The KSC Method for RAW Power Lifting

The following program is a simple 7-week repeatable cycle that can be used for competitive or non-competitive power lifting training. The program can also be used for competitive or non-competitive strength lifting training which is similar to power lifting but consists of the Squat, Deadlift, and Overhead Press instead of the Bench Press as the focus lifts of the program.

Whether you choose to prioritize power lifting or strength lifting, you can still effectively train and progress both the Bench Press and Overhead Press if progress on both lifts is important to you.

The program is set up to be a 4-day per week program, but it can be manipulated into a 3-day per week program if you feel you need an extra day of recovery each week or if scheduling issues prevent you from getting to the gym 4 days per week.

Over the course of the program you will do a combination of very heavy training on all the competitive lifts in the 1-3 rep range, at or above 90% of 1RM. You will also be exposed to high volume loading in the 75-85% range on all the competitive lifts. Additionally, on certain weeks you will be prescribed to perform certain variations of the competitive lifts for a moderate volume and intensity scheme to help you build muscle mass and work on weak points.

However, the key to making this work is that not all of these methods are used every week for every lift. Attempting to do so will lead to burn out and overtraining.

Over the course of 7-weeks there will be a cycling of volume, intensity, and exercise selection that will leave you feeling fresh at every training session so that you can attack the volume and intensity workouts with vigor and focus.

The first 6 weeks of the program are your “loading weeks” where we will build up your capacity on all your competitive lifts and some key assistance lifts and in Week 7 you will sharply deload from both volume and intensity and all assistance work. If you have a competition planned, you will insert the meet onto the end of Week 7. If you do not have a competition planned then you will continue to rest and train with light workouts and then start the program all over again the following week.

This is a tried and true program and you do not need to adjust training percentages or exercise selection, except for maybe on some of the non-essential assistance movements I recommend.

You will be provided templates to follow for competitive training and non-competitive training as the insertion of a meet into Week 7 will heavily influence how you re-start the subsequent training cycle.

Let’s get started!
**Squat Training**

As with any good training program, your success or lack thereof, is largely predicated on squat performance. Not only is the squat 1/3 of your total in a power lifting or strength lifting meet, but it also drives your performance on the deadlift.

It is very important that all of your intensity day and volume day workouts be done with the exact style of squat that you will use in competition. The preferred method is the low-bar back squat as described in *Starting Strength: Basic Barbell Training*. If you cannot low-bar squat due to age or old injury then a high bar back squat will have to suffice, but low-bar is superior in terms of weight that can be lifted and the amount of muscle mass you can train.

Three times during the cycle you will be prescribed “light squats” in the 60-70% range. These are moderate in load and volume and are simply used to “grease the groove” and maintain your squat form on lower body workouts where we are more focused on the deadlift. However, if you feel you don’t need to “grease the groove” of your competition squat form then you can substitute light squats with a variation of the squat. Acceptable substitutes include the front squat, the pause squat, pin squats, box squats, or squats with a specialty bar such as a safety squat bar or cambered bar. Different variations of the squat can be used to help strengthen weak points in your lift or simply introduce some variety into the programming in order to break up the monotony.

My recommendation is that less experienced lifters use the basic “light squat” to practice their technique and that more experienced lifters who don’t have any significant technique issues can select a variation of the squat that helps to strengthen a weak point in their lifts. However, the first time through the program I recommend everyone simply do the light squat instead of a squat variation.

If you choose a variation of the squat for your light day, you will do so with an equivalent volume to what is prescribed in the program, but the percentages will not apply.

For example, if a light squat is prescribed for 3x5@60% and you choose a paused box squat as a substitution then you will simply select a load that can be done for 3 sets of 5 reps without any missed reps. If you don’t know how to select an appropriate load “on the fly” then you probably just need to stick to light squats at the prescribed percentages. Additionally, you can tweak the set/rep range to fit the movement. So if front squats are chosen for your light day, you might just do 3-5 sets of 3 reps rather than 5 reps as triples are more appropriate for front squats than are sets of 5 due to the difficulty of keeping a heavy front squat racked for a prolonged period of time.

**Deadlift Training**

The deadlift will follow a similar cycle as the squats for high intensity workouts (1-3 reps at or above 90% of 1RM) but there will not be a dedicated high volume deadlift workout. You will be dependent on the stress created by your high volume squat workout to help move your deadlifts along. Instead we will use a series of back off sets following your high intensity deadlift sessions as well as variations of the deadlift following some of your squat workouts.

Recovery from deadlifts tends to be a somewhat individualized factor and not everyone can necessarily perform the same volume of deadlifts during the training cycle. You will have to use a little bit of
instinct, experience, and common sense to decipher how much of the deadlift volume you want to try and do. It is recommended that you do the maximum amount of work you are capable of during each 6 week loading block as it will make the effects of the week 7 deload all that much more effective.

**Bench Press & Overhead Press Training**

The Bench Press and Overhead Press follow a very similar cycle to the Squat for volume and intensity work.

If you are competing for power lifting then all volume work will be done with the bench press. On intensity days you will bench press at 90% or above every other week. On alternate weeks you will select a bench press variation such as a close grip bench press to use for your heavy lifts OR you can train the press heavy on these days if you still want some focus on that lift. The template I prescribe here uses the close grip bench press on alternate days of the bench press for the powerlifting program.

Overhead presses are used for assistance work after your volume benches.

If you are competing in strength lifting, then all volume work will be done with the overhead press. On intensity days you will train the press at 90% or above every other week and on alternate weeks it is suggested that you train either the bench press or incline bench press as your other heavy lift on alternate weeks from the overhead press.

There will also be a mix of some targeted higher rep back off sets and some assistance exercises for you to choose from. These will help to build muscle mass and address weak points in your lift, especially the triceps which play a major role in benching or overhead pressing.

**How to Start the Program**

Often, when a trainee starts a new program it is because they are burnt out or overtrained from a previous program they were using that was not yielding results. If this is the case with you, it is suggested that you take 1-2 light weeks in the gym prior to starting this program. Simply train a light full body workout twice per week with a moderate volume and load (ex: 3x5@70%) for the squat and the bench press or overhead press and a single set of 5 deadlifts. This should allow some fatigue to dissipate from your system without letting yourself completely detrain.

If you have not been training or have not been training consistently then you can start the program as prescribed when you are ready.
4-Day Per Week – Power Lifting Focus

Week One

Monday – Bench Intensity / Testing

1. Bench Press – work up to a 1-rep max on the bench press. Try and avoid missed reps if possible. Once you achieve your max single for the day, move on to exercise 2.
2. Flat or Incline Dumbbell Bench Press: 3-5 sets of 8-10 reps. Rest 2-3 minutes between sets, use a full range of motion.

Tuesday – Squat Intensity / Testing

1. Back Squat – work up to a 1-rep max on the squat. Try and avoid missed reps if possible. Once you achieve your max single for the day, move on to exercise 2
2. Rack Pull – work up to a conservative set of 5 reps. Rest 3-5 minutes, deload the bar by 10% and perform a second set of 8-10 reps
3. Barbell Rows 3-5 sets of 8-10. Rest 2-3 minutes between sets.

Thursday – Bench Press Volume

1. Bench Press – after warm ups, perform 5 x 5 @ 75% of Monday’s 1RM. Rest as needed between sets to complete the volume
2. Overhead Press – after warm ups perform 3 sets of 6-8 reps + 1 set of 10-12 reps
3. Tricep Extensions – 3-5 sets of 10-15 reps

Friday – Squat Volume

1. Back Squat – after warm ups, perform 5 x 5 @ 75% of Monday’s 1RM. Rest as needed between sets to complete the volume
2. Stiff Leg Deadlift – 2-3 sets of 6 reps.
3. Chin Ups or Pull Ups – 3-5 sets of max reps or Pulldowns 3-5 sets of 8-10

Week Two

Monday – Bench Intensity

1. Close Grip Bench Press – work up to a 1-rep max on the close grip bench press. Try and avoid missed reps if possible. Once you achieve your max single for the day, then perform 3 sets of 5-8 reps at 75% of 1RM and 1 set of 8-12 reps at 60% of 1RM. Rest as needed between sets
2. Dips - 5 sets of max reps (aim for minimum of 25 total reps)
Tuesday – Deadlift Intensity / Testing

1. Light Squat – 3 x 5 @ 60% of 1RM
2. Deadlifts – work up to a 1-rep max on the deadlift. Try and avoid missed reps if possible. Once you achieve your max single for the day perform a set for maximal reps at 75% of 1RM. You may use lifting straps for the back off set.
3. One Arm DB Rows or Seated Rows 3-5 sets of 8-10. Rest 2-3 minutes between sets.

Thursday – Bench Press Volume

1. Bench Press – after warm ups, perform 5 x 4 or 4 x 5 @ 80% of your week 1 1RM. Rest as needed between sets to complete the volume
2. Overhead Press – after warm ups perform 3 sets of 5-7 reps + 1 set of 10-12 reps
3. Tricep Extensions – 3-5 sets of 10-15 reps

Friday – Squat Volume

1. Back Squat – after warm ups, perform 5 x 4 or 4 x 5 @ 80% of Monday’s 1RM. Rest as needed between sets to complete the volume
2. Stiff Leg Deadlift – 2-3 sets of 5 reps.
3. Chin Ups or Pull Ups – 3-5 sets of max reps or Pulldowns 3-5 sets of 8-10

Week Three

Monday – Bench Intensity

1. Bench Press – after warm ups, perform 3 x 3 or 4 x 2 @ 90% of your week 1 1RM. Rest as needed between sets to complete the volume
2. Flat or Incline Dumbbell Bench Press: 3-5 sets of 8-10 reps. Rest 2-3 minutes between sets, use a full range of motion.

Tuesday – Squat Intensity

1. Back Squat – after warm ups, perform 3 x 3 or 4 x 2 @ 90% of your week 1 1RM. Rest as needed between sets to complete the volume
2. Rack Pull – perform a set of 5 reps with 5-20 lbs more than you used in week 1. Deload the bar by 10% and perform a set of 8-10 reps.
3. Barbell Rows 3-5 sets of 8-10. Rest 2-3 minutes between sets.

Thursday – Bench Press Volume

1. Bench Press – after warm ups, perform 5 x 3 (5 sets of 3) or 4 x 4 @ 85% of your week 1 1RM. Rest as needed between sets to complete the volume
2. Overhead Press – after warm ups perform 3 sets of 4-6 reps + 1 set of 10-12 reps
3. Tricep Extensions – 3-5 sets of 10-15 reps
**Friday – Squat Volume**

1. Back Squat – after warm ups, perform 5 x 3 or 4 x 4 @ 85% of your week 1 1RM. Rest as needed between sets to complete the volume.
2. Stiff Leg Deadlift – 2-3 sets of 4 reps.
3. Chin Ups or Pull Ups – 3-5 sets of max reps or Pulldowns 3-5 sets of 8-10

**Week Four**

**Monday – Bench Intensity**

1. Close Grip Bench Press – after warm ups, perform 3 sets of 2-3 reps with 90% of your week two 1RM. Then back off to 80% of 1RM and perform 1 set of max reps. Then back off to 65% and perform 1 set of max reps. (Example: 1RM = 275. 3x3x250, 1xMaxRepsx220, 1xMaxRepsx180) Rest as needed between sets.
2. Dips - 5 sets of max reps (aim for minimum of 25 total reps)

**Tuesday – Deadlift Intensity**

1. Light Squat – 3 x 5 @ 65% of 1RM
2. Deadlifts – after warm ups, perform one max set at 90% of your week 2 1RM (2-4 reps). Then, deload the bar to 80% of 1RM and perform a second max set of 5-8 reps. Rest as needed between sets.
3. One Arm DB Rows or Seated Rows 3-5 sets of 8-10. Rest 2-3 minutes between sets.

**Thursday – Bench Press Volume**

1. Bench Press – after warm ups, perform 5 x 6 @ 75% of your week 1 1RM. Rest as needed between sets to complete the volume (5 sets, 6 reps)
4. Overhead Press – after warm ups perform 3 sets of 6-8 reps + 1 set of 10-12 reps. Try and beat what you previously did for 6-8 reps in week 1 by either adding weight or adding reps.
5. Tricep Extensions – 3-5 sets of 10-15 reps

**Friday – Squat Volume**

1. Back Squat – after warm ups, perform 5 x 6 @ 75% of your week 1 1RM. Rest as needed between sets to complete the volume.
3. Chin Ups or Pull Ups – 3-5 sets of max reps or Pulldowns 3-5 sets of 8-10
**Week Five**

**Monday – Bench Intensity**

1. Bench Press – after warm ups, perform 3 x 2 or 6 x 1 @ 95% of your week 1 1RM. Rest as needed between sets to complete the volume
2. Flat or Incline Dumbbell Bench Press: 3-5 sets of 8-10 reps. Rest 2-3 minutes between sets, use a full range of motion.

**Tuesday – Squat Intensity**

1. Back Squat – after warm ups, perform 3 x 2 or 6 x 1 @ 95% of your week 1 1RM. Rest as needed between sets to complete the volume (3 sets of 2 or 6 sets of 1)
2. Rack Pull – perform a set of 5 reps with 5-20 lbs more than you used in week 3. Deload the bar by 10% and perform a set of 8-10 reps.
3. Barbell Rows 3-5 sets of 8-10. Rest 2-3 minutes between sets.

**Thursday – Bench Press Volume**

1. Bench Press – after warm ups, perform 5 x 5 or 6 x 4 @ 80% of your week 1 1RM. Rest as needed between sets to complete the volume (5 sets of 5 or 6 sets of 4)
2. Overhead Press – after warm ups perform 3 sets of 5-7 reps + 1 set of 10-12 reps. Try and beat what you did in week 2 for sets of 5-7 by either adding weight or adding reps.
3. Tricep Extensions – 3-5 sets of 10-15 reps

**Friday – Squat Volume**

1. Back Squat – after warm ups, perform 5 x 5 or 6 x 4 @ 80% of your week 1 1RM. Rest as needed between sets to complete the volume
2. Stiff Leg Deadlift – 2-3 sets of 5 reps. Try and beat what you did in week 2 for sets of 5 reps.
3. Chin Ups or Pull Ups – 3-5 sets of max reps or Pulldowns 3-5 sets of 8-10

**Week Six**

**Monday – Bench Intensity**

1. Close Grip Bench Press – after warm ups, perform 3 x 2 reps or 6 x 1 with 95% of your week two 1RM. Then back off to 85% of 1RM and perform 1 set of max reps. Then back off to 70% and perform 1 set of max reps. (Example: 1RM = 275. 3x2x260, 1xMaxRepsx235, 1xMaxRepsx190) Rest as needed between sets
3. Dips - 5 sets of max reps (aim for minimum of 25 total reps)
**Tuesday – Deadlift Intensity**

1. Light Squat – 3 x 5 @ 70% of 1RM
2. Deadlifts – after warm ups, perform one max set at 95% of your week 2 1RM (2-3 reps). Then, deload the bar to 85% of 1RM and perform a second max set of 3-6 reps. Rest as needed between sets.
3. One Arm DB Rows or Seated Rows 3-5 sets of 8-10. Rest 2-3 minutes between sets.

**Thursday – Bench Press Volume**

1. Bench Press – after warm ups, perform 5 x 4 or 6 x 3 @ 85% of your week 1 1RM. Rest as needed between sets to complete the volume (5 sets of 4 or 6 sets of 3)
2. Overhead Press – after warm ups perform 3 sets of 3-5 reps + 1 set of 10-12 reps.
3. Tricep Extensions – 3-5 sets of 10-15 reps

**Friday – Squat Volume**

1. Back Squat – after warm ups, perform 5 x 4 or 6 x 3 @ 85% of your week 1 1RM. Rest as needed between sets to complete the volume.
5. Chin Ups or Pull Ups – 3-5 sets of max reps or Pulldowns 3-5 sets of 8-10

**Week 7 (Reload + Power Lifting Meet)**

**Tuesday – Squat & Bench Deload**

1. Back Squat 3 x 3 @ 75% of 1RM
2. Bench Press 3 x 3 @ 75% of 1RM

**Saturday – MEET**

Recommended Meet Strategy:
   a. Attempt #1: Open with 90%-95% of your week one 1RM
   b. Attempt #2: Attempt a 5% increase from your week one 1RM (est. 10-20 lbs)
   c. Attempt #3: Attempt an increase from Attempt #2 based on feel (est. 5-20 lbs)

**Week 7 Deload (No Meet)**

**Tuesday – Squat & Bench Deload**

1. Back Squat 3 x 3 @ 70% of 1RM
2. Bench Press 3 x 3 @ 70% of 1RM

**Friday – Squat, Bench, Deadlift Deload**

1. Back Squat 3 x 3 @ 75% of 1RM
2. Bench Press 3 x 3 @ 75% of 1RM
3. Deadlift 1 x 3 @ 75% of 1RM
Post Meet Note

If you want to restart the training cycle immediately following your power lifting meet, then you can skip the testing days altogether in week 1. Take 3-4 days of complete rest following your meet and resume training on Thursday and Friday with your volume workouts for Bench & Squat at 75%.

In Week 2 you can skip the Deadlift 1RM attempt on Tuesday and simply perform the volume work at 1 set of max reps @75% as prescribed.

All % work in your immediate post meet training cycle will be based off your best lifts at the meet.

4-Day Per Week – Strength Lifting Focus

(Squat & Deadlift workouts are the same as the Power Lifting Program)

Week One

Monday – Overhead Press Intensity / Testing

1. Overhead Press – work up to a 1-rep max on the overhead press. Try and avoid missed reps if possible. Once you achieve your max single for the day, move on to exercise 2.
2. Seated Dumbbell Press: 3-5 sets of 8-10 reps. Rest 2-3 minutes between sets, use a full range of motion.

Tuesday – Squat Intensity / Testing

1. Back Squat – work up to a 1-rep max on the squat. Try and avoid missed reps if possible. Once you achieve your max single for the day, move on to exercise 2
2. Rack Pull – work up to a conservative set of 5 reps. Rest 3-5 minutes, deload the bar by 10% and perform a second set of 8-10 reps
3. Barbell Rows 3-5 sets of 8-10. Rest 2-3 minutes between sets.

Thursday – Overhead Press Volume

1. Overhead Press – after warm ups, perform 5 x 5 @ 75% of Monday’s 1RM. Rest as needed between sets to complete the volume
2. Close Grip Bench Press – after warm ups perform 3 sets of 6-8 reps + 1 set of 10-12 reps
3. Tricep Extensions – 3-5 sets of 10-15 reps

Friday – Squat Volume

1. Back Squat – after warm ups, perform 5 x 5 @ 75% of Monday’s 1RM. Rest as needed between sets to complete the volume
2. Stiff Leg Deadlift – 2-3 sets of 6 reps.
3. Chin Ups or Pull Ups – 3-5 sets of max reps or Pulldowns 3-5 sets of 8-10

**Week Two**

**Monday – Bench Press Intensity**

1. Incline Bench Press – work up to a 1-rep max on the incline bench press. Try and avoid missed reps if possible. Once you achieve your max single for the day, then perform 3 sets of 5-8 reps at 75% of 1RM and 1 set of 8-12 reps at 60% of 1RM. Rest as needed between sets
2. Dips - 5 sets of max reps (aim for minimum of 25 total reps)

**Tuesday – Deadlift Intensity / Testing**

1. Light Squat – 3 x 5 @ 60% of 1RM
2. Deadlifts – work up to a 1-rep max on the deadlift. Try and avoid missed reps if possible. Once you achieve your max single for the day perform 1 set of max reps at 75% of 1RM. You may use lifting straps for the back off set
3. One Arm DB Rows or Seated Rows 3-5 sets of 8-10. Rest 2-3 minutes between sets.

**Thursday – Overhead Press Volume**

1. Overhead Press – after warm ups, perform 5 x 4 or 4 x 5 @ 80% of your week 1 1RM. Rest as needed between sets to complete the volume
2. Close Grip Bench Press – after warm ups perform 3 sets of 5-7 reps + 1 set of 10-12 reps
3. Tricep Extensions – 3-5 sets of 10-15 reps

**Friday – Squat Volume**

1. Back Squat – after warm ups, perform 5 x 4 or 4 x 5 @ 80% of your week 1 1RM. Rest as needed between sets to complete the volume
2. Stiff Leg Deadlift – 2-3 sets of 5 reps.
3. Chin Ups or Pull Ups – 3-5 sets of max reps or Pulldowns 3-5 sets of 8-10

**Week Three**

**Monday – Overhead Press Intensity**

1. Overhead Press – after warm ups, perform 3 x 3 or 4 x 2 @ 90% of your week 1 1RM. Rest as needed between sets to complete the volume
2. Seated Dumbbell Press: 3-5 sets of 8-10 reps. Rest 2-3 minutes between sets, use a full range of motion.
Tuesday – Squat Intensity

1. Back Squat – after warm ups, perform 3 x 3 or 4 x 2 @ 90% of your week 1 1RM. Rest as needed between sets to complete the volume
2. Rack Pull – perform a set of 5 reps with 5-20 lbs more than you used in week 1. Deload the bar by 10% and perform a set of 8-10 reps.
3. Barbell Rows 3-5 sets of 8-10. Rest 2-3 minutes between sets.

Thursday – Overhead Press Volume

1. Overhead Press – after warm ups, perform 5 x 3 or 4 x 4 @ 85% of your week 1 1RM. Rest as needed between sets to complete the volume
2. Close Grip Bench Press – after warm ups perform 3 sets of 4-6 reps + 1 set of 10-12 reps
3. Tricep Extensions – 3-5 sets of 10-15 reps

Friday – Squat Volume

1. Back Squat – after warm ups, perform 5 x 3 or 4 x 4 @ 85% of Monday’s 1RM. Rest as needed between sets to complete the volume
2. Stiff Leg Deadlift – 2-3 sets of 4 reps.
3. Chin Ups or Pull Ups – 3-5 sets of max reps or Pulldowns 3-5 sets of 8-10

Week Four

Monday – Bench Intensity

1. Incline Bench Press – after warm ups, perform 3 sets of 2-3 reps with 90% of your week two 1RM. Then back off to 80% of 1RM and perform 1 set of max reps. Then back off to 65% and perform 1 set of max reps. (Example: 1RM = 275. 3x3x250, 1xMaxRepsx220, 1xMaxRepsx180) Rest as needed between sets
2. Dips - 5 sets of max reps (aim for minimum of 25 total reps)

Tuesday – Deadlift Intensity

1. Light Squat – 3 x 5 @ 65% of 1RM
2. Deadlifts – after warm ups, perform one max set at 90% of your week 2 1RM (2-4 reps). Then, deload the bar to 80% of 1RM and perform a second max set of 5-8 reps. Rest as needed between sets.
3. One Arm DB Rows or Seated Rows 3-5 sets of 8-10. Rest 2-3 minutes between sets.

Thursday – Overhead Press Volume

1. Overhead Press – after warm ups, perform 5 x 6 @ 75% of your week 1 1RM. Rest as needed between sets to complete the volume (5 sets, 6 reps)
2. Close Grip Bench Press – after warm ups perform 3 sets of 6-8 reps + 1 set of 10-12 reps. Try and beat what you previously did for 6-8 reps in week 1 by either adding weight or adding reps.
3. Tricep Extensions – 3-5 sets of 10-15 reps
Friday – Squat Volume

1. Back Squat – after warm ups, perform 5 x 6 @ 75% of your week 1 1RM. Rest as needed between sets to complete the volume.
3. Chin Ups or Pull Ups – 3-5 sets of max reps or Pulldowns 3-5 sets of 8-10

Week Five

Monday – Overhead Press Intensity

1. Overhead Press – after warm ups, perform 3 x 2 or 6 x 1 @ 95% of your week 1 1RM. Rest as needed between sets to complete the volume.
2. Seated Dumbbell Press: 3-5 sets of 8-10 reps. Rest 2-3 minutes between sets, use a full range of motion.

Tuesday – Squat Intensity

1. Back Squat – after warm ups, perform 3 x 2 or 6 x 1 @ 95% of your week 1 1RM. Rest as needed between sets to complete the volume (3 sets of 2 or 6 sets of 1)
2. Rack Pull – perform a set of 5 reps with 5-20 lbs more than you used in week 3. Deload the bar by 10% and perform a set of 8-10 reps.
3. Barbell Rows 3-5 sets of 8-10. Rest 2-3 minutes between sets.

Thursday – Overhead Press Volume

1. Overhead Press – after warm ups, perform 5 x 5 or 6 x 4 @ 80% of your week 1 1RM. Rest as needed between sets to complete the volume.
2. Close Grip Bench Press – after warm ups perform 3 sets of 5-7 reps + 1 set of 10-12 reps. Try and beat what you did in week 2 for sets of 5-7 by either adding weight or adding reps.
3. Tricep Extensions – 3-5 sets of 10-15 reps

Friday – Squat Volume

1. Back Squat – after warm ups, perform 5 x 5 or 6 x 4 @ 80% of Monday’s 1RM. Rest as needed between sets to complete the volume.
2. Stiff Leg Deadlift – 2-3 sets of 5 reps. Try and beat what you did in week 2 for sets of 5 reps.
3. Chin Ups or Pull Ups – 3-5 sets of max reps or Pulldowns 3-5 sets of 8-10
Week Six

Monday – Bench Intensity

1. Incline Bench Press – after warm ups, perform 3 x 2 reps or 6 x 1 with 95% of your week two 1RM. Then back off to 85% of 1RM and perform 1 set of max reps. Then back off to 70% and perform 1 set of max reps. (Example: 1RM = 275. 3x2x260, 1xMaxRepsx235, 1xMaxRepsx190)
   Rest as needed between sets
2. Dips - 5 sets of max reps (aim for minimum of 25 total reps)

Tuesday – Deadlift Intensity

1. Light Squat – 3 x 5 @ 70% of 1RM
2. Deadlifts – after warm ups, perform one max set at 95% of your week 2 1RM (2-3 reps). Then, deload the bar to 85% of 1RM and perform a second max set of 3-6 reps. Rest as needed between sets.
3. One Arm DB Rows or Seated Rows 3-5 sets of 8-10. Rest 2-3 minutes between sets.

Thursday – Overhead Press Volume

1. Overhead Press – after warm ups, perform 5 x 4 or 6 x 3 @ 85% of your week 1 1RM. Rest as needed between sets to complete the volume (5 sets of 4 or 6 sets of 3)
2. Close Grip Bench Press – after warm ups perform 3 sets of 3-5 reps + 1 set of 10-12 reps.
3. Tricep Extensions – 3-5 sets of 10-15 reps

Friday – Squat Volume

1. Back Squat – after warm ups, perform 5 x 4 or 6 x 3 @ 85% of your week 1 1RM. Rest as needed between sets to complete the volume.
3. Chin Ups or Pull Ups – 3-5 sets of max reps or Pulldowns 3-5 sets of 8-10

Week 7 (Deload + Strength Lifting Meet)

Tuesday – Squat & Overhead Press Deload

1. Back Squat 3 x 3 @ 75% of 1RM
2. Overhead Press 3 x 3 @ 75% of 1RM

Saturday - MEET

Recommended Meet Strategy:
   d. Attempt #1: Open with 90%-95% of your week one 1RM
   e. Attempt #2: Attempt a 5% increase from your week one 1RM (est. 10-20 lbs)
   f. Attempt #3: Attempt an increase from Attempt #2 based on feel (est. 5-20 lbs)
Week 7 Deload (No Meet)

Tuesday – Squat & Overhead Press Deload

1. Back Squat 3 x 3 @ 70% of 1RM
2. Overhead Press 3 x 3 @ 70% of 1RM

Friday – Squat, Overhead Press, Deadlift Deload

1. Back Squat 3 x 3 @ 75% of 1RM
2. Overhead Press 3 x 3 @ 75% of 1RM
3. Deadlift 1 x 3 @ 75% of 1RM

Post Meet Note

If you want to restart the training cycle immediately following your strength lifting meet, then you can skip the testing days altogether in week 1. Take 3-4 days of complete rest following your meet and resume training on Thursday and Friday with your volume workouts for Press & Squat at 75%.

In Week 2 you can skip the Deadlift 1RM attempt on Tuesday and simply perform the volume work for 1 set of max reps @75% as prescribed.

All % work in your immediate post meet training cycle will be based off your best lifts at the meet

(FAQs on the following page)........
FAQs About the Program

How do I determine what weights to use for the Dumbbell Pressing exercises? (flat and incline press, seated press, etc)

I prefer to do 1 light warm up set just to get the stretch at the bottom of the exercise and get a feel for the movement. Then I attempt my heaviest set that reaches failure or near failure in the 8-10 range. Following that movement I recommend you rest only 2-3 movements and perform descending sets where you will lower the weight slightly from set to set to keep reps in the 8-10 range. If your heaviest set achieves at least 10 reps then go up in weight the next time you do this movement. Using a sets across approach with DB exercises (same weight for every set) will generally result in you using a weight that is too light to maintain your rep range, or will lead to your last set falling way too short of your target rep range, or will require you to rest way too long between sets to achieve your desired rep range on all your sets.

For Triceps Extensions – what exact exercise should I use?

I recommend you rotate through a handful of different exercises each time you train triceps. Performing the same exercises at each workout will lead to stagnation and even inflammation in the elbow. Good choices are: lying triceps extensions with an ez-curl bar, lying triceps extension with dumbbells, overhead triceps extensions with an ez-curl bar, overhead triceps extensions (single arm) with a dumbbell, cable pressdowns, or any assortment of triceps machines available to you.

Where should I set up the bar for Rack Pulls?

I prefer just a few inches below the knee. I also recommend that you use a double overhand grip with a pair of lifting straps for this exercise. Generally you can Rack Pull 5-10% more than you can deadlift, but this varies from lifter to lifter. If this exercise is new to you, you may not Rack Pull much more than you Deadlift.

Any tips for Stiff Leg Deadlifts?

Begin with the bar on the ground like a regular deadlift. You will pull each rep from a dead stop just like a regular deadlift. Allow a very slight bend in your knees. These are NOT “straight” leg deadlifts. If you are fairly flexible you can stand on a 2-4 inch platform for extended range of motion and extra work on the hamstrings. I prefer double overhand grip with straps on these as well. Weight will generally be 20-30% less than your regular deadlift but you may have to experiment to find the appropriate load, especially if you are new to this exercise.

Where should my hands be for Close Grip Bench Press?

I prefer that your index finger be on the line where the knurling of the barbell meets the smooth part of the barbell. It’s about 16 inches apart on most bars. Be sure and use a spotter
for close grips or set the pins up in your rack for safety. Close grips can die out rather unexpectedly due to tricep fatigue.

**Do I have to do my light squats before I deadlift?**

No. You can perform your light squats after deadlifts if you prefer, however, if you are competing then it is a good idea to condition yourself to deadlifting after you squat.

**How should I perform the Barbell Rows?**

Whatever style is comfortable to you. Immediately after Rack Pulls it can save time to just strip a bunch of weight off the barbell and do your rows from the pins in the rack from the same height you rack pulled from. Use very strict form. Keep your low back locked into extension and pull the barbell into the lower part of your belly. Practice pulling from your lats and not your arms. I recommend double overhand grip with straps for these. It will help take the forearms and biceps out of the movement and help you focus on pulling from the lats.

**I’m too fat or too weak to do Chin Ups or Dips…**

Use a lat pulldown machine for a chin up sub. You can use a double overhand wide grip or a chin grip on the bar. If you don’t have a Lat Pull machine available then perform bodyweight rows on a pair of TRX straps, Blast Straps, or Rings. These can be ordered cheaply from Rogue, EliteFTS, etc.

If you can’t do Dips you can do another tricep extension exercise for 3-5 sets of 10-15 reps or sets of push-ups to failure.

**How can I make this into a 3-day Program?**

Follow the order of the workouts exactly as I have written out here, but simply train on Monday, Wednesday, Friday (or whatever days fit your schedule). It doesn’t change the program at all, it simply extends your “week” by a few extra days. This is a great option if you are over 40 or otherwise have a very demanding professional or personal life that doesn’t allow you to always get your required sleep or calories in consistently.

You also have the option of starting the first few weeks at 4 days per week and then changing to a 3 day per week routine as fatigue starts to build up in weeks 4, 5, and 6.

**Can I customize the program?**

The program has been proven to work with a number of my trainees over the years. You don’t need to customize the meat and potatoes barbell lifts that begin each training session. After the first 1-2 main lifts each day you can modify or skip altogether some of the assistance work. But you don’t need to add anything to this program. Appropriate modifications will generally be the removal or reduction in volume of some of the bodybuilding style assistance work if you find recovery to be an issue.
A Note on Volume Days....

You will see that the volume work follows a 3-week wave that goes from 75-80-85% of 1RM in weeks’ 1, 2, and 3 and then repeats those same percentages in week 4, 5, and 6. However in weeks 4-6 there is an increase in the amount of volume you are asked to do at each of the prescribed percentages. This is intentional so try not to mess with your percentages. In week 4 when the volume loads drop from 85% back down to 75% I want you to feel a perceived reduction in workload. If you want to add a small amount of weight to your volume days in weeks 4-6, this is permissible, but be smart....take into account you are already doing more sets/reps than you did in weeks 1-3. If any of your volume days feel easy you can make the workout more difficult by decreasing your rest time between sets, or introducing pauses into the bottom of your squat or bench press. You can also focus on increasing your bar speed during your sets if the weights feel light. As the late great Bill Starr used to say...make the plates rattle at the top!