

The most admired objects of all bodybuilding and powerlifting fans are the big benchers, who frequently have the attention of everyone during their workout sessions. Perhaps because of this focus, a lifter can easily become overtrained with all of the assorted assistance exercises that are available, so you must be conservative. Still, you want to maximize the lift because there is nothing like the confident feeling of hitting a big bench press before going into the deadlift. This twelve week training cycle is for a hypothetical lifter who made a 400 lb. bench press in his last contest. This workout is done twice a week for the first six weeks and once a week the last six weeks of the training cycle.

In the first 8 weeks, assistance exercises such as the dumbbell flies, military press, dips, triceps press, and pushdowns are preferred for three sets of six to eight reps. In the last 4 weeks of the cycle, only pushdowns are included, for 3 sets of 8 reps.

Always include some warmup exercises and flexibility work to prepare the area for a productive workout. Allow yourself 15-20 minutes to properly warmup.

Week 1: Bench 135x8, 205x8, 240x8x4. Dumbbell Flies 50x8, 60x8, 70x8x3. Military Press 135x8, 170x8, 190x8x3. Dips 25x8, 45x8, 70x8, 90x8. Triceps Press 90x8, 110x8, 135x8x3. Pushdown 90x8, 100x8, 120x8x3. (These suggested exercises will need to be adjusted

WORKOUT of the Month

A new concept in weight training instruction. A workout by workout, set by set, rep by rep workout plan, with exact training poundages specified over the entire span of a strength training cycle, laid out for you by a top Powerlifting authority. Each month, a different lift is analyzed. For those of different strength levels than the starting poundage specified, simply increase or decrease the training weights in direct proportion. For example, if your lift is 400, and a starting lift for the program is 500, multiply the training poundages by .8 (400 divided by 500); if your lift is 600 multiply the poundages specified by 1.2 (600 divided by 500).



throughout the training cycle.)

Week 2: Bench 135x8, 205x8, 225x8, 250x8, 275x8x3, 250x8

Week 3: Bench 135x8, 205x8, 225x8, 260x8, 290x8x3, 260x8

Week 4: Bench 135x8, 225x8, 260x8, 305x8x3, 260x8, 225x8

Week 5: Bench 135x8, 225x8, 260x3, 305x3, 320x6x3, 260x8

Week 6: Bench 135x8, 225x8, 260x3, 315x1, 340x5x3, 295x6

Week 7: Bench 135x8, 225x6, 275x3, 315x1, 360x4x3, 300x6

Week 8: Bench 135x8, 225x6, 315x3, 315x1, 380x3x3, 315x6

Week 9: Bench 135x8, 225x6, 315x3, 340x1, 390x3x3, 330x5

Week 10: Bench 135x8, 225x6, 315x3, 360x1, 405x2x2, 350x5

Week 11: Bench 135x8, 225x6, 315x3, 360x3, 380x3, 315x5.

(Allow five days rest prior to the contest.)

Week 12: Contest - Warmup poundages: 135x5, 225x5, 315x1, 350x1; first attempt 390; second attempt 415; final attempt 420-430.

Gene M. Bell Jr. is a two time World Champion, four time National Champion, and A.P.F. World Record Holder, and a U.S.P.F. American Record Holder. At the 1988 Armed Forces Championships, he benched 512 in winning the 181 lb. competition (photo at left) and less than 2 months later at the Budweiser Hawaii Record Breakers meet he moved that up to 523, so his routines work. At the 1987 Armed Forces meet he got 545 at 198 lbs.