

## SQUAT WORKOUT

### LOUIE SIMMONS

I am always asked to make personal workout programs for lifters. This is impossible to do without seeing these people in the gym and observing their form. Their form may be terrible, or they may have a blatant muscle weakness that is causing bad form. For all those people, here is a sample workout to prepare you for a meet. This is the workout that Shawn Nutter used for his first meet. His lifts at 242 were an 840 squat, a 575 bench, and a 650 deadlift. At his first meet, he totaled 2065.

We based his attempts on a max band squat of 565 bar weight plus 375 pounds of band tension. The bands were attached to the base of our monolift, which had a 2 x 4 taped to each side.

Although we don't truly cycle yearly for a meet, the circa-max, or near-max, phase lasts 3 weeks, plus there are two deload phase weeks. To begin with, Shawn used a 3-week wave with a Safety Squat bar. Throughout the year we use the Safety Squat bar and our 14-inch-cambered bar to save the shoulders and arms.

Here is Shawn's training for the IPA Nationals.

First wave with the Safety Squat bar:

Week 1: 8 sets of 2 reps with 325 plus light bands

Week 2: 8 sets of 2 reps with 375 plus light bands

Week 3: 6 sets of 2 reps with 415 plus light bands

Week 4: 8 sets of 2 reps with 325 plus medium bands

Week 5: 8 sets of 2 reps with 375 plus medium bands

Week 6: 6 sets of 2 reps with 415 plus medium bands

Switch to a 14-inch-cambered bar:

Week 7: 8 sets of 2 reps with 405 plus strong bands

Week 8: 8 sets of 2 reps with 465 plus strong bands

Week 9: 6 sets of 2 reps with 505 plus strong bands

Circa-max phase:

Week 10: 5 sets of 2 reps with 435 plus medium and strong bands

Week 11: 4 sets of 2 reps with 465 plus medium and strong bands

Week 12: work up to 565 with medium and strong bands, about 350 pounds of band tension at the top

Week 13 (first deload week): work up to 565 with one strong band for 1 rep

Week 14 (second deload week): work up to 405 plus 120 pounds of chain for 3 sets of 2 reps

Week 15 (mmeet): 2005 IPA Nationals

I knew the training should have rendered an 860 squat at the meet. He blew up 840 like a toy. We like to leave some on the platform and make substantial progress at the next meet.

Let's look at Shawn's special exercises after the squat workout.

After Friday's squat workout, Shawn first does speed pulls: 335 plus 100 pounds of band tension at the start and 220 at lockout, 5-8 singles, each week. Next, he does 45 degree hypers, 3-5 sets with 45-135 pounds, 2-6 reps. Then he does calf/ham/glute raises with a 45-pound plate, 4-6 sets of 3-6 reps. Next are abs of some kind, then hypers, 3 sets on the roller Reverse Hyper machine, 280 pounds for sets of 10 reps, and 3 sets on the strap Reverse Hyper machine, 380 pounds for sets of 10's. After some light stretching, he's done.

Monday is max effort for the squat and deadlift. Here is Shawn's 15-week cycle. Yours can vary.

Week 1: raise GPP with sled pulls, 180 pounds for 6 trips of 200 feet as a warmup; 10-inch low-box squat with the Safety Squat bar for max singles; good mornings on the Back Attack machine; 45-degree hypers, 4 sets of 6 reps with 90 pounds; chest-supported rows; 5 sets on the Reverse Hyper (RH) machine; abs.

Week 2: rack pulls with plates 6 inches off the floor; chest-supported rows; RH, 3 sets; roller RH, 3 sets; strap RH; abs.

Week 3: sled pulls, 360 pounds, 4 trips of 200 feet for a warmup; cambered-bar good mornings to a max triple; straight-leg deadlifts, work up to 455 for 5 reps; barbell rows; lat pull-downs with V-bar; strap RH; abs.

Week 4: reverse band box squats with monster mini-bands (reduces weight on the box by 120 pounds; made 775); good mornings on the Back Attack machine; dumbbell rows; kettle-bell swings; calf/ham/glute raises holding a 45-pound plate; abs.

Week 5: sled pulls, 135 for 8 trips of 200 feet; concentric Safety Squat bar squats done to a max single; 45-degree RH, 180 for 3 sets of 2 reps; chest-supported rows; roller RH, 3 light sets; strap RH, 3 light sets; abs.

Week 6: close-stance sumo standing on a 2-inch box for a max single; front squats on a 10-inch box for 6-8 reps with moderate weight; calf/ham/glute raises for sets of 6 reps; barbell rows; strap RH, 4 sets; abs.

Week 7: sled pulls, 8 trips of 100 feet; lat pull-downs, wide bar and V-handle; band leg curls; band good mornings; RH; abs.

Week 8: band deadlifts, 370 pounds of tension at the top, max single (he made 405 on the bar with 370 pounds of band tension); chest-supported rows; calf/ham/glute raises, 3 sets of 4 reps, 90 pounds; strap RH, 3 sets; abs.

Week 9: light sled pulls, 135 for 8 sets of 2 reps; light lat pull-downs; roller RH, 3 light sets; abs. This workout is very easy because the following Friday the circa-max phase starts.

Also during the next 3 weeks, our max effort is changed from maxing out on a barbell lift to pushing the special exercises to high limits. Don't push the low back and lats plus abs together. Rather, we train one muscle group very hard and the others moderately hard.

Week 10: light good mornings, work up to 70% for 3 reps, 1 set; moderate chest-supported rows; 3 sets of 3 reps of calf/ham/glute raises, as heavy as possible; heavy RH, 3 sets of 10 reps; roller RH with 360 pounds, 3 sets of 10 reps; strap RH with 480 pounds; abs.

Week 11: sled pulls, 225 pounds for 6 trips of 200 feet; barbell rows, 135 for 4 sets of 6 reps; heavy RH, both styles, weight the same as week 10; abs.

Week 12: Because we take a max on Friday with lots of band tension, no barbell exercises are done; chest-supported rows; calf/ham/glute raises, 3 sets with light weight; 45-degree RH, 200 pounds, 3 sets of 2 reps; light roller RH, 180 pounds, 3 sets of 10 reps; abs.

Week 13: Remember, this is a deload week; sled pulls, 90 pounds, 6 sets of 200 feet; light lat rows or pull-downs; moderate RH, 2 sets on roller model with 270 pounds, 10 reps, 2 sets on strap model, 360 pounds for 10 reps; abs.

Week 14: This is the Monday of the meet. Do light RH and abs.

Note: After both squat day and max effort day workouts, always stretch lightly and do some joint mobility work. Most lifters at Westside never wear the straps up or knee wraps. This is up to you. All squats are done on boxes. You must taper down before meet days.

GPP is very important if you want to reach the top. If you are

unfit and can't do the proper exercises or do sled pulling, tred mill work, or kettle bell work, you will undoubtedly fail. I have seen men that did not believe in being physically fit have to quit because of poor health. These men are classified as "ronins": samarais without a master. When they quit, they have no one to answer to, when they could have passed on their experience to others so they won't make the same mistakes.

At the meet, open up light, something around 90% of your contest best. Don't let your ego beat you. If you must, practice with your gear. Know your attempts and have good help with you. Don't ask strangers to help; they don't know you or your needs. Don't look at the meet as your last, but rather build your total from meet to meet.

At Westside, we help each other. If one of our lifters asks someone outside our gym for help, we feel betrayed. You are either with us or against us.

It may take a while to master the gear. There is a lot of good gear to choose from.

Don't mix and match systems. This won't work. Powerlifting is a great sport; respect it.

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