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CRITICAL POWERBUILDING



MONTHLY WORKOUT

By Mike Westerdal

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Workout of the Month

CRITICAL POWERBUILDING

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The Goal Of This Workout:

To improve strength and size with powerbuilding workouts that start with compound exercises for lower reps followed by assistance exercises for muscular size. In addition we will be incorporating GPP which will build some foundational conditioning that serves to develop base fitness qualities in an athlete.

The two components of this month's workout; powerbuilding and GPP are explained in greater detail below.

What Is Powerbuilding?



Shiloe Steinmetz Supporting Critical Bench



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The simple answer is that it's a combination of bodybuilding and powerlifting training where the goal is to add lean muscle mass with the strength to match.

A powerbuilder therefore may chose to compete in either sport but one does not need to compete in anything simply to have the goal of building strength & muscular size.

Stereotypically many bodybuilders are known for ripped physiques but are relatively weak in comparison to powerlifters that compete in the squat, bench press and deadlift. Likewise a lot of powerlifters tend to look "out of shape" when compared to their bodybuilding counterparts.

Powerbuilding training on the other hand makes bodybuilding synonymous with strength. With this workout philosophy you'll mesh hypertrophy training and strength training.



Typically large compound movements like the bench press, squat, deadlift, military press and overhead press and variations of these would be done at the beginning of the workout for low to moderate reps to work on your strength attributes.

After these movements are completed the workout is followed by assistance or auxillary exercises that can in fact be isolation exercises but do not have to be.

These exercises support the main lifts in getting stronger, but are done for higher rep ranges to stimulate muscle growth and increase the size of the muscle being trained.

Powerbuilding will take care of the strength and size aspect of your training while your GPP training days will compliment this by keeping you athletic, conditioned, and prepared for life all while burning fat and keeping you both lean and fit.



An Introduction to General Physical Preparedness



The concept behind General Physical Preparedness (GPP) is the development of basic fitness skills-flexibility, strength, endurance and speed-by doing mostly functional exercises or movements that involve multiple muscle groups.

It's basically all about balance in your body and building a good solid base using old school exercises that involve as many different muscle groups as possible.

GPP is not a "style" of training but rather, it is a component of training-and it doesn't require and special training or fancy equipment.

If you are interested in developing balance among fitness, strength and size, then you ought to be taking a good look at GPP.

For example, a guy can lift and lift and lift until he's as big as an ox with bulging muscles of steel but be short of breath from a climb up a flight of stairs. Or, if you are into competitive sports, adding the GPP component to your training mix can really give you a competitive edge. Guys also use GPP to improve weak spots, to be more adaptable, improve their overall fitness levels and to boost and speed up their bodies' capacity to recover all while burning fat at the same time.

The sled pull, tire flip, farmer's walk, wheelbarrow push and plate lifting are some of the more common GPP exercises around. In doing any of these exercises you start out with a goal of doing it for maybe ten minutes or so, with a long-term goal of working up to about 30 minutes.



It's important to remember this part: Once you reach 30 minutes, don't keep striving to be able to do longer stretches of time. Rather, enhance your capacity by increasing the weight, not the amount of time you're doing the exercises. This is where you'll really see improvements in your performance.

One of the great things about GPP is that it involves compound exercises that require you to use multiple muscle groups and multiple skills (balance, coordination, etc.) at the same time. By doing compound exercises you're not only improving your all around fitness level but you're also significantly lowering your risk of injuring yourself.

Lots of bodybuilders get totally caught up in building size, focusing on doing the same exercises over and over again. By keeping the focus just on the muscles that you see in the mirror (the "beach muscles") and not training the core, they are setting themselves up for injury.



Powerlifters are equally guilty on totally concentrating on their maximum strength without paying much attention to their hearts or work capacity. If you can squat 700 pounds you should be able to squat 225 for 15 reps without getting totally winded.

The other great thing about GPP training elements is that you can do them with whatever you have handy. If you don't happen to have a sled hanging around the house-no worries-push a vehicle around instead.



And if you aren't able to do that, then maybe you can flip a tire or attach some rope to a piece of plywood, put a bunch of bricks on it and start dragging it around. With GPP you're not tied to a specific routine or exercise. It's not a requirement that you do specific exercises or follow a particular routine-it's more important that you do strongman type exercises that are really going to challenge you.

Even if you live in the heart of the city you can incorporate GPP exercises into your training routine. The farmer's walk can be done anywhere. Just grab a couple of heavy dumbbells and start walking. As you improve, use heavier dumbbells. If the weather is lousy then you can do it at the gym.

At the gym you can also carry around plates instead of dumbbells, if you'd like. Kettle bells are great for doing GPP exercises too. You can use them to do snatches, the farmer's walk or any number of other compound exercises.

You can even do GPP exercises if you don't have anything more than your own bodyweight. Jump squats are just one example of a bodyweight GPP exercise

that you can do. The point is that GPP allows for a great deal of creativity, flexibility and adaptability. Watch the Strong Man competitions on the television if you want some great ideas for coming up with your own GPP routines.

To wrap up, by including GPP exercises into the training routine, dangerous imbalances-and the injuries that often accompany them-can be avoided.

Adding GPP exercises into the mix can also help keep boredom at bay and can also keep you from getting burned out on training. You'll also be giving yourself a serious competitive edge and as an added bonus, because the body is in all-around better physical condition, you'll also find that you recover more rapidly and will probably have more energy too.

In this month's workout we are performing GPP work on Tuesdays and Thursdays.



This Month's Workout Parameters

Rest Periods

During your powerlifts (deadlift, bench and squat variations) take as much time as you need between sets which could be 3-5 minutes. However during your assistance work and hypertrophy exercises you'll want to keep rest periods below a minute...which also means you'll require less weight to generate the same tension.

On your GPP training days you will want to push yourself and rest as little as possible. Each time you repeat a GPP workout, either finish it in less time or add a small amount of weight/resistance to the exercises.

Tempo

On your powerlifts you'll want to be explosive. Lift the weight as fast as you can. Remember that due to the heavy loads the bar will not appear to be moving very fast. None the less, the goal is to complete each rep as fast as possible without resorting to any forced reps!

For all your other lifts you'll want to control the weight and use good form. Each repetition should take about 2 seconds in the eccentric phase, followed by a 1 second contraction in a motionless position and finishing the concentric phase of the lift with another 2-second tempo.

Selecting Your Weight/Resistance

This is going to be simple so don't over think it. Let say, you're supposed to do 4 sets of 5 reps. I want you to pick a weight for your first set that you think you can 5 reps for on all 4 sets. We are not going to be pyramiding up or doing drop sets this week. Make sure whatever weight you use, that you do not force reps. It puts too much strain on the CNS and is not helpful for your strength goals.

You may have to estimate the weight to use for the first set of each exercise, but after the first set you should know what weight to use for the rest of the sets for that exercise moving forward.

If you got all 5 reps for all 4 sets you can increase the weight next time you do that exercise again. If you were not able to complete all 4 sets by doing 5 reps, stick with the same weight the next time you do the exercise until you can complete all the required reps.



Follow this 1-Week Routine for the next 4-Weeks

You'll be training 5 total days per week with two off days. You might as well put your off days on the weekend, but that's up to you. You'll have 3 powerbuilding training days and 2 conditioning or general physical preparedness (GPP) training sessions.

Weekly Overview – Repeat for Four Weeks:

- Day 1: **Deadlift/Back/Biceps/Abs**
- Day 2: **GPP**
- Day 3: **Bench/Chest/Triceps/Abs**
- Day 4: **GPP**
- Day 5: **Squats/Legs/Shoulders**
- Day 6: Weekends Off
- Day 7: Weekends Off

Your training logs can be found below. Print them out and use them. Record your results in your training log at the Critical Bench Vault forum so we can see how you're doing and keep you on track. Try to improve each workout in weight, reps or time.

Dominate this workout and maybe you'll be ready for next month's routine 😊

Keep training hard,



Mike Westerdal
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DATE:		DAY: 1									
EXERCISES	SET 1		SET 2		SET 3		SET 4		SET 5		
	WEIGHT	REPS	WEIGHT	REPS	WEIGHT	REPS	WEIGHT	REPS	WEIGHT	REPS	
Back/Biceps/Abs											
1. Deadlift		5		5		5		5			
2. T-Bar Rows		8		8		8					
3. Pull Ups /Or Assisted		10		10		10					
4. Hammer Curls		6		6		6		6			
5. Knees to Bows		12		12		12					

NOTES: You should be able to finish this workout in about an hour.

DATE:		DAY: 2									
EXERCISES	SET 1		SET 2		SET 3		SET 4		SET 5		
	GPP	Complete 125 total reps. Example: 5 sets of 25 reps with 60 second rest between sets.									
1. DB or KB Swings		25		25		25		25		25	

NOTES: Record the weight you are using in the first column. Remember you can take more than five sets if you need to but the workout isn't done until you get all 125 reps. Use a challenging weight. You want to be very glad that each set is over. You'll have just barely enough time to catch your breath before you're at it again.

Next time you do this workout, finish it faster with the same weight or finish in fewer sets or add weight.



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DATE:		DAY: 3									
EXERCISES	SET 1		SET 2		SET 3		SET 4		SET 5		
Chest/Triceps/Abs	WEIGHT	REPS	WEIGHT	REPS	WEIGHT	REPS	WEIGHT	REPS	WEIGHT	REPS	
1. Bench Press		5		5		5		5			
2. Close Grip Barbell Floor Presses		5		5		5					
3. Rolling DB Extensions		8		8		8					
4. Triceps Pushdowns		10		10		10					
5. Medicine Ball Twists		12		12		12					
NOTES:											

DATE:		DAY: 4									
EXERCISES	SET 1		SET 2		SET 3		SET 4		SET 5		
GPP	Complete 100 total reps. Example: 5 sets of 20 reps with 60 second rest between sets.										
1. Burpees		20		20		20		20		20	
NOTES: Record the weight you are using in the first column. The guy in the sample video is being lazy. We are going to add a jump to our Burpees. No wait! We are going to be holding 10-15 lbs dumbbells in our hands. At the top part of the burpee we are going to jump and overhead press the dumbbells on each rep! This is not an easy workout. Just get your 100 reps and you can rest until tomorrow.											



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DATE:	DAY: 5									
EXERCISES	SET 1		SET 2		SET 3		SET 4		SET 5	
	WEIGHT	REPS	WEIGHT	REPS	WEIGHT	REPS	WEIGHT	REPS	WEIGHT	REPS
Legs/Shoulders										
1. Squats		5		5		5		5		
2. Leg Press		8		8		8				
3. Glute Ham Raises		8		8		8				
4. Plate Raises		10		10		10				
5. Reverse Flyes		8		8		8				

NOTES: Click the squats link above to watch a video where I describe your squat form in detail. We may use variations of the squat in future monthly workouts, but this month we are doing a powerlifting style squat.

For the leg pres exercise, don't assist with your hands and use light enough weight that you get a decent range of motion please.

You can do glute ham raises by having a partner hold your feet or use the machine if you have access to one.

For the plate raises, use a 25, 35, or 45 lbs plate for the exercise.

If you want to train your abs at the end of the workout you can do so but it is not mandatory.

Days 6 & 7 OFF

Take two days off or perform some optional low intensity steady state cardio such as walking on an incline on the treadmill. Or just stay active by playing basketball, going biking, swimming, hiking, walking, or doing some yoga or other active recovery work.

Don't do anything too strenuous on these days or it could affect your gains.



Blank Training Log

DATE:	DAY:									
EXERCISES	SET 1		SET 2		SET 3		SET 4		SET 5	
	WEIGHT	REPS	WEIGHT	REPS	WEIGHT	REPS	WEIGHT	REPS	WEIGHT	REPS
NOTES:										