

# TRAINING

## 12 Week Bench Press Peak

as told to PL USA by Greg Reshel, Power Excel

Are you looking for a routine to peak your bench press for a fall contest? I have some ideas for you. I will show you a 12 week contest peak. You will train the bench press on two training days per week. On day one you will be performing the bench press in contest form with 8-12 sets of accessory work of your choice for chest and triceps. On training day two you will be performing close grip bench press and wide gap (bodybuilding style) bench press as well as 8-12 sets of accessory work of your choice for traps, shoulders, and biceps. The peaking cycle will be in three phases. Phase one will be a four week foundation cycle with high volume and fast pace. The second cycle will be a

strength cycle with one to two minutes between sets and lower volume with heavier weights. The third cycle will be the actual peak with reduced volume and some heavy contest style singles to prepare for the actual event. I am listing the primary exercises on training Day 1 and Day 2. Remember that the accessories you choose to accompany the primary exercises are not to be very heavy. These accessories are to build stabilization in your bench press and to maintain your muscle size while peaking for the contest. Keep them fairly light and in good form! I am basing my numbers on a 350 lb. current contest max. Adjust the numbers up or down to suit your needs.

**Day 1: Bench Press** - warm up as needed to perform the following working sets:

| Week #  | Set #1  | Set #2  | Set #3  | Set #4  | Set #5  | Set #6  | Set #7  | Set #8  |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Week 1  | 205 x 5 | 210 x 5 | 215 x 5 | 220 x 4 | 225 x 4 | 230 x 4 | 235 x 3 | 240 x 3 |
| Week 2  | 205 x 3 | 215 x 3 | 225 x 3 | 235 x 3 | 245 x 3 | 255 x 3 | 265 x 3 | 275 x 3 |
| Week 3  | 205 x 5 | 210 x 5 | 215 x 5 | 220 x 4 | 225 x 4 | 230 x 4 | 235 x 3 | 240 x 3 |
| Week 4  | 205 x 3 | 215 x 3 | 225 x 3 | 235 x 3 | 245 x 3 | 255 x 3 | 265 x 3 | 275 x 3 |
| Week 5  | 245 x 5 | 255 x 5 | 265 x 5 | 255 x 5 | 245 x 5 |         |         |         |
| Week 6  | 255 x 3 | 260 x 3 | 265 x 3 | 270 x 3 | 275 x 3 | 280 x 3 |         |         |
| Week 7  | 245 x 5 | 255 x 5 | 265 x 5 | 255 x 5 | 245 x 5 |         |         |         |
| Week 8  | 255 x 3 | 260 x 3 | 265 x 3 | 270 x 3 | 275 x 3 | 280 x 3 |         |         |
| Week 9  | 285 x 1 | 285 x 2 | 285 x 3 | 285 x 2 | 285 x 1 |         |         |         |
| Week 10 | 285 x 1 | 295 x 1 | 305 x 1 | 315 x 1 | 325 x 1 |         |         |         |
| Week 11 | 285 x 1 | 285 x 2 | 285 x 3 | 285 x 2 | 285 x 1 |         |         |         |
| Week 12 | Open @  | 325     | 2nd @   | 345-355 | 3rd @   | 370-380 |         |         |

**Day 2:** Close Grip Bench Press. Weeks 1 through 4 - warmup to 155 lbs. and perform as many sets of 6 repetitions as you can in 12 minutes. Each week try to perform more sets than the week before. Weeks 5 through 8 - warmup to 185 lbs. for 5 sets of 5 repetitions with a very slow descent to your chest and a fast explosion up. Pause at the top of each repetition. Weeks 9 through 11 - warmup to 205 lbs. for 6 sets of 3 repetitions. Be

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solid and aggressive. Week 12 - 135 x 1 rep, 175 x 1 rep, 195 x 1 rep, 225 x 1 rep. Wide Grip Bench Press to the Mid-Pec: Weeks 1 through 4 - warmup to 5 sets of 8 reps at 135 lbs. smooth and steady. Weeks 5 through 8 - warmup to 4 sets of 6 reps at 185 lbs. with a pause at the bottom. Weeks 9 through 11 - warmup to 5 sets of 5 reps at 135 lbs. smooth and steady. Week 12 - drop this exercise before the meet.