

70SBIG.COM PRESENTS

THE TEXAS METHOD

PART I



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Disclaimer

All forms of exercise pose some inherent risks. The information presented is not intended for the treatment or prevention of disease, or a substitute for medical treatment, nor as an alternative to medical advice. This publication is presented for information purposes, to increase the general knowledge of strength and conditioning. The information and program outlined herein should not be adopted without a consultation with your health professional. Use of the information provided is at the sole choice and risk of the reader. This program is designed for healthy individuals 18 years and older only. Before practicing the exercises in this book, be sure that your equipment is well-maintained, and do not take risks beyond your level of experience, aptitude, training and fitness.

Author's Note

This book assumes a healthy, drug-free trainee with *at least* halfway decent mobility and technique. Individuals with existing pathology – anatomical, neuroendocrine, or otherwise – will receive and adapt to stress differently. Trainees and lifters who use performance enhancement drugs will alter how they adapt to stress and the Texas Method may or may not be optimal. The author has no experience taking enhancement drugs or coaching anyone that has, and all of the programming prescriptions reflect this. Lastly, appropriate mobility and technique is a requisite; if a trainee can't get into an efficient position to train the structures properly, then the prescriptions are for naught. If trainees are serious about their training, they should invest in getting a quality coach to at least verify they have decent technique.

Thanks

Thank you to Mike Hom, Jacob Tsyplkin, and Tom Vale for invaluable editing, comments, or support throughout the writing and editing process. Thanks to Mark Rippetoe and Lon Kilgore for establishing the foundation for how I think about programming. Special thanks to my close, yet irritating friends who appear on my site: Arin Canecchio, Brent Kim, Chris Riley, Mike Battaglino, and Shawn “The Law Dragon” Owen. Might as well throw Leda in there although she could take it or leave it. No thanks to myself throughout all this; I’m unimpressed with how long it took me to finish, and I’ve only just begun.

Introduction

The advent of the internet was incredibly beneficial for strength training enthusiasts. The geographical barriers that prevent trainees from discussing what they love were obviated, and the internet provided a forum. The internet opened the doors for successful strength coaches to discuss their thoughts and material with average trainees who would otherwise never know their names. The spread of information brought advances into how we understand and implement strength and conditioning training. Most ideas are as old as a rusted York barbell, but what is old to someone in Ohio may be revolutionary in California. Natural selection occurs and old ideas die out because of their lack of utility. The concepts that remain cement themselves among strength training lore.

Science can easily explain the concepts that all strong men have known; illicit an adaptive stress on the body to improve. The concept is simple, yet its application is not. The correct dose of stress to induce progress depends on a trainee's current state of adaptation. The hard part is applying the correct dose of stress. But that's why we're here: to learn the basics of stress application to get stronger.

Getting strong requires all of the musculature in the body working through a full range of motion in natural gross movement patterns. Multi-joint, or compound, exercises like the squat, standing press, deadlift, and bench press best achieve this. By training the body together in one day, there is a systemic stress to go along with the local stress at the muscles. The system recovers and adapts the body's environment to handle the same stress easier in the future. How long someone has been training or where their strength lies with respect to their genetic potential determines the dose and response time of the stressor.

A person who hasn't done serious and consistent strength training will benefit from a Linear Progression (LP). A LP is a program that advances on a daily basis because the dose of the stress can be recovered from in a day or two. There are different kinds of LPs, but the best will have a given set and rep scheme and will increase the load each workout. Each workout will hit the entire body with compound movements, places at least one day of rest in between workouts, and typically averages three workouts a week. The best LPs don't exceed three total work sets and have around five reps per set. Two very good LPs include Starting Strength (from the book of the same name) and the Greyskull LP. You can familiarize yourself with linear progressions online and in other texts like *Practical Programming* by Mark Rippetoe and Dr. Lon Kilgore.

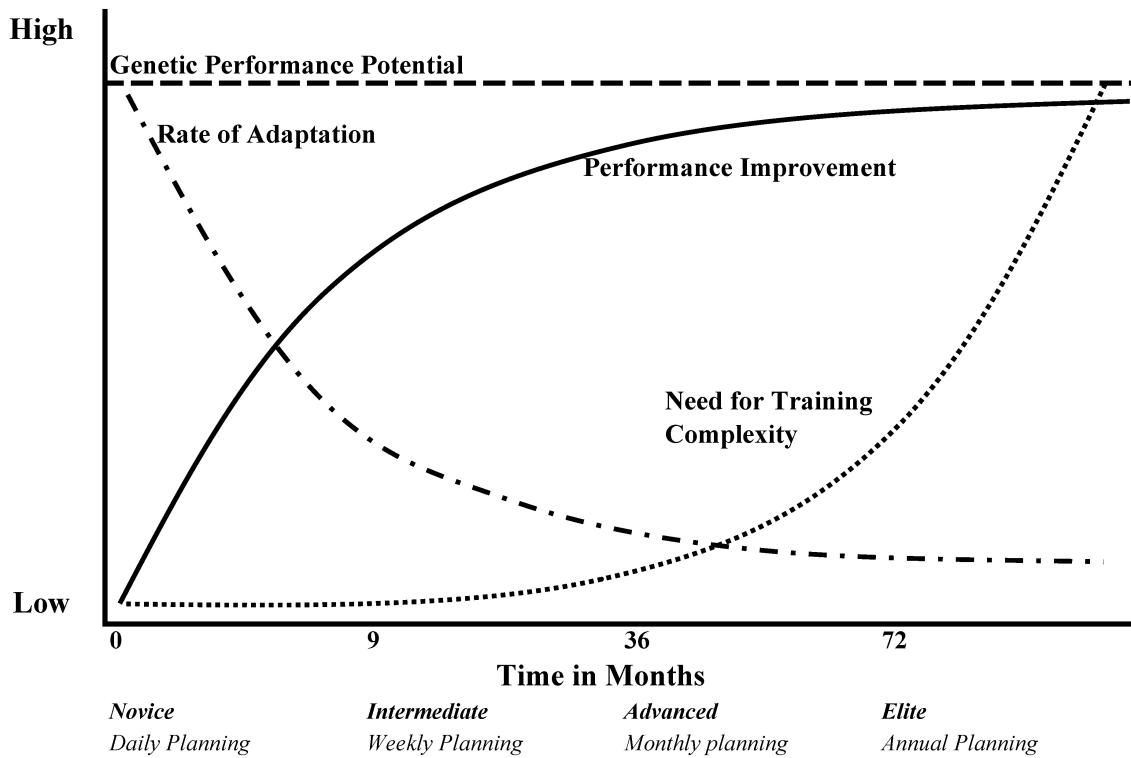


Figure 1. The rate of performance improvement slows as a trainee advances. Additionally, the need for training complexity and performance improvement are inversely related. Figure used with permission from Lon Kilgore. From the unreleased book FIT by Kilgore, Hartman, and Lascek.

Figure 1 shows a trend in performance development over time. This trend applies to any physical attribute, but for our purposes we will consider it “strength development”. Un-adapted trainees will progress quickly; it’s not uncommon to put over 100 pounds on a novice’s squat in the first six weeks. Experienced trainees know that they cannot have that same rate of improvement. As a trainee advances, their programming must have a more complex manipulation of variables to illicit improvement; a daily progression becomes a weekly progression. **The principle of weekly variable manipulation is what I sum up as “The Texas Method”.** Before implementing a Texas Method the trainee requires a baseline of training knowledge.

LPs are a good starting point because they develop strength and muscularity as well as good training, eating, and recovery habits. Developing good muscularity is critical for overall body strength. If a trainee has big thighs and a small trunk, then they can’t transmit any force to a barbell or someone’s face. If a

trainee gains weight and strength, yet they have a skinny arms and neck, they still look like a pussy at work. Stronger is nice, but strength with muscularity is why we are here.

Good training habits are learned from commitment to a program. If a trainee doesn't adhere to any program, then their progress will be as spotty as their dedication. Learning how to eat to recover and improve is incredibly different than eating as a sedentary adult. Protein and caloric requirements are high – much higher than someone who sits on their fupa every day. Having a surplus in protein and calories are how a trainee builds strength and muscle, yet all three of the macronutrients – protein, carbohydrates, and fat – are vitally important. Strength and size can't be maximized by eating sparingly.

The concept of recovery is easy, yet its practice is poor. A trainee needs to take care of their body. Philosophically and literally speaking, it's the only one they've got. Learning how to deal with the aches and pains of successful training is vital for progress. Learn the best methods to build and maintain the ROM around joints. Learn how pressure and massage can make fascia, tendon, and muscle more pliable. Learn to take a day off when needed and how to not train when sick.

These are all the concepts that can make or break a training program, yet leave the scope of this book (the author notes that you can find this information on 70sBig.com). The reader possesses a text that will help him understand and think about intermediate programming. It starts from the ground up to explain what Texas Method programming is, why it works, how to tweak it for various goals and advancement, and how to use the concepts throughout a training career. By reading this book the trainee will have a better understanding of not only the intricacies of weekly programming, but also how they can apply the concept of "stress and adaptation" to other programs and training related subjects. I hope that it gives the reader a baseline that propels them to further their study of the realm of human performance. After all, learning is an adaptation that doesn't have a genetic potential.

Chapter 1 – What is the Texas Method?

The Texas Method (TM) is a term that I use to refer to the manipulation of training variables – namely volume and intensity – to illicit gains in on a weekly basis. I don't exclusively use it to refer to a single cookie cutter program, because there is rarely a program that will work for all trainees who need to make weekly progress. I have used different combinations of sets and rep schemes with a TM set-up to progress strength, and it's just easier to lump it all together in one term.

Glenn Pendlay, a successful American Olympic weightlifting coach, explained to me how the guidelines for the TM were developed. Pendlay had his high school and junior national level lifters squat five sets of five reps twice a week on top of their rigorous Olympic weightlifting program. Their last squat workout was at the end of an intense training week, and most lifters were probably tired, sore, and wanting to get home. The 5x5 squat at the end of their session was probably like basketball players having to hit free throws in their last practice day or football players having to run that pass scale drill *one more time* as the sun goes down.

The trainees eventually bargained with their coach to do one heavier set instead of a grueling five sets. Pendlay finally relented with one circumstance: if the lifters didn't set a personal record (PR) on the first set of five, then they would have to drop weight and get four more sets in. Talk about incentive! What the coach and lifters found in the coming weeks was a squatting method that worked a little better than the previous method and the TM was born.

This outline of 5x5 and a 5 rep-max (5RM) would become the basic outline. However, in my time of using the TM on myself, using it on others, and observing the anecdotal data from hundreds of trainees online, alterations to the program must occur to continue progress. Each individual is full of variances and peculiarities – musculature development, body dimensions, genetic predisposition, and training history to name a few – and this is why programming is an art. Most people don't implement programs very well because they don't know how to modify them for their own goals or situation. The collection and implementation of this information, personal experience, and the necessity of program tweaking is the basis for this book.

The Starting Point

In order to make appropriate modifications to a TM, it's important to understand the general outline. Typically a trainee shifts into the need for weekly programming after they have exhausted their potential to make gains on a daily program (e.g. a linear progression, LP). The fundamental concept of the TM is to have moderate to high amounts of volume with medium intensity early in the week and high intensity, low volume at the end of the week.

Monday — 5x5

Wednesday — Light work, between 70 and 80% for 2x5

Friday — 5 rep max (5RM)

The volume is a specified dose of stress placed on the body to force it out of equilibrium, or homeostasis. Assuming the body can recover from the “volume day” stress, it will adapt to it so that the same dose won't have the same magnitude the next time it's implemented. For someone who has just completed the daily progression, or a LP, they will recover from this volume dose in three to five days. In the last workout of the week – Friday or Saturday – the trainee will display the dose adaptation by squatting a heavier weight. This “intensity day” is a gauge to see if adaptation occurred as a result of the volume day stress. Additionally, intensity day creates its own unique stress; the body handles much heavier weights with much less total work. This stress is different in how it affects muscular structure, connective tissue, and neuromuscular efficiency. After a couple days of rest, the trainee is ready to get another dose of volume day; the cycle repeats itself.



It's easy to see how placing appropriate doses of volume and intensity throughout the week can increase strength. Yet we are all beautiful people with unique characteristics, backgrounds, and goals. Running

the program above may work for some, but many trainees run into issues for a variety of reasons. The basic set up above can be manipulated to propel progress, and this is why **I use the term “TM” to refer to the collective manipulation of training variables to make weekly progress**. In order to use the TM or its derivatives, it’s best to understand what it is or isn’t good for.

What is the TM good for?

The TM is a very good general strength program. It includes and progresses all of the important lifts: squat, standing press, deadlift, and bench press. A proper LP will have established a good body size and structure, and the TM can continue to build and refine mass. Although the TM is primarily a strength program, solid mass is a byproduct of getting stronger over time (the higher a trainee’s absolute strength is, the more weight the trainee can handle on muscle building exercises or techniques).

Because of the TM’s focus on improving strength, it is a good starting point for beginning powerlifters. Chapter 4 will discuss various sub-goals in the TM and how to tweak the program to get swell, improve power, and establish conditioning while Chapter 5 will elaborate on how to use the TM in meets.

The TM is a good off-season strength program for team sports and season athletes. Season athletes compete in a sport with designated season of competition; they can benefit from re-establishing or improving their strength base before shifting back into a strength maintenance and sport conditioning phase. Check out Chapter 4 for more information on season athletes using the TM.

The TM may also be used as an alternate to the LP. I have switched people to a TM set up for various reasons including anatomical issues (typically asymmetry) and subtle form issues. One female trainee had pelvic asymmetry due to rotational scoliosis in the lumbar spine. The frequency of three sets of five reps throughout the week was giving her problems that reverberated around her low back and hip. I switched her to a TM set up; the volume five sets of five consisted of a lower weight that allowed us to work on positional issues and conscious neurological innervation and the intensity day allowed us to push the weight up for a single heavy set without fretting over technique. There are other instances where I switched trainees to a volume/intensity set up because of chronic form issues (i.e. knees coming in at the bottom of a squat or chest-dropping that causes the bar to roll), and it allowed us to practice specific cues with the lighter volume sets while experiencing heavy sets on intensity day to drive progress. A good coach will be able to think outside of the box to drive progress in their trainees instead of stubbornly sticking to rigid schools of thought.

Lastly, the TM is a good gateway into more advanced programming. Once a trainee has learned how they adapt to stress (by tweaking their program to make it work), they will have excellent insight on how to

progress their training as their body demands new methods of dose and response. The TM is obviously a useful style of programming; after all, you're reading a book that I've spent time writing about it. But TM does have some drawbacks. Some drawbacks can be tweaked in the programming while others are simply incongruent.

What is the TM *not* good for?

The nature of the TM is such that as the trainee continues to gain experience with it, it becomes much harder. Making weekly progress in strength is faster than making bi-weekly or monthly progress, so the trainee will find himself experiencing the upper limit of stress that his body can handle in order to promote adaptation. This gets hard. Real fucking hard.

There were times when I rested about ten minutes in between my five sets of five on volume day, and I managed to survive the workout. I vividly remember using my routine self-talk and imagery methods to jack up my adrenaline before the fifth set of five at 455 pounds. My pulse was racing as I hitched my belt into the second hole. I no longer could hear the music droning in the gym, and I no longer had peripheral vision; it's as if my focus blocks out the irrelevant sensory details. I approached the chalk stand while taking short breaths. I could feel my pulse; it pounded through my chest and my mind. I rubbed my hands in the chalk – it helped increase the friction of my grip on the bar – and then rubbed them together. I specifically remember the chalk softly floating up to the sunlight that was shining diagonally across my vision. There was something poetic at how it floated, so softly, through the sunlight as my jaw clenched uncontrollably. It was like the peaceful eye before the hurricane hits. I slammed myself under the bar, walked the weight out, and ground through five reps with a weight I had already done for 20 reps. Summoning maximal adrenaline five times in an hour left me feeling exhausted, and I fell into a chair to catch my breath. I had survived volume day again.

As you can see, toeing the line of what kind of stress your body can handle isn't easy. Yet we have found that making subtle changes – even reducing the volume – can help improve the progression. The variables can be manipulated to make progress, but it's still lifting weights and lifting weights isn't easy. Getting deep into a TM will eliminate some trainees. Some may not have the motivation to attack their training days. Some may have recovery limitations because their jobs are strenuous or they lack the funds to replenish. Older trainees – perhaps 35 to 40 years and above – may find the volume a bit much to recover from. Again, volume can be scaled and tweaked, yet there may be other optimal programs (Jim Wendler's 5/3/1 is a great program for older guys).

The TM isn't optimal for Olympic weightlifting when used as a strength emphasis. That is, if the trainee tries to add weightlifting into a rigorous TM program, he will not recover well for optimal strength or

weightlifting development. The nature of Olympic weightlifting training demands training to be at least 80% of a 1 rep-max (1RM) for it to be useful; mechanics and neuromuscular efficiency are completely different with anything lighter and don't correlate into success with heavier weights. It makes logical sense; the body can't train optimally for two separate goals. Instead, opt for a solid Olympic weightlifting program that includes some TM principles to improve the squat –similar to Glenn Pendlay's squat program he used with the junior national lifters. Such a program would knowingly have reduced numbers in the squat since the priority is on the snatch and the clean and jerk, but that's an appropriate and optimal tradeoff.

The TM is not a good program if conditioning is the primary goal. This should be glaringly obvious; adding conditioning to a rigorous strength program will limit the recovery capabilities to get stronger. On the other hand, conditioning can be added to the TM in order to maintain or improve conditioning levels relative to the individual's ability. Chapter 4 will show you where to add conditioning in a TM to accomplish just that. Just keep in mind that if conditioning is the *primary* goal, then the TM is blatantly counter-intuitive.

It's important to note that while the TM is not optimal for these alternate goals, it can address some other training goals. Chapter 4 is full of ways to add or tweak the TM for various sub-goals.

The goal of training isn't to follow a program; instead a program is supposed to help achieve goals. This book is a resource of how to tweak all things TM, but if there isn't an optimal TM program from this book it doesn't mean the principles of the TM can't be applied to a different program. Good programmers can borrow aspects of other programs and use them in the context of appropriate dose/response relationships. Staying rigid in thinking will retard the potential for progress. Progress is the starting point for our next chapter that focuses on how to transition into a TM program.

Chapter 2 – The Transition

Now that there is a general understanding of what the TM style of programming is, what it's used for, and why it's useful, it's time to talk about how to transition into it. The concepts of adaptive stress and individuality resonate frequently throughout my writings. An adapted stress must be imparted on the body for improvement, yet the magnitude and method of that stress is dependent on a person's current state of adaptation. Society likes to group things together to make them easier to comprehend; skinny, weak, skinny-fat, big, fat and strong are ways to describe a trainee. These distinctions aren't descriptive enough. One trainee may have just started to deadlift and squat, yet has been benching for years. His bench would probably be higher than his squat or deadlift; such a body isn't balanced for performance.

A trainee that has stark contrasts in muscular development and ability – upper body verses lower body or anterior verses posterior – will not perform optimally. Athletic movements like running, jumping, throwing, catching, swinging, tackling, or laterally moving demand that the legs apply force to the ground with the knees and hips while the trunk either transmits or stabilizes against those forces. Holistic strength is the capacity that gets converted to ability through conditioning.

Muscular imbalances can exacerbate strength imbalances because they decrease mechanical advantages. A trainee with a thin lower back hasn't developed his musculature to withstand high forces, whether they are applied via lifting or sport activities. A *properly executed* LP can help iron out these deficiencies in trainees, yet often different exercises will be in different stages of development. This is the gray area between daily and weekly programming, and effectively transitioning the exercises to a TM approach can prevent blunted progress. Beating your dick into the ground because “that's what the program tells you to do” doesn't help get you any stronger. Let's look at the various core strength exercises and how to transition them to the TM.

Transitioning the Squat

Any LP will be based on improvement of the squat because of its propensity of increasing total body strength. Most LPs will have the trainee squatting two or three times a week with three to

five sets of five reps. There is an old adage in human performance: the un-adapted trainee will have a high rate of progress early on, yet the rate of progress will slow as they become more adapted (AKA the law of diminishing returns). This means that squatting volume and frequency can be more gratuitous early on, yet will have to be toned down after one to three months. Squatting involves the majority of the body's musculature, so if it is done too frequently and too close to the limit of what the body can handle, it will start causing local structural problems (strained ligaments and muscles) or systemic recovery problems. **Remember: the more muscle mass that is trained by the exercise, the more disruption that occurs.** Take care to prevent these issues by resetting the LP or transitioning to the TM.

Exhausting a progression of squatting at least twice a week will prepare a trainee for TM programming. Instead of three sets with moderate weight, the trainee will shift to five sets of moderate weight early in the week with one set of heavy weight later in the week. The middle of the week is a lower stress day to allow for recovery.

Standard TM Outline
Monday — 5x5
Wednesday — Light work, between 70 and 80% of Monday for 2x5
Friday — 5 rep max (5RM)

Figure 2.1

There are hardly any “rules of thumb” in programming, but I’ll try and give some guidelines. The trainee should take 10 to 20% off of their 3x5 weight to have an estimate on their 5x5 weight. I also recommend that the first **Volume Day** consist of ascending sets – starting with a lighter first set, then progressively adding weight each set. If a trainee has finished their squat LP at 405, then this would be a good first day:

1st Volume Squat Day
Set 1 – 325x5 (20% off of 3x5 weight)
Set 2 – 335x5
Set 3 – 345x5
Set 4 – 355x5
Set 5 – 365x5

Figure 2.2

The first set is a total of 20% off of the max LP weight and the fifth set is a reduction of 10%. This represents a nice, easy transition. Jumping into the TM with a near max effort 5x5 will not only cause surprising amounts of soreness, but will blunt progress early. **The inception of a new program should be treated with respect, particularly the more advanced a trainee is.** It will take several weeks to acclimate to the TM, and the trainee mustn't get greedy in the first week. By low-balling his weight, the trainee will set himself up for solid progress in the coming weeks.

The next workout is a **Light Day**; the trainee will squat about 75% of what he did on Volume Day to get some blood flowing and work out some soreness. In our example above, the trainee would squat around 275x5 for a couple of sets. After a hard LP, the trainee may feel that the Light Day is worthless, that he isn't accomplishing anything. This is understandable, yet the light day does more good than harm, so the trainee should stop bitching. He can take solace in the fact that in some advanced TM programs, the Light Day is removed.

In some variations, the Light Day can include front squats. If a trainee is low bar back squatting regularly, front squats may cause some technical trouble. The nature of a non-vertical torso in the low bar squat and a vertical front squat can be hard to grasp for less experienced trainees. Assuming the trainee has developed good motor pathways for both movements, he can work up to front squatting three sets of three. As with any new exercise, lift, or movement, the trainee should low-ball his weight so that the front squats don't interfere with the Intensity Day's squats (a trainee wouldn't want his maverick front squat session to cause him to miss a PR two days later – trust me, I know). If the trainee was high bar back squatting to begin with, then front squats won't have much of a debilitating effect.

The **Intensity Day** consists of one heavy set of five. During the first Intensity Day, the trainee should try and at least hit what he did in his LP. In the example above, the lifter would want to do 405x5. Again, low-balling is preferred, because even if he settled for 405x5, it's 40 pounds more than his last set on Volume Day. Increasing the discrepancy between Volume Day and Intensity Day is one of the TM's goals and will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3. The trainee may opt to lift 410 or 415 on his first Intensity Day so that he can set a PR on the weight he squats for a set of five. This is fine, but he probably shouldn't move beyond fifteen pounds of his LP weight; the trainee's body isn't adapted to the higher intensity lifting and giving him time to acclimate will be more optimal than shooting too high and failing. **Remember to give room**

to grow when starting a new program. Greediness is the bane in training, especially when starting something new.

The trainee's first week of the TM is complete. The next week he should try and turn his Volume Day sets into "sets across", a term that means he will squat the same weight for all of his working sets. A good progression would be to squat 345x5x5 in Week 2 and then begin increasing the Volume Day weight in subsequent weeks.

Transitioning the Bench Press and the Standing Press

The pressing exercises are trained slightly differently in a LP and thus have a different transition to the TM. Each day an average LP day will consist of a big lift (squat or deadlift), a press (standing press or bench press), and are followed by one or two auxiliary exercises (chin/pull-ups, power cleans, barbell rows, etc.). Since the bench and the press work some of the same musculature (primarily the elbow extensors and the shoulder flexors), they are advanced *together* instead of individually. A trainee in a LP may find their press stalling, yet their bench continuing to improve. This trainee will have to reset the stalled lift while the other progresses until *both* lifts have stalled.



Getting both the press and bench to stall together is tricky, yet important. It's tricky because the TM transition won't always happen in congruence with the squat transition. In fact, most trainees will have settled into TM-ing their squat while their press and bench continue to make daily progress. This is preferred because the rate of progress is higher in an LP than a TM. Observe Figure 2.3:

	Volume	Light	Intensity
Week 1	Press 5x5	Bench light for 3x5	Press 5RM
Week 2	Bench 5x5	Press medium for 3x5	Bench 5RM

Figure 2.3

The frequency is the same as the LP, yet the variables change the role of each training day. The Volume Days are lower than the top LP weight and they apply the stress. The Intensity Days express the adaptation by driving the weight up. The Light Days play their role in recovery, yet don't do much other than getting sub-maximal accumulated work in.

The transition will follow the same guidelines as the squat: a reduction of 10 to 20% of the LP weight will be a good starting point for the first Volume Day. If a trainee finished his LP with his press sets at 185 and his bench sets at 275, his first respective Volume Days would look like this:

Press	Bench
Set 1 - 145x5	Set 1 - 230x5
Set 2 - 150x5	Set 2 - 235x5
Set 3 - 155x5	Set 3 - 240x5
Set 4 - 160x5	Set 4 - 245x5
Set 5 - 165x5	Set 5 - 250x5

Figure 2.4

Again, the starting weights are ascending on the first Volume Day to allow a smooth transition. The drop of 10 to 20% gives a good range for what those sets should be. The fifth set may even be easy, but the trainee should wait to observe how they recover to the change in volume. As always, if it's too easy on the first day...GOOD! Leave room to grow when starting new

programs. Don't be silly or stupid to fulfill bragging rights; nobody cares how big your penis is, and nobody cares what you bench on Volume Day. Save the dick swinging for an adult-like Intensity Day or a competition lift.

Transitioning the Deadlift

In each LP workout the trainee will be squatting and either pressing or bench pressing. These lifts are easily shifted into the Volume and Intensity Days. However, the deadlift shouldn't be done every day in a LP because of its high structural and systemic stress. I like to have a novice deadlift once a week on the same repeating day to allow for a full week of recovery. Typically the trainee will increase a single top set of five. Often I see people doing multiple work sets of the deadlift; the additional volume with this brutal exercise will make it difficult to recover and it will use a lower amount of weight for each set. Instead, working up to a single, heavier set of five will improve strength and not interfere with subsequent training days.

The single set of five will eventually slow down and stall. At this point, the trainee has some options. If the trainee's lower back is the limiting factor in squatting or deadlifting (observed as the low back severely rounding on either lift, sometimes causing the trunk to fold "like a taco"), then getting more cumulative deadlift training with sets of five will develop the musculature so that it can handle higher amounts of work. Ratcheting back the weight and repeating lifting sets of five – even if the weight stays the same for multiple weeks – will help the musculature develop. Developing musculature may or may not mean that hypertrophy (muscle building) occurs. The lower back and upper pelvic musculature shouldn't have a concentric or eccentric action when lifting. These postural muscles primarily support the structures of the pelvis and spine so that force can be transmitted to the load. Less experienced deadlifters will have to build these structures' tolerance to maintain position throughout an entire deadlift. As a beginner, deadlifting high weights with severely shitty form won't create a balanced and strong body. Developing this musculature is even more critical for non-powerlifters as it will help them apply forces more efficiently.

Practically speaking, if a trainee has a deadlift stall, he should reset the weight and work back up. If he continues to stall at the same weight, yet his squat is making progress, he may opt to follow the advice in the previous paragraph. There will be an arbitrary point in which a five rep deadlift will be too much to recover from regardless of musculature or other lifts in the program. Another option is to elongate the rest time between deadlift workouts. Seven days of

rest can shift into ten, and progress can continue. Eventually the rest can be elongated to 14 days. This is what I did for my friend Chris Riley as he moved his deadlift from around 450x5 to 545x5. The primary problem is that the lifter only deadlifts twice a month. Will deadlifting only 24 times a year be enough to develop the musculature and optimal strength for powerlifting or other sports? I have decided that the answer is no.

The last option for the stalled deadlift can be implemented on a LP or the TM. It simply drops the trainee to deadlifting a triple instead of a set of five. Triples allow the trainee to handle more weight, continue consistent progress, and they bring the deadlift volume down a bit. The loss in volume may not be optimal for someone aiming to improve their musculature (for size or support purposes), and deadlifting consistently medium weights for sets of five may bridge this gap. Progressing the weekly triples works well for a physically prepared trainee. **Remember: the LP exists to establish a strength and musculature base before advancing the programming.**



Once the squat transitions to the TM, the deadlift should be done on Intensity Day. Trying to deadlift something significant after squatting on Volume Day won't be effective; the posterior chain will be destroyed after 25 significant squat reps. Instead, deadlift at the end of the Intensity Day (after squat and press/bench). The significantly lower volume won't blunt the

posterior chain, and deadlifting heavy will be a nice cap to a solid training week. **Don't deadlift on Light Day.** There isn't supposed to be significant stress between Volume and Intensity Day so that recovery and adaptation can occur. This isn't simply a muscular thing; the endocrine (or hormonal) system is busy at work to make this happen. Depressing the system with an ill-advised "Light Day" will mark Intensity Day as ineffective.

The whole point of the TM is to improve the Intensity Day. The deadlift must be programmed and cared for differently since it can't be done as frequently (it's structural and systemic hit is too high). Progressing the deadlift triples is the first thing to try on a Texas Method. The entire stock program will look like this:

	Volume	Light	Intensity
Week 1	Squat 5x5	Squat ~75% of Monday for 2x5	Squat 5RM
	Press 5x5	Bench light for 3x5	Press 5RM
	Chin-ups		Deadlift 3RM
Week 2	Squat 5x5	Squat ~75% of Monday for 2x5	Squat 5RM
	Bench 5x5	Press medium for 3x5	Bench 5RM
	Pull-ups		Deadlift 3RM

Figure 2.5

Note how there is significant volume early, and significant intensity late in the week. Note how there isn't much work on the Light Day. Lastly, notice how I added chin-ups and pull-ups to Week 1 and Week 2 respectively. These exercises can be done for three sets of as many reps as possible with body weight, or three sets of five with additional weight and progressed over time. This very basic set up can be successful for two to six months (assuming recovery is under control). However, even the most well-intentioned trainees will run into trouble, and Chapter 3 will teach how to tweak the variables in the TM.

Chapter 3 – Changing the Recipe

Most LPs can be followed exactly as they are written, and most novice trainees will have success proportional to one another. The very basic TM outline is just as simple and straight forward, yet the stock program doesn't enjoy as high of a success rate. As a trainee progresses, their programming needs get more complicated. Squatting five sets of five may be good, but is it optimal? Or is 5x5 only necessary when transitioning from an LP into a TM? The answer lies with the individual and their recovery resources. The basic tenets of TM style programming are volume and intensity, and their relationship must be understood.

The Volume/Intensity Relationship

Volume is the primary variable that drives strength for non-drugged lifters; a trainee can only get so far with working up to a max every training session. In the TM, volume is the dose of stress that elicits the adaptation of improved strength. The relationship exists every workout in a LP and becomes more critical when on a TM. The Volume Day provides a sub-maximal dose and its success is reflected on Intensity Day. However, this doesn't always happen correctly.

The most common problem people have on a TM is pushing their Volume Day too high. The dose goes beyond the beneficial threshold and becomes debilitating; the trainee can't recover before Intensity Day. Squatting 385x5x5 for volume while only intensity squatting 405x5 is not good, not good at all. High volume numbers are irrelevant on the field, court, or platform. Absolute strength is what matters regarding application to sport (and is the only thing that matters in powerlifting). No football coach would care if his linebacker can do ten sets of medium weights. Instead, he prefers a heavy-ass set to increase the absolute strength and power of his linebacker to be a “take on the iso and fill the gap” kind of beast.

Intensity Day is a reflection of the absolute strength. It's a top-end set, the heaviest weight that can be handled and thus is the true indicator of strength and is the equivalent of a “maximum effort” day in powerlifting or weightlifting programs. Instead of trying to push both volume and intensity up in the TM, the goal is to manipulate the volume so that the intensity is pushed up. Increasing the discrepancy between Volume Day and Intensity Day is critical and it can't be done without tweaking the stock original program outline. The programmer has to free his mind and think of effective ways to establish good doses of volume that will result in substantial Intensity Day increases. First he has to learn the ingredients before he can change the recipe.

Volume Ingredients

If five sets of five is a good dose of volume, then ten sets of ten should be too, right? Wrong. Not only are ten sets excessive, but doing over five reps per set will reduce the percentage of weight a trainee can handle. The program aims to increase strength, so cap the repetitions at five in order to handle moderate amounts of weight repeatedly. Higher reps may be in order if swollertrophy is the goal, yet good strength levels are required before effective swoleness can occur. Flip to Chapter 4 for more information on tweaking the TM to get mega jacked.

The best way to plan a good dose of volume is to decide what rep scheme to use. Sets of five is the first scheme to utilize because most LPs work with fives, but let's assume the trainee has gone through the introductory period on the stock TM for at least two months. The trainee's motivations and goals should be taken into account. The goals will sort out the rep scheme, and the rep scheme will sort out the number of sets. A trainee who still wants to gain some mass while getting stronger should stick with fives. A trainee who wants to push his strength with full bravado could drop to triples. A trainee who doesn't aim to gain any more weight (i.e. a weight-class limited lifter) could drop to doubles. A quick note on using doubles for volume: doubles haven't been tested often and they have reduced time under tension which could have an effect on quality volume or structural fatigue in prolonged events (e.g. 8 hour powerlifting meets). Triples have been used with great success in powerlifting preparation and fives are always successful assuming the trainee uses the appropriate number of sets.

A good rule is to aim for 15 to 25 reps on Volume Day. The minimum of fifteen reps is similar to the tonnage from the LP, and thus a different dose will be needed to drive progress. Anything more than 25 reps will be difficult to recover from; recovery is necessary to ensure an increasing Intensity Day. Now that we have our total rep guidelines, we can figure our sets: three to five sets of five, five to eight triples, and seven to thirteen doubles (see Figure 3.1). Notice that in the intro portion of the TM, it was recommended that the trainee increase the weight in each set. The ascending method should be limited to introductory periods; instead, use the same weight for all of the volume sets. This will quantify the dose much more easily and standardize the weekly stress. When in doubt, consult the tonnage (reps x sets) of the recent LP or TM weight and compare it to the projected numbers. Five sets of three will be the same total number of reps as three sets of five, yet three sets of five will have a higher tonnage because the trainee would use more weight for sets of triples than sets of fives.

Proposed Volume Set/Rep Schemes for Strength Training		
Reps	Sets	Total Reps
2	7 to 13	13 to 26
3	5 to 8	15 to 24
5	3 to 5	15 to 25

Figure 3.1

In the first week of using a new volume scheme, low-ball the weight for the same reasons when starting a new program; leave room to progress. Stick to whatever repetition trend preceded your current volume choice; if you were working with 5x5 (25 total reps), then use eight triples instead of five (24 total reps). Several weeks of acclimation to the volume and intensity will give you an idea of the effectiveness. If there are problems within the first month of any TM set-up, then the blame is on the programmer for picking loads that were too high (whether on Volume or Intensity Day). The tweaking responsibility lies with the programmer to observe the data, draw conclusions, and make predictions. If the Intensity Day is not beyond the means of the trainee and the volume dose is going well, yet Intensity Day isn't progressing, then the volume dose is wrong. Trainee subjectivity becomes relevant; if the trainee is feeling run down and under-recovered for Intensity Day, then there is too much volume. If the trainee is blatantly unaffected by the volume dose (via no difficulty with the sets, no soreness after, etc.), then the volume may be too low *if the intensity day is not progressing*. **When volume needs to be adjusted, change the number of sets or the weight.**

I've never seen an instance where the volume was too low, but I've seen countless instances of too much volume. Drastic drops in volume are a bit brash; instead, reduce the total sets. If 365x5x5 resulted in a beat down, tired Intensity Day, then keep the load and drop two sets off. The next week's Volume Day will be 365x5x3 (read as 365 done for five reps, three times). If the next Intensity Day is successful, the trainee could keep the volume the same, or add one more set for four total sets. The goal is to adjust the volume dose to increase the load on Intensity Day. **Smaller changes are preferable to large changes; the more fluctuation there is, the more inconsistency there is.** Long-term TM programming is based on finding the appropriate dose/response and making it consistent.

Progressing the Volume Dose

It's best to only increase the volume load by five pound increments, yet it shouldn't be done *every week*. Early in a TM progression, the volume/intensity discrepancy won't be very large. If there is a 20 pound discrepancy – 385x5x5 volume and 405x5 intensity – then increasing both days by five pounds every week will maintain the same discrepancy. Eventually the volume day will increase to a point that it causes too much stress, and the trainee is simply a "volume warrior" who is unable to lift heavier-ass

weight. Instead, the trainee can hold their volume steady while the intensity increases. The previous example trainee will keep his 385x5x5 volume constant while his intensity creeps to 410, 415, and 420. The limit of this trainee's Intensity Day (given his current volume dose) is unknown, but **a good strategy is to let the intensity increase for three to four weeks, then increase the volume**. Using this strategy, the Intensity Day load will gain about 15 pounds on the Volume Day load every month. A trainee *could* hold his volume load constant and let his intensity load increase until it failed, but this strategy would A) place the trainee too far behind his potential and B) cause a missed Intensity Day. Nobody likes missing an Intensity Day; it makes a trainee feel small and weak.

A good volume/intensity discrepancy is about 70 pounds, an average determined by observing myself and trainees I coach. See figure 3.2 for examples of volume/intensity discrepancies of real lifters at different stages in their TM programming.

Examples of Volume/Intensity Discrepancy			
Name	Volume	Intensity	Discrepancy
Justin	435x5x5	500x3	65
AC	455x3x8	520x2	65
Chris	530x5x3	615x2	85
Mike	455x5x5	520x2	65

Figure 3.2

Dealing with Volume Day

The key in getting a greater volume/intensity discrepancy is knowing how to adjust the volume according to observed program data. Truth be told, volume squatting isn't easy. In fact, it's the shittiest day on the TM. Bucking up for five tough sets requires patience, resiliency, and above average "psyche up" ability. As the volume load progresses, the trainee's rest between sets will need to increase. Initially there should be at least five minutes between sets, yet that number will rise to about ten minutes in experienced TM users. If the trainee is limited on training time, he should get at least 2/3 the normal work and see if he can eke out a successful Intensity Day. Volume Day can't really be skipped since its stress is needed for progress. If the trainee misses a scheduled Volume Day, he should aim to repeat it the following day and either bump his training days down a week day or remove the Light Day and complete the Intensity Day on its normally scheduled day (see solution 1 and 2 in Figure 3.3 respectively). If the trainee can't lift on Friday or Saturday, he can move his Intensity Day up one day and drop the Light Day (Solution 3 in Figure 3.3). These solutions are by no means optimal, but they can allow the trainee to get a week of progress despite life's obligations.

Texas Method FUBAR Solutions						
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Normal Schedule	Volume Day		Light Day		Intensity Day	
Solution 1		Volume Day		Light Day		Intensity Day
Solution 2		Volume Day			Intensity Day	
Solution 3	Volume Day			Intensity Day		

Figure 3.3

All of the examples on volume doses have focused on the squat. The squat is the most important exercise to control on a TM because of its huge systemic hit (lots of muscle mass = higher systemic effect). If a trainee overreaches with his squat volume, it can have a debilitating effect on his presses and deadlift. Keep the volume in check with minor changes to consistently increase the volume/intensity discrepancy. Let's learn about the other half of our ingredients for an effective TM recipe.

Intensity Ingredients

Driving up the Intensity Day is one of the most rewarding lifting experiences a trainee will have. The program is designed so that at the end of every week the bar is loaded up, the music is cranked, and things get reckless. This is what lifting is all about (I just got goose bumps writing this). The Intensity Day isn't just a representation of the adaptation to the volume dose; it's also a different stress that helps drive progress into the next week. However, if the TM isn't programmed correctly, the Intensity Day can be a huge failure.

The best Intensity Days will typically be limited to five reps *total*. Regardless of the number of sets performed, keeping the total reps under five ensures that the volume stays low. Volume and intensity share an inverse relationship; when one increases, the other decreases. The term Volume Day implies "high volume, lower intensity" while Intensify Day implies "high intensity, low volume". Maintain this relationship on Intensity Day. **A decent guideline is to do 1/5 of the volume reps for the Intensity Day (25 volume reps ÷ 5 = intensity reps).** Thus, a trainee squatting 5x5 will limit his volume at five reps while a trainee squatting 3x5 (read as three sets of five) will limit his volume at three reps. There are situations when it's okay to breach the five rep mark, yet only for experienced TM users who use it sparingly (more on this in Part II).

Most Intensity Days will consist of top sets with five, three, two, or one rep(s). The first thing to try on a TM set up is a 5RM. However, a 5RM isn't always optimal; a powerlifter may want fewer reps to practice

for a meet or a general strength trainee may want to handle more weight than a 5RM will allow. Doing one heavy triple, or 3RM, is very effective and preferred. A triple will still have a decent amount of time under tension, it's descriptive for choosing first attempts in a meet, and it's a percentage of the hypothetical 1RM that is not too high to be problematic and not too low so that it still is a pretty solid stress in itself. **Remember, unless a trainee is well established and experienced with a TM set-up, their 1RM is changing each Intensity Day.** That's why there aren't many percentages in intermediate strength programs; the absolute strength increases every week and percentages in week two don't mean the same in week three.

Rep Schemes for Intensity Day	
Scheme	Number of Times Repeated
5RM	Once
3RM	Once
2RM	Once
Triples	One or two
Doubles	One to three
Singles	Three to five

Figure 3.4

Working up to a 2RM is also acceptable, yet it should be reserved for TM veterans. Exhausting a 3RM before moving to 2RMs is ideal and preferred. For one, the inexperienced trainee's body may not be ready for significantly heavier poundage – squats may be overly shaky, blood vessels aren't ready for higher pressures, muscles or tendons can be pulled, and misses are more common since there isn't enough data with heavy loads to make a prediction. By exhausting the 3RM, the trainee has been training solidly for several months and has increased his 3RM substantially. Once the 3RM progress begins to slow, he will look ahead to extend his weekly strength grains. The 2RM is a nice shift because it lets the trainee add at least five pounds onto his 3RM and make an additional run at the 2RM as he approaches potential volume and intensity stress he can handle in a single week's time (relative to his volume dose).

Singles are an effective tool, assuming they are placed and used effectively (typically when readying for a powerlifting meet). Despite the fact that Intensity Day demands low volume, some volume is still necessary for an effect., and multiple singles should be used. Doubles can also be done for multiple sets to get a higher tonnage with equal amounts of volume (e.g. two or three doubles done as heavy as possible will have a higher tonnage than a 5RM with lower weight). By doing multiple sets, the trainee gets an adequate amount of intensity work that also imparts a stress – one with different structural and neuromuscular efficiency – for improved strength. Mid-level TM users can use multiple sets to drive

progress. Fewer sets work better for strength sports while multiple sets provide accumulated work for general strength trainees or other sports and activities – the end goal will dictate the program. **These multiple sets can be done for sets across (same weight for all sets), ascending sets (weight increases each set), or decreasing (heaviest weight is done first, and then decrease each subsequent set).** Figure 3.5 for examples of each.

Different Strategies for Multiple Sets on Intensity Day			
	Singles	Doubles	Triples
Sets Across	525x1x3 to 5 times	495x2x2 to 3 times	480x3x1 or 2 times
Ascending	520x1, 525x1, 530x1	485x2, 495x2	475x3, 485x3
Descending	535x1, 520x1, 515x1	500x2, 485x2	490x3, 475x3

Figure 3.5

It's implied that the last set in an ascending scheme is not a true repetition maximum (since there is an inherent level of fatigue from the prior sets). It's also understood that repeating a weight for more than one set, in the case of sets across, is not a true repetition maximum either. A descending rep scheme would be used when the trainee aims to PR, yet still wants to get additional higher intensity volume after the initial repetition maximum. Again, this is reserved for a TM veteran. A TM veteran is someone who has used TM style programming for a substantial amount of time (typically at least a year) and has exhausted one or more strategies.

Progress Trends

There are particular strategies that, when properly and intelligently used, yield impressive gains. For example, after the initial introductory period of working with 5RMs, the trainee should shift into using the 3RM on Intensity Day. There isn't anything wrong with the 5RM; it's just that the 3RM is better. A 5RM's tonnage isn't significantly higher than a 3RM's, the 3RM will use a higher load which helps increase the volume/intensity discrepancy, and the trainee will handle heavier-ass weights sooner. Eventually progress will slow, the last rep will be a grind, and the trainee will question whether he can do it again the next week. Most times he can, but eventually he'll miss that last rep, and it'll be time to re-strategize.

This is the moment when the programmer has to take an honest look at both recovery resources and the volume dose. At this point, the trainee *should* have recovery under control and the programmer will look to the volume dose. Is volume day horrible? Is it difficult, but definitely not impossible? The difficulty of Volume Day and how the trainee feels throughout the week will determine whether or not the volume

day can continue to push the Intensity Day. If the recovery resources and volume dose are suitable, then the trainee can shift into progressing 2RMs. The cycle begins again and the programmer and trainee may need to adjust the volume dose to continue progress. The 2RM progression probably won't last as long as the 3RM progression; whenever the Intensity Day reps flow into the next stage of progression, that stage will have a shorter duration since rate of progress slows.

Most trainees will never experience long lengths of uninterrupted progress. Competition season, powerlifting meets, work, school, injury, illness, and other life occurrences will usually get in the way of progress. In most cases the trainee will need to gain ground on what he already built, but regaining ground is faster than establishing it for the first time. These interruptions or stalls usually will keep the trainee on a 3RM or 2RM progress trend most of the time. However, a logical progression would be to shift into singles. The trainee's goal could be to progress a 1RM for several weeks. After completing a successful 1RM, the trainee can get additional volume with singles at a reduced load to garner additional volume with the heavier weights. Another option is to progress three to five singles across as indicated in Figure 3.4. The 1RM progression probably won't last longer than about a month, yet will mark an excellent time for a de-load week or two. Progressing singles across will last longer than a 1RM progression, yet probably not last as long as the 2RM progression. This should be understood so that a plan is in place for what to do after singles are exhausted.

There are several options after exhausting the 1RM or singles. The trainee can shift back into doing triples, and start the entire trend all over again. It will be almost a year after the trainee began his 3RM progress, so he should be able to set new PRs. Then he could continue the cyclic progress trend through 2RMs, 1RMs, and singles again. Another strategy is to use **speed sets** (AKA dynamic effort) as the primary intensity stress for three to eight weeks. Speed Sets are done with a load of about 55 to 65% of a 1RM and are done as explosively as possible. The end goal is to recruit more motor units in the movement, and this is best done by doing reps on the minute every minute. Squat speed sets are best done with doubles for eight to ten sets while bench or press are best done with triples for eight to ten sets. The emphasis on the squat is to bounce sharply out of the bottom to create the fastest stretch-reflex possible. The bench and press use the same concept to explode out of the bottom of their respective movements. The trainee must make a volitional effort to move the bar *as fast as possible* to garner a worthwhile adaptation. Each set is *never* fast enough. The weight is only increased the following week if the trainee moves all of his sets as fast as he could – a coach or friend needs to watch all of his reps to ensure that he is maintaining maximal effort and speed.

Speed sets have pros and cons. They help develop power and explosiveness, especially in the squat and deadlift (see the deadlift section later in this chapter). The intensity stress is now due to high velocity instead of high intensity, so weeks that use speed sets can be treated as a slight de-load compared to the normal TM set up. The volume can even be reduced slightly and maintained throughout the speed set

weeks. However, if several weeks of speed sets are used on Intensity Day, then it would require a couple of heavier Intensity Days to re-adapt to the increased loads when resuming a regular TM program. When returning to those high-load Intensity Days, the trainee may want to do some ascending doubles or triples to ramp himself up physiologically and neurologically. **Remember to ease back into any type of programming instead of jumping into the gauntlet.** Leaving “weight on the bar” (an expression to indicate that more weight could have been used) is preferable to doing too much and A) failing a set or B) getting injured. Experienced lifters will hardly ever miss any reps because they don’t push too far beyond their known limit. Speed squats are used here for two to three weeks of de-load from a rigorous TM style program. Part II will show how speed squats can be incorporated into a regular rotation on Intensity Day to help push progress.

Concerning De-loads

TM style programming doesn’t have repeating de-loads because it assumes full recovery by the start of each week. This won’t always be the case in practice. Trainees who find themselves consistently run down or experience symptoms of **overreaching** or **overtraining** – increased resting heart rate, feeling lethargic and sore all of the time, irritable, achy, or increases in body fat to name a few – will benefit in a reduction or elimination of load. In most cases, trainees aren’t actually overtraining in the sense that they are pushing they are depressing their systems, but **under-recovering**. Under-recovery is either a direct lack of recovery by the trainee (e.g. not eating enough food or not sleeping enough) or pushing the structures too hard too soon (which is usually an ill-advised program).

Good judgment will determine whether this warrants a reduction in a Volume Day (by a couple of sets, for example), a reduction in a total week’s work, or taking a week completely off. This shouldn’t need to happen often; maybe only once every six to twelve weeks. The less experienced the trainee, the fewer de-loads they will require. More advanced trainees often lift large amounts of weight with respect to their body weight and will require de-loads more often. For example, AC is a raw powerlifter who has weighed between 210 and 218 for a while, yet he regularly squats and deadlifts above 500 pounds and benches above 350 pounds. AC has found that his body requires a de-load every five to six weeks to optimally continue a program without feeling achy and sore all of the time.

My friend Gant has always said, “I’ve never rested too much,” implying that he has, in fact, worked too much. Resting for a week may delay progress in the short-term, yet one week of rest won’t have an effect on a long training career. Put it in perspective and when in doubt, rest.

Putting It Together

Tools and strategies are now understood, but I want it to be implicitly clear what to do given an array of circumstances. Unfortunately, things aren't cut and dry because so many different scenarios can unfold. This section will lay some basic guidelines and finish off with a detailed chart on what to do depending on different volume/intensity scenarios.

The TM can help a lifter gain decent bodyweight, yet at this point in the trainee's career, the rate at which his strength and size increase slows. Building lean body mass (LBM) will be a slower process than it was with LPs. The trainee will improve their diet so that it doesn't have superfluous amounts of carbohydrates to keep body fat in check. Notice that I didn't say "eliminate carbohydrates"; doing such a thing is stupid and a hard-training lifter will require carbohydrates, albeit healthy choices. The diet will have plenty of protein and enough fat to garner the calories for recovery. The point is that the trainee will have learned and transitioned into good nutrition habits so that when their progress stalls in the TM, the answer shouldn't be "eat more". A good rule of thumb is that if you fit into a regular pair of jeans, then you probably haven't done a good job of gaining muscle.

Trainees should stay well hydrated; endurance athlete, programmer and coach Brian MacKenzie recommends drinking half of body weight in ounces of water. Water is necessary for many chemical reactions and helps keep muscles supple. Proper hydration is the Robin to nutrition's Batman; Batman can get by without Robin, but he can always use the help (unless it's Chris O'Donnell). The author suggests not carrying a gallon of water with you throughout the day (including at the gym); it screams "jackass".

If life gets in the way of TM training, then react accordingly. Figure 3.3 gave solutions to common scheduling issues. Often time people get over-burdened with work or school, and just need to take a week or several training days off. It's best that the trainee squats ascending volume sets to re-acquaint himself after a layoff; jumping back into a full blown 5x5 for sets across, even after just one week off, can be an eye opening experience. If the trainee gets sick (from a viral or bacterial infection – not just the sniffles), then they should accrue two full days of not only feeling well, but eating and hydrating well before training again. The first training day should be light, the next should be medium, and the third can broach higher intensity. The trainee would follow up with an ascending Volume Day the next week and a conservative Intensity Day to see where their current ability is. The subsequent weeks would consist of making appropriate jumps back to pre-illness levels.

Despite the societal consequences of such behavior, younger trainees learn that binge drinking hampers their training. Determine which is more important: life altering intoxication or hard, efficient training and

react accordingly (Note: getting belligerently drunk will not, in fact, help you pick up chicks. Wearing flannel, however, will). Other physical endeavors like recreational sport or activities can be planned around by tweaking the schedule or variables to allow for recovery. Unless there's a serious competition coming up, don't skimp out on other physical activities. Have fun and adjust your program accordingly.

Altering the schedule or goal of the workout will help deal with the above. When there aren't extraneous factors affecting training, the trainee needs to know how to adjust the TM based on recent evidence. To eliminate any doubt of what to do next, Figure 3.6 below gives solutions based on how the Volume or Intensity day feels. The subjective "easy" workout won't occur often, but I've included it here for congruency. "Easy" implies that the sets are completed without trouble and with short rest periods. Some trainees are incorrectly accustomed to going through sets very fast – as few as two or three minutes of rest between sets. The load will be too light and the stress will be insignificant regarding progress. "Medium" is where most sets will start, and these sets require decent effort. "Hard" means that the trainee feels he is "going to work" and needs to bring his lunch pail – these sets demand focus. "Very hard" sets are the same as "barely surviving" and are often associated with grinding reps and questioning whether all the reps can be completed. "Very hard" sets are typically associated with a TM veteran and should implicate the end of a progression (of 5RMs, 3RMs, etc.). If a less experienced TM user has "very hard" sets, then he has probably incorrectly used a volume or intensity dose. The table assumes a veteran trainee that has established a good volume dose. A trainee who has used a TM set up for three months or fewer will typically improve with less volume and more intensity. Small reductions in total number of sets and holding the Volume Day constant will allow the volume/intensity discrepancy to increase.

Solutions to Observed Trends			
Volume	Intensity	Diagnosis	Typical solution
Easy	Easy	Low-ballng	Progress both days quickly
Easy	Medium	Low volume	VD will eventually need to increase for ID increase
Easy	Hard	Volume Wrong	Not enough V dose to push ID
Easy	Very Hard	Volume Wrong	Not enough V dose to push ID
Medium	Easy	Low Intensity	ID is low-balled
Medium	Medium	Decent	Continue ID progress as normal
Medium	Hard	Standard	Normal progression
Medium	Very Hard	Standard	Normal progression, V will increase to drive ID
Hard	Easy	VD high, ID low	Decrease VD, progress ID
Hard	Medium	VD high, ID low	Hold VD constant or reduce, progress ID
Hard	Hard	Standard	Normal progression, increase V/I discrepancy
Hard	Very Hard	Veteran	Nearing end of current progression
Very Hard	Easy	High volume	Reduce VD significantly, progress ID
Very Hard	Medium	High volume	Hold VD constant or reduce, progress ID
Very Hard	Hard	Volume Wrong	Hold VD constant or reduce, progress ID
Very Hard	Very Hard	Veteran	Close to end of progression, good luck. Try less V

Figure 3.6

There may be rare situations in which the above solutions do not apply, thus the trainee will have to employ their best judgment. Observe all of the available facts regarding the program (perceived difficulty, a coach's opinion, etc.), recovery resources (nutrition, sleep, etc.), and life (school, work, stress, etc.). Analyze the data by noting how each thing could hamper training, and then react accordingly.

The Deadlift

A TM set-up concerns itself with exercises that can be done multiple times a week without significant structural or systemic fatigue. Unfortunately the deadlift is an exercise that can only be seriously trained once a week. The best day to deadlift on a TM is on Friday; it fits with the concept of higher intensity and lower volume and quality deadlift workouts simply don't occur after a significant volume squat session. Chapter 2's discussion on the deadlift gave a simple weekly 3RM progression. Barring any plans for competition or a meet (see Chapter 4 for sub-goals and Part II for powerlifting meet preparation), progressing the 3RM is preferred.

When progress slows and eventually stalls, the trainee needs to determine whether or not they are recovering appropriately. If the deadlift causes so much soreness that it interferes with the following

Volume Day, then the structures require more cumulative deadlifting with decent intensities to become better adapted. A reset is in order for this circumstance. If the slowing progress is more so due to a lack of strength to pull the load for three reps – and short-term recovery concerns are NOT present – then the trainee can shift into doubles. Just like with the other lifts, the 2RM progression will allow the trainee to add at least five pounds compared to the 3RM, yet the progression will be shorter than the 3RM progression. Once the 2RMs start to slow, singles can be used.



Singles can be used with a 1RM, sets across, ascending sets, or descending sets. The best method will consist of a progression of three singles across. Once the third rep becomes a grind, the trainee switches to two singles across. Once the second rep becomes a grind, the trainee switches to progressing one single. The end of the progression of singles will mark an excellent time to de-load.

Speed Deadlifting

Deadlifting on a TM set up won't have a Volume Day in the sense that the squat, press, and bench do, yet there are ways to get stress early in the week that can help the Intensity Day. This is best accomplished with **speed deadlifting** (AKA dynamic effort deadlifting). The principles are similar to speed squatting; use 55 to 65% of the estimated deadlift max, and pull one rep every minute for six to twelve minutes. Andy Baker turned me on to this programming trinket in early 2010 and it has helped develop deadlifts, especially in powerlifters. The speed work helps develop explosiveness in the pull and

aims to recruit more motor units. The adaptation from speed work can assist in the explosive mindset required for heavy pulling as well as provide a subtle neurological improvement.

A trainee who opts to use speed deadlifting will be focused towards powerlifting, power development, or is incredibly committed to increasing their deadlift (see Chapter 4 for more on power development and Part II on powerlifting preparation). Speed deadlifts can be added at the end of Volume Day, yet they are best used on the day after Volume Day. Experienced TM users will find that Volume Day is grueling and time consuming; squatting, bench pressing (or the standing press), and chin-ups are enough to sap energy from the most motivated lifters. Also, the built up fatigue – especially in the posterior chain – will hinder the ability to recruit maximal motor units for the speed work to be effective. Power cleans are also acceptable, yet speed deadlifts works better for trainees who don't have good power production (largely a genetic predisposition). If a trainee deadlifts 600 pounds, yet his power cleans are capped around 250 lbs., then speed deadlifts will provide a better adaptation to help increase the deadlift (see Chapter 4 for more on power development and power cleans).

Create a new training day immediately after Volume Day and perform speed deadlifts there (example in Figure 3.7, see Chapter 4 for more). Throw the chin-ups or pull-ups after the speed deadlifts and now Volume Day isn't as daunting. The load for speed deadlifts can stay constant for several weeks; the goal is to move the bar *as fast as possible*. Just as with speed squatting, a friend or coach is useful for watching the sets to ensure maximal effort and speed.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Regular	Squat Volume		Squat light		Squat Intensity
	Bench Volume		Press medium		Bench Intensity
	Chin-ups				Deadlift Intensity
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Speed DL	Squat Volume	Speed Deadlift	Squat light		Squat Intensity
	Bench Volume	Chin-ups	Press medium		Bench Intensity
					Deadlift Intensity

Figure 3.7

5/3/1 Progress Trend

Shifting from triples to doubles to singles is the first progress trend that can work. However, the higher intensity pulling may catch up to more advanced deadlifters. Another good progress trend is to adopt a principle from Jim Wendler's excellent 5/3/1 program, and I refer to it as the 5/3/1 progress trend. Wendler's program consists of multiple sets at specific percentages with the last set being done for as many reps as possible. If multiple sets and reps are used on the TM, it will have the propensity to produce too much deadlifting stress to proceed successfully. Instead, the 5/3/1 will refer to the top set done each week. The first week is done with a medium set of five. When starting this progression, the goal won't be to PR on a set of five. Instead, use a weight that will be a decent, but not limit, set of five. The trainee should know that he could have gotten at least two or three more reps. The following week the trainee will increase the weight by about 25 pounds and do a set of three. Again, it shouldn't be a limit set of three and may even be similar to a true 5RM. The following week the trainee will add another 25 pounds or so for one single. The single shouldn't be a limit rep; aim for difficult but not impossible. The fourth week of this progression will be de-load the deadlift with a light deadlifts or a Romanian deadlift (RDL) workout. The trainee could also opt for a higher rep deadlift set with a *light* load. Max-rep deadlift sets with significant loads may be challenging (and fun?), yet they won't effectively help a strength program because of their large stress. The trainee could opt for high-load, high-rep sets if it's followed by a de-load week or vacation. Otherwise, keep the load *light* (perhaps 50%) and grab a set of ten to fifteen reps.

The recommendation of 25 pound increases is simply an estimate and the trainee should use his best judgment. The first cycle of the 5/3/1 trend should have each deadlift workout feeling difficult but not impossible. The notion of starting low – something that Jim Wendler stresses – is important so that progress can continue in the future. Subsequent cycles can gradually approach limit sets with the hierarchy of importance placed on the fewer rep sets.

3/2/1 Progress Trend

A similar trend using reps at 3/2/1 can also be implemented by employing the same principles as the 5/3/1 trend with reps of 3/2/1 instead. Load increases will be reduced to ten or fifteen pounds and thus would constitute higher monthly deadlift intensity when compared to the 5/3/1. A trainee could even link these two trends together, cycling once or twice through a 5/3/1 trend followed by one or two cycles of 3/2/1. The benefits of these trends are that significant deadlift occurs at least three times a month. If a trainee tries to exhaust a 5RM, they will eventually have to elongate their rest between deadlift workouts to two weeks. Deadlifting a 5RM twice a month is less productive than deadlifting moderate to record weights three times a month. Other intermediate deadlift strategies include non-deadlift exercises. Less experienced deadlifters and powerlifters will benefit physically and psychologically more from deadlifting regularly as opposed to specialized training techniques. However, deadlifting significant

loads three times a month may take its toll on stronger deadlifters (Part II includes more advanced deadlift cycling). Figure 3.8 shows the tonnage trends for deadlift sets of three and five reps respectively.

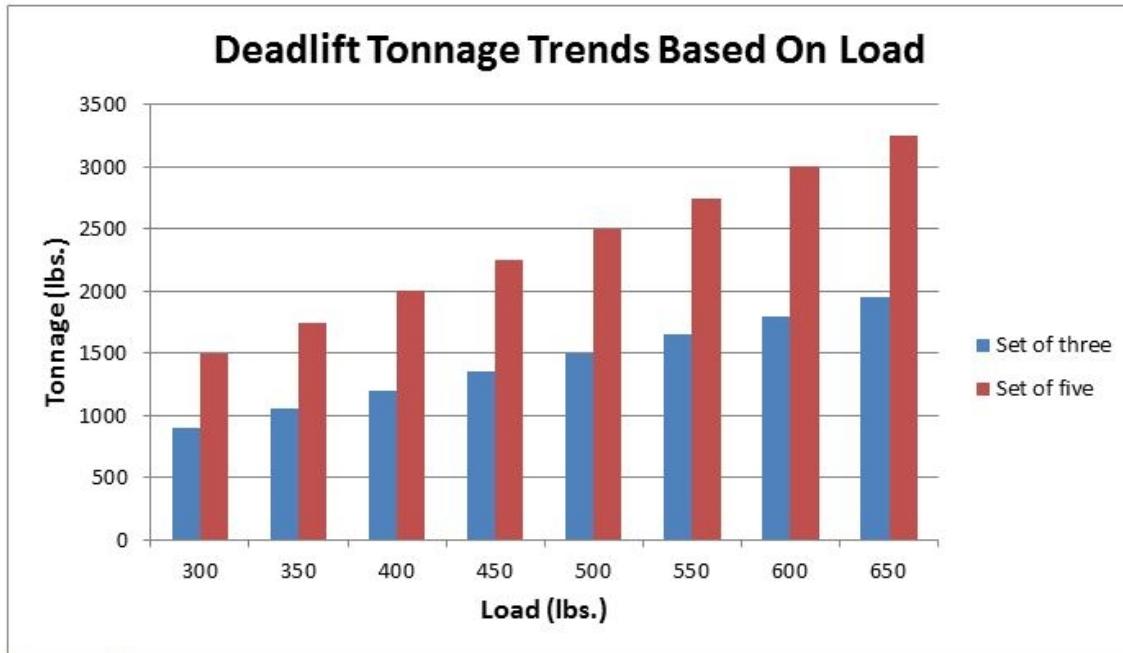


Figure 3.8

A five rep deadlift set done with 500 pounds yields a tonnage of 2500 pounds. This tonnage pales in comparison to 10,625 lbs., the tonnage associated with squatting 425x5x5. However, the nature of the deadlift is such that the force of that tonnage is isolated primarily on the lower back and hamstrings. The force of the squat tonnage is distributed throughout the body more effectively instead of having a primary pin-point on the low back. The low back is the most important link in the performance chain because if it fails, the body can't effectively transmit force from the legs through the trunk. Taking care to not destroy the low back is important for a successful strength program, yet eventually the trainee will achieve high tonnages from the high loads he handles. An inability to recover from triples, singles, doubles, the 5/3/1, or 3/2/1 trend will demand more complicated deadlift programming (see Chapter 6).

Throughout this chapter, I've used the terms 5RM, 3RM, 2RM, and 1RM with the assumption that the trainee is going through the progress trends for the first time. Grizzled TM veterans will know that when they start a new progression, they will have to get through several weeks of non-PR days. In this case, 3RM will imply "heavy triple" and a 3RM progression will imply "progress the heavy triples back up to PR territory". The strategies in this chapter can help a trainee progress for at least one year and as many as several years if he tweaks everything appropriately. Eventually the trainee will find that his volume doses

and progress are difficult. Part II discusses how the TM can undergo a metamorphosis to a program that has lower weekly volume yet continues progress, albeit slower. This chapter also has also assumed a primary focus of improving strength without concern for power development, Olympic weightlifting, conditioning, getting swole, assistance exercises, or in-season athletes. These sub-goals are discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4 – Sub-goals

The last chapter showed us how versatile TM style programming is; volume and intensity can be manipulated and tweaked to continue strength progress over time. The TM is a fantastic strength program and can create a solid foundation of strength for a variety of goals. A trainee can shift away from a TM style program to focus on other goals and return to the TM later. The problem with shifting to and fro lies with the old adage “two steps forward, one step back”. Strength gains are made, and then diminish slightly depending on cumulative strength training, musculature, and the emphasis of the alternate program. Using an alternate program to implement gained strength can work, and in some cases is entirely necessary. This chapter will explain how it is possible to have sub-goals in addition to gaining strength. First we’ll talk about how the TM is used given anatomical or technique abnormalities, then discuss where to place assistance exercises, power and Olympic lifts, and conditioning workouts. Then we’ll cover different ways to use the TM to get mega jacked followed by how to use the TM for seasonal athletes.

Anatomical and Technical Abnormality

The TM style of programming is typically reserved for “intermediates”, or trainees who require a weekly adaptation as opposed to a daily adaptation. There are specific scenarios when early advancement is not only warranted, but necessary. If a trainee has an anatomical issue that prevents symmetrical squatting (e.g. scoliosis, a crooked pelvis, or a shorter leg) or severe technical problems (e.g. problems with keeping the bar racked properly, thoracic or lumbar hypermobility, lack of strength in the external hip rotators to keep the knees out, etc.), then a TM transition can be very helpful. If the trainee continues performing the abnormality during a LP, the daily stress can either develop tightness and soreness in the afflicted area or lead to an injury. The concept of “The Final Stroke” is that abnormal performance in the short-term may seem irrelevant, but the chronic abnormality will “chop away” at structures until finally one routine and insignificant rep causes a significant change, or failing, in the structures. It’s best to iron out asymmetrical or errant form faults before an accumulation of work can create bad habits and cause problems down the road.

If the errant form is present during squatting, and a trainee is squatting three times a week on a LP, then the trainee is placing significant volume with significant loads on the weakening structures. The trainee *should* hold their weight back and account for the error, yet this hardly happens in practice. Assuming the trainee or coach reduces the LP load to account for it, the trainee’s progress is blunted by the stall. Instead, the trainee could use a carefully created TM to account for the error.

The TM will not only have a lower weekly tonnage, but it will distribute the tonnage throughout the week effectively so that the technical error won't flare up and cause the trainee pain. Figure 4.1 shows the squat tonnage comparison between a LP and TM. The loads of the TM are about equal to what the hypothetical trainee could lift given the LP numbers.

Squat Tonnage Comparison					
		Volume	Light	Intensity	Total Tonnage
LP	Load x reps x sets	350x5x3	355x5x3	360x5x3	15975
	Tonnage (lbs.)	5250	5325	5400	
TM	Load x reps x sets	335x5x5	245x5x2	405x3	12040
	Tonnage (lbs.)	8375	2450	1215	

Figure 4.1

The TM's weekly tonnage is lower than the LP and the bulk of the volume in the TM is done early in the week. The Volume Day is where form would be emphasized and painstakingly perfected because the load is lighter than it was in the LP. Lighter loads are easier to control, and minute form details are easier to comprehend with less total exertion. Light Day will get additional work and form emphasis. Intensity Day is where the weight will be pushed with less emphasis on form. Since there is only one set, the trainee will focus on effective completion instead of one set. The weight will be challenging and the form fault will probably be present, but the heavy load will A) effectively continue the strength progression because of progressive overload, B) not cause too much stress on weakening structures because the bad form is only acceptable for one set each week, and C) will provide a much needed psychological boost to a trainee who has been held back by nagging form faults. This last reason is probably the most important because it allows the trainee to feel accomplished; it's hard to feel successful in a LP if the weight continuously has to be ratcheted back to account for form faults. Loading up the weight and hitting a PR, even an ugly PR, will be euphoric.

It's important to note that this method of using the TM for anatomical or technical abnormalities is for subtle form faults. If there is a serious and gross form fault – the trainee is stepping forward to prevent falling over or the thoracic spine is dangerously hyper-extended – then the TM won't be the solution; good coaching will. Quality of coaching leaves the scope of this book, but I dare say, "Use common sense."

A Note on Women

It has been my experience and observation that women experience these errant form issues more often than men. Whether it is a lack of weight training background, joint hyper-mobility, lack of confidence, or lack of musculature structure, women must often overcome troublesome form faults. It's critical that women see progress in their training, both objective (data from the log book) and subjective ("Your squat has really improved these last few weeks"). Continuously resetting on an LP will piss most women off, and the TM will open an avenue of progress and confidence.



Assistance Exercises

When most people learn about the TM, they immediately want to know where the assistance exercises go. Mainstream fitness and bodybuilding sources have placed assistance exercises on a pedestal. The large, compound lifts build strength and muscle, and the assistance exercises merely help improve a cog in the large system. Assistance exercises will add additional, albeit different volume to the musculature to make them stronger for their role in the compound lifts. In some cases assistance work merely develops and increases the musculature around a joint to make the action of the joint more efficient and stronger. In either case, they *assist* the strength improvement of the compound lifts. Figure 4.2 is a table that includes the most useful assistance exercises and their general utility. Part II will include a detailed exercise section with descriptions and pictures.

Summary of Assistance Exercises and Respective Utility		
Develops...	Improves...	Exercises
Hamstring/glute	Squat, deadlift, pulls, other lower body lifts	RDL, Good Morning, Reverse Hyper, Glute-Ham Raises
Shoulder, upper back, or chest	Bench, press, other upper body lifts	Chin-ups, pull-ups, dips (weighted), Barbell and Dumbbell Rows
Neck, yoke, biceps	Physique, ancillary structures	Power Shrugs, Neck Harness, Barbell Curls

Figure 4.2

RDLs, good mornings, reverse hyperextensions, and glute-ham raises are all noted for their ability to improve the deadlift and squat. Proper form is more important on these exercises than load because proper form will work the muscles through the intended range of motion. Increasing the load too high will obviate any benefit from doing the exercises since they merely turn into bastardized versions of the squat or deadlift. **Assistance exercises are about quality over quantity; no one cares how much weight anybody can use with assistance exercises.** All three exercises are best used with three to five sets of eight to twelve reps. When introducing these exercises, use lighter loads and less volume so the normal weekly program isn't disturbed. Increase volume and load over time.

Chin-ups and pull-ups both help develop the musculature necessary for shoulder extension and help strengthen the joint due to the subtle difference in humerus angle in each exercise. Dips develop shoulder flexion and elbow extension which augments pressing movements. All three calisthenics should advance to the point of using additional weight and rep ranges can vary between the standard “three to five sets of eight to twelve reps” for assistance work, three sets of five with the load increasing each workout, sets of maximal bodyweight reps, or aiming for a minimum amount of reps in a workout. Barbell and dumbbell rows serve a similar function in strengthening the shoulder extensors and middle, albeit differently. Barbell rows are typically used for lower reps to build back strength while dumbbell rows are used for reps to develop back musculature. Check out the Swollertrophy section later in this chapter for some set/rep schemes.

The last row of Figure 4.2 concerns exercises that have less applicability to getting stronger and are more concerned with “filling out” the body. When most trainees gain a lot of body weight and musculature from a LP, they neglect the biceps and neck and are left with a pencil-neck appearance. I would never wish this on any of my readers; most of my readers want to look strong in addition to being strong. Add these exercises once a week to develop the lacking musculature. To a lesser extent, the related structures will increase in strength over time and will be less susceptible to pulls or strains. Curls will

develop the strength of the tendons in the elbow joint and neck harness work will increase the strength and diameter of the neck.

Power shrugs are used to establish yoke – an impressive representation of musculature from neck to shoulders. Power shrugs are more effective than standard shrugs because A) the initial hip extension begins the upward momentum so the traps don't have to attempt contracting on a large static load, B) the higher speed and momentum allow more reps to be done with heavier weight, and C) there is no eccentric, or lowering phase (the bar is lightly guided in its fall back to the rack instead of controlled down) that will tire out or cause more damage to the traps. Most gym goers will perform shrugs by bending their knees and shrugging, a movement that accomplishes absolutely nothing since the trainee's body moves down in relation to the bar. Power shrugs demand that the bar is accelerated upward and finished with the traps helping the bar up in relation to a stationary body. Be sure to use an older bar since the bar can be bent when it makes contact with the rack at the end of each rep.

Where to Schedule Assistance Exercises

Typically the trainee should only add in one exercise *at the* most from each grouping of assistance work (see Figure 4.2). A program that revolves around tons of fancy assistance work will detract from the intended goal. Add assistance gradually and give each exercise enough time in the program to gauge whether or not it makes an impact. Assistance work typically won't work well on Light Day because it could interfere with Intensity Day. Weighted dips or chins/pull-ups, RDLs, good mornings, reverse hypers, and power shrugs shouldn't ever be placed on Light Day, and **no work should ever be on the day before Intensity Day**. Body weight dips or chin/pull-ups could be done on Light Day, but less work done on Light Day means that the trainee is completely rested for Intensity Day.

Instead, place the assistance work on the Volume or Intensity Days. Keep the hamstring/glute work on Volume Day; doing those exercises on Intensity Day will increase the tonnage on a day where the program requires there to be low tonnage/volume. Split chins/pull-ups and dips between Volume and Intensity Day. Additionally, the trainee can create a new training day on the day between Volume and Light day to get additional assistance work in. Volume Day can be taxing, so doing it the following day will A) allow the trainee to complete assistance work with fervor, B) allows more assistance work to be done in the week than if the Assistance Day didn't exist, C) keep the assistance work in the early portion of the week so that full recovery can still occur prior to Intensity Day, and D) acclimate the trainee to four training days, which will be necessary in advanced TM stages (discussed in Part II). See Figure 4.3 for examples.

Examples of Where to Include Different Types of Assistance Work					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Regular	Squat Volume		Squat light		Squat Intensity
	Bench Volume		Press medium		Bench Intensity
	Chin-ups				Deadlift Intensity
Added assistance	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	Squat Volume		Squat light		Squat Intensity
	Bench Volume		Press medium		Bench Intensity
	Chin-ups		Curls		Deadlift Intensity
	RDLs				Dips
Assistance Day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	Squat Volume	Power Shrugs	Squat light		Squat Intensity
	Bench Volume	Chin-ups	Press medium		Bench Intensity
	Reverse Hyper		Curls		Deadlift Intensity
					Dips

Figure 4.3

Chin-ups and pull-ups are interchangeable in Figure 4.3 and should be alternated every time they are done. Notice that any hamstring/glute work is done early in the week as to not interfere with Intensity Day. Also note that Figure 4.3 concerns itself with a week that includes volume and intensity bench pressing; it's implied that the following week will have a press emphasis (if confused, see Figure 2.5), and the assistance work could stay the same or change depending on the week.

Power Development

Power is the ability to move force quickly, and a trainee's potential is limited by their genetic potential. The easiest way to distinguish between the potential of various people is to test the vertical jump. Decent power has a vertical jump between 25 and 29 inches, and good power is anything over 30 inches. Anything over 35 inches is freaky-good. To get an accurate reading, make sure to account for arm length in the vertical jump by measuring how high the trainee can reach while flat footed. Regardless of ability, a trainee can work towards maximizing his potential to display power through training.

This text aims to improve power by lifting weights. Plyometrics, jumping, and bounding are all beneficial for increasing power and general athletic ability, yet they leave the scope of this book. Furthermore, not only is it easier to advance power by changing the load on specific lifts, but our focus is how to maximize motor unit recruitment to increase strength.

Some trainees will have learned how to power clean on the LP, yet most trainees will avoid them because they look complicated or unsafe. Power cleans and snatches are excellent exercises that, when performed correctly, have an explosive extension of the hip that generates vertical momentum on the bar. This section will focus on power cleans over power snatches since the load will be heavier and the time of completion isn't significantly longer than the power snatch relative to the squat and deadlift. Power cleans are a wonderful exercise; they use the same musculature as the deadlift to pull the bar off of the floor, yet the hip extension is a violently quick movement that requires the lower back to maintain its alignment while the hip extensors activate and contract *as fast as possible*. The subsequent rack requires balance and skill, and loads the entire body differently than any other lift. For strength training purposes, the power clean is quantified by catching the bar with a knee angle equal to or greater than 135° , which is also equal to or less than 45° from lockout (a straight line has an angle of 180°). If the knee is more acute than this angle, then it isn't a power clean (too often lifters claim high power clean loads when catching the weight at a 90° knee angle). The goal is to use hip extension to jump the bar as high as possible. Having to recover from each clean with a front squat will load the muscles related to squatting in addition to the muscles related to pulling, and this is more than the program intends. If the trainee is performing the power clean by arm pulling, upright rowing, and reverse curling the bar, he is getting absolutely zero worth out of the lift, and certainly no power development. It's almost as bad as half squatting. Almost.



Power cleans will be used for the same reason that speed deadlifts were used in Chapter 3; to recruit maximal motor units by moving the bar as fast as possible to help push the deadlift. Trainees that are new to power cleaning can get effective work by using triples. Their primary goal is to practice doing the

movement correctly and allowing their structures to adapt to this new lift. Increase the weight slowly throughout the workout and aim for three to five triples with a significant weight (challenging, yet not impossible). After several weeks of using triples across, it's best to use doubles and use a similar progression. Doubles will allow more weight to be used, and after several weeks of progressing doubles *with good form* and sets across, the trainee can now begin timing the sets. Timed sets work well to develop power because the motor units must try to achieve full activation without full recovery. The trainee can perform doubles on the minute for five to ten minutes. After several weeks of progressing timed doubles, the trainee can transition to timed singles. Singles will allow more weight to be handled within the same minute of rest. The trainee can complete between eight and fifteen singles, progressing weekly by adding reps or increasing the load. Eventually the trainee will stall at a weight that can be completed for ten to fifteen singles. The weight that the trainee stalls at and what percentage that weight is of his deadlift will depend on his genetic potential.

Power Clean Progress Trends	
Reps	Sets
3s	3 to 5
2s	5 to 10
1s	8 to 15
<i>Note: After progressing doubles, begin timed sets and progress into timed singles</i>	

Figure 4.4

This is why the power clean progression is arbitrary; it moves through triples, doubles, timed doubles, and timed singles at a rate that is relevant to the trainee and his potential. If the trainee has good power and can power clean a moderate to high percentage of his deadlift, then the total power clean volume may need to be lower to allow recovery for the deadlift on Intensity Day. If the trainee's power clean is a very low percentage of their deadlift, then the trainee may need closer to 15 reps to illicit progress or the load may not be significant enough to push the deadlift (see Figure 4.5). In such a case, the trainee would transition over to speed deadlifts.

Comparison of Power Clean to Deadlift In Two Trainees			
	Deadlift	Power Clean	Percent of DL
Trainee 1	625	250	40%
Trainee 2	475	315	66%

Figure 4.5

To summarize Chapter 3's *Speed Deadlifting* section, use 55 to 65% of the 1RM and pull a single six to twelve times every 60 seconds. Trainees who have skipped the power clean progression – perhaps they were unable to learn the movement correctly from a good coach – may benefit by using a slightly lower percentage than the 55 to 65% range when beginning to add speed deadlifts. Such a trainee could start with 45% and increase it over time to fit within the desired range. The progression should start at the low end of the weight percentage and rep range. The goal is to move the weight *as fast as possible* on every single rep to stimulate motor unit recruitment. The trainee will add one or two reps until they reach ten reps per workout. Weight will only be added in the following week when the trainee and a spectator are convinced that all of the reps were moving at maximal speed.

The optimal day to do power cleans or speed deadlifts is on Assistance Day (see Figure 4.3). These lifts can be done after squatting and benching on Volume Day, yet fatigued muscles will not display power as efficiently if they were fresh. Performing power cleans or speed deadlifts on Assistance Day will allow the trainee to get the most out of his emphasis on speed.

Conditioning

Strength is the fundamental capacity for human performance. Using strength to develop the structures and systemic capabilities is summed up as 'conditioning'. Conditioning can refer to two things: a) the act of stressing the structures to withstand new types of forces and b) improving the use and delivery of substrates to supply energy to the muscles. The former explanation is important to lifters in order to prevent them from straining tendons, muscles, or ligaments when beginning new activities. **Remember, when starting a new exercise or activity, perform a low intensity and low volume workout and patiently progress it up to normal levels.** This concept applies to competitive events, sports, and recreational activities. Attempting sprints, for example, when the structures aren't even adapted to running isn't just misguided, it's stupid. Trainees should swallow their ego and ease into new or unadapted physical endeavors.

This section is concerned with why, when, and how conditioning should be incorporated into a TM set up, but also how to program conditioning and strength together. Whether or not conditioning should be performed depends on the individual. If the trainee is merely a lifter, then low to medium amounts of conditioning will help maintain or improve the cardiovascular and respiratory function. If a lifter is within 30 days of a meet (powerlifting or Olympic weightlifting), then all conditioning other than walking shouldn't be done in order to devote resources to recovery and supercompensation for the event. Other trainees may want to maintain or improve athletic ability as they get strong. Athletes who compete in other non-lifting sanctioned sports should shift into a maintenance phase while improving their sport conditioning (see the section on Seasonal Athletes later in this chapter). Regardless of individual, this

section is for the strength trainee who not only doesn't want to huff and puff on the stairs, but also the trainee who doesn't want other fitness elements to ebb in their pursuit of strength.

Trainees who are un-adapted to conditioning, out of shape, or overly fat should first build a base of conditioning. The easiest way is to use a protocol that successful sprint coach Barry Ross implements with his athletes to prepare for their sprint program: walk as fast as possible for 15 minutes. Barry's athletes will walk three times a week for four weeks and aim to walk further for each workout. It's incredibly simple; leave point A and walk for 7.5 minutes, then turn around and return to point A. Next time, try to go further. Do this two or three times a week for about a month and huffing and puffing shouldn't be an issue. Be sure to take the dog.

Other introductory protocols can include light rowing or cycling for ten to fifteen minutes or pushing a light sled for about 25 yards, four to ten times while resting one to three minutes in between each push. The idea is that the un-adapted trainee's body is introduced to a new stress and gives it time to elevate the conditioning baseline. Most trainees who went through a LP and transitioned into a TM style set up will only be conditioned for lifting. **The concept of adapting is contingent on applying a correct dose of stress to get the desired response.** If a small dose is required to illicit a response, then why apply a large dose? Larger doses may even cause more harm than good by stressing joints, lungs, or vascular system to a point of causing soreness, coughing, or nausea for the rest of the day. Understanding this **dose-response relationship** and how it changes depending on a trainee's current adaptation is imperative for quality programming.

The rest of this section will assume that the trainee has a baseline of conditioning and wants to increase or maintain above average conditioning while they get stronger with the TM. The most efficient form of conditioning will be short, intense periods of work. This method aims to produce and maintain a high metabolic output relative to the time it is performed and minimize recovery between those bouts. Hitting and maintaining high outputs will create an environment that has a deficit of energy substrates. This deficit is the stress that promotes an enhanced adaptation when compared to lower output training (like long, slow distance jogging). Put simply, intensity-based conditioning will result in getting more conditioned faster compared to lower output methods of conditioning; more bang for the buck. Intense conditioning doesn't subject the muscles to an oxidative environment – like LSD training – that is counter-productive for strength gains.

Types of Intensity Conditioning

There are three types of intense conditioning that we will use for TM programming; all out, interval, and sustained effort. **"All out"** conditioning is a method where a maximum output is sustained for as long as possible. The trainee attempts to maintain that output until the work is completed, or until their rate of work depreciates below a given threshold. These maximal outputs will decline within seconds, and will

undoubtedly diminish over the course of several minutes – and that's the point. The trainee should be working at such a high rate of work that they are unable to maintain it; such an output creates a deficit in substrates. If the duration of the workout extends too long, then rates of work diminish to the point of ineffectiveness. Thus, **all out conditioning should be capped around five minutes.**

Interval conditioning is slightly different in that it has repeated bouts of high output and incorporates periods of rest. Whereas “all out” conditioning saw a reduction in work rate seamlessly, interval conditioning will see it over several intervals of work off-set by intervals of rest. Rest and work are variables that can be manipulated over time to improve the stress of a given workout. In order to increase the stress, work can be increased, rest can be decreased, or work can be increased while rest is decreased simultaneously (see Figure 4.6). Interval conditioning is dependent on intensity, so in order to ensure that all intervals create a significant stress, **interval conditioning should be capped around twelve minutes.**

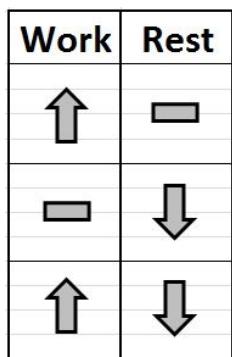


Figure 4.6

Interval conditioning can simply consist of repeating x amount of work a number of times with set periods of rest. In more advanced trainees the variables can be ascending, descending, or consist of the pyramid and ladder methods. In the case of descending work, each interval can have a reduction of work so that the trainee can put equal or greater effort as their workout continues. Ascending rest may increase the rest periods as the workout progresses. The ladder and pyramid methods are adopted from Johnny Pain’s “The Greyskull LP” book. He uses the terms to improve calisthenics (push-ups and pull-ups), but I use them here to describe a trend in work. A pyramiding conditioning workout would have ascending amounts of work followed by equal descending drops. A ladder conditioning workout would have ascending intervals, and then revert back to the shortest interval and ascend back up again (as opposed to descending like the pyramid version).

Examples of Work Intervals With Running	
Method	Distance (rest implied)
Repeated	400x4
Ascending	100, 200, 300, 400
Descending	400, 300, 200, 100
Pyramid	200, 300, 400, 300, 200
Ladder	100, 200, 300, 100, 200, 300

Figure 4.7

These frivolities in a workout may appear sexy to the conditioning fan, but they are largely irrelevant for the implementation of interval conditioning within a strength program. Instead, most trainees should merely perform repeated intervals of work with a fixed rest period. The following week they can slightly decrease the rest and adapt accordingly (see Figure 4.8 for examples). Simple is easy.

Simple Interval Progression Over Time		
	Rest Decreased (400m run x 4)	Work Increased
Week 1	3:00 rest	400x4
Week 2	2:30 rest	400x5
Week 3	2:00 rest	400x6
Week 4	1:00 rest	400x7

Figure 4.8

The last type of conditioning is **sustained effort conditioning**, and it consists of a lower rate of work that is extended beyond fifteen minutes. This type of conditioning serves the purpose of structurally adapting to an activity or improving glycogen stores in the event that the trainee must be able to perform a longer duration activity. For TM purposes, we use “all out” and interval conditioning in short durations, yet the time frames can be extended depending on a trainee’s goals. **This book assumes an emphasis on strength, size, power, and speed, thus the total conditioning times are short.** A trainee can perform lower output activities for longer durations after conditioning with short, intense workouts, yet that threshold is arbitrarily capped. **A trainee can expect to effectively perform in a duration that is three times as long as their average intense conditioning duration**, yet anything beyond this threshold may be difficult. This threshold would be around half an hour for trainees using the above guidelines for “all out” and interval conditioning, and the threshold can be greatly extended via sustained effort conditioning.

Consider an example of American military personnel. A U.S. Army Airborne Ranger must be strong, powerful, fast, and quick, yet he is also required to ruck march twelve miles in three hours (with a 45 pound ruck) and run five miles under forty minutes. The ruck marching demands that his feet are conditioned and the run demands that his structures – muscles, tendons, bones, and ligaments – can handle a five mile run at a decent pace. In either case, the Ranger will need to put time under a ruck and on the trail via sustained effort conditioning to optimally prepare. By being strong, he can move faster and longer, yet he must condition his body to express that capability.

In any case, sustained effort may be a necessity for some trainees and leisurely for others (e.g. hiking, volleyball, basketball, etc.). The key here is specifically doing the activity that must be prepared for. Nothing else conditions basketball better than basketball, and nothing will make you better at rucking than rucking.

Structuring the Conditioning Workout

The basic structure of effective intensity workouts has been described, but the actual exercises or activities haven't. Here is conditioning in a nut shell: improved performance requires a stress; conditioning stress is a result of substrate deficit; substrate deficit occurs when sustaining high metabolic outputs; and high metabolic outputs are achieved through intense exercise. Using large, compound movements that work a lot of musculature will use the most energy to cause a significant stress. Isolation exercises, like a sit-up or biceps curl, only work a small amount of muscle and won't demand enough energy to create a systemic stress. Using gross movement patterns that take the hips, knees, and shoulders through a full range of motion are ideal. This can be done with body weight movements, or with implements (anything from barbells to rocks).

Appropriate exercises should be compound movements that can be done fast, yet with appropriate technique to properly work the structures. The movements need to be done fast enough to demand large amounts of energy. Doing one body weight squat per five seconds doesn't demand as much energy as doing three squats in several seconds. Additionally, body weight squats are better than walking lunges because the lunge is a much slower movement; more work can be done in a shorter amount of time with a set of ten squats compared to ten lunges. This doesn't mean that technique is forgone for the sake of doing things quickly. If the trainee only completes half a squat, they don't take the muscles of their knees and hips through a full range of motion and the movement becomes irrelevant. If a trainee performs a poor, bastardized arm-pulling power clean that is void of any jump or hip extension, then they have no business incorporating this movement into their conditioning. Technique can and will break down when experiencing fatigue, but it shouldn't break down to the point where the purpose of each movement is lost. Moving the bar or body from point A to B isn't the goal; conditioning the body and musculature effectively and correctly is. Succinctly, **Quality Work > Total Work.**

When using implements, the load will have an inverse relationship with the number of reps performed. The more consecutive or total reps that are performed of a given movement, the less of a load it should have. This will not only prevent a decrease in work rate during the conditioning workout, but it will also prevent any unnecessary lingering localized (at the muscle) or systemic stress that may affect other training days during the week. **Conditioning loads should not exceed 60% of 1RM and ideally will stay below 50% of 1RM.** Anything heavier can a) be too much to lift for consecutive reps, b) require too long of rest in between reps since force production is the limiting factor instead of substrate utilization, and c) by definition no longer qualify as an optimal conditioning workout since the highest work output is not maintained. If the trainee is going to spend his time conditioning, then he shouldn't waste it resting because he doesn't have the force production capabilities to move the chosen load. Instead, the workout should be designed to not have any rest unless it is programmed. Programmed rest may be in the form of rest intervals (as described above), or *active rest*. Active rest is a lower output activity that allows some recuperation from the higher intensity portion of the workout without completely stopping all activity. Active rest can utilize slow or isolation movements like sit-ups, RDL's, and lunges. Some trainees, especially competing lifters, can use a circuit of assistance work as their conditioning since they don't require exceptionally intense conditioning. Assistance circuits are similar to barbell complexes in effectiveness.



Conditioning in a strength program is fairly straightforward; one to three days should be programmed on training days that won't interfere with the recovery for strength. Conditioning shouldn't take the place of rest days so that the system is allowed appropriate recovery, and **conditioning should never be placed the day before heavy training days.** In a TM style program, Thursdays and Sundays are off limits; Intensity Day and Volume Day follow respectively. It's okay to condition on training days, but it would be best to avoid conditioning on Light Day so that the system can go through its weekly super compensation for Intensity Day. Conditioning on Volume and Intensity Days is fine, yet conditioning on Assistance Day (typically Tuesday) and the day after Intensity Day (typically Saturday) are optimal. Longer or more strenuous bouts of conditioning should go on Saturday morning since there will be two days of recovery before Volume Day on Monday. Efficient conditioning programming will not use the same musculature

that was recently trained or that will be trained in the next several days. For example, using body weight squats the day after volume squatting would be downright silly. If deadlifts or other pulling occur soon in the program, then lots of kettlebell swings wouldn't be prudent. Lastly, it would be best to use movements and exercises that are not native to a strength program. Branching out from squats, presses, and pulls will allow the body to improve its general physical preparedness. Activities like kettlebell swings, thrusters, jumping, and agility drills force the body to adapt to new movements and maintain or improve athletic ability.

Collection of Conditioning Activities and Exercises				
Lifts	Calisthenics	Distance	Other activities	Implements
Squats	Burpees	Running	Pushing	Barbells
Deadlifts	Pull-ups	Biking	Pulling	Dumbbells
Cleans	Push-ups	Rowing	Swinging	Kettlebells
Snatches	Dips	Swimming	Carrying	Medicine Balls
Presses	Jumps		Agilities	Sleds
Jerks	Squats			Sand Bags
	Climbing			Ropes
	Crawling			Other

Figure 4.9

If a trainee aims to include conditioning in their strength program, they must ask three questions.

1. **What is the end goal?**
2. **What is the body currently adapted to?**
3. **How can the body progress from its current state to the desired adapted state?**

The end goal will determine the method of conditioning. Is the end goal for a trainee to run a 5k with his wife and daughter? Then running will definitely be a part of his conditioning. Does a powerlifter not want to breathe heavily when climbing stairs? Then general activity that he finds fun like flipping tires, tossing children, and pushing trucks will comprise his conditioning program.

The current state of adaptation will dictate how to progress the trainee's condition from now until the goal. If that same trainee with the 5k goal hasn't run in several years, then it would be unwise to start pumping 5ks into his program. The concept of "**crawl, walk, and run**" must be implemented. In 5k Dad's case, he must start walking quickly to make sure his structures can handle a prolonged exposure to

movement. Next he may have several workouts that are intermittent with jogging and walking. Then he may progress into intervals of 100 to 400m of slower running. Then he may progress his speed up, and eventually start longer sessions of running: half a mile, a mile, 1.5 miles, etc. His regular program may have interval running on Tuesday and a longer run on Saturday, yet he would progress into such a program to avoid unnecessary stress on his ankles, knees, or hips.

In the above example, the overall conditioning program's intensity is low. 5k Dad didn't need to do burpees and thrusters to achieve his goal. He may have been physiologically prepared for a 5k had he used higher intensity workouts, yet he would still need to adapt his structures to the act of running, and nothing else can do that except running. **Trainees should remember that conditioning should reflect their goal and the program should progressively work up to that goal by starting easily and slowly.**

Olympic Weightlifting

As stated in Chapter 1, the TM is not an optimal Olympic weightlifting program. I have received e-mails on trainees asking if they can apply the TM principles of volume and intensity to the Olympic lifts – often with the same set and rep scheme (e.g. snatching 5x5 on Monday). The required mechanics and neuromuscular efficiency inherent in the Olympic lifts means that they don't respond the same as the "strength lifts" like squat, press, bench press, and deadlift. Additionally, adding on the Olympic lifts to a rigorous TM template – on that has an emphasis on increasing the strength lifts – will blunt both the strength and Olympic lifts since recovery cannot be optimal. Instead, the TM set up can be applied as assistance work for the Olympic lifts. Ideally this would only be the case for the squat. Regularly doing the Olympic lifts near maximum (or arbitrarily above 80% of 1RM) is necessary to drive progress, and thus it should be a regular part of a good weightlifting program. Programming squats for a weightlifter becomes an individualized thing based on their strengths, weaknesses, current program, and current state of adaptation. Thus, using a TM method of squatting on a weightlifting program may or may not be relevant, but is a good start for a weightlifter in the early stages of squat development.

If a weightlifter is particularly weak to the point that it is limiting his lifts (e.g. the squat strength is not greater than 315 pounds), the lifter may benefit from a "TM cycle of strength training". Applying strength into the Olympic lifts can be more efficient than trying to get strong by exclusively doing the Olympic lifts, especially if the trainee has decent technique. The lifter could use a general TM outline for about six weeks to bolster the strength numbers before returning to a regular weightlifting program. This primarily applies to developing a better base of strength in weak weightlifters and isn't optimal for stronger and experienced weightlifters.

Let it be known that at least a decade has passed since Glenn Pendlay and his lifters discovered the general TM template. Pendlay has been coaching top lifters since and has undoubtedly improved his

squat program for his intermediate or advanced lifters. In any case, weightlifting programming leaves the scope of this book. Trainees who want to try a TM squat protocol could do volume squats on Monday and intensity squats on Friday. Volume is relative, so three sets of five could qualify as substantial and would help prevent too much systemic stress from something like five sets of five. See Figure 4.10.

Hypothetical TM Squatting for Weightlifting		
Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Snatch ~80 to 90% CJ ~80 to 90% Squat 3x5	Power Snatch Power CJ Front squat 3x3	Snatch - Max CJ - Max Squat 3RM

Figure 4.10

Swollertrophy

Linear progressions present an excellent way for a skinny guy to exponentially improve his strength and pack on mass. As with all physical adaptations, there is a sharp rate of change when first starting, and it tapers off gradually (see Figure 1 in the Introduction). The rate of improvement decreases, and the necessity for different training arises. A new intermediate lifter may have experienced good mass gains, but may want to continue improving his muscular development while getting stronger. Other trainees may not respond well to the mid-range rep training that is standard for a TM. Swollertrophy methods introduce higher rep ranges to increase the size in muscle structure.

Rep Continuum For Size and Strength			
Strength		Size	
Strength Without Mass	Strength With Some Mass	Mass With Some Strength	Mass Without Strength
1 to 3 reps	4 to 6 reps	8 to 12 reps	12+ reps

Figure 4.11

“Swollertrophy” is a condition where the muscles reach a point in which their “maximum jackson” levels are saturated; it’s the act of getting swole, or swollen. It’s desirable among most adult males since they not only want to be strong, but *look* strong. This section provides the intermediate trainee with some options specifically geared to build or refine mass with a TM set up. Improving leverage around a joint will make the core strength lifts stronger and more efficient. A trainee may have exceptionally long arms that aren’t optimal for bench pressing. Such a trainee may opt to develop his upper body musculature; in this case the triceps, shoulders, upper back, and pectorals. Other trainees may have learned to lift with

inefficient form that neglects balance around their joints or trunk, and extra strength work on the lacking structures can build them up (e.g. using RDLs to build the posterior chain of an anterior-chain-dominant athlete). Still, other trainees may get out of a linear progression with quality mass gained in their legs, hips, and trunk, but may lack muscle in their arms, back, and neck or have a desire for greater mass or refinement. In any case, there are several methods that are compatible with a TM set up. These methods are not designed to be a top level bodybuilding program, but for the strength athlete that wants to look strong while being strong.

The Pump Method

A trainee may have good, thick musculature but want to refine his musculature. Well-built lifters can utilize The Pump Method to “catch a pump” instead of accumulating work. Catching a pump is both amusing and contagious, but it focuses on high intensity lifting followed by back off sets. The trainee will strength train with a lower volume and high intensity approach; three to five triples works well. This strength work will maintain or even improve the lifts over time while backs-off sets help growth. In these back-off sets, the trainee uses a load that is about 75 to 80% of the load he used for strength work that day (or about 60 to 70% of 1RM) and does three to five sets of eight to ten reps with *at most* thirty seconds of rest. For example, let’s say a trainee performs the standing press for heavy triples. After three heavy triples around 205 lbs, he may opt to catch a pump in his shoulders (and possibly triceps) by lowering the weight to 165 lbs and doing a quick set of eight reps. Then he will rest for fifteen seconds and do another eight reps, and then rest again for a set of max reps. Suddenly the trainee has accumulated at least 24 reps of moderate pressing in the span of 2 minutes and is adequately pumped.

Guidelines for Catching a Pump After Work Sets			
Sets	Reps	% of Work Set	% of 1RM
2 to 4	8 to 12	75 to 80%	60 to 70%

Figure 4.12

Bodybuilding fans will recognize this simple method as the “rest-pause” technique; it merely uses higher reps and short rest periods to stress the muscle’s environment and force growth. By using lower rep, higher intensity sets prior to the rest-pause sets, the trainee can still maintain or improve their strength in congruence with swoller-pumping.

The Accumulated Work Method

Other trainees that are unhappy with their musculature development and need more than mere “refining” will need to utilize accumulated work over time. By virtue of working the muscle consistently every week, it will develop. Structures that have been neglected in direct work (such as the upper back, lower back, hamstrings, biceps, or triceps) can be worked over time with assistance exercises to get bigger and stronger. If strength is still the underlying goal, then these additional exercises can use a strength set and rep scheme of three to five sets of five repetitions. If the trainee desires to increase the size of regularly used structures (e.g. musculature involved in squatting, benching, pressing, and deadlifting), then a swollertrophy rep scheme of eight to twelve reps is in order. **The above will not always hold true, yet is a good guideline: muscles that aren't directly worked in the big lifts should be strength trained while muscles that are included in the big lifts can be stimulated from a higher rep scheme.**

The most useful exercises to use for furthering size and strength development for a new intermediate are weighted chin-ups/pull-ups, weighted dips, barbell rows, power shrugs, RDLs, barbell curls, and neck harness. If these movements haven’t previously been performed by the lifter, their inclusion may be substantial enough to illicit growth. Weighted chin-ups (supinated, or palms-in, grip) and pull-ups (pronated, or palms-out, grip) are excellent at strengthening the musculature around the shoulder joint and increasing upper body mass – two factors that can increase the press and bench. A progression of three sets of five will work for these exercises, but once the weight is over thirty pounds, a trainee can get creative. One method is to use three sets of five (as heavy as possible with full range of motion), then half the weight and go for max reps, and then go for max reps with just body weight. Another method is to warm-up to a heavy triple, back off for a couple sets of five, then go for reps with 25 pounds, and then go for reps with body weight. Chin-ups and pull-ups should only be done on Volume, Intensity, or Assistance Days, and never on Light Days since the structural fatigue will negatively affect intensity benching or pressing. Weighted dips are an anterior compliment to chin/pull-ups and effectively work the chest, shoulder flexors, and elbow extensors. They can use similar set/rep schemes as chin/pull-ups.

Barbell rows are a fantastic lift for the musculature in the back, yet most people don’t perform them optimally. The method of holding the bar off the ground throughout the set isn’t as useful as the method of starting each rep with the plates on the floor (commonly called Pendlay rows on the internet; Ed Coan did them this way as well – over 500 pounds in fact). Starting from the floor requires a controlled, yet forceful hip extension – which requires the low back to maintain its position while the posterior chain extends the hips – followed by the actual row into the upper abdomen and sternum area. The hip extension helps provide some momentum for the beginning of the movement; trainees shouldn’t use body English at the top range of motion since it will reduce the use of the targeted musculature. Rows should go through a steady three-sets-of-five progression. A back off set can always be done for a set of ten reps to catch a pump. Dumbbell rows should be done with the heaviest dumbbells the trainee can

tolerate for max reps. If the trainee has a weak grip, it can improve through high rep, heavy dumbbell rowing. If the trainee has a good grip and is exceeding 100 pounds, straps can be used. A rite of passage is to dumbbell row 150 pounds for reps as it is a typical weight for a skinny guy; trainees are literally lifting a human being up and down with one meaty arm.

Romanian deadlifts, or RDL's, are more relevant to trainees than high bar squat. High bar squatting doesn't involve the hamstrings in the same way that a low bar squat does, and posterior thigh may be lacking in size as a result. RDL's are often confused with stiff-legged deadlifts; RDL's start from the hang position before the weight is lowered without the plates touching the floor, and returned to the start with a stretch reflex out of the bottom. Stiff-legged deadlifts use similar mechanics, yet the lift starts with the barbell on the ground like a deadlift. In the RDL, the knees will be unlocked during the movement, yet will NOT flex any more. Instead, the hips are pushed back as the trainee flexes at the hip. Pushing the hips back and NOT letting the knees move forward or flex stretches the hamstrings, assuming the lumbar muscles stay tight and contracted. The bar is kept close to the legs (which requires shoulder extension; the lats will be worked). Many people claim outrageous RDL numbers, yet essentially are doing a shitty deadlift since they don't push the hips back or keep the knees back. Instead of using higher reps with RDL's, trainees should use a three-sets-of-five progression; getting stronger in this movement can pay dividends in the squat and deadlift (which are the serious mass builders).



Power shrugs were created by Tommy Suggs and Bill Starr to assist in the Olympic lifts. The idea was to handle more weight through the finish of a pull than they ever would on the platform. Each rep starts and ends with the bar on a rack (less equipped trainees can have their barbell sit on boxes or stacked bumper plates). The bar sits at mid-thigh, and the movement begins with a forceful hip extension to generate momentum and finishes with a powerful shrugging of the shoulders as high as possible. The

weight is guided, not lowered, back to the pins to avoid dangerous eccentric loading on the traps and rhomboids. Loads in can approach and exceed 1RM of deadlift, yet trainees should introduce these slowly and ensure they are done correctly. Power shrugs should first be progressed with a three-sets-of-five scheme.

Barbell curls and neck extensions (with a harness) are dependent on the concept of accumulated work. These two areas are not worked well in the big lifts, and need regular work to grow. Johnny Pain's e-book "The Greyskull LP" discusses neck harness effectiveness. Neck extensions are never done for fewer than four sets of 25 reps while slowly progressing the load over time. Barbell curls should be done for three sets of ten reps consistently. Despite what the internet functional fitness community says about curls, they are important and effective; strengthening the tendons and ligaments around the elbow is not a bad thing, and neither are big arms. Big arms = big paychecks.

Depending on the trainee's emphasis for growth, he can use other exercises like incline bench, front squats, and close-grip bench. The key here is to not get fancy with exercise choices lest the program turns into a Muscle and Fitness shit-fest. The placement of additional lifts will coincide with the Assistance Exercises portion of this chapter (see Figure 4.3). **Strength trainees – especially those who have gone through a linear progression or have gotten experience on a TM – merely need to add in one to three exercises, get them strong, and shift their big lifts into higher rep ranges.**

The 10s Method

The TM fluctuates the emphasis of volume and intensity throughout a week in order to drive progress. As stated earlier, the swollertrophy rep range is between eight and twelve reps. Tens are used because they are a nice, even number, lie within that range, and will allow more weight to be handled than anything above ten reps. I have implemented a ten rep TM program with various lifters with success. The basic outline is that Volume Day consists of three sets of ten reps, and Intensity Day consists of a ten rep max (10RM). This stock outline still maintains the Volume/Intensity relationship that has been developed with a more traditional TM, yet increases the reps for jacked-ness.

This rep scheme would apply to squatting, pressing, and benching, yet not to deadlift. Deadlifting can cause substantial systemic stress, but the danger with ten reps is causing too much localized stress. Pulling a bunch of shitty reps with the lower back bearing the brunt of the load will result in a destroyed lumbar/sacral area. This kind of stress can interfere with other lifts, especially the squat. Trainees should maintain at least B-grade technique when pulling high rep deadlifts to prevent any longstanding issues. Instead, the trainee could work up to a heavier set of three or fewer reps, then back off to around 70% of what they did that day for a set of ten.

Trainees should ease into doing tens; most that come off of a linear progression are not adapted to anything more than five reps, and tens will be...traumatic. Soreness will be inherent, but crippling soreness is detrimental to overall progress. **Just because a trainee can do something doesn't mean that they should.** Some trainees may have some issues after several weeks of doing tens. This typically occurs on lifts that use fewer muscles like the bench press or press. Their structures may not recover and cause debilitating soreness or prevent good positioning on other lifts. In this case, the Intensity Day can be dropped to a 5RM. 70's Big's AC dropped to a 5RM on the intensity day of a '10s Program' and worked the 5RM up to 365 lbs weighing around 212 – solid work. It's important to note that lifters with exceptional strength-to-body-weight ratio will have more problems than a heavier lifter. For example, benching 340+ is more stressful to a 212 pound guy than a 312 pound guy because the lever arms aren't as efficient.

I got an idea for a slightly more advanced and more effective '10s Program' from Kyle Pierce's weightlifting program at LSU-Shreveport. In their hypertrophy/muscular endurance phase, they will warm-up to a 10RM and perform subsequent descending sets. The second set is whatever weight they used on the 10RM – 10%. The third set is 10% off of whatever was used for the second set. For example, if a lifter has a 10RM of 400 lbs., his second set would be 360x10, and his third set would be 325x10. This accomplishes several things: it includes three sets of ten that hit the swollertrophy rep range, but also still get the accumulated three-sets-of-ten work; it increases the overall intensity of the workout since the first set is higher than three sets of ten for sets across or ascending sets (definition of 10RM is that it can't be done again that session); and the 10% reductions ensure that there isn't too much total tonnage imparted on the lifter. This session would be placed on Volume Day. The Intensity Day could consist of attempting a new 10RM, picking a slightly lower weight and going for a 20RM, or go for rep maxes with fewer reps like 8RM or 5RM. It isn't recommended to attempt more than four consistent weeks of 20RMs – the systemic and structural stress is too much. Trainees can repeat the same Intensity Day rep scheme (e.g. 8RM every week), alternate between two (e.g. 8RM and 20RM), or cycle through all available (e.g. 5RM, 8RM, 10RM, and 20RM).

Variations on the 10's Method			
	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Regular	3x10	3x5 Alternate Exercise	10RM
LSU-Shreveport Version	1: 10RM 2: 10RM - 10% 3: 2nd - 10%	3x5 Alternate Exercise	5RM, 8RM, 10RM, or 20RM

Figure 4.13

When To Use Swollertrophy

Getting bigger and better muscles is never a bad thing, yet the quest for strength shouldn't be ignored in pursuit of this since size is a byproduct of strength. A swollertrophy program will work best with a good strength base as well as a good TM base. A trainee who has just finished a linear progression will not have any TM data to base a swollertrophy program on, nor will their body be ready for more advanced techniques. Instead, he should adapt his body to the weekly improvement that is the TM. After several months, he can use additional exercises to accumulate work, utilize the pump method, or go on a 10s Program. As always, being strong will help any of these methods since being strong will allow more weight to be handled. For example, rest-pause sets done with 165 lbs. (for three sets of eight) amounts to 3960 lbs. of tonnage. The same amount of reps with 95 lbs. has a pitiful tonnage of 2280 lbs. Which tonnage do you think will induce more growth: 3960 or 2280 lbs.?

Trainees or athletes who are recovering from a meet or competitive season will undergo a period of rest that should last at least one week. The 10s Programs are suitable to prep the body for the regular strength training that will soon rev back up. It can be treated as a periodized phase of hyper/swollertrophy, yet it still has a strength element. I have also used it with post-meet raw powerlifters who aim to increase the size of particular structures – usually the upper body – to improve their lifting leverage.

The 10s Program is the only method that significantly alters the set and rep scheme of the TM. Because of this it should be limited, but can last anywhere from four to ten weeks with the six to eight week range working very well. The upper limit is around 12 weeks; 3 months is a long time to sustain the higher amounts of tonnage consistently.

Seasonal Programming

The TM is a good off-season strength program for team sports and seasonal athletes. These athletes compete in a sport with designated season of competition; they can benefit from re-establishing or improving their strength base before shifting back into a strength maintenance and sport conditioning phase. The basic flow has the athlete using the TM to build strength in the off-season while maintaining mobility and conditioning, and then adjusting the work load and increasing mobility during the season.

Off-Season

The off-season is the time to make progress on foundational ability to apply into the next sport's season. An athlete will follow the criteria laid out thus far throughout this book to drive their absolute strength,

but should maintain their mobility, agility, and conditioning. Mobility helps keep the range of motion in joints and muscles supple – two things that help prevent injury. Most sports place the athlete in positions that aren't mechanically advantageous, and focused mobility and agility work will augment what lifting weights can accomplish. See Kelly Starrett's Mobility WOD online for plenty of stationary mobility. Athletes should also include plenty of movement based mobility drills to introduce and adapt to new stresses and ROMs. NFL players Ray Lewis and Tony Gonzales have excellent track records of performing well over long careers, and both professional athletes are proponents of active mobility work during the off-season. Lastly, some form of specific agility or conditioning should be used regularly to keep the structures adapted. A hockey player should get on the ice regularly so that when he prepares for the season he isn't shocked into a stress that has been neglected for months. Most athletes should maintain their lateral movement capabilities as it is neglected in lifting, which is linear. **Regular strength trainees or lifters can benefit from the same mobility and agility work and can implement it into their daily warm-ups.** Cone or ladder drills work well for agility and dynamic warm-ups or hurdle work well for mobility.

The off-season athlete may opt to “periodize” their approach for off-season programming. This would create periods of time during the off-season that would have an emphasis on a specific physical attribute. Right after the previous season ends, the athlete could go through a mobility phase where they ignore lifting and let their body recover. They then can shift into a strength phase which will evolve into a power phase. The last phase is a specific conditioning phase to ready for the sport itself. Strength, Power, and Conditioning are in order from “most persistent adaptation” to “least persistent adaptation”, thus their order in periodization shouldn’t be switched. These phases can function within a TM template so long as the overall program volume changes to reflect the emphasis on phase. For example, the power phase may have a total reduction, but emphasize higher intensity and speed lifting. The conditioning phase would begin shifting the programming template to maintain strength while conditioning. Note that during the specific strength phases, an off-season athlete will only need to do enough conditioning to stave off structural atrophy as opposed to actively improving their conditioning.

In-Season

During the season, an athlete will be specifically practicing their sport and regularly competing in games or tournaments. Stationary and movement-based mobility work becomes important to prevent injury as well as recover from injuries. If injuries heal without movement, they are susceptible to re-injury. Lifting shouldn't be dropped from the program; it's necessary for A) maintaining strength or B) accumulating work. Maintaining strength throughout a season is relevant, especially during long seasons. Getting weaker definitely won't help performance late in the season, a time where playoffs and championships occur. Yet the accumulated work of lifting is just as important as maintaining strength. The regular accumulated work will keep working the muscles through a full range of motion and help prevent injury.

The first change to make in-season is to reduce the total volume of the program. An athlete only has given amount of recovery, and most of it will need to be used to recover from practice and for games. Using too much recovery ability on lifting will be detrimental to performance. On a TM set up, the athlete can drop his Volume Day as low as three sets of three, and keep his Intensity Day around a heavy double or triple. The athlete shouldn't be concerned with hitting PR's, but instead get quality lifting. Deadlift frequency and intensity should be reduced, and many athletes may opt to replace them completely with RDL's. See Figure 4.14 for a basic TM schedule with reduced Volume.

In-Season Volume/Intensity Ranges		
	Volume	Intensity
Fives	3 sets	1 set
Triples	3 to 5 sets	1 to 2 sets
Doubles	3 to 6 sets	1 to 3 sets

Figure 4.14

Athletes may opt to simply use the general theme of the TM instead of following a structured outline. The beginning of the week could be medium intensity with a little bit of volume while the end of the week has less volume and a bit more weight. It sounds wishy-washy, yet it has to be; the athlete will be beaten up, run down, and need to adjust the lifting to account for what is going on in the actual sport. One method is to arbitrarily pick **minimum weight goals**. If the athlete was routinely squatting around 500 pounds, he may opt to try and squat a minimum of 405 for a few sets in his workouts. An athlete can have the goal of hitting several sets of doubles or triples on the Volume-ish Day to get anywhere from six to fifteen reps while hitting fewer total reps for heavier weight on the Intensity-ish Day. The athlete could use this strategy and only train twice a week on top of his normal sport schedule. These same principles could apply to an experienced TM trainee who is either focusing on conditioning as a sub-goal, or wanting a reduction in work while maintaining strength.

The weekly template should change depending on the game schedule. No training should be done within 48 hours of a game, and no significant deadlifting should be done within four days (hence the option of regularly subbing RDLs for deadlift, although reduced load deadlifts are okay). Athletes should stay conservative with strength training around their games until they know how their body responds. They should ease into training a day or two after games. Athletes should also avoid training critical structures within a few days of a game. For example, hockey players wouldn't want to squat heavy before a game, and baseball or basketball players wouldn't want to press, bench, or do weighted chin-ups prior to a game.

The longer a season is, the harder it may be to keep the intensity higher on lifting days. Sports like rugby and football can be grueling on the body, and the athlete could shift into merely hitting a few sets of five around 70% twice a week to get the helpful accumulated work on their structures. Gym training would revolved around moderate lifting with the big strength lifts (squat, press, bench, deadlift/RDLs, chin-ups) and mobility work (stationary and movement-based). Shifting into this set-up in the middle or late season may be necessary to preserve the body for optimal in-game performance.

Late-Season Programming	
Monday	Thursday
Dynamic Warm-up	Dynamic Warm-up
Squat	Squat
Bench	Press
Deadlift	Rows
Mobility	Mobility
<i>All loads 70 to 85%</i>	

Figure 4.15

The late-season athlete should basically aim to get some work on his structures and stay mobile and healthy. He's no good to his team if he can't play and injury prevention starts early in the off-season and continues with persistent care of the body.

Conclusion

The Texas Method style of programming isn't always implemented correctly. I have talked with numerous folks who have been volume squat warriors and lack a proper Volume-Intensity discrepancy to the point of blunting the progress on other lifts. The TM has gotten a bad rap in some circles because of its perceived high volume or ineffectiveness. I hope this e-book has informed the reader on how the TM works, how to transition into it, how to tweak it for quality progress, and how to utilize it for some interesting sub-goals. The principles of training learned throughout this e-book can be applied into other forms of programming. The concepts of "proper stress doses to induce adaptation" and "manipulating volume and intensity" can be generalized to many other programs. There are countless other important programming lessons bolded throughout the text; heed these lessons when creating, changing, or maintaining a program.

There is still much more to the TM. We have taken it further from a standard strength progression or sub-goals and have used it to develop quality raw powerlifters and exceptionally strong athletes. Chris has squatted 644 and deadlifted 661 in competition. AC has squatted 534 and benched 380 in competition weighing around 212. Mike has squatted 551 and deadlifted 606 in competition. We have had competitive success – and will have continued success – by adapting the program as our athletes adapt. Part II of *The Texas Method* will discuss how an ordinary trainee can use it, outline the advanced tweaks for further progress, provide some educated guesses on how to push the programming down the road, provide case studies of different developing athletes on the TM, and a comprehensive exercise appendix complete with photos.

Part II of The Texas Method will be released soon and includes:

Chapter 5 – Programming for a Powerlifting Meet

How to use the TM to program and taper for a powerlifting meet.

Chapter 6 – Advancing

Advanced training techniques we have developed for experienced TM users to develop each lift – the same programming outlines that the previously mentioned lifters use.

Chapter 7 – ...And Beyond

Some ideas on how the advanced lifter will program their training based on observed data and discussion with other coaches.

Appendix A – Case Studies

Specific descriptions of five lifters and their TM training progressions from weak to strong.

Appendix B – Exercises

A comprehensive exercise listing with photos and descriptions for each lift. Attractive female included.

About the Author

Justin Lascek has a Bachelor's degree in Kinesiology with an emphasis in Exercise Science from Georgia Southern University. He has extensive experience coaching a variety of athletes ranging from high school to collegiate athletics, skinny and large guys, 12 year-olds to 70 year-olds, prime athletes to paraplegics, house moms to the military's special operations forces, powerlifters to weightlifters, and brindled puppies. He had a short stint playing collegiate football and qualified for and competed in the 2010 USA Weightlifting Senior National Championships. Justin is the writer and editor of 70sBig.com.

