

Wizard of Fitness

Training so effective it's like Magic!



Four Phase Training: Slow / High / Holds / and Heavy

The benefits of variety in training can be accentuated with a method that addresses the four primary modalities of strength, heavy weights, high reps, slow reps, and isometric holds. While these training techniques can be mixed and matched during any given workout, this approach dictates that all the exercises are done in that fashion and rotated through, according to the chosen Grid. A variation of this that can be experimented with is where the high rep and slow rep days are combined and blended, alternating one set done to high rep and the next done slowly (10 count positives and negatives... (See the Intensity Techniques PDF.)

All muscle fiber types and sub-cellular elements will be stimulated and developed for the best ultimate strength possible. Heavy training strengthens contractile proteins. High reps develop glycogen stores, plus mitochondrial function and number. Slow reps increase nerve conduction and capillary supply. Isometric Holds trains them all at those points where the muscle is working (plus about 10 degrees in either direction).

Keep track of your weights. Each time you come back to your Heavy phase, your numbers should increase by 5 to 10 percent for several weeks or more. Keep your cardio and your diet on track and then measure your lean-to-fat ratio as you get stronger, and enjoy also getting more ripped. It all works together.

Those unfamiliar with these techniques should do at least one rotation of each training style, independent of the muscle group arrangement.

Muscle Group	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Back	Slow	High	Holds	Heavy
Chest	Slow	High	Holds	Heavy
Legs	Slow	High	Holds	Heavy
Shoulders	Slow	High	Holds	Heavy

Grid 101

The order of the training styles can be modified. Each athlete can experiment to see what produces the best results. Novices do well to start with slow and progress to heavy.

Slow Reps

This technique sets the stage for good form and control, and will yield tremendous benefits in recruiting deep muscle fibers. Using 50 to 60 percent of your Heavy Day weights, do your reps with a slow motion 5 to 10 second positive and ten to twenty second negative.

Even as your Heavy Day weights increase you might stay with the same weights but increase the time from a ten count positive to fifteen, a twenty count negative to thirty. Keep the breath pumping the whole time, numerous breaths per rep. Time under tension will be equal to, or longer than, the High Rep sets.

High Reps

Endurance is a key component of strength and aids heavy training. Using about 70 percent of your Heavy Day weights, your reps should be somewhere between 20 and 50.

You might play this where as your Heavy weight goes up, you keep the High Rep weight the same push the reps up closer to fifty if they are not yet near that. In other words, tax the muscle with an increase in the rep range and time under tension. Then, as your Heavy Day weights go up again, increase your High Rep weight and repeat the process of increasing reps...

Isometric Holds

This technique consists of pausing with the weight in the bottom of a press and at the top of a pull (whatever the movement is, hold at the most difficult point). This technique really builds power that contributes to increasing max strength. They can also be added at points in the range of motion.

Using upwards of 80 percent of the Heavy Day weight, you should do 5 to 8 reps with a 5 to 10 count hold. As you get stronger, increase the pause time from five to ten, and even 15...

Heavy Day

The most important component of getting stronger is lifting relatively heavy weight. But to minimize risk of injury and to maximize overall power, heavy stimuli should be tempered by these other training styles. Then even heavy negatives can be tolerated in the rotation.

Anywhere from one to five reps is in this category. You might do 3 to 5 sets of 3 to 5 reps as a ballpark figure, depending on your fitness level and goals. The weights that you use here set the formula for the other training styles, as in what percentage of the Heavy Day weights are best for when going High Rep, Slow Rep, and Isometric Holds.

Periodization Grids

Muscle Group	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3
Back	High	Slow	Holds
Chest	Slow	Holds	High
Legs	Holds	High	Slow
Shoulders	High	Slow	Holds

Grid 201

The newer exerciser, or someone coming back from an injury, might choose to do several rotations of the three non-Heavy Day workouts and then add it in after a base of the other exercises styles has been established. Eventually, one maximal strength has been achieved, workouts can consist of a combination of each style.

Muscle Group	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3
Back	Heavy	Slow / High	Holds
Chest	Slow / High	Holds	Heavy
Legs	Holds	Heavy	Slow / High
Shoulders	Heavy	Slow / High	Holds

Grid 301

If a strength athlete wants to train heavy every third workout, the slow and high rep days can be combined, or alternated from one round to the next.

Muscle Group	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Back	Heavy	Slow	Holds	High
Chest	Slow	Heavy	High	Holds
Legs	High	Holds	Heavy	Slow
Shoulders	Holds	High	Slow	Heavy

Grid 401

More recovery between Heavy days can be achieved by separating Slow and High Rep days and experimenting with the different distribution pattern possibilities. copyright BrianPaulAllison.com©

Muscle Group	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Back	Heavy	Slow	High	Holds
Chest	Holds	Heavy	Slow	High
Legs	High	Holds	Heavy	Slow
Shoulders	Slow	High	Holds	Heavy

Grid 402

This rotation places isometric Holds prior to the Heavy day for each muscle group. It also spreads the Heavy days out with four workouts in between each.

Muscle Group	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Back	Slow	Holds	High	Heavy
Chest	Holds	High	Heavy	Slow
Legs	High	Heavy	Slow	Holds
Shoulders	Heavy	Slow	Holds	High

Grid 403

This plan separates the Holds and Heavy day and puts High reps prior to Heavy. It also compresses the Heavy days with only three days in between each over the course of the rotation. It eases into the arrangement and finishes with a big pump of the shoulders with high reps...

Other sequences can be used to determine optimal force production. Larger scale plans could methodically progress through each possibility.

This is also a moving target, depending on outside influences like how much sleep is aiding recuperation, fighting off colds and flu, social time constraints, other stressors and psychological factors. Take all these things into consideration and train accordingly. It is more important to keep the routine moving forward, hitting each muscle group at least once per week, and avoiding injury.

Training heavy too often can lead to over-training, like Louie Simmons of West Side Barbell preaches against the myth of simple progressive resistance. Accessory movements and complimentary techniques are what help athletes progress in power, speed, and metabolic optimization.

Create Your Own

Muscle Group	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4

Muscle Group	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3

As it says in the Upanishads of ancient India, *“You are what your deep, driving desire is. As your desire is, so is your will. As your will is, so is your deed. As your deed is, so is your destiny.”*

