

The BENCH

Technique versus Training

as told to PL USA by **GEORGE HALBERT**

The two most important aspects of your weightlifting progress are technique and training. A novice weightlifter will make great strides in strength regardless of training methods or techniques used, however, as one progresses in strength the importance of training and technique increases proportionately. These two partner aspects not only control your progress or lack thereof, but also each aspect plays a crucial role in the development of its partner aspect.

The most important aspect one can learn to improve strength is to learn proper technique. There is a mode of thinking out there that I describe as "He's not strong, he's just got good technique." This is just confused thinking. I know, I have thought this way myself. Have you ever heard anyone say "he is not a good shooter, he just has good technique" or "he's not really fast, he just has good technique?" One has to come to realize that technique is a factor of strength. Back to my first point, the most important thing you can do to improve your progress is learn the proper technique. Learn how your chest starts the bar moving, learn how your triceps squeeze the bar out, learn how your lats lock in your elbows. If you do not understand these relationships, how can you set up a training program to increase your strength? Also, you may think that your technique can only improve to 100 percent and then it will be perfect. I think instead like this -- if my maximum is 400 lbs with perfect technique I want to improve it to 500 lbs with perfect technique. As you see there is always room for

improvement in your technique, just add on weight. Once you have come to understand technique (as an ongoing process), you will be ready to set up your training.

Once you understand good technique, training becomes the most important aspect to your progress. However, technique in training now becomes paramount. How is it that my training partner and I can perform the same exercise (5 board lockouts) and only my lockout improves while his lock out is stuck? I realize that there are numerous reasons that this phenomenon may occur, but the number one answer is technique. This is the number one problem I experience with my training partners - their technique in training is lacking. If I performed my 5 board band presses using the same technique they use, my lockout would be stuck too. Believe me, my lockout was stuck for years because of this. One must learn proper technique in training and program the body to respond using this technique. This is the biggest problem with trying to instruct someone how to become stronger. I am not a good enough writer to explain to you proper technique and relationships on paper. Instead, I try to give basic principles and ideas and then it becomes up to the reader as to how that information gets processed. This is also the downfall of video. Although I can relay information better to you in my video through visual stimulation, it is still up to the viewer to process the info. In a recent discussion I had with Louie on some advanced training books, Louie said "you need to sit back and read it and then open your mind to what it is saying." So, when I describe the 5 board band press in my articles or my video I say "As you lower the bar with arms extended towards your stomach you will feel the weight shift into your triceps" do you respond by thinking - unrack the bar and then lift it - or do you open your mind to the relationship of your triceps to the load of the weight. So, back to training vs. technique, and let's say my technique suffers because I can't get the bar off of my chest. Simple solution -- understand the relationships of your pecs to the initial movement of

the bar. If you don't know how to use your pecs, your chest development will suffer. Begin doing wide grip benches with elbows out and push up by squeezing in on the bar. I've heard about confusion by some, because I say proper technique in the bench press is squeezing out on the bar, but here I say squeeze in. It is here that you must understand that pecs squeeze in so to best isolate them one must squeeze in on the bar. However, once you've learned your pec relationship to the bench press, proper technique is to squeeze out on the bar. Now, you reevaluate and adjust your training accordingly to improve on your new weaknesses and so on and so forth.

I realize the concepts of training and technique deserves much more time and ink than I have spent on them. However, I have tried to relay some basic concepts and principles

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for you. It is up to your the reader to open your mind and respond accordingly. Do not limit your abilities because your mind is closed. It took me 13 years to understand the simple relationship of triceps to the bench press. Hopefully, these articles and others you read will help you avoid these training pitfalls. First, learn the proper technique and then set up the proper training and use proper training technique to meet your strength goals.

GEORGE HALBERT

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