

Things You Should Know

Louie Simmons

Did you know there are three main methods of weight training? The Dynamic Method. This method develops and improves a fast rate of force development, or explosive strength. Approximately 60-90 lifts per month should be devoted to explosive strength.

The Repetition Method. We use the repetition method to near failure. The number of reps should be limited to just before the point of failure. It is not intended for the squat, deadlift, bench press, clean, or snatch, but rather special exercises such as lat work, tricep work, back extension work, ab work, and exercises that attempt to isolate a muscle group.

You cannot determine a 1-rep max from a rep max. Why? Men and women possess different muscle types. The more fast twitch, the worse one will be with reps because they hold less oxygen per cell. Someone who has an abundance of slow twitch fiber will have greater endurance because they can't contract the muscle as intensely. In addition, a novice cannot use as much muscle fiber as an advanced lifter.

Every one should know that HIT (high-intensity training) is really low-intensity training, by looking at the intensity zones. High intensity is defined as 1 to 2 reps at 90% and above. Doing 8 or more reps is low intensity. When doing high repetitions, you produce less force with each rep. When lifting 300 pounds in the bench for reps, each successive rep has less force. If you go to failure and miss with the 300-pound bench, it should be obvious that the missed rep produced less than the 300 pounds of force. This system builds muscular endurance in a fatigued state.

Maximal Effort Method. Using this method, one works up to a 1-rep max in a barbell exercise: rack pull, box pull, floor press, incline press, low box squat, parallel box squat, etc. At Westside, our maximal effort method is copied after the Bulgarian system: the most weight lifted on a particular training day. This may not be an all-time max, but rather the max weight lifted depending on your state of preparedness. If your best floor press is 500 and you make a true max single of 480, you are at 96% of your best. One should always be at least at 90% of your best, or it becomes too strenuous to regain top form.

After a good warmup, 3 lifts are performed, one at about 90%, then one at near max or a small max, then one more. For Olympic lifting, the lifts done at greater than 90% are 4-10, according to A. S. Prilepin's findings. Our findings at Westside for near-max work or circa-max lifts are that Prilepin's chart works fine, but when attaining a true absolute max, no more than 3 lifts should be performed. This is because powerlifts take longer to perform.

This means that the time under tension is much longer. After gathering this information for the past 35 years, this is our conclusion.

Did you know that the dynamic effort method was designed to replace a max effort workout? Both are extreme and must be separated by 72 hours. Both workouts are accompanied by 3 or 4 special exercises. The Westside system allows you to become faster, bigger, and stronger continuously throughout the year.

Did you know that speed and quickness are determined by external resistance? No one tries to lift a heavy weight slowly, as Fred Hatfield said. Olympic lifting is a speed-strength sport, but

requires great strength. In powerlifting, one must lift great loads. While these loads appear to move slowly, explosive strength is a must. In the United States, every university does some Olympic lifting. I ask them why. Their reply is that it builds explosive power. But in Europe, particularly in the old C.C.C.P., who invented the term “explosive power”, they never mention using the Olympic lifts. Dr. Yuri Verkhoshansky, who invented shock training, or, as we call it, plyometrics, talks about bounding, jumping, plyometrics, and depth jumps--jumping off a high platform, resulting in a high-speed landing--but never Olympic lifts.

In the book *Explosive Power and Jumping Ability for All Sports* by T. Starzynski and H. Sozanski, Olympic lifting is never discussed. Starzynski coached two Olympic gold medalists, and Sozanski is a coach and professor specializing in problems of training for jumping ability. Seated barbell press off the floor is illustrated in their book.

Did you know that there are much better exercises than the standard Olympic lifts, as follows.

Kneeling squats. After kneeling down with the heels touching the glutes, jump into a full squat.

Kneeling power cleans. The next progression is the kneeling power snatch.

Kneeling split snatch and kneeling power snatch.

Straight leg power clean and snatch and clean.

Power snatch while sitting with the bar across the legs.

We have a thrower who trains with us occasionally who can do a kneeling jump squat with 255. John Stafford has jumped onto a 35-inch box with a pair of 70-pound dumbbells.

We concentrate on box squatting and using the contract and reactive methods. Thomas Kurz has stated in *The Science of Sports Training* that to develop explosive strength, explosive efforts can be used, such as jumps, shotput, or jerking dumbbells or a barbell. “But it is easiest and safest to increase it by increasing maximal strength.”

Did you know that a wide stance squat works the quads to the same degree as a close stance squat, but with the bonus of using more hip, glute, and hamstring muscles? Anyone who tries to squat as much as possible soon learns that a wide stance produces greater results. This was proven at a test at Ball State University.

Did you know almost all college and high school football teams do power cleans and power snatches, yet they are not used in the NFL combines?

Did you know that when lifting barbells, there is a deceleration phase? For this reason, you must use Jump-Stretch bands or chains. They accommodate resistance. When joint angles become more favorable, such as at lockout, one can lift considerably more weight. With barbell weight, the bar can be too heavy at the start to generate sufficient acceleration to complete the lift, or the bar can be too light and as it nears completion, the barbell slows down, causing a deceleration. The bands also can be used as a contrast method. As the bar descends, the band tension decreases. As one rises concentrically, the bands increase the load, causing a contrasting load difference. The contrast and reactive methods must be used for the development of speed strength and explosive power.

Did you know that attaching bands to the bar produces an overspeed eccentric phase? Why is this important? When velocity is tripled, a 9 times greater kinetic energy is produced. It has been proven (Samoyloff, Kisseliff, 1928; O. Foerster, Altenlurgey, 1933; Lippold, 1957) that the stretch reflex (or the myotactic reflex) has great value for increasing the effect of eccentric work. This proves the great contribution to overspeed eccentrics.

Did you know that muscles contract harder and faster the higher their temperature?

Did you know that Westside has only two men on its staff:

John "Chester" Stafford and Matt Wenning? John talks about nutrition on his Web site. He has, I believe, the biggest push-pull for a 275-pounder: a 733 bench and a 832 deadlift, in addition to a 2502 total. Matt Wenning is a graduate of Ball State University with a Masters in biomechanics and has already made a 950 squat, a 650 bench, and a 725 deadlift at 275. These two people, along with myself, are the only qualified people to talk about the real truth of what goes on at Westside.

We see the evolution of strength training every day, and every day it changes for the betterment of our lifters. If you follow our articles and talk to me occasionally, you know that the experiments we conduct are performed on our top men at two or three major meets to prove that the tested methods work. I don't write B.S.; I write about what I see at Westside. Some things work, some don't. We put forth a lot of effort to help our lifts, and I hope yours. I appreciate how cooperative our lifters are, young and old, and how loyal they are. Some have been here for years. Bob Coe has been here over 20 years, and Chuck Vogelpohl, Amy Weisburger, and Jimmy Richie for 20 years.

Did you know that Westside contributes to the development of many sports. A former top soccer player from Manchester United stayed at Westside for more than a month to learn our system. After returning home, Ben Plevey opened up a training facility to pass on the system to young athletes in his home country.

Four rugby coaches from all over the world spent considerable time at Westside, and the results have been quite favorable to say the least.

Many pro football players come to Westside and have made great strides. Also, many major universities have adapted the Westside system to fit their needs. Did you know that the football players never ask me to make them faster, but ask to become stronger?

Making them stronger makes them faster. There would not be a Westside if not for the likes of Huge Iron, Donny Thompson, Spud Barkly, Paul Childress, Andy Bolton, with his 971 deadlift, and Jeff Lewis, with his 1200+ squat. Because of them and many like them, we never miss a workout for fear that some of you dudes are working on a secret of your own. I am proud to be associated with powerlifting, and I hope you are too.

And, oh yeah, did you know Dr. Judd must be a hell of a man to take the abuse he gets each month? My hat's off to you, Dr. Judd.