

The program that I use, and that I have put a number of individuals on, is based on 3 phases. There is the Conditioning Phase, the Strength and Explosiveness Phase, and the Peaking Phase. The 3 phase format is a little complicated, but it is very valuable and the dividends do show up. I've had a total of 20 individuals on this type of program and each time they have used it and given it the necessary 12 full weeks of the cycle, they have added anywhere from 5-25 pounds onto their bench press. They have ranged in age from 15 to 50 yrs.

There are some things not to do. One of the things I see guys doing is too many sets and too many assistance exercises. We must have quite a few closet bodybuilders hiding out as powerlifters. They spend an hour bench pressing and then another hour and a half on assistance work. They're back at it in 2 or 3 days and they can't figure out why they're not making progress and why they're continuously sore. If you're not recuperating, you should back off. Make some modifications. Take some time off. A lot of injuries in powerlifting are simply from overtraining. Make sure that you're selective in your training poundages, your intensity, frequency and in duration of your workout. All these factors go hand in hand. As you get to the meet, you must remember that your workouts are going to be higher in intensity so they should be shorter in duration and frequency.

One thing that I've experimented with is weight gain while trying to improve the bench. The bench press seems to respond well to bodyweight increase. About every 2-4 pounds weight gained translates into 5-15 pounds increase in bench press. In this routine, we're not indicating any kind of weight gain or any other changes in the lifter. All my lifts and all the individuals I train are lifetime drug free lifters.

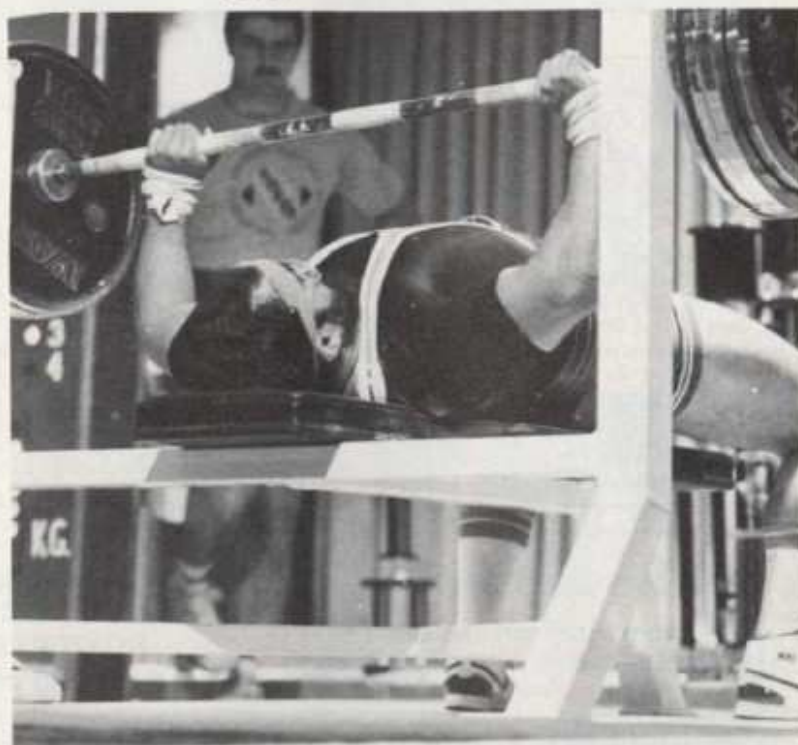
My accomplishments have not been aided by steroids. I think that a lifter should keep everything in good perspective and never take steroids and stay lifetime drug free in pursuit of powerlifting success and their goals. Number One, they'll be a lot healthier and Number Two, they'll enjoy the sport quite a bit more and Number Three, they'll be able to compete quite a bit longer. They won't have to be a flash in the pan like so many guys you see coming and going. They'll be able to continue lifting and enjoying the great sport of powerlifting. Make it a lifetime activity. Keep everything in perspective and strive for balance in your lifting and, more importantly, in your life.

This program takes a total of 12 weeks, and I'm basing the numbers on a 350 pound max, coming into the routine. Phase One is a very short program. 3 weeks maximum!!! If a person stays on this program for more than 3 weeks, they start to overtrain, due to all the conditioning work. Phase One is called the 'Conditioning Phase'.

# 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).**

## Mike Foggia's Bench Routine



MIKE FOGGIA a great bench presser, competing at the 1989 ADFPA Nationals.

### PHASE ONE

**Workout 1:** start out with stretching and flexibility. One thing different about my routine from others I have seen is that they're stuck on a "day" basis (for example, Monday and Friday; Wednesday and Saturday). I modify this, because some people require two days of recuperation on a certain phase while others may require four days. Try to work out what you need for rest. Take about 10 minutes for stretching and flexibility exercises. Then 1 set of 15 just using the bar, 1x10x135; 1x8x205; and then 3 sets of 6-8 reps starting with 245. 1 set of as many reps as possible with a close grip at 190. Assistance exercises (in this order, because it's important): dumbbell presses, 3 sets of 8-10 reps with max weight; dumbbell lateral raises 3x10-12 reps with max weight, but still maintaining good form; dumbbell presses with back supported; you simulate a behind the neck press, but by using a dumbbell it doesn't put the torque on the shoulders that the long bar does. By angling your hands a lit-

tle, you can take some of the torque out of the shoulder area. After the dumbbell presses, do pulldowns in front, 4x8-12, try and get a good stretch and work the lats. 3 sets of E-Z curls using the E-Z curl bar, 8-12 reps using the max weight; 2 sets of hammer curls 8-12 reps using max weight; 3 sets of E-Z curls using the french press bar, bringing it down to the forehead and then locking it back out arms length. Rest 3 days, ideally, before the next workout.

The change is that the maximum in the peak set is upped by 5 lbs. **Workout 2** is: 1x15 with the bar; 1x10x135 in the bench press; 1x8x205; 3x6-8x250; close grips with 195. Assistance exercises in the same order: dumbbell bench presses 3x8-10; dumbbell lateral raises 3x10-12; dumbbell presses (behind the neck press); pulldowns in front; EZ curls 3 sets of curls using EZ curl bar; 2 sets of hammer curls; EZ curls using the French Press. Rest for 3 more days.

**Workout 3** is in the middle of the second week. The only change is on

the peak set. The weight would go up to 255 lbs. Do 3 sets of 6-8 reps at 255. Emphasize explosiveness on this phase and the next to prepare for the 'Pre-Contest' Phase. 3x6-8x255 on the bench press. Warmups and assistance exercises would remain the same. Close grips should be moved up to about 200. In **Workout 4**, we move on up to 260. **Workout 5** would be 265. This is about 3 weeks with 3 days of rest between workouts. You should not follow this workout for more than 6 workouts if you're using 3 days of rest. Next, take 5 full days of rest to prevent overtraining.

### PHASE TWO

You need 4-6 weeks for this

Strength and Explosiveness phase, in which we use an A and a B workout, with different exercises performed on each day. In

**A - Workout 1**, do 1x15 with the bar; 1x10x135, 1x8x205, 3x5x280. This will get you ready to handle the bigger weights. You don't want to peak too early, however. Close grips 2 sets with max amount of reps possible at 205. Lateral raises 3 sets, One arm rows 4 sets, dumbbell hammer curls and dumbbell presses.

In the **B - Workout 1**: rest 4 days do 1x15 with the bar, 1x10x135, 1x8x205, 2 sets of 2 at 290 lbs. No close grips are performed in the B workout. Instead add 3 second pauses working on explosiveness. Bring 270-275 lbs. down to your chest and hold for 3 seconds then explode off your chest to lockout position. Do 3 reps and only 2 sets. Absolutely no more. Also, do one set of lockouts on a power rack. Just one set using the maximum amount of weight you can. Lateral raises 3 sets, 3 sets of 8-12 reps, pull downs in front 3 sets 8-12 reps, dumbbell curls 4 sets. Do handstand or wall pushups, up against a wall with your training partner holding your feet. Just one set of as many as

you can. Gorge that area with blood. After 4 days of rest go back to the A workout. In our **A - Workout 2**, everything would stay that same except 3x5x285. Do the same assistance exercises. After 4 days rest, in the **B - Workout 2**, go 2 sets of 2 at 295, then another four days of rest. For the next couple of workouts we'll stay at 285. In **A - Workout 3**: go 285 for 3 sets of 5, do close grips 2 sets max reps at 205, lateral raises, one arm rows, dumbbell hammer curls and dumbbell bench presses. After another 4 days of rest do **B - Workout 3**, 1x15 with the bar, 1x10x135, 1x8x205, and 2 sets of 2 at 295. The same amount of weight is handled with varied repetitions. Take 4 days rest. On **A - Workout 4**, your third workout with 285 do 3 sets of 5, you just repeat the routine. On **B - Workout 4** do 295 again and this would be your third workout at 295. We have four A workouts and four B workouts. This should take 4-6 weeks.

(Mike's Bench Press Workout of The Month is continued on page 76)

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### PHASE THREE

Peaking Phase: pre-contest phase, very high intensity. Short duration workouts (not in gym longer than 1-1½ hours) with 5 days of rest in between. You should rest 5-6 days after the last B workout, to get ready for the 4 week Pre Contest phase.

**Workout 1:** start out with the bench press with the bar only 1x15, followed by 1x10x135, 1x6x205, 1x3x350, 1x3x290, 2x3x305. Then do 2 sets of maximum rep close grips using 280 lbs. Lateral raises and hammer curls 3 sets of 8-12 reps. Finish off with dumbbell bench presses 3 sets of maximum weight using 8-12 repetitions. Rest 4-5 days. Each day in your rest period just take 135 and do it ten times. This will stimulate blood flow and aid recuperation. After your rest do

**Workout 2:** again 1x15 with the bar, 1x10x135, 1x6x205, 1x1x250, 1x3x290, 1x3x305, 1x2x315. Repeat the same program moving close grips up to 290 with maximum reps and lateral raises, hammer curls and dumbbell presses. For the remainder of this program, I won't repeat the close grips, lateral raises, hammer curls and dumbbell presses, BUT they all stay the same, using between 280-300 lbs. on the close grips. On the rest of the exercises strive to do 8-12 repetitions for 3 sets using the maximum weight. Rest 4-5 days. Come back for **Workout 3** of this final phase and do 1x15 with the bar, 1x10x135, 1x6x205, 1x1x250, 1x2x300, 1x2x315, 1x2x325, 1x4x285. Everything else remains the same. Rest 4-5 days. Come back for

**Workout 4** and repeat, 1x15 with the bar, 1x10x135, 1x6x205, 1x1x250, 1x1x305, 1x1x320, 1x1x335 with a pause, 1x1x345 with a pause. Do 2 sets of 2 with 320 working on a pause. Repeat everything else. Rest 5 full days.

Come back again for **Workout 5:** 1x15 with the bar, 1x10x135, 1x6x205, 1x1x250, 1x1x305, 1x2x325, 1x2x330, 2x3x295 working on the pause. Do the same assistance work and rest 5 days. In

**Workout 6,** repeat the same warm up sequence: 1x15 with the bar, 1x10x135, 1x6x205, 1x1x250, 1x1x305, 1x2x330, 2x2x335, 2x3x295. On the last sets work on explosiveness, with a pause. Do the same assistance work, same reps, same sequence, etc. Rest 5 days, so there is 7 days before the contest, for **Workout 7:** 1x15 with the bar, 1x10x135, 1x6x205, 1x1x250, 1x1x305, 1x1x335, 1x1x350. Do nothing the 7 days prior to the contest except for the 135 for repetitions.

At the meet, warmup as follows: 1x15 with the bar, 1x10x135, 1x3x205, 1x1x250 (you should have your shirt on before doing the 250), 1x1x280. For your opener attempt 330, then 350 (2nd attempt), and 360-365 for your third attempt.

If there is extreme soreness or fatigue, take an extra day of rest. You can add rest days, but never subtract any, as it'll catch up with you. For questions write Mike Foggia, 717 Mulberry, Des Moines Iowa 50309