

Strength routines are designed to get you strong all over. A good routine will give you increased strength in a variety of movements and will create a larger power groove for your competition performance lifts. Off-season conditioning routines will get you in shape to train really hard. You need to develop the capacity to recover quickly between sets and to have the overall endurance to survive volume strength training. This month I will lay out a strength training routine for an intermediate level bench press. You will need to work very hard for nine weeks. The purpose of the routine is to build your capacity for heavy work volume. If you can substantially increase your work volume in the 60-80% of single rep max range you will have made a measurable strength increase. Follow this with a peaking cycle focusing on technique and timing, and I will guarantee a bigger total.

To accomplish a substantial increase in work volume you cannot simply train for longer periods of time. Your energy and hormone levels will last between 45 minutes and 1 hour and 15 minutes. Your workout must fall within that window. You can adopt a workout that has enough volume to significantly tax you in the 1 hour and 15 minutes limit. The, over a period of 8-12 weeks, work faster each workout until you can accomplish the same volume workout in only 45 minutes. Alternatively, you can begin a workout that takes about an hour and add sets and reps at the same weights each week and fight like hell to get the workout done in the same time period regardless of the volume increases. The workout I will now outline for you will be the former variety. Time the first workout and add a little volume if necessary to make it last over 1 hour on the hustle. Each of the next 9 weeks you must decrease the time period to bring the same amount of work, eventually, under 45 minutes.

The sets and reps of work over the 80% single rep max will be performed during the peaking cycle. You should handle no work over 80% in this routine or your strength will plateau quickly, leaving you susceptible to injury and, most assuredly, to overtraining. This routine will have numbers based on a 200 lb. man that is currently bench pressing a max of 360 lbs. You will need to adjust the numbers up or down to suit our personal abilities and goals. Do not be afraid to lower the weights somewhat and simultaneously increase the volume. You have a window of 60-80% of single rep max. If you are working close to 80% your total volume will be less than if you work 70% or 60% but

# TRAINING

## Strength and Conditioning Routines, Version 2, The Bench Press

as told to Powerlifting USA by Greg Reshel, Power Excel



*Strength and Conditioning Routines build a base from which your peaking routine can produce a new Personal Record in the Bench.*

you will always gain strength if you work hard. Look at the routines you have performed recently and adjust the level of your weight to be in a different percentage range from work you have been performing. We all need variety to avoid plateaus and to keep from getting stale. You will perform two routines for the bench press each week. You must always work fast with very little time wasted between sets. Do not be afraid to miss a rep or two by working fast between sets. Failure to accomplish any of the sets just means that you are pushing the limit of your recovery and this will make you strong. Overall volume is the goal. Missing a few reps is not important to the success of the routine.

**DAY ONE:** Alternate Dumbbell Curls - STRICT - 6 sets of 6 reps increasing weight with each set. Wide Grip Barbell Curls - 6 sets of 8 reps with fixed or decreasing weight. Close Grip Upright Rows - 5 sets of 7 reps with a slow release to the bottom. Seated Press Behind the Neck - 8 sets of 8 reps with a slow negative to the bottom at the same height as the bottom of your ears. Use the same grip width as

your competition bench press. Bench Press - grip the bar about two finger widths narrower than your competition bench press on each side. Warmup as needed to perform 6 sets of 10 reps at 215 lbs. with the bar touching your mid pec, above the nipple. Double Dumbbell Straight Arm Pullovers on a Flat Bench - 3 sets of 12 reps, slow and light.

**DAY TWO:** T-Bar or Corner Rows - 8 sets of 8 reps with the weight increasing each set. Single

Arm Dumbbell Rows - 5 sets of 7 reps heavy. Close Grip Upright Rows with a 20 degree Forward Lean - 4 sets of 10 reps increasing weight each set. Bench Press - Use your competition grip and perform 9 sets of 3 "triple sets" of partial bench presses at 245 lbs. A "triple set" is performed by lowering the weight in the usual manner and then as soon as the weight touches your chest you will drive it back up, but only halfway. You must stop the weight between 1/2 and 3/4 extension and come right back down. You will only lock out the third rep. This is one "triple set". You must perform three bottoms but lockout the third rep three times for a total of nine reps per set. You will perform a total of 9 sets of 9 reps divided into 3 "triple sets" per set. Cable Crossovers of Flat Flies - 3 sets of 12 reps fairly heavy.

Always use spotters for your own safety. If you have questions or observations, contact us at POWER EXCEL, 2807 South Superior Street, Milwaukee, WI 53207, (414) 769-1211. We welcome your questions and observations. Good Luck.

At POWER EXCEL we have the first series of training logs, each of which includes off-season, strength, and peaking routines for all three powerlifts with all the accessory work listed. We have logs for novice or casual powerlifters, intermediate or serious powerlifters training year round, and for advanced or seasoned veterans of powerlifting as well as master lifters. Each log book is organized to have a specific selection of routines that will work together to build strength and break plateaus. We will continue to increase our library of routines and expand the range of log books to suit many individuals. If you are interested in these log books, give us a call and let us know what you would like in the way of training routines. We will provide you with a book that suits your needs. All are \$20. Call us today! Good luck and good training.

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