

There is a relatively simple triangular rule to success in strength training. There are three major components to that success: 1. Hard Work through gradually increasing work volume and speed of work followed by a period of gradually increasing load (weight). 2. Rest - physical, mental, and emotional rest sufficient to allow recovery from training. 3. Food - adequate nutritional balance as well as sufficient calories to fuel the recovery and gains triggered by the hard work.

Every athlete should pay careful attention to these three principal factors if they wish to make progress in their sport. The unwritten center of this principal growth triangle is "variety". Our bodies, minds, and spirit thrive on variety. Variety sparks the adaptation process, speeding growth and recovery with minimal effort. It is this variety that spurs us at Power Excel to create alternative and interesting programs for the athletes that we coach. It is not necessary for every individual program to produce gains in absolute performance. Many programs will establish deeper foundation in muscular balance and enhancement of the recovery process so that subsequent programs will be much more successful. When approaching strength training for powerlifting performance it is very helpful, if not mandatory, to enjoy the process of training. When that training process is varied significantly there will be many momentary strength fluctuations as your body works to adapt. You will not be contest strong all the time. You will, however, make gains overall. In the interest of those whose focus is long term improvement and getting the most from the sport, we have adapted a number of variations of popular training formula. This month I will show you three variations of the popular pyramid training for the bench press. Rather than performing three weeks of eight's, three weeks of five's, followed by two to three weeks of three's, we will be scrambling the design of the strength and conditioning peaking cycles. They are not designed to peak you for the top meet of the season but rather to deepen your strength and conditioning and prepare you for a peak performance cycle. You may establish a personal best on this cycle but we guarantee that you will be stronger and in better condition at the end of these cycles. I am not including related accessory work because accessory work is specific to the individual athlete and these programs focus on the Bench Press exercise itself.

250 lb. BENCH PRESS PEAK

This first program as-

The BENCH

Bench Press Pyramid Training Program Alternatives

as told to *Powerlifting USA* by Greg Reshel, *Power Excel*

sumes that you can now Bench Press in the 225-240 lb. range. I expect that you will complete all the reps in good form with a little energy to spare. These sets are not designed to be all-out. If you struggle in any of the sets you need to ask yourself and your training partner if you were concentrating and executing good form. If you got out of the groove a tough set may mean nothing. If you are in good form and have tough sets you may need to lighten up some to get the results we are looking for. You will be bench pressing two times per week for nine weeks. Warmups are not included so warmup as needed to prepare you for the working sets

and then follow the program.

Week 1 - A. 3 sets of 12 reps at 100 lbs., B. 6 sets of 8 reps at 100 lbs. **Week 2** - A. 3 sets of 8 reps at 135 lbs., B. 5 sets of 6 reps at 135 lbs. **Week 3** - A. 3 sets of 6 reps at 155 lbs., B. 7 sets of 4 reps at 155 lbs. **Week 4** - A. 2 sets of 10 reps at 140 lbs., B. 5 sets of 8 reps at 140 lbs. **Week 5** - A. 2 sets of 7 reps at 160 lbs., B. 4 sets of 5 reps at 160 lbs. **Week 6** - A. 2 sets of 5 reps at 190 lbs., B. 2 sets of 3 reps at 190 lbs. **Week 7** - A. 1 set of 5 reps at 200 lbs., B. 1 set of 8 reps at 175 lbs. **Week 8** - A. 1 set of 4 reps at 210 lbs., B. 2 sets of 4 reps at 200 lbs. **Week 9** - A. 3 sets of 1 reps at 185 lbs., B. Peak - Open 225, 2nd 245, 3rd 260 lbs.

350 lb. BENCH PRESS

PEAK - This workout assumes a current level of 310-335 lbs in the Bench Press. You will be performing two bench routines per week for a total of nine weeks. I will not include warmups, only working sets. You are concentrating on the bench press exercise in this cycle so make sure that your other accessory work does not tire you out for your Bench Press on your bench days.

Week 1 - A. 3 sets of 5 reps at 175 lbs., B. 6 sets of 12 reps at 140 lbs. **Week 2** - A. 3 sets of 3 reps at 235 lbs., B. 5 sets of 8 reps at 175 lbs. **Week 3** - A. 3 sets of 2 reps at 250 lbs., B. 4 sets of 2 reps at 270 lbs. **Week 4** - A. 1 set of 6 reps at 245 lbs., B. 1 set of 12 reps at 225 lbs. **Week 5** - A. 1 set of 4 reps at 280 lbs., B. 3 sets of 8 reps at 225 lbs. **Week 6** - A. 1 set of 3 reps at 305 lbs., B. 5 sets of 2 reps at 270 lbs. **Week 7** - A. 2 sets of 2 reps at 260 lbs., B. 1 set of 6 reps at 245 lbs. **Week 8** - A. 2 sets of 8 reps at 225 lbs., B. 2 sets of 3 reps at 295 lbs. **Week 9** - A. 3 sets of 2 reps at 210 lbs., B. Peak - Open 310, 2nd 340, 3rd 360 lbs.

400 lb. BENCH PRESS

PEAK - This workout assumes a current level of 365-390 lbs in the Bench Press. You will be performing two bench routines per week for a total of nine weeks. I will not include warmups but only working sets. You are concentrating on the bench press exercise in this cycle so make sure that your other accessory work does not tire you out for your Bench Press on your bench days.

Week 1 - A. 5 sets of 2 reps at 240 lbs., B. 3 sets of 10 reps at 180 lbs. **Week 2** - A. 5 sets of 2 reps at 280 lbs., B. 1 set of 8 reps at 260 lbs. **Week 3** - A. 5 sets of 2 reps at 320 lbs., B. 6 sets of 3 reps at 280 lbs. **Week 4** - A. 4 sets of 2 reps at 280 lbs., B. 1 set of 10 reps at 260 lbs. **Week 5** - A. 5 sets of 2 reps at 240 lbs., B. 4 sets of 8 reps at 240 lbs. **Week 6** - A. 5 sets of 1 rep at 280 lbs., B. 1 set of 3 reps at 330 lbs. **Week 7** - A. 5 sets of 1 rep at 320 lbs., 3 set of 10 reps at 220 lbs. **Week 8** - A. 5 sets of 1 rep at 280 lbs., B. 2 sets of 8 reps at 260 lbs. **Week 9** - A. 5 sets of 1 rep at 240 lbs., B. Peak - Open 370, 2nd 400, 3rd 420 lbs.

The accessory work for all three of these programs should be light to moderate in load and fast paced to build endurance and stimulate the biochemical processes responsible for growth and healing. If you need or have questions considering these or other programs we have developed for *PL USA*, contact us at Power Excel - 2809 South Superior Street, Milwaukee, WI. 53207 or by phone (414) 769-1211.

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