

The Repetition Method

By: Louie Simmons

I have previously discussed the different methods of training that are utilized at Westside. The dynamic method replaces a maximal effort day and builds explosiveness and speed strength. The maximal effort method builds strength speed and absolute strength.

We know that training with weights about 90% for 3 weeks will cause a negative training effect. To remedy this, the conjugate method is employed. Each week on maximal effort day we use a different core exercise and max out with 100% or more. It can be a good morning, pull, or special morning, pull, or special squat for the squat and deadlift or a floor press or board press for the bench press, to name a few.

If you think about it, strongman events are really the conjugate method. It's not uncommon for a top strongman to deadlift 800 or more.

Many don't realize it, but we also use the repetition method to failure, never in the classical lifts, but rather with special exercises with dumbbells, belt squats, the Reverse Hyper[®]5356,359 and 6,491,607b2, and so forth. I prefer to do repetitions for time, not bothering to count reps, in a slow tempo.

If this sounds new to you, it's not. In the 1970s the great Olympic lifter Vasili Alexeyev used a variation of the repetition method for part of his training, sometimes doing power cleans non-stop for 2-3 minutes. He would do various hybrid exercises: front squat and push press, squats with the bar on his back and drop squats, etc. The bar weight was light but would work every muscle cell. He would do a warm up by throwing a 220 pound barbell over his head backward 100 times. Then after practicing the snatch for over 2 hours, he would spend an hour in the pool, lifting his legs hundreds of times to strengthen his abdomen. Then he would leap merely 1000 times. He would use many exercises to gain great strength and to raise his work capacity, and of course his total. This is precisely what Westside is after.

Here are some examples of how the repetition method is used at Westside:

For the squat or deadlift, I will do belt squat for 3 or 4 sets of 3 minute sets, 2 or 3 sets of abs, or the Reverse Hyper[®]5356,359 and 6,491,607b2 for 1-3 sets of 1-3 minutes each

Another workout consists of band good mornings, a single set sometimes lasting 6-8 minutes, depending on band tension. Follow this with light dumbbell presses for 2-4 minutes nonstop.

Walk with a sled for up to 5 minutes with light resistance. Follow with ab work.

Do light deadlifts for 1-3 minutes followed by ab work for at least 2 minutes.

Pick up a barbell and throw it overhead behind you or the same exercises with medicine balls. This works the entire body. After throwing it, simply walk over to it and do another rep.

Do band leg curls for 3-6 minutes followed immediately by band leg extensions.

Do dumbbell power cleans for 1-3 minutes, either holding them at your waist or on your shoulders, or of course over your head.

Do dumbbell pressing on a bench or, my preference, on stability ball. I use three different weights depending on the day. After the dynamic workout, I use 100s for 3 minutes. On max effort day, I have done 75s for 5 minutes. Four or five times a week I use 40s for a set of 3-10 minutes.

Using weights of roughly 30% will serve as restoration, by not being heavy enough to stop adequate circulation via strong muscle contraction.

To validate some of the findings at Westside, in *Science of Sports Training* by Thomas Kurz, high reps with very light weight are stated as being beneficial in the rep range 100-200. Olympic long jumper Diane Guthrie had been doing 250 leg curls every day using 10 pound ankle weights. She noted that when she slacked off the work, she incurred leg injuries.

People make a mistake thinking that there is only one method of training. In fact, there are many, and they must coexist in a continuous chain of proven methods.

When doing the workouts I have outlined, remember to do them with a slow tempo. This means 6-10 reps per minute, resting between reps while still holding onto the bar or dumbbell. Regardless of where you hold the bar or dumbbell, it will work the muscles to their fullest extent.

A great benefit of the repetition method is an increase not only in all strength but also in endurance. This method is also commonly known as lactic acid tolerance training. It promotes a high degree of growth hormone production, which can aid in size and strength.

I suggest that at least two levels of intensity be used: one for strength and one for restoration, the latter using 30% of max or less. As your absolute strength increases, all your strength qualities increase. When I could do 100 pound

dumbbells for 40 seconds, I could do 30s for 1 minute 30 seconds. Later when I did 100s for 3 minutes, I did 50's for 8 minutes and 75s for 5 minutes. When your top strength goes up, so does your strength endurance with less than max weights.

Size, strength endurance, and restoration can all be gained using this method. It is a simple and effective way to raise work capacity and volume to increase your total as well as your fitness level. This method worked for the greatest Olympic lifter of all time—Vasili Alexeyev—and currently and greatest bencher by formula—George Halert.