

WORKOUT of the Month

Mike Simpson's Russian Bench Routine

This article is being written not only to present an excellent bench press routine, but also to share a philosophy of lifting and a method of setting workout goals.

I've been wrestling and strength coach at Republican Valley High School for the past ten years. During this time I have been exposed to various philosophies for training athletes. None have been more interesting nor more valid to me than the Russian Theory of coaching wrestling. The Russian Olympic wrestling coaching staff works backwards from conventionally used methods. That is, they begin by setting their final goals and objectives, then work backwards from the day before the scheduled meet in planning workout routines and short range goals.

I have been applying this same theory to my bench press routine. I establish my desired final goals three months in advance of the day of competition. I then begin working backwards, knowing that in order to achieve a workout (set-rep-poundage) goal for a certain workout, the prior workout (set-rep-poundage) goal must be achieved. In other words, workouts have been geared in a manner that enables the lifter to build on each week's progress until the final goal or ultimate max lift has been made. In order to achieve success with this bench routine, the lifter must be intense and goal oriented toward

every set and workout.

This bench press workout is a slight revision of my mini-cycle bench routine that appeared in *POWERLIFTING USA* (Nov. 1981). However, in this present routine I have eliminated singles and reduced the number of sets as the meet grows nearer. The reason for these modifications is that the lifter is handling heavier weight in the last phase of the cycle which poses a threat of overtraining if the number of sets are not reduced.

I still do not recommend inclines, flies or military presses unless they are used during the off season. Three months before the meet, the lifter needs to be hitting the bench press hard, and the use of other assistance movements will result in overtraining.

Tricep extensions are great as a supplement to the bench press. I hit about five or six sets of tricep extensions on an incline bench after my Thursday workouts, if I experience much tenderness of the tricep insertions at the elbow, I'll reduce the tricep work or just do cable work once a week. I continue training triceps until a week before the meet.

My best competition bench resulting from this routine has been a 450. If a lifter is capable of benching 400 with a pause, then he should be able to add an additional 25 to 35 pounds on his bench. Success is contingent upon training intensely and following the routine closely. If the prescribed

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 at 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)

workout poundages appear to be too light at first, don't increase weight, but make each rep harder by incorporating pauses that may vary in length from one to ten seconds.

Important Points to Remember:

1. Warm-up before you hit your workout sets. I like to go 135 x 8 and 225 x 8. Warming up is an individual thing, and you have to do what is right for you.
2. You must be goal oriented toward every set and every rep in all of your workouts. Think about your upcoming workouts, and when your bench day arrives, attack the weight with as much as intensity as you can muster. You must attack the weight like you would attack any other opponent.
3. Use good form on all of your sets and employ pauses frequently.

Week 1: Monday: 285x8, 275x8, 275x8, 300x1 (10 sec. pause)

Thursday: 275x5, 305x5, 335x5, 335x5, 335x5, 305x1 (10 sec. pause)

Week 2: Monday: 275x5, 305x5, 340x5, 340x5, 340x5, 340x5, 310x1 (10 sec. pause)

Thursday: 275x5, 315x3, 345x3, 365x3, 365x3, 365x3, 315x1 (10 sec. pause, increase your last lift each workout by 5 lbs. for a 10 second pause)

Week 3: Monday: 275x8, 295x8, 295x8, 295x8, 295x8

Thursday: 275x5, 315x5, 345x4,

345x5, 345x5, 345x5

Week 4: Monday: 275x5, 315x5, 350x5, 350x5, 350x5, 350x5

Thursday: 275x5, 315x2, 340x2, 360x2, 380x2, 380x2, 380x2

Week 5: Monday: 275x8, 305x8, 305x8, 305x8, 205x8

Thursday: Repeat 4th week Monday workout

Week 6: Monday: 275x5, 315x5, 355x5, 355x5, 355x5, 355x5

Thursday: 275x5, 315x3, 350x3, 375x3, 375x3, 375x3

Week 7: Monday: 275x8, 315x8, 315x8, 315x8, 315x8

Thursday: Repeat 6th Week Monday workout

Week 8: Monday: 275x5, 315x5, 365x5, 365x5, 365x5

Thursday: 275x5, 315x2, 355x2, 390x2, 390x2, 390x2

Week 9: Monday: 285x8, 325x8, 325x8, 325x8

Thursday: Repeat 8th Week Monday workout

Week 10: Monday: 275x5, 320x5, 370x5, 370x5, 370x5

Thursday: 285x5, 325x3, 370x3, 385x3, 385x3

Week 11: Tuesday: 285x5, 325x5, 370x5, 370x5, 370x5

Friday: 285x5, 335x3, 375x2, 400x2, 400x2, 400x2

Week 12: Tuesday: 285x5, 335x3, 375x1, 400x1, 420x1, 390x3

Saturday: (Meet Day) Warm-Up, Open-400, 2nd Attempt-420, 3rd Attempt-435 to 440

GOOD LUCK!



Mike Simpson, Head Wrestling and Strength Coach at Republican Valley High School in Indianola, Nebraska in competition. Photo courtesy Mike.