

## Teen Lifting

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There has been much said about lifting and age. Everyone has their viewpoint. The United States, for the most part, will start young, 8-10 years old, in a particular sport such as football, baseball, basketball, boxing, and wrestling. It's almost always sports specific. That is, they participate in the sport with no prior general physical preparedness (GPP).

In the old Soviet countries, there were sport institutes that prepared the youth age 12 and above for sports but not by playing a certain sport, but by a well-prepared process of GPP. This is general mobility, flexibility, dexterity, endurance, hand/eye coordination, balance, and strength. For example, pushups, pull-ups, rope climbing, medicine ball work, kettle bell work, and some running and short sprints are done. They produced the model athlete for their sports system. Children were chosen for the sport that suited their physical, mental, and emotional qualities. Neither the child nor the parents were able to pick the sport.

Here in the United States, football is huge. Go to any park and a million kids are playing football. Of course, only a small percentage will go on to play college ball, and even fewer will go on to the NFL. But all that sprinting, jumping, and agility drills formed the GPP for power lifting.

Kenny Patterson started lifting at Westside at 14 years old and became the youngest to bench press over 700 pounds and hold an open world record at 22 years old with a 728 bench at 275 body weight. Mike Brown benched 735 at 19 years old, still the biggest bench by a teen. Mike has gone on to total over 2500. Dave "Neutron" Hoff, at 16, squatted 805, benched 515,

and deadlifted 650 at 220. Now at 19 years old Neutron has made a 1005 squat, a 680 bench, and a 745 deadlift, to total 2430. This is the largest and only 1000-pound squat by a teen and the biggest total by any teen at any weight.

How did Kenny Patterson, Mike Brown, and now Neutron make the lifts they did? When they came to Westside, each was placed in a group of advanced lifters. Instead of one coaching many, many coached one. Bob Coe and Gritter Adams oversaw everything Neutron did. He was surrounded by top 10 lifters to help in his development. He could easily handle the physical work, but more important to me was the fact he could cope with the mental process of learning the methods and with the never-ending expectations placed on him. Like those that preceded him, Neutron has the most advanced methods at his disposal.

Like Mike Brown, Neutron uses a lot of foam box squatting, lowering his regular box and placing a 7-inch foam pad on top. This makes box squatting very taxing on the muscles. It feels like there is no bottom in the squat. This causes better balance and feels somewhere between a regular squat and a box squat. On max effort day he does rack pulls with and without bands, good mornings with a variety of bars, Zercher squats, fronts squats, or Manta Ray squats. When he feels fatigued, he will do only hypers, glute/ham raises, lat work, sled work, and abs. There are many exercises to choose from on max effort day. He will do 3 or 4 exercises and rotate them according to his needs. By switching exercises frequently, the central nervous system is never fatigued. The max effort exercises are rotated weekly. The special exercises are rotated whenever progress slows or boredom sets in.

Neutron does very little special exercises after the main workout. He is biomechanically suited to squat, bench, and deadlift; thus his training is geared toward that fact. Pavel would say that Neutron is a model athlete.

On speed squat day bands and chains are used 95% of the time. Occasionally he will use free weights while squatting on foam. He will stand on foam and sit on foam about 25% of the time. About 60% of the workouts are done sitting on foam only, but always sitting on some kind of a box. He will warm up in gym shorts, then groove briefs, and will use what gear it takes on very heavy work days.

His bench workout looks the same, but he never uses a bench shirt on speed day. Nine sets of 3 reps with three different grips are used. Mini-bands, monster mini-bands, or 2 or 3 sets of 5/8 inch chains are used to accommodate resistance in many combinations. Triceps extensions with dumbbells or barbells are done every workout and with as high volume and high intensity as possible. The lats are second on his list. He then does pull-downs, rows with barbells or dumbbells, chest-supported rows, upper back, rear and side delts, and some hamstrings and curls to end the workout.

On max effort bench day the workout changes each week. The following can be done: floor press with just bar weight, with chains, or bands, regular bench with chains or bands, incline or decline press, weight releasers, ultrawide-grip or close-grip bench, and dumbbell press at different angles. This is the conjugate system.

Changing the rate of bar speed on dynamic day, changing the amount of bands or chains on the bar, or adding a hanging kettle bell to the bar causes a chaotic state. The

lightened method with overhead bands of different strength can also be done.

Science tells us that doing the same exercise for 3 weeks with a weight of 90% or greater will cause progress to stop. By switching the main core exercise each week, you can continue to make progress indefinitely. How? By not negatively affecting the CNS. This holds true for speed day as well. By switching the accommodating resistance, one can avoid the speed barrier. This is when one feels he cannot move the bar any faster regardless of how hard they try.

As you can see, we train a teen like an advanced lifter, just by training by percents and picking the correct special exercises to complement his weaknesses. Only time will tell how far he can go, but so far there's no stopping Neutron.

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