

Taoist Power Lifting - Pavel Tsatsouline

Tension = Force: The tenser your muscles are, the more strength you display. It is that simple. Watch how the wiry muscles of a kick boxer stand out in sharp relief when a powerful kick makes its impact or how a gymnast's compact deltoids appear rock hard and almost inanimate as he executes a crucifix on the rings.

Force and tension are essentially the same thing. That is why **neurological, or 'bulk free'**, strength training can be summed up as acquiring the skill to generate more tension. "Skill is perhaps the most important element in strength," agrees strength researcher from California Prof. Thomas D. Fahey. To acquire that skill—and the super power that comes with it, not to mention the traffic-stopping muscle definition—you must maximize muscular tension in your training. High-tension training involves:

High-tension training has five key conditions:

- 1) slow exercise performance;
- 2) maximizing muscular tension, or 'flexing', regardless of the weight used;
- 3) employing heavy, 85-90% of one's maximum, weights at least some of the time;
- 4) minimizing fatigue;
- 5) taking advantage of various neurological phenomena.

Here is how you can minimize various types of fatigue and get the most out of your strength training:

- 1) limit the repetitions to five and fewer;
- 2) increase the rest intervals between sets to a duration of three to five minutes;
- 3) limit the number of sets to two;
- 4) pause and relax between reps;
- 5) do not practice a lift more than five times a week.

When you use dumbbells, you control the weight in 3-D. The barbell eliminates one degree of freedom: you cannot move your hands in or out on the bar until you let go of the weight. A machine restricts you to one plane of movement. Your stabilizing muscles get no workout because the machine is doing their job. When you get back to the real world where you have to control your weights, you will expose yourself to an injury in the planes of movement you have not strengthened. Besides, you will not be able to use most of your strength. Your nervous system will shove a brick under your gas pedal when it realizes that the stabilizing muscles are not up to the job. Using the strength built on an exercise machine is like shooting a cannon from a canoe! Movements that involve more than one joint form a kinetic chain. It is a natural way for your body to perform. When you push your car out of a ditch you do not try to isolate your quads and limit the movement to your knee joints. No, your quads, hamstrings, glutes, and calves work as a team and many joints are involved: the ankles, the knees, and the hips. Your nervous system develops coordination to manage that tram of muscles. This inter-muscular coordination is one of the main factors determining how strong you are when you lift a barbell or move your refrigerator. "How can anyone expect to possess co-ordination in active work when his muscles have never worked together in groups?" asks incredulous Earle Liederman in his 1924-book *Muscle Building*.

There are two types of muscle growth. Myofibrillar hypertrophy, or 'real' muscle growth, is an enlargement of the muscle fiber as it gains more myofibrils, things, which contract and generate tension. The muscle gets stronger and harder. Myofibrillar hypertrophy is accomplished by training with heavy weights.

Step Cycle

Workout Number	1st set Weight x	reps	2nd set Weight x	reps
1	80	x	70	x
2	80	x	70	x
3	85	x	75	x
4	85	x	75	x
5	90	x	80	x
6	90	x	80	x
7	95	x	85	x
8	95	x	85	x
9	100	x	90	x
10	100	x	90	x
11	100	x	90	x
12	100	x	95	x
13	105	x	95	x
14	110	x	100	x
15	110	x	100	x
16	115	x	105	x

Let's start with irradiation. You can milk this phenomenon for all its strength amplifying worth by intentionally even more muscles into play. Simply squeeze the barbell hard on all upper body exercises and flex your abs and glutes on all lifts! Enter hyper irradiation, a high intensity technique that delivers a no delayed gratification strength boost. Powerlifters whom I taught this deceptively simple move report a typical increase of ten pounds on their bench press the first time they try it!

- **squeeze the weight as if you are trying to crush it to pulp;**
- **squeeze your glutes as if pinching a coin with them;**
- **tighten your abs as if bracing for a punch.**

You will have an easier time integrating your abs and glutes into the action if you follow this advice of the late

karate great Masatoshi Nakayama: "For strength and stability, it is necessary to have the feeling that the line connecting the navel and the anus is short as possible.

The Power to the People! Lifts are slow—about three to five seconds to lift, same to lower—because maximal tension of all the musculature emulates a maximal lift which usually takes that long. There is no need to time yourself. Full body tension will take care of slowing you down. Try moving fast when all your muscles are flexed—you just cannot! Compared to Super Slow, or any other exercise protocol for that matter, The Power to the People! program produces superior results because it allows the highest levels of tension, full body involvement, and employs heaviest weights. In fairness to Hutchins he makes many excellent points, especially regarding strict exercise performance, and his protocol has some bodybuilding and rehab applications. When you are squatting going down to grip the bar, your body should feel very tight. Visualize loading a very tight spring. Skinny Lamar Gant, who has dead lifted five times his bodyweight, pound for pound more than anyone in the world, swears by this technique. Grip the bar with an alternate grip. It means one palm is facing forward, and the other one back. This weird move will help you to hold on to the bar better when the weights get heavy. If you have ever taken a self-defense class, you know that one thumb is weaker than four fingers. That is why you were taught to push against the assailant's thumbs to break his grip around your wrists. The weight should be deliberately 'squeezed' off the floor for safe and effective dead lift performance. Your knees should point in the same direction your feet are pointing at all times. Do not let them buckle in, which could be hard on your knee ligaments? Consciously keep your knees pointed forward throughout the lift. You may even have to think of pushing them out to keep them straight! You have heard it before: keep you abs and glutes tight! Make a point that you keep you back locked at all times and keep your weight on your heels. If you are still looking at the ceiling, or far in front of you, like you should, it should not be a problem. But never twist or turn your neck when dead lifting! You are almost guaranteed a trip to a chiropractor if your do.

Dead lift Highlights:

- **Stay on your heels**
- **Keep your back arched**
- **Never took down**
- **Stay 'tight' and hold your air when lifting**

There are dozens of pressing movements: the bench-press, the parallel bar dip, the incline dumbbell press. The old-fashioned **side press** is the press of choice for the exclusive Power to the People! Program for seven reasons:

1. **The side press requires full body action and gives a great workout to the stabilizing muscles of the midsection, it is a long time favorite of Russian weightlifters;**
2. **The side press requires that you to lift a seven-foot bar with one arm, therefore it give a great workout to the gripping and various stabilizing muscles;**
3. **The side press is a lot easier to learn than, say, a proper two arm military press;**
4. **The side press teaches good habits for overhead lifting, which come in handy in everyday life;**
5. **The side press places the shoulder in the position of external rotation, which enhances workout safety and strengthens the rotator cuff muscles;**
6. **The side press encourages the use of the lats, 'the armpit muscles', to stabilize the shoulder joint, a measure that greatly increases training safety and longevity;**
7. **The side press requires no spotters or any additional equipment like benches or racks.**

Now, instead of pushing the barbell, push yourself away from the bar. This secret visualization prevents your shoulder from rising prematurely, losing power, and getting hurt. Push away slightly sideways, so your body will lean away slightly. This move will give a great workout to your side muscles: lats, obliques, etc., and will enable you handle more weight. Leaning sideways also discourages leaning back, which is a no-no!

Avoid any twisting when you lean! Try to keep your lats, or 'armpit muscles' tight. When you have locked out your arm, let out some air and relax a little. Do not overdo it; you might expose your back or shoulder to an injury. Inhale again, crush the barbell, and actively pull the bar down with your elbow, as if you are trying to break a brick with it. Successive induction boosts your strength and does a lot to protect your shoulder.