

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 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 the 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 1.2 (600 divided by 500).

LAMAR GANT's Nine Week Bench Routine

The bench press is the most commonly performed lift in weight training. There are dozens of bench press contest throughout the United States, and equally as many experts on the lift.

You can combine several training modes that will create strength in this lift; but like any combination, you must find the *right* formula.

My recommended routine assumes a three hundred bench press coming in and follows a nine week plan.

The first day for your benches is Saturday and the second day is Tuesday. Tuesday's workout is identical to Saturday's, except you use 10 lbs. less on the bar. Your assistance is done on the days you bench press, and the workload varies according to the day (light or heavy) it is done. Keep in mind that your assistance work will last only 6 weeks, doing three sets of each lift. The weight you start with in the assistance exercises should be an amount that your are capable of handling for 3 reps more than what is required. Increase the weight 5 lbs. per week. The assistance exercises are close grip benches, dumbbell flies, dumbbell front raises, and hammer curls.

Week 1: 135x10, 190x12, 190x12, 190x12, 190x12, 190x12.

Week 2: 135x10, 200x12, 200x12, 200x12, 200x12, 200x12.

Week 3: 135x10, 210x12, 210x12, 210x12, 210x12, 210x12.

Week 4: Warm-up to 240x6, 240x6, 240x6.

Week 5: Warm-up to 250x6, 250x6, 250x6, 250x6.

Week 6: Warm-up to 260x6, 260x6, 260x6, 260x6.

Week 7: Warm-up to 280x3, 280x3, 280x3.

Week 8: Warm-up to 290x3, 290x3, 290x3.

Week 9: Warm-up to 315x4 sets of singles with a pause.

Don't bench or do assistance work the week of the contest. On the day of the meet, warm up with 135x10, 225x3, 260x1. Let the opener bench be conservative with 290, second attempt 315. I'll let you be the judge on your last attempt from 320 to 330.

I do recommend using wrist wraps and a bench press shirt.



Lamar Gant ... remains the single most successful powerlifter to represent the United States in IPF open men's competition, with 15 world championships to his credit (a mark exceeded internationally only by Inaba of Japan). Is there anyone even remotely on the horizon of US lifting now who could conceivably challenge that record? Not only was Mr. Gant a consummate champion, winning in legendary fashion, time after time, and setting records that remained on the books for years (some still stand!), but he was also one of the most sincerely well-liked individuals in powerlifting history. I once described him as the "Magic Johnson" of powerlifting, with his million dollar smile, and just as much style. He was the first man to total 12 times his bodyweight, and the first man to go five times bodyweight in any individual lift. Well known as a deadlifter, he actually set IPF records in the bench and total before ever pulling one, and what other man in open IPF men's competition can say that they have held an official men's open world record in the squat, bench, deadlift, and total (each of the possible categories!) at one time or another. He competed in his first open men's world championship at 16, and started winning his titles at age 18. All this and more, despite being diagnosed with extreme scoliosis (curvature of the spine). Lamar had "presence" and influenced more lifters than he probably realized. For example, at the recent IPF Women's Worlds, I heard the decades ago tale of how Finland's Jari Tahtinen decided that powerlifting was truly going to be the sport for him. He was lifting at the 1980 IPF Worlds in Texas and Jari recalled with extraordinarily vivid clarity one specific conversation when Vince Anello was preparing, under extreme pressure, to pull the winning deadlift of 810 lbs. to just edge Sweden's surging Conny Nilsson for the gold medal in the 198s. Eyeball to eyeball with Lamar (who had already out-totaled a spectacular Joe Bradley, in this meet where Joe squatted 650 at 132), Vince was trying to psyche himself into the monumental task ... almost frenetically repeating to Lamar ... "I know I can do it! I know I can do it!" and Lamar calmly looked back into Vince's eyes and, in his inimitable Gantian manner, smoothly reassured Vince ... "Glad to hear it. Glad to hear it." in that resonating, deep voice of his. Jari thought the way Lamar said that was the coolest thing he had ever heard (before or since), and that moment was the turning point for Jari, which propelled him to an IPF Men's Open title of his own, in 1986 when the Men's IPF Worlds were held in Holland. There was a bit of confusion about the scoring in this particularly close class, and Jari actually knew he had won well before his coaches came over, happily scratching their heads, telling him they thought he had somehow ended up in first in the 198s ... a report to which Jari stoically replied ... "I know". That night Jari went to his room and took 10 Valiums ("Waliums" is how Jari pronounces it) because he knew if he didn't take them he would be "lifting all night" ... at least in his mind. In the morning, he woke from that deep, induced slumber and groggily asked his friend ... "Is it true that I won, or did I only dream it?" His friend told him "You are the World Champion, Jari". After a significant pause, Jari replied ... "Glad to hear it. Glad to hear it". That's the kind of effect Lamar Gant had on people.