

THE TOP 5 STRATEGIES TO STRUCTURE YOUR WORKOUTS FOR IMPROVED STRENGTH

I get this question all the time. "what is the best exercise for chest?" well. . . depends. "How many reps should I do in each set?" well. . . depends. In helping people with exercise programs there are not a lot of definite answers. I know, you just wanted me to give you all the answers, but it really, well. . . depends on what your goals are and about a thousand other things.

Don't worry, the more information you seek from quality sources the better, I'm about to give you some good stuff. If you have a goal like gaining strength, it becomes easier to answer some of the previous questions because there are guidelines for things like strength training.

Appropriate Practice: When gaining strength is your goal, it's a good idea to give yourself a lot of practice with lifting heavier weights. This is so your body can adapt more quickly to lifting heavier things and therefore be stronger. This principle is called appropriate practice. One mistake I often see, is when people are training for strength they do a lot of sets at different weights working their way up to a heavy weight and then moving to another exercise. The problem with that is you aren't getting as much practice or trials lifting the heavy weights. Ideally, in strength training you would make sure you were warm, and then begin to do all of your exercise sets at about 80-90% of your maximum. That way you wouldn't be wasting any time lifting lighter weights that won't challenge you enough to gain strength.

Do your weakest parts first: The reason for this is so you have the most resources available to put toward the exercise. You should have the most energy, mental stamina, and will to succeed early in the workout. Another reason doing your weakest area first helps is because often the weakness is a combination of skill and absolute strength. It's a lot easier to work on skills when your mind is fresh. Often that alone will improve strength quickly.

Multi Joint (compound) before single joint exercises: With strength being the goal it's a good idea to do multi joint exercises before single joint exercises. Multi joint exercises are ones where more than one joint is involved in the lift. Examples are Bench Press: shoulder and elbow. Row or Lat pull-down: shoulder and elbow. Squat or leg press: hip, knee, ankle. Single joint exercises involve one joint like biceps curls (elbow) or leg extensions (knee). It's good to do the multi joint exercises early in the workout because they involve combining the strength of several muscles to perform a lift and are strong when working together. Also, fatigue of assisting muscles won't interfere with lifting heavy. So if I wanted to get stronger at pushing I wouldn't want to wear out my triceps by training them before I did a bench press exercise because I wouldn't be able to lift as much weight.

Keep repetitions low: Even though this seems simple, many people perform too many repetitions when training for strength. 8 repetitions is the ab-

solute most per set that you should do when training for strength. It's okay to do sets of 3, or 5 or 6 and those low reps are great for building strength. Why is it good? Because beyond 8 repetitions your body runs out of short term energy and begins converting energy to help continue. That is an example of endurance and to train that way would promote endurance and not strength.

Recovery is Key: Make sure you are getting enough recovery in between set's and days of training muscles. When you are working at heavier weights like 80-90% of your maximum, you need to rest longer between sets. At those high intensities it takes almost 3 minutes for your body to replenish the short term energy stored in the muscles. If you are not taking enough time between sets, the following sets will not be as strong as they would be, which means not finishing sets. Also, take at least 48 hours rest from heavy lifting in muscle groups to allow them to fully recover when working at higher intensities. This will help ensure that you are progressing.

Now you've got an idea about how to structure your workout program to really get stronger. Keep in mind that these suggestions are great for strength development and you will probably see an increase in strength within a couple of weeks. However, these tips may not be ideal for other goals like endurance or overall fitness.

References: Bompa, T. *Periodization training for sports*.

ARE YOUR SUPPLEMENTS CERTIFIED DRUG-FREE?

People spend a lot of money on nutritional supplements to improve health or get healthy elements into their bodies that they can't otherwise get from daily nutrition intake. I, like many other fitness professionals think supplements are fine if the user realizes that supplements are to be used in addition to a healthy diet and not as a replacement for one.

If you are going to take nutritional or sports supplements it's important to understand what you are taking and how it effects your body. One problem that has come to light recently is supplement contamination. It's real, and it could effect you if you take supplements made in the U.S.

In October 2000, the IOC (International Olympic Committee) commissioned a

study on the prevalence of banned substances in nutritional supplements. A total of 634 non-hormonal nutritional supplements from 13 countries and 215 different suppliers were tested in the study. The results showed that an incredible 94 samples (14.8%) were found to contain unlisted substances that would lead to a positive doping test. The U.S. also came in at 14.8% Some of these substances include testosterone precursors and amphetamine. I would certainly recommend keeping those supplements out of your system, I know I don't want them in mine. If you are an athlete and taking supplements you should make sure that you are using Certified Drug-Free products, to prevent any false positive drug tests. I would recommend that if anyone takes supplements, multivitamins included,

make sure that they are Certified Drug-Free.

The BSCG (Banned Substances Control Group) currently tests supplements and guarantees purity. Limited companies are willing to certify their products because of the expense involved. Here are a few that do:

Kodiak Nutrition International, LLC.
AmeriSciences
Pharmanex
Theta Brothers Sports Nutrition

References: N. Baume et.al. (2006) Research of stimulants and anabolic steroids in dietary supplements Scandinavian Journal of Medicine & Science in Sports 16 (1), 41-48.

APRIL HEALTHY RECIPE HAWAIIAN PORK CHOPS

4 (6 ounce) lean center-cut loin pork chops
1 egg white, lightly beaten
1/4 cup unsweetned pineapple juice
1 tablespoon low-sodium soy sauce
1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
1 cup dry breadcrumbs

1 teaspoon dried
Italian seasoning
1/4 teaspoon
paprika



Trim excess fat from pork chops. Combine egg white and next 4 ingredients in a shallow container and stir well. In another shallow container, combine the breadcrumbs, Italian seasoning and paprika and set aside.

Spray a roasting pan and rack with nonstick cooking spray. Dip each pork chop in the liquid mixture and then lightly coat in the breadcrumb mixture. Place pork chops on the rack in the roasting pan. Bake for 15-20 minutes (depending on thickness) at 350 degrees, turn and then continue to bake another 15-20 minutes or until no longer pink in the center. Makes 4 servings. Serving size: 1 chop

Nutrients per serving: Calories 302, Total fat 7g (21% of calories), Saturated fat 2g, Cholesterol 111 mg., Sodium 531 mg., Carbohydrate 18g, Protein 39g, Dietary fiber 1g.

Next Month:

Exercise and the Mind: Learn how exercise has a positive effect on brain function.

Overtraining: More is better? Not always, I will discuss symptoms of overtraining.

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