

Deadlifting on the Rise

By: Louie Simmons

Finally, after many years, it seems the deadlift is on the rise. In New Orleans in September 2002. I was lucky to witness not one but two 900+ deadlifts, by Gary Frank and Andy Bolton. After trading the record back and forth, Andy reclaimed it in Columbus Ohio in March 2003 with 934. With Steve Goggins pulling 881 and Ano Turtiainen having made 892, it is apparent that we must work on deadlifting to keep up. Some lifters are born to deadlift, i.e., short back, long arms, and large hands. In fact, most big deadlifters lack a big bench except for Gary. So, how can one obtain a big deadlift? Hard work, and more hard work.

Box deadlifting is a productive method. These are done by standing on a platform ranging in height from 1 to 4 inches. A conventional or sumo deadlifter can use four levels, up to 4 inches. Keep track of each box record for a single. To increase grip strength, do a triple, pausing each rep on the floor. Pulling off a platform will build the start or finish of the deadlift regardless which portion of your deadlift is lagging. This is done by increasing the range of motion 1-4 inches, depending on box height. A bonus is developing your grip by having to hold on to the bar longer than a regular deadlift.

My old friend Jerry Bell , the first 165 pounder to pull 700 officially, from Toledo Ohio, would stand on a 4 inch platform to train his deadlift, with obvious results. Rick Crain made a 716 deadlift at 165, a world record at the time, in 1982. he did both wide and close stance deadlift training off a coke crate to build his phenomenal pulling power.

Don Blue, a 148 king did the same. Don was in an altercation and was stabbed in the eye and lung, yet recovered well enough in 8 weeks to again break the deadlift record.

Rack pulls are also effective. Most lifters do rack pulls incorrectly. That is the bar is too high off the floor allowing one to lift a weight that will never be attempted in a meet. This can cause a total breakdown of the central nervous system. An Olympic lifting guideline contends that the optimal weight percent for pulls be restricted to 10% above the best clean or snatch. This was discovered by A. D. Ermakov and N.S. Atanasov (1975) by accumulating the results of 780 highly skilled weight lifters. Lifts at 85% were the most used at 22.9% , 90% lifts were done 16.7% of the time, and lifts of 80% were done 14% of the time. Compare this with weights of 100% which were done only 2.5% of the time.

In 1982, I made a 722 deadlift at 220. my best rack pulls were 705 at 2 inches off the floor, 730 4 inches off the floor, and 760 6 inches off the floor . I later made 855 8 inches off the floor and 805 6 inches off the floor with straps. But not until I recently made a 715 PR with no straps 2 inches off the floor did I make

progress again. I realized that I will never make an 855 or even 805 deadlift. I was wearing myself out for nothing.

The law of accentuation states that strength should be trained only in the range or sport movement where the need for high force production is maximal (V. Zatsiorsky). It would seem that to lift weights not remotely possible is a waste of time and energy. Rather, it is beneficial to do several singles ranging from about 80-90% of a maximum deadlift. I recommend the guidelines set forth by A.S. Prilepin (1974). Because the deadlift is very taxing on the central nervous system, I recommend the minimal number of lifts 10 at 80%, reducing to 4 lifts at 90% of a particular pin record.

The lightened method is performed by attaching Jump-Stretch bands to a power rack to allow 135 to be almost weightless at floor level. We have found that whatever you pull in the lightened method, provided that you do it with no suit or groove briefs, you can pull in a meet. This is a proven method at Westside. At a meet when wearing a suit with the straps up, of course, one receives a good carryover. The blue bands are accurate from a low 600 deadlift up to Matt's 850 pull. Lifters that pull up to 600 would use a green band. The bands are looped, not choked. When locked out, the bar is totally lifted out of the bands.

We also do platform deadlifts with bands on a Jump-stretch platform with double-looped mini-bands. Two methods are used at Westside: speed strength deadlifts and max effort deadlifts. For speed strength, use 60% of your max single pull on the platform. Do 6-10 singles. These should be done right after speed squats, so set up the platform before squatting. You should be able to go right into the speed deadlifts after the squat workout if your GPP is up to par. The platform deadlifts will also build your grip. For max effort work, set records with different bands.