

# WORKOUT of the Month

In February 1990, I took a step that changed my life. I fell thirty feet off a tower, broke my back, and crushed my spinal cord. Now I am paralyzed from the waist down, and squats and deadlifts are out. But the situation has a positive side also. I have returned to school and am a senior studying business at the University of Washington. I can also bench more now than before my accident.

December 8-10, 1992, I competed in the IPF World Open Bench Press Championships in Kaohsiung, Taiwan. Earlier in the year I read the results of the 1991 Worlds in *Powerlifting USA* and found that I was strong enough to compete in the disabled division. I called 1992 Bench Press Nationals meet director Chip Hultquist and left a message to have an entry form for the Nationals sent to me. Then I trained for and entered my first bench meet, not sure that I was going to the Nationals. At the meet I benched 245 lbs. and missed a third attempt at 260. I actually won the 181 lb. Men's open division. About an hour after I got home I got a call from Chip Hultquist. His job had brought him all the way from Tennessee to Washington State and his hotel was only a couple of miles from my house. He hand-delivered an entry form and encouraged me to enter the Nationals. He also outlined a training program and recommended a bench shirt. Within a week I had a travel sponsor and started a 10 week cycle. At the USPF Bench Press Nationals in Tallahassee, Florida I benched 270 lbs. and set a personal record. Here are the exercises and ten week cycle I used for the Nationals.

For the chest I did benches and inclines. All benches are done with perfect form and a pause. I do incline presses on a Smith Machine because it is easier to balance. This allows me to push much heavier weights. I add weight or reps for the first six weeks of the cycle, back off for two weeks, then drop inclines the last two weeks before the meet. Back work is always pull-downs and rows. Pull-downs are usually done to the rear. I do rows on a seated row machine with a pad supporting my chest. I can not use my lower back muscles so this is the best rowing movement. Shoulder work includes a couple of sets each of bent laterals, side laterals, and one arm dumb-

## World Disabled Bench Press Champion Workout



Brian Blum winning the Disabled Division at the 1992 IPF World Bench Press Championships (Keller)

bell presses or military presses on the Hammer Strength machine. Bicep work is one arm at a time dumbbell curls, hammer curls, or cable curls. The main tricep assistance exercise is the close grip bench. Warm-ups on this day include light benches (135 x 10) to stretch the benching muscles. The close grips are cycled similar to the incline presses, but aren't dropped until the week before the meet.

This cycle can be used by someone who has a 245-250 pound bench without a bench shirt. The sets do not include warmups:

**Week 1:** Monday - rest. Friday - Bench 185x10x3; Incline 3 sets, Curls 3 sets.

**Week 2:** Monday - Back 7 sets, Close Grip bench 3 sets, Shoulders 6 sets. Friday - Bench 195x10x3, Incline 3 sets, Curls 3 sets.

**Week 3:** Monday - Back 8 sets, Close Grip Bench 3 sets, Shoulders 6 sets. Friday - Bench 205x9x3, Incline 3 sets, Curls 4 sets.

**Week 4:** Monday - Back 8 sets. Close grip bench sets 3 sets. Friday - Bench 215x8x3. Incline 3 sets. Shoulders 4 sets This is a transition week where I start to work shoulders with chest and biceps with back and triceps. I also switch from one arm dumbbell presses to a Hammer Strength military press machine. I work to pump up the

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).

shoulders, not push max poundages.

**Week 5:** Monday - Back 8 sets, Close grip bench 3 sets, Curls 3 sets. Friday - Bench 230x5x3, Incline 3 sets, Shoulders 6 sets.

**Week 6:** Monday - Back 6 sets, Triceps 4 sets (French presses and one arm pushdowns for variety), Curls 3 sets. Friday - Bench 234x3x3 (start using bench shirt), Incline 2 sets, Shoulders 5 sets.

**Week 7:** Monday - Back 5 sets. Close grip bench 2 sets. Curls 3 sets. Friday - Bench 245x3x2 (w/shirt), Incline 2 sets. Shoulders 3 sets.

**Week 8:** Tuesday - Back 5 sets, Close grip bench 2 sets, Curls 4 sets. Saturday - Bench 255x2x2 (w/shirt)

**Week 9:** Tuesday - Back 5 sets, Shoulders 3 sets. Saturday - Bench 235xl, 255xl, 265xl. This is a contest simulation day. Use the same gear you will use at the meet. Finish the workout with two sets of military presses and two sets of hammer curls.

**Week 10:** Tuesday - Rest. Saturday - Meet day! At the meet I opened with 245.4 lbs. to get me into the meet. On the second attempt I set a PR with a 270 lb. lift. My third attempt was a miss at 281 lbs.

For the Worlds I used basically

the same cycle, but without a bench shirt my poundages the last two weeks were about 10 pounds lower than before the Nationals. At the Worlds I went 198 instead of 181 to have a better chance at the gold medal. My 248 lb. lift beat my competitor's 225 lb. lift and earned me the gold medal. USA Team coach Robert Keller picked my attempts to win. It was my first 3 for 3 meet.

I would like to thank the IPF for including a disabled division in their World Bench Press Championships. I enjoy competing in the same meet as able bodied people. I can't wait to see the disabled lifters from Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, and Germany again at next year's Worlds in Budapest, Hungary. These World Championships really help to bring people closer together.

Brian Washington will host the USPF Bench Press Nationals and World Team Qualifier in Baltimore, MD on August 28,29,1993, There is a lot of room for the U.S. to send a bigger team. I was the only disabled male this year and there were no women or disabled women lifters from the U.S. The men's team was not full as well, so come on out to the Nationals. You can do it!

Brian Blum