

Deadlift Training

As told to Powerlifting USA

by Louie Simmons

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Deadlift records have made little progress in recent years. I believe it is easy to add pounds to a squat or bench press due to more progressive equipment. The supportive gear, in Westside's opinion, pushes one to gain bodyweight to increase the squat and bench press, but anyone, including myself, can tell you, if you're too heavy, your pull is destroyed.

With all that said, how do you train the deadlift for a meet? You don't. One must train the deadlift in a multiyear plan. An 8- or 12 week cycle won't work. For example, it may take 6 months to raise your hamstrings up to acceptable levels. If not, you will never reach your potential.

Let's look at Matt Smith's progress in a 30 month period. Matt had a 633 deadlift meet PR. Two and a half years later it is 825. This deadlift completed a 9 for 9 day and gave Matt a 2445 total at SHW.

Matt used the conjugate method. This system links special exercises that will increase awareness and coordination. Its purpose is to raise the classical lifts. First used for the Olympic lifting team at the Dynamo Club in the old USSR, this method was tested on 70 top lifters. It consisted of 25 to 40 special exercises. At the end of the first study, only one lifter was satisfied with the number of exercises. The rest wanted more.

Westside Barbell also began using this system in the early 1970s. If I put \$1 million under a rock in the parking lot and told you to find it, chances are the first rock you pick up will have nothing under it. I bet that million that you would keep, looking until you struck it rich. It's the same with exercises. If you look long enough, you will find methods and exercises that work best for you while realizing that many are worthless in comparison.

Now let's look at a constantly revolving system of exercises that are used on max effort day, always trying a PR. For the advanced lifter, do 3 lifts, all singles: one at roughly 90% and then a PR, and if it is truly a max, stop, if not, try one more. It is much better to break new ground as often as possible. Lifting weights of 90% or more for more than 3 weeks will stop progress, but by rotating the core special exercises each week, one can max out all year long. This system is the supermaximal method.

Here are several workouts for the deadlift that can be coupled any way you want. Workout 1. Safety squat bar squats on a 12-inch box. Work up to max. Next, glute/ham raises, the Reverse Hyper, and abs.

Workout 2. Bent-over good mornings to a max single or a 3-rep max. Then sled pulling for 8 trips of 200 feet with moderate weight, the Reverse Hyper, lat rows on a chest-supported machine, and abs.

Workout 3. Deadlift using the lightened method by placing the Jump-Stretch bands at 5 feet 6 inches off the floor to lighten the load by 65, 110, or 150 pounds. Work up to a max. Next, do pull-throughs, dumbbell rows, the Reverse Hyper machine, and leg raises.

Workout 4. Front squat on a parallel box. Try a new max, a single or a 3-rep max. Next do glute/ham raises, sled pulling with ankle straps, the Reverse Hyper machine, and standing ab work.

Workout 5. Rack pulls with the plates 2 inches off the floor for a max single, pull-throughs, incline sit ups, barbell rows, and the Reverse Hyper.

Workout 6. Heavy sled pulls with a belt around the waist for six pulls at 200 feet a pull. Then glute/ham raises, dumbbell rows, Janda sit-ups, and the Reverse Hyper. Janda sit-ups, named for Prof. Vladimir Janda, are done by hooking a band underneath the bench with the feet not anchored to eliminate hip flexor involvement. Hold on to the band, press your heels downward, push out on the abs, and pull up on the band.

Workout 7. Cambered bar good mornings. First bend over close to parallel; now squat as low as comfortable; then raise up. Work up to a single or a 3-rep max. Then do pull-throughs, snatch grip rows, standing abs, side rows for obliques, and the Reverse Hyper.

Workout 8. Arched-back good mornings. Remember, when doing a good morning, the bar must be in front of the knees. If not, it is a quarter squat. Work up to a max single or a triple. Pull a sled backward for 6 trips of 200 feet each. Barbell rows with a close grip, Janda situps, and the Reverse Hyper machine.

Workout 9. Concentric safety squat bar good mornings. Crawl under a bar that is suspended 3 feet off the floor and do good mornings. Do max single. Then glute/ham raises, chest-supported rows, standing abs, and the Reverse Hyper.

Workout 10. Band deadlifts on platform. Here, you can use one or two mini-bands, or purple, green, or blue bands. This is workout 10-14 if you use a different strength band each of these weeks. Work up to a max single. Then chest-supported rows, glute/ham raises, standing abs, and the Reverse Hyper machine.

Workout 15. Suspend the Buffalo bar or 14-inch cambered bar or do Zercher squats with a suspended bar. This is workout 15-17. Then pull a sled with a power belt for 4 trips for 200 feet backward. Then dumbbell rows, Janda sit-ups, and the Reverse Hyper.

Workout 18. Box deadlifts off a 4-inch box for conventional dead-lifts. Workout 19 is sumo deadlifts off a 2-inch box. Then do hanging leg raises, pull-throughs, and the Reverse Hyper machine.

Workout 20. Belt squats off a low box. Workout 21 is off a parallel box. Workout 22 is off a high box. For these workouts use a very wide stance. If you use the same boxes but with a very close stance, you now have workouts 23-25. Follow with glute/ham raises, incline situps, and the Reverse Hyper machine

Workout 26. One-legged squats with a straddle stance. Support the back foot on

a box while the front foot is far out in front. This will build the entire leg while increasing flexibility in the hip and groin. Then do Janda sit-ups, backward sled pulling for 6 trips of 200 feet each, side-bends, and the Reverse Hyper machine. Here you have 26 workouts, which is not even close to the amount we do. There are many methods combined in our workouts (concentric, eccentric, accommodating resistance, flexibility, awareness, and coordination) by doing a new task each week and maxing out continuously with exercises that build strength speed.

Matt does the dynamic method on Friday. The maximal effort work outs discussed above are roughly 72 hours later, on Monday. The more exercises you master, the better you are at any related exercise

Does this really work? Westside has had two female lifters do 470 and 484 deadlifts at 132 bodyweight and two female 165's do 534 and 556. As for the men, we have a 165 who has done 640, two 181's with 670 and 677, at 198 three over 700 and one at 750, two 220's with 722 and 795, a 242 with a 793, a 275 with an 804, a 308 with an 800, and three SHWs with 810, 821, and Matt's 825.

I know the greatest deadlifters are built to deadlift. At Westside we have never had the luxury of such a specimen. We had to develop the deadlift, just like Matt's increase from 633 to 825 in 30 months.

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