

The bench press is the lift that certainly draws the most attention from the majority of people. Bench press training is much more pleasant than a grueling squat or deadlift workout, for most. That is why the average weight trainer has every excuse in the book for why they cannot squat (or work legs at all) or deadlift. I have had much success at the bench press, although my energies have been equal for each powerlift. The reason I have had this success is from optimal training theories and routines. Before I outline my routine, I'd like to stress a few points about training for the bench press: 1. Although you may feel energetic, you should not train the bench press more than one time per week. 2. If you want to increase size and strength, you should train sets of 5 repetitions for the majority of your training cycle. 3. Bodybuilding exercises (flies, pec-deck, etc.) should be left for bodybuilding. I believe in working different grips while benching to achieve full pectoral, deltoid and tricep development.

With these points in mind, here is a suggested routine for maximum size and strength, based on a current maximum of 400 pounds.

Exercises: Bench Press - competition grip; close-grip bench press - these are done with a shoulder

# WORKOUT of the Month

## Steve Preston Bench Press Routine



*Steve Preston has benched 480 lbs. in the 181 class. His routine is based on a lifter capable of 400 lbs., however, if you have a different maximum lift, simply increase or decrease the designated weights in direct proportion to the difference between your lift and 400 lbs.*

width grip. Always pause each repetition on these (bring bar lower chest for lower pectoral development); wide-grip bench press - use a grip 2-3 inches wider than your

competition grip (always pause each repetition); reverse grip bench press - use same hand spacing as in competition grip; shoulder-width pushdowns - keep elbows in.

These exercises are all done on the same day, once per week. At the beginning of your training cycle, you might hit shoulders later in the week. About 4 weeks away from the contest, you only need to do close-grip benches for assistance. Yes, that's all. If you are pushing with all you have, that is plenty.

**Week One:** Warm up each session, then - Bench - 315x5x2; assistance - 2 sets of each exercise.

**Week Two:** Bench - 320x5x2; assistance - 2 set of each exercise.

**Week Three:** Bench - 325x5x2; assistance - 2 sets of each exercise.

**Week Four:** Bench - 330x5x2; assistance - 2 sets of each exercise.

**Week Five:** Bench - 340x5x2; assistance - 2 sets of each exercise.

**Week Six:** Bench - 350x5x2; assistance 2 sets of each exercise.

**Week Seven:** Bench - 365x3.

**Week Eight:** Bench - 375x3.

**Week Nine:** Bench - 390x2.

**Week Ten:** Bench - 400x2.

**Week Eleven:** Bench - 350x3.

**Week Twelve:** Contest- 380, 410, 425.

Reps on assistance work are the same as in the bench press. Special thanks to Dan Mlodozienec, Ed Coan and Chris Confessore for all the help over the years. I can be reached at: (716)662-9469 or Steve Preston, 199 Bridle Path, Orchard Park, NY 14127.