

The magnum force of “sets and reps”

I know what you're thinking, was that six reps or was it only five? Well, to tell you truth, in all this excitement I kind of forgot myself, but being that your set rep scheme can be one of the most important factors in how strong and powerful you can become you've got to ask yourself one question: do you feel lucky, well do ya?

The number of repetitions (reps) you perform per set of repetitions as well as the number of sets performed has been one of the most studied and researched areas of strength development and should not depend on luck. Finding and using the correct percentage of the one repetition maximum (1RM) at which you perform your reps and sets is the other determining factor that will optimize strength and power gains.

Over the years many different combinations of sets, reps, and percentages of 1RM have been used to develop strength. If you are looking for one of the common factors among a preponderance of the various training programs it would be that the use of percentages of 1RM between seventy five and ninety percent produce the greatest gains in pure strength.

For an example, a lifter training to improve base strength who has a one repetition maximum of two hundred pounds would be best served using training poundage's between 150 pounds for five to six repetitions up to 180 pounds for two to three repetitions. The repetition range will vary depending on the complexity of the lifting movement being performed and the skill of the lifter involved. When greater power is the training goal lighter weights as low as 50% of 1RM can be employed with success. The number of sets performed will vary as well, with the common thread being that the total number of repetitions combined from all the sets will typically be around twenty to twenty five reps. An example of this, using our lifter capable of a two hundred pound lift we might see four or five sets of five repetitions at 160 pounds (80% of 1RM). It should be noted that a weight with which you can perform just five repetitions will be very close to eighty percent of your one repetition maximum (1RM) so performing a 1RM is not always necessary to find out what your training weights should be.

It should be kept in mind that aggressive strength and power training programs such as these should only be employed by lifters who are technically sound and are being closely supervised by expert lifting coaches with the proper credentials. Lifting technique should always take precedence over how much weight is being lifted and limitations in core strength, balance, and flexibility should be addressed before any serious weight training is performed. If the lifting program is being used to improve sports performance an emphasis on athleticism and injury prevention should also be a high priority.

With proper training weight selection, diet, and recovery practices you can enjoy consistent strength gains. So go ahead....make your day!

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