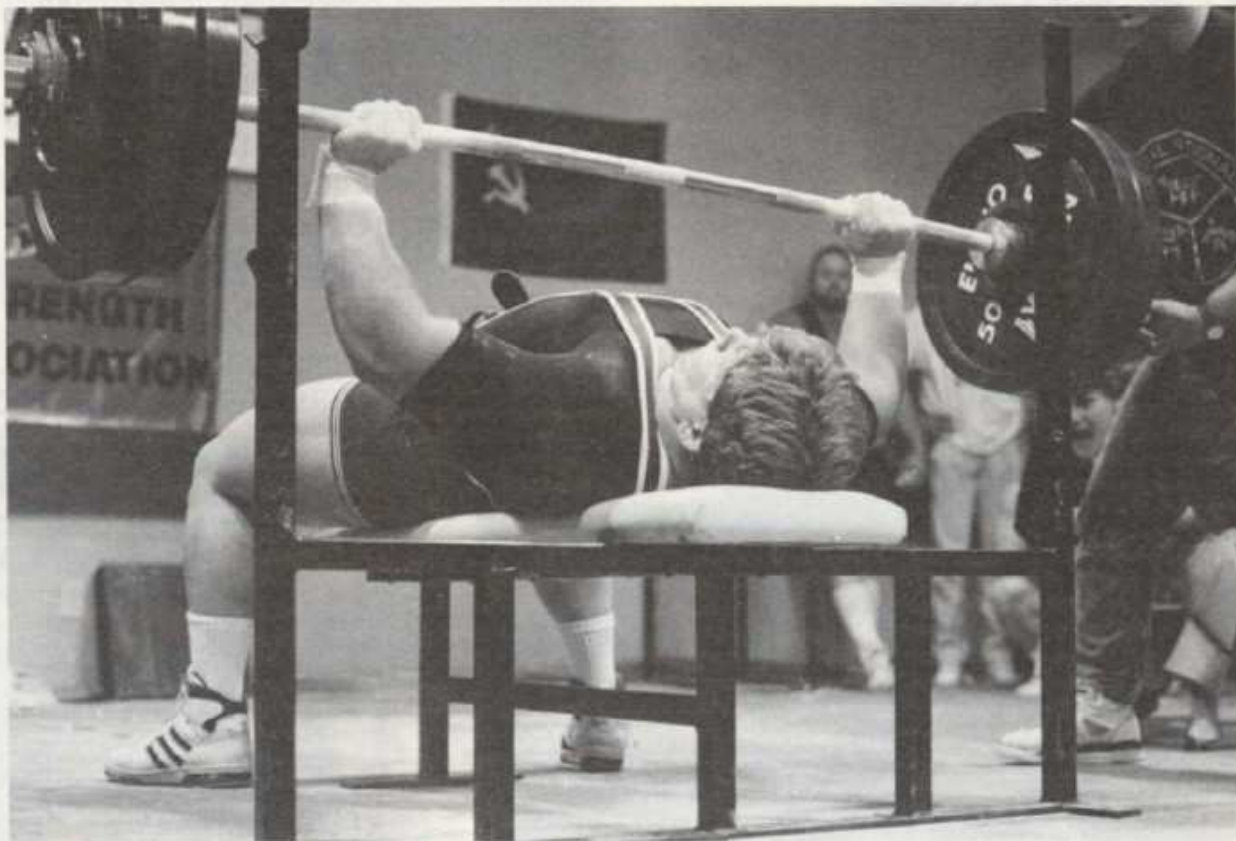


# WORKOUT of the Month

## Mike Siegler's Natural Bench Press Training Plan

My two phase bench press workout is designed for the drug free lifter. I designed this bench cycle in deference to the fact that a drug free lifter can not recover from a workout that is designed for an enhanced recovery system. It does not require a bench shirt. I advocate training without a bench shirt and putting it on at the meet, if it is allowable. I do not train pauses in the gym. This is because I feel pauses damage the joint. I also rarely do assistance work of any kind. This is because assistance work detracts from the recovery of the bench press movement as a whole. My bench workout alone is enough to increase bench press strength. I bench press on Mondays and Thursdays.



Mike Siegler made each of the attempts that the training program he has laid out in this article was designed to produce, topped off by this 540 attempt that he was successful with at the NASA Grand Nationals - USA vs USSR competition held in Atlanta

**Phase I:** When I have not competed for a while, I incorporate Phase I into my training program. I begin Monday with 4 sets of 10 reps at 315. On Thursday, I increase the weight in accordance with how much I feel I have recovered from Monday's workout. The following Monday, there is another slight increase in weight for 4 sets of 10 and so on until I can bench 365 for 10 reps. Then I go on to Phase II. It usually takes me about 6-9 workouts to reach Phase II.

**Phase II:** Phase II is the part of my cycle that is geared toward a particular meet. I bench press heavy on Mondays and light on Thursdays. The following is the bench press cycle I used for Rich Peters' NASA Grand Nationals in Atlanta, GA on June 1-3. I based my training on my intention to go 501, 523, 540 on my competition attempts at that meet. My previous meet was Rich Peters' Natural Nationals in Reno where I benched 512 on Feb. 25th, so I can skip Phase I. Only the heavy workout on Monday is listed. Every Thursday from this point on I bench 4 sets of 315 for 10, then I go home!

**March 5th** - Max Set 3x405x6  
**March 12th** - Max Set 3x415x6  
**March 19th** - Max Set 3x420x6  
**March 26th** - Max Set 3x425x6

**April 2nd** - Max Set 3x430x6  
**April 9th** - Max Set 2x440x4  
**April 16th** - Max Set 2x450x4  
**April 23rd** - Max Set 2x455x4  
**April 30th** - Max Set 2x460x4  
**May 7th** - Max Set 1x470x3  
**May 14th** - Max Set 1x480x3  
**May 21st** - Max Set 1x490x3  
**May 28th** - Max Set 1x500x3

I believe that a little strength and a lot of form can lift any weight. I have always considered myself a technician of the bench press. I believe in the use of equipment in a meet. I wear a bench shirt when possible, light leather belt, hightop shoes, wrist wraps, and, of course, my singlet. I'd wear a helmet if I could. (The people who have seen me squat will testify to the truth of this.)

The most important thing in a meet is to anticipate the pause signal. Bringing the bar slowly to a tight, full chest of air will accomplish this. I think of my breathing in three simple stages. 1) I BLOW the bar off the rack at my lift off. 2) I SUCK the bar to my chest. 3) I BLOW the bar off my chest to lock out.

I would like to thank the following people for helping me with my powerlifting career. I give them all



**SUCCESS!** Mike celebrates not only a successful attempt, but a successful training philosophy as well.

the credit for what I have accomplished because they are my support group: my wife Natalie; my parents David and Joan and sister Rachel; my partners Tyler and Carla Malejko; gym owners Bill and Nancy Gilbertsen of Priority Health and Fitness in Prior Lake, MN; and Dan and Jay of The Body Shop in St. Cloud, MN; training partners Tyler Malejko, Russ Dunker, Mike Grimsley, Raymond Howard Bonus, Jr., Tom Blomberg, Greg 'Dr. Pain' Payne, and 'Hollywood' Howie Lagergren.

*Editor's Note: Mike Siegler will soon be moving, along with his partner Tyler Malejko to the Seattle area to open a gym. Best wishes to Mike, Tyler, and their families on this venture.*