

How To TRAIN For The DEADLIEST LIFTS

I have gotten a lot of questions about how I structure my training, and I have never been able to give a really solid answer because that is a long topic to cover and I am not about to type it all out every time I get that question in a comment or a DM. So I am going to go into details here so I can just redirect anyone interested to this post in the future. Before getting into it, I want to make it very clear that this is what works FOR ME, RIGHT NOW. It does not represent how I trained to get to this point, and it does not constitute a suggestion that this training plan is going to be a good fit for anyone else. So I would not recommend reading this and then going out and imitating my training. I will recommend reading the rationale of WHY I make the training decisions I make and using those to make better informed decisions in your own training. Let my training inspire and inform your training, but don't try to copy it. And as a final preface, this is going to be largely a big picture overview, so there will not be many fine details. Those might be future topics of their own, and the training logs I am going to try and start doing will also go into those details in more depth.

My training is broken up into a schedule that repeats every year(ish). I run 3 blocks in this period that each consist of a bulking sub-block and a cutting sub-block. Bulks are run for approximately 11-12 weeks, and cuts for approximately 5-6 weeks. These timelines adapt as needed but I roughly end up with a years worth of programming between all three. I try to take a holistic approach to the programming within each block, so that the diet, training goals, and training structure all compliment each other. This means that when I bulk I am training aggressively, focusing on growth and development. I work with higher volumes, accumulating more fatigue and worrying less about demonstrating strength during the bulk period. My training is also more focused and structured to make sure that I am maintaining sufficient intensity and volume to push that growth and development. Conversely, when I am cutting I only focus on getting sufficient volume and intensity to maintain mass, which is far less. This allows far lower fatigue levels and a lot more room for what I can fit into my training. For those reasons, it is during cutting periods that I pursue training that allows me to best demonstrate my strength. This is at odds with the predominant approach to bulk and cut programming and I suggest you read the dedicated posts on that topic for more details. The cutting period in each block also acts as a 'rest' period between the more aggressive bulk periods, both physically and mentally. If you take away anything from this part it should be that you should think of all the aspects of your training/programming and see how they can best be harmonized. With this schedule I have no 'wasted' time in any area, and it is very sustainable.

For bulking periods, I have been starting the year running Rip And Tear, which focuses on Squat, Bench and Deadlift. While squat and bench are no longer huge priorities of mine, I respect the movements enough to try and get my numbers up, with this block being my main concession to that goal. The spring/summer bulk block will continue to have a strong focus on overhead pressing and Strongman events for as long as I continue to compete in a local show each summer, which I plan to for the foreseeable future. The summer/fall block is pretty open, and has been a place for me to test run new training methodology. Last year I used it to test the

efficacy of Flesh & Metal. These compound lift focused program goals are covered by the 3-4 days of training I do at home. I will have a plan of some kind for the compound lift(s) I want to do each day, then I will hit 2-3 movements for 2-3 sets for accessory work. I do not worry about going too hard on this work, and generally just go by feel. Paired with the at home training I spend 3 days a week at a local commercial gym. These days, usually split up as Upper, Lower and Arms, are purely for hypertrophy. I will hit 5-7 movements for 3-4 sets and really focus on keeping the intensity up. I like this set up as I know that regardless of what I decide to focus on at home, and how well I adhere to my plans there, I will always have a core of 3 solid workouts to push my growth. I find that it's much harder to get distracted in the commercial gym setting, and I really appreciate the wide variety of machines I have access to. When pushing the compounds hard at home it is very nice to be able to pick machines that give joints/small muscles that feel overworked a break and still get a solid workout in.

Cutting periods are much less structured, to the point where I usually have no plan whatsoever. At most I might have one or two specific goals and a progression scheme for those, but that is it. The only necessary component for my cutting programming is the bare minimum stimulus needed to maintain my muscle mass. This translates into very little volume, meaning that I have a lot of time, energy and fatigue to spend elsewhere. If you are reading this at the time of posting, the last 6 weeks or so have been spent cutting, and I was pretty prolific in that period. I have been asked multiple times how I can hit so many big, heavy lifts back to back. The answer is that I am not doing much else, I have a lot of resources to dedicate to goofing off in the gym. I am not hitting working sets of anything, I am not hitting my 3 high volume, intense dedicated hypertrophy days. At most, I am banging out a few sets of some heavy compounds some days and a few accessory sets. None of that takes much time or energy, so I spend what I save seeing how far I can elevate myself while still deadlifting over 500lbs. As I already mentioned, this period isn't just light and unstructured because cutting weight requires very little in the way of stimulus, it is also because cuts are my break time, both physically and mentally. Bulking is hard if you are doing it right. If you think that training is easier when you bulk then you are not training nearly as hard as you should be to justify your caloric surplus and get the most out of it. That kind of grind is not sustainable, and the weeks spent casually cutting after the aggressive training of the bulk are how you make things sustainable. Not only is my body shedding all that accumulated fatigue and healing up overworked areas, my mind is getting a break. Not having a rigid program (well, rigid by what are my now whimsical standards) to adhere to is much less mentally exhausting to me, and having the chance to explore all my odd lifts without having to balance them against my 'real' training is very freeing.

I use a variety of progression schemes for primary lifts. Rip And Tear follows a pattern of increasing weight, increasing sets, and dropping reps over the course of each month-long segment, then resetting with slightly higher weight with fewer reps in each subsequent month, working all the way down to singles at the end of the program. I really like this pattern as I find lower reps much less fatiguing physically and mentally, intensity kept equal, so raising the set count allows for more exposure to the movements while keeping the 'cost' of the sets about the same. Flesh & Metal involves continually setting continual PRs in a movement every session it's trained until you fail to one up your last session, then movements are cycled out. I like this set

up as it keeps you pushing for high intensity sets but doesn't grind you into the ground and the rotation of movements helps keep overuse injuries and issues to a minimum. I am also a huge fan of very high frequency, mostly low intensity work for pushing strength in a lift. For example, I had a cut where I benched every day of the week, with 5 days just being 6, relatively, light reps in as many sets as it took to keep them fast and easy. Then one day where my goal was to set a rep PR at any weight, and one day with 5 progressively heavier singles. That approach took me from a sub 4 plate bench press to hitting 5 back to back singles at 405 by the end. The constant practice really helps refine your technique, and keeping most of the days very easy stops fatigue from over-accumulating. I have had similar success in lower body lift goals with a 5 times a week structure.

For accessories I never use a structured plan, and I never write one in programs I write out for others to use. I don't really see a point in planning out accessory work unless it is for a beginner. I just have a rough idea of what body part I want to hit, and then pick whatever movements I am feeling that day. I will usually have favorites at any given time that I will consistently train for a few weeks but then I will grow disinterested in them and move to something else for a while. You know what is better than an 'optimal' movement? A movement you are excited and invested in, because that is the movement you are going to push harder in, and thus get more results from. This is a big reason why I gravitate towards accessories that 'feel' good and give a good pump/stretch/contraction. I do not believe that these factors are super important inherently in how effective the movement is, but they make me more invested in hitting my sets hard because they make it feel like it's working, and that is all that really matters. I am a big fan of using machines for accessory work over free weights, though there are certainly plenty of exceptions to that. Machines are not bad, particularly if they are used in concert with free weight work as opposed to being the only source of resistance training. Machines are designed to either better isolate muscle groups, or streamline certain movement patterns. A machine can allow for movement patterns that a free weight cannot, as the path of the movement can be modified mechanically to a path that gravity would not readily permit in a free weight. In addition to that, they can allow for focused work on a muscle group without the accompanying cost to certain supplementary muscle groups or connective tissue. When I am benching three times a week already I am more than happy to use a chest press machine that is much more forgiving on my shoulders for the additional chest volume I need.

I incorporate a lot of autoregulation into my training, in lieu of dedicated deloads, or structured periods of reduced intensity/volume. Once you have a good sense of your body's fatigue levels and what areas are pushing into overuse based on how you feel I think that this is the way to go. Training 7 days a week most of the time I have no problem with taking a really lazy day sometimes, particularly when cutting. If I only make it through my compound lifts in the time I allot for lifting because I am really dragging I have no issues missing accessory work that day. If I am tired and know an AMRAP set isn't going anywhere I will just hit the minimum reps and call it a day. I don't have an issue cutting less critical structured work as I go through a block if I feel my body is not keeping up. For example, I have ended up cutting most of the deadlift volume from Rip And Tear each time I have run it. I do not think that this is because there is a flaw in the volume load of the program, generally speaking, but I have an exceptionally large deadlift so

any working sets of deadlift are going to be much more fatiguing for me than they will be for other people. And my deadlift does not suffer from lack of practice, as the technique comes so naturally to me. I rarely program ANY deadlift work in my structured training, despite improvement being a high priority for me. This is because what I get out of practicing deadlift is not really worth what I need to expend to perform that practice. I do not think that this is the case for most people however, and that the suggestion that many ignorant people make about deadlifting having a poor return for the fatigue it produces is bullshit. A 900+lb deadlifter is the exception here, not the rule.

Finally, I probably need to talk about the odd lifts if I am going to talk about my training. I want to make it abundantly clear, as I have before, that the odd lifts are not part of my training, they are the result of my training. I train to be big and strong so that I can do wild heavy lifts. I do not train wild heavy lifts so that I can be big and strong. With that in mind, they do not have a place in my training structure. I do not plan for them when I build out my programming, I do not have a helicopter squat day, that would be ridiculous. Instead, I simply do what I want once I have met my training needs, using whatever energy, time and fatigue I have left. If I were to be completely honest, sometimes I do prioritize some silly lifts over my actual training, but that is really just self-indulgence rather than sound logical training decision making. They are fun, they make for great content that a lot of people enjoy, and I think they are a great expression of the time and dedication I have put into training. But they are not a solid training tool most of the time, and I do not want anyone to think that they are. The truth is that my training isn't really any more exciting or unusual than anyone else's, getting big and strong is mostly boring repetitive work. I just choose to express the fruits of that work in ways that most people don't really bother to, or have never considered. Like I already mentioned, I have ample time and energy to do this when cutting, but not very much when bulking. I usually will make one of my training days at home pretty sparse when it comes to pre-planned work, and I will use this day to scratch that itch and make some content for all of you to enjoy.

I know that this is a pretty high overview of my programming, and does not have much in the way of detail, so feel free to ask about specifics in the comments. If the answer is short I will answer it there, and if it's not so short it might be its own topic at some point. I keep a list of ideas for those and it's always good to add more to it. I also plan to put together some more in depth training logs during this bulk, though I make no promises if recording and editing them turns out to be a huge pain. They should have a lot more in depth details as I discuss specific weeks, as opposed to my training as a whole. Anyways, I hope this (at least partially) answered your question of "How do you train?" if you are one of the many people to ask me.