1991. He is by far the lightest of the group. My old friend Danny Wohleber, of Cleveland, OH, was the youngest, at 21 years old in 1982, and at a bodyweight of 268. This brief bit of history illustrates how difficult the deadlift truly is.

We also got lazy in the deadlift. After all, Ted Arcidi made the first official 700 (705) bench in 1985. Now, at least 65 others have done that much. My old friend Dave Waddington made the first 1000 (1003) pound squat in 1981. Now we have 35 and the number is growing.

I believe there are several reasons for this. One is the lack of supportive gear in the deadlift. Put down a few Benjamins for a better bench shirt and squat suit and your bench and squat will probably go up. Although there are deadlift suits, they don't have the same impact as other power gear.

Except for Eddie Coan, most men found it necessary to gain a large amount of weight, which helped the squat, but destroyed the leverage needed to pull such weight. Only three out of the eight made at least 3 times bodyweight.

What can be done for the deadlift? Well, let's try training. First, speed pulls are a necessity to pull big weights. We have had great success with Jump-Stretch band pulls. Our platform is designed to provide 100 pounds of tension at the start and 220 pounds at lock-out. The bar weight is about 60-65% of your meet deadlift. We also will add more band tension at the lock-out only, leaving the original start tension the same.

A second method is to drape chains over the bar. For a 700+ pull, use three or four sets of 5/8 inch chains that are 5 feet long. A variation of the chain method is to attach the chain to the platform on one end. As the bar is pulled upward, the chain will fall on the bar at any height desired.

The lightened method is also used quite often for speed work. We place the strong blue bands over the power rack pins at 5 ft. 6 in. off the floor. This will reduce 135 pounds to about zero at the floor. The bar weight is 70% of your best pull. All speed pulls should be done right after speed squats for 5-8 singles.

Max Effort Work

Westside lives on good mornings of all types.

*Concentric good mornings. Here we support the bar in chains suspended from the top of our power rack. We work up to a max single. It may look like a half-squat/half-good morning. Regardless of your form, if you break your record, you are stronger.

*Bentleg arched-back good mornings.

*Bent.back bent=legged good mornings.

*straightleg arched-back good mornings.

*Good mornings with heels raised.

Good mornings with one foot raised 2-4 inches.

Good mornings with weights and bands

Good mornings with weights and chains

Good mornings with weights, chains and bands

Squatting for the deadlift

*Very low box squats will build a large deadlift. Squat off a box that is 2-4 inches lower than the box you use for training the squat.

*Safety squat bar.

*MantaRay squats.

*Buffalo bar on a low box.

*14inch cambered bar.

*Dave Draper's squat device, which rapidly changes the body position. This is precisely why squatting with special bars work; they artificially change the length of the spine.

*Belt squats. These build tremendous leg strength without taxing the back.

Deadlifts

*Ultrawide deadlifts, sumo style. This develops extremely strong hip muscles. Tim Harold went from a hard 700 pull to an easy 775 pull in 3 month's time.

Rack pulls. Choose pins that allow only about 10% over your best regular deadlift.

*If you pull conventional, try a sumo record. One style will help the other. One must also use special exercises to increase the deadlift. Very few lifters can excel by only deadlifting. I've already talked about good mornings and special squats, but there are exercises that isolate certain muscle groups. The deadlift is done for singles, squats 1-3 reps, and good mornings 1-5 reps. The special exercises below are to be done in the 6-12 rep range or higher.

*Glute-ham raises. These are to be done to 2-10 reps per set, depending on the amount of weight used. You can increase the difficulty of this exercise by raising the rear of the glute-ham bench. Sometimes this version is referred to as an inverse curl.

*Pull-throughs. Face away from a low-pulley device, grab a single handle attachment connected to the cable, and walk forward a few feet. Squat down with the arms straight and stand back up.

*Modified glute-ham raises. Do these on a 45 degree hyper bench. While performing a back raise with a bar on your back, simply perform a partial glute-ham raise simultaneously.

*Belt squats. Use a belt squat machine or stand on boxes using a belt from which you can suspend weight. These not only build the entire lower body but also correct pelvic tilt.

"Band leg curls. Attach a band around the lower support of a power rack. Place a

bench about 4 feet from the rack. Hook your heels in the band, sit on the bench, and do leg curls.

*Band good mornings. Place a band around your neck and stand on the other end.

Next, work the abs in many forms.

Deadlift Technique

For conventional deadlifts, for poor lock-out, the feet should be pointed straight ahead.

This will allow the hips to rotate forward farther and stronger. If the feet are turned out, less hip rotation is achieved.

For sumo style, always push the feet apart while pulling. This brings the hips forward as fast as possible, increasing leverage. The strongest style is feet straight forward. How straight your feet will be is dependent on your flexibility, which also determines the width of your stance. Push the feet apart and pull backward toward the body. This keeps the shoulders above or, hopefully behind the bar.

I learned to deadlift from many, but Mike Bridges was most instrumental in my technique and teaching technique. My old friend Vince Anello taught me that it takes many exercises besides the deadlift to excel at it. When asked what make his deadlift so great, 821 at 198, Vince replied, "anything makes my deadlift go up." He was right. For grip, Ed Coan told me to train the fingers to hold on to the bar. Training the forearms makes them bigger and your hands thicker, making your grip worse.

I hope some of these tips get you a new record in the deadlift.