

BEYOND 5/3/1



SIMPLE TRAINING  EXTRAORDINARY RESULTS

Beyond 5/3/1: Simple Training for Extraordinary Results

By Jim Wendler

Before you embark on any physical fitness program including one that involves lifting heavy weights in your hands, on your back and over your head, please consult a doctor. You may want to get a doctor to examine your head because this is some pretty stupid stuff that we do with barbells.

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The 5/3/1 Principles: Fuck You, Pay Me

Since the original 5/3/1 book and the second edition came out, I've been working to improve the 5/3/1 program. The program was originally written for selfish reasons as I wanted a simple and easy program to follow, a program that held true to the principles in which I believed and one that I wanted to actually use. I question whether the many programs and training ideas written by "authorities" have even been used, either by themselves or anyone else, programs that exist simply to waste paper, space and time. When you have your own training, body and strength on the line, you tend to give a lot more effort, time and care into designing a program. I'm sure that at some point I will be forced to use test subjects for my research but until then, I will burn this body until I cannot stand.

The changes and tweaks in this book represent years of training, research, injuries and mistakes. Hell, there is even a new program – Beyond 5/3/1. When I first wrote the original program in 2008, I had no idea that I would be able to expand the program into what it is today. After 25+ years of training and writing programs, I still have that youthful desire to create something new, unique and amazing. When you lose that, you lose life.

The principles of the 5/3/1 program kept me grounded and I made sure that every variation stayed true to them: emphasize big, multi-joint movements, start light, progress slow and set personal records. Using big movements such as the squat, bench press, deadlift and press is nothing revolutionary in the quest for strength. It has been done since the barbell came into existence.

Setting a personal record (PR) is somewhat unique as not every training program makes it a priority. Plenty of training programs achieve success without setting a PR, but personally, I love going into the weight room with a goal to shoot for. I love the challenge, to push myself. I love leaving the weight room feeling stronger than when I entered.

There is a downside: You will not set PR's every time. Understand that PR's aren't given to you; they are earned through work, struggle and sacrifice. Often, those who become depressed and discouraged after a bad workout are

beginners and young lifters who don't yet realize that greatness doesn't always show up. There will be bad days – *really* bad days.

But that's what makes the PR's so special. So the next time you have a bad workout, embrace it, remember it and do whatever you have to do to make your next workout better than the last one. Let me give you a tip – moping around like a sad puppy dog isn't going to help you. Change your attitude. Attitude is the one thing you have total control over and the minute you let doubt, depression or martyrdom creep in, you set yourself up for a long life of mediocrity.

I receive thousands of questions about training templates, assistance work and “form videos” all hoping that there is a reason for their lack of PR's, lack of progress or simply looking for the magic formula for getting stronger. Yes, if you are squatting with the barbell on your forehead, you will have to make a change. But the factors that no one even considers are Will and Desire. These two things can force a square peg to fit into a round hole. The world is filled with millions of examples of people doing extraordinary things with Will and Desire. Why not you? I see so many people settling for mediocrity simply because they think successful people have some kind of advantage. Sure, you may have been dealt a tougher hand in life. Make it happen. This reminds me of a quote from the movie “Goodfellas:”

“Now the guy's got Paulie as a partner. Any problems, he goes to Paulie. Trouble with the bill? He can go to Paulie. Trouble with the cops, deliveries, Tommy, he can call Paulie. But now the guy's gotta come up with Paulie's money every week, no matter what. Business bad? "Fuck you, pay me." Oh, you had a fire? "Fuck you, pay me." Place got hit by lightning, huh? "Fuck you, pay me.”

If you want something to happen, have the Will and Desire to do the necessary work and the attitude to go along with it. Excuses are nothing more than you showing the world you have given up. You get what you expect and you get what you deserve. Embrace that in your life and watch what happens.

The Importance of the Training Max

The last two principles of the 5/3/1 program, start light/progress slow, are based on the idea of the Training Max (TM), which is the most unique part of the program. Although it has been bastardized and criticized, the training max is as essential and important to training for strength as squatting and pressing are.

The training max is a representation of 85-90% of your weight room max – not your competition max. This is the number on which all of your percentages of the 5/3/1 program are based. Now everyone wants a way to cheat the system, to use their real max for their percentages, or to increase their training max at a faster rate believing that this will somehow make them stronger. Let me tell you a little secret: it won't. It will catch up to you quicker than that nude photo you texted to the "love of your life".

The training max exists to allow for the ebb and flow of life and training. By using 85-90% of your weight room max, you allow for a window that still keeps you accountable for your training while allowing some room for the inevitable bad day. Essentially, the TM is a number you can hit on any day in the weight room after a warm-up. You can go into the workout knowing that you will hit your numbers regardless of the situation.

Most of the ebb and flow of training is related to stress in your life. While you can sometimes funnel life's stress into your training in a positive way, it will inevitably catch up to your performance. Your boss is a thoughtless asshole/bitch and rides you incessantly because he/she haven't been laid in months? Your squat workout just went in the shitter. You just found out your wife racked up \$20,000 in credit card debt this year? Good luck on that press workout.

On the other hand, there are days when the weights feel a hundred pounds lighter. The bar is screaming off your back at the top of each squat rep. Your speed and form are dead on.

Luckily, the 5/3/1 training program has enough flexibility to cover each of these areas and to keep you progressing forward. On a bad day, do the

workout, try your best for a PR and move on. Come back to fight another day, this time with more fire.

On a great day, you now have two options: you can push the last set for a new PR, or, take advantage of your strength and do Joker sets after setting a PR. Both are what I like to call Programmable Auto-Regulation, a set way of taking advantage of the strength you have that day. If you have been doing the 5/3/1 program for any amount of time, you should know that pushing the last set for a new PR, is the money set. Joker sets are a unique twist on working up during a workout when you feel great.

A word of advice: Train like hell to keep your training max 90% of your weight room max. Yes, your TM goes up after each cycle and eventually you will not be able to hit the required reps and have to reset. However, train, eat and sleep with the idea and goal that your training max will remain 90%. This requires a lot of work, but your efforts will be rewarded.

6-Week Training Cycles – New 5/3/1 Training

Over the past couple of years, I have come up with a great way to plan your 5/3/1 training cycles and keep your training, mind and body on track. Even if you aren't a competitive lifter, the 6-week cycles will help to keep you focused, allowing you to have fun and try new things without committing too much time.

6-week training cycles consist of two 5/3/1 training cycles done back-to-back without a deload. After the first 3 weeks, you **MUST** increase your training maxes as usual. Please read that again to make sure it sinks in. After the first three weeks, add 5 pounds to your upper body lifts and 10 pounds to your lower body lifts. Obviously, after the 6-week training cycle and the deload, you will increase your TM again. To illustrate this, here is the exact training cycle:

6 Week Training Cycle

Week 1	3x5
Week 2	3x3
Week 3	5/3/1
Increase TM	
Week 5	3x5
Week 6	3x3
Week 6	5/3/1

6 Week Training Cycle, 3/5/1

Week 1	3x3
Week 2	3x5
Week 3	5/3/1

Increase TM	
Week 5	3x3
Week 6	3x5
Week 6	5/3/1

After the sixth week, take a deload week, increase your training maxes and start all over again. The 6-week training cycle is dependent on you weight training four days per week or at least, doing all four main 5/3/1 lifts (squat, press, bench press, deadlift) one time each in a seven-day period. If you are training using a three-day per week template, where one lift is done per day, your training cycle would be longer than six weeks. But the same principles are applied – perform two 5/3/1 cycles and then deload.

Each 6-week cycle will be slightly different. I highly recommend choosing one of the 5/3/1 variations listed below for each 6-week cycle. Choose one for each lift, or you can do all the lifts the same way – this is up to you. You will have a myriad of choices that cover each area of training which make YOU responsible for your success. Choose each area of your training and make sure that it is 100% covered. You are now responsible for:

Training Maxes – This is a given, but you must know your training maxes (TM) for each of the main lifts if you are going to calculate your training for the next six weeks.

Mobility/Warm-up – The exact warm-up and mobility routine must be mapped out. This is what you will do prior to your training or whenever you feel it necessary to do your mobility work. Personally, I live on the Defranco Agile 8.

5/3/1 Set/Rep Variations – This is all explained below. You don't necessarily have to pick a 5/3/1 variation for your training. You can do the standard training model and just go for rep records. When in doubt, this is ALWAYS the best way to get shit done. Go in, kick some ass and get the hell out. People often try to fool themselves and use “overtraining” and the hilarious “CNS burnout” as excuses not to train hard. Don't be that guy. Be Dan Gable not Adrenal Fatiguenstein.

Accessory lifts/Template – This can be as detailed as you want it to be. Some

people need each day and each exercise planned. Others just need “abs/low back” and make the decision during the workout. Whatever you want or need, get it done.

Conditioning – The conditioning you choose must be appropriate for your training goals and your conditioning levels. For example, if your goal is to increase your squat to 440 for seven reps at the end of the 6-week cycle, but you haven’t done any conditioning work as of late and are horribly out of shape, choosing “Do Prowler 6 days per week” is not the best choice. I know this because this is a question I have to answer three or four times a day.

Eating Plan/Supplements – Again, what you consume has to be congruent with your goals. If you want to get stronger and you eat like a bird, you now have proof of your self-sabotage.

Recovery Protocols and Schedule – This is very simple to do. All you have to do is ask yourself this question: What do I need to do every day to make sure that my body and mind are at their peak for each workout? Then, write it down. This could be as simple as sleeping enough each night or scheduling naps during the day. Limiting your Internet time to 30 minutes per week or shutting off your phone after 3pm could ease stress. Maybe eating X amount of protein and carbs every day makes your body feel great. Whatever it is, you **MUST** write it down and be sure to achieve these goals daily.

If you are serious about training, you must be serious about what you do outside of the gym to maximize your performance. I also understand that many people aren’t terribly serious about their training – we all, at one time or another, need to put training aside to do other things in our lives. But if you are dead serious about achieving your training goals, if training is one of the top three priorities in your life, you must make the effort to recover. And you must be willing to make the sacrifices to get there.

When training for strength (absolute strength) is a huge priority in my life, the following recovery protocols are used:

- Sleep – 8-10 hours/day.
- Naps/relaxation – 30-60 minutes/day of quiet.
- Food – 4-5 meals/day

- Epsom salt baths – 1/day
- Mobility work – 3 times/day
- Massage – 1 time/week
- Conditioning – 30 minutes, 3 days/week of AirDyne. Never discount the importance of an aerobic base. This will help lower your resting heart rate, improve blood flow and reduce overall soreness.

Because of the extra sleep, naps, massage time, salt baths, etc., required for success, other aspects of my life are put aside. Things I like to do, such as playing music or going out with my wife are put on the back burner because I don't have the time to do everything I WANT to do. I have to do what I NEED to do. Some people might be able to get away with being a little more lenient but I do not possess the talent to do so.

The Warm-up

Here is a good way to incorporate more warm-up sets into your training and get your body ready for the work sets. You don't have to do this – just another wrinkle that I added into my own training. The benefits for me are:

- A set way of warming up – like the work sets, nothing is left up to chance or interpretation.
- Prepares my body better for the upcoming training.
- Allows for more supersets and additional exercises.

For me, these are all positive aspects of this warm-up. After using the empty bar for a few sets, I start with a base weight. For the squat and deadlift, the base weight is 135 pounds. For the press and the bench press, I use 95 pounds. With those numbers as my base weights, I work backwards from my first work sets in 10% increments. So let's say that your training max is 300 pounds for the bench press. Your work sets on the 3x3 week are: 210, 240, 270. 10% of 300 is 30 – so I work down from 210 in 30 pound increments. Here is an example:

Bench Press – TM = 300

- Bar x 10 reps
- 95 x 5 reps
- 120 x 3-5 reps
- 150 x 3-5 reps
- 180 x 3-5 reps
- 210 x 3 reps
- 240 x 3 reps
- 270 x 3+ reps

Here is another example of the 3x3 week with the squat:

Squat – TM = 500

- Bar x 10 reps

- 135 x 5 reps
- 150 x 3x-5 reps
- 200 x 3-5 reps
- 250 x 3-5 reps
- 300 x 3-5 reps
- 350 x 3 reps
- 400 x 3 reps
- 450 x 3+ reps

Between the upper-body lifts, the first three or four sets are superseded with band pull-aparts, face pulls or dumbbell rear laterals. These exercises do a great job warming up the shoulders. The rest of the sets are done with rows, curls or some kind of pull-up between the main lifts (bench press and press).

For the squat and the deadlift, I often superset extra hip mobility work and static stretching for the hip flexors, chins/pull-ups and some lighter abdominal work.

In the end, this systematic way of warming up allows you to fully prepare for the training of that day.

Note: When the weight reads “150,” 150 pounds is on the bar - NOT 155. I never, ever compromise. You do it right ALL the time, not some of the time. When you let one part of your life/training get compromised, it will all go to shit. Do it right, or don't bother doing it at all.

5/3/1 Variations

All of these 5/3/1 variations stay within the principles and philosophies of 5/3/1. To remind you, these are:

- Use multi-joint exercises as the core of your program. These include the squat, deadlift, press, bench press and power clean.
- Start too light.
- Progress slow.
- Set personal records (PR's).

These 4 variations are the anchors of the 5/3/1 program, all of which keep you grounded and progressing toward your goal. I answer thousands of questions monthly about training templates. As long as the templates use this philosophy, it doesn't really matter that much what you do. Granted, some ideas/templates are much better than others but as long as the PRINCIPLES remain the same, you are pretty safe in what you do.

Remember that the variations listed below are to be done for a 6-week cycle.

5/3/1 Pyramid

This is the most common variation to the 5/3/1 program and is a great way to get more volume into your training. In this variation, you do the normal 5/3/1 sets and reps each week and work yourself back down. I highly recommend going for a PR on the top set AND the last set. If you want to really push yourself, you can also go for max reps on all the down sets. People might say that this is too much work but they need to grow a pair of balls and realize that no one got stronger without challenging their body and mind. Remember that “max reps” does not equal “to failure” or “do the sets with bad form.” This means that you perform the set and leave 1-2 reps in the tank, as long as your form is good.

Week One	Week Two	Week Three
5 x 65%	3 x 70%	5 x 75%
5 x 75%	3 x 80%	3 x 85%
5+ x 85%	3+ x 90%	1+ x 95%
5 x 75%	3 x 80%	3 x 85%
5+ x 65%	3+ x 70%	5+ x 75%

First Set Last

This is for people who want to get more volume while hitting high reps. It is also great for those with limited weight room time, who want to hit the main lifts and get out. Also, the First Set Last is great to do for a couple of cycles and try to hit the last set for 20 reps, especially on the squat. This is not an easy variation if you push yourself hard. Here is the most common “First Set Last” variation:

Week One	Week Two	Week Three
5 x 65%	3 x 70%	5 x 75%
5 x 75%	3 x 80%	3 x 85%
5+ x 85%	3+ x 90%	1+ x 95%
As many reps as possible (AMRAP) x 65%	AMRAP x 70%	AMRAP x 75%

First Set Last: Multiple Sets

This is another variation of the First Set Last concept. In this variation, perform the first set for multiple sets of 5-8 reps. Generally, I recommend doing 3-5 sets. I can't recommend this variation enough. When combined with Joker sets (this will be explained later in the book) it combines the PR set, heavier weights and lighter back off sets. These back off sets (the First Set Last) is a great way to get some extra volume in without burning yourself out.

In my experience the last few years these seem to be the "magic bullet" for those that need some extra volume work in their training. Plus, it doesn't give the lifter the insane muscle soreness of the Boring But Big.

Week One	Week Two	Week Three
5 x 65%	3 x 70%	5 x 75%
5 x 75%	3 x 80%	3 x 85%
5+ x 85%	3+ x 90%	1+ x 95%
3-5 sets of 5-8 reps @ 65%	3-5 sets of 5-8 reps @ 70%	3-5 sets of 5-8 reps @ 75%

First Set Last: Rest Pause

This variation is only used for the upper body lifts (the bench press and the press). After the main sets, drop down to your first set and perform a rest/pause set.

A rest pause set is simple. You do 3 sets in 1. After a few warm-up sets (this is up to you), perform an all out set of an exercise, rest briefly, then repeat it with the same weight, rest briefly again, and perform the last set.

The rest period can be timed with a watch, by counting breaths, or by counting in your head. It is recommended that you take 15 deep breaths between sets. Here's an example of a rest pause set:

Bench Press

- 295 pounds for 15 reps
- Rest 20-30 seconds
- 295 pounds for 6 reps
- Rest 20-30 seconds
- 295 pounds for 3 reps

Week One	Week Two	Week Three
5 x 65%	3 x 70%	5 x 75%
5 x 75%	3 x 80%	3 x 85%
5+ x 85%	3+ x 90%	1+ x 95%
Rest Pause set @ 65%	Rest Pause set @ 70%	Rest Pause set @ 75%

First Set Last: Pause Squats and Pause Benches

For those of you who are weak off the bottom of the bench press and weak out of the hole of the squat (if you are a raw lifter, this applies to YOU), here is a great way to incorporate these lifts to the 5/3/1 program. This is also a great way for a lifter to learn how to stay tight in the hole of a squat or at the bottom of the bench press.

Perform the normal 5/3/1 sets and reps. After your last set, do the first set again but do 3-5 sets of 3-5 reps of pause squats or paused bench presses. Here is an example:

Week One	Week Two	Week Three
5 reps @ 65%	3 reps @ 70%	5 reps @ 75%
5 reps @ 75%	3 reps @ 80%	3 reps @ 85%
5+ reps @ 85%	3+ reps @ 90%	1+ reps @ 95%
Pause Squat/Bench – 3-5 sets of 3-5 reps at 65%	Pause Squat/Bench – 3-5 sets of 3-5 reps at 70%	Pause Squat/Bench – 3-5 sets of 3-5 reps at 75%

5/3/1 Strength Phase (variation of 5/3/1 for PL)

This is completely programmed in the *Year of 5/3/1 Challenges* in this very book, so if you are looking for a complete program and a great challenge, check it out. It is highly detailed and no stone is left unturned. The basics of the program are this:

Switch weeks 1 and 2: The 3x3 week is the first week and the 3x5 week is the second week.

On weeks 1 and 3, you work up to a single. This single is done with YOUR TRAINING MAX.

You can do max reps on the final set if it fits into your training program; this is all explained in the *Year of 5/3/1 Challenges*.

On the second week (3x5 week), do only the required reps, and do NOT perform a single.

Personally, I like the “Part Two” version of this training in the earlier part of the training program. Don’t be afraid to hit your TM for a PR set and drop back down and do multiple sets with your first set (see above First Set Last).

Part One

Week One	Week Two	Week Three
3 x 70%	5 x 65%	5 x 75%
3 x 80%	5 x 75%	3 x 85%
3+ x 90%	5 x 85%	1+ x 95%
1x1 @ Training Max		1x1 @ Training Max

Part Two

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Week One	Week Two	Week Three
3 x 70%	5 x 65%	5 x 75%
3 x 80%	5 x 75%	3 x 85%
3 x 90%	5 x 85%	1 x 95%
1x AMRAP @ Training Max		1x AMRAP @ Training Max

5/3/1 and Dynamic Work

I've been asked how to incorporate "dynamic" lifting into training countless times. Here's an easy way. The point of dynamic work is to move the barbell quickly and explosively, which you should already be doing on all your sets. If you're not, start now. You don't need to use a box squat to do "dynamic" squatting. Let's also make sure that you are well-rested between your dynamic sets - don't turn this into a conditioning session. Your rest periods should be enough so that your body is ready to perform to the best of your ability. Now if you are resting 10 minutes between sets, that is certainly a big problem and maybe you should be going for walk rather than putting a bar on your back. In general, if you perform the dynamic work prior to the main work, take more time between sets. This will minimize the fatigue. If you do the dynamic work after the main work, you can put a stopwatch on yourself and shorten the rest periods. Here is how you would program dynamic work for squats and pressing movements.

The first variation primes your body for better dynamic work and the second variation uses the dynamic work to prime your body for heavier work. Experiment to see which variation works best for you. I'm sure some Internet Tucker will let us all know the correct way to do it, based on his whopping 1.2x bodyweight squat. Just move the weight fast, no matter which variation you choose.

One thing that might help is to do a couple sets of the dynamic work first. If you feel fast and strong, work up and do the main work. If you still feel slow and weak, keep doing the dynamic work until you feel prime and ready.

You can also work in Joker sets into this training (explained below).

Variation One (For squats, bench press and press)

Week One	Week Two	Week Three
5 reps @ 65%	3 reps @ 70%	5 reps @ 75%
5 reps @ 75%	3 reps @ 80%	3 reps @ 85%

5+ reps @ 85%	3+ reps @ 90%	1+ reps @ 95%
Dynamic Work – 8 sets of 3 reps OR 5 sets of 5 reps @ 70%	Dynamic Work - 8 sets of 3 reps OR 5 sets of 5 reps @ 70%	Dynamic Work - 8 sets of 3 reps OR 5 sets of 5 reps @ 70%

Variation One (For deadlift)

Week One	Week Two	Week Three
5 reps @ 65%	3 reps @ 70%	5 reps @ 75%
5 reps @ 75%	3 reps @ 80%	3 reps @ 85%
5+ reps @ 85%	3+ reps @ 90%	1+ reps @ 95%
Dynamic Work - 5 sets of 2-3 reps @ 70%	Dynamic Work - 5 sets of 2-3 reps @ 70%	Dynamic Work - 5 sets of 2-3 reps @ 70%

Variation Two (For squats, bench press and press)

This second variation has you doing the dynamic work prior to the main work. These faster sets will help prime you for the heavier work later in the workout.

Week One	Week Two	Week Three
Dynamic Work - 8 sets of 3 reps OR 5 sets of 5 reps @ 70%	Dynamic Work - 8 sets of 3 reps OR 5 sets of 5 reps @ 70%	Dynamic Work - 8 sets of 3 reps OR 5 sets of 5 reps @ 70%
1x1 @ 80%	1x1 @ 80%	1x1 @ 85%
5+ reps @ 85%	3+ reps @ 90%	1+ reps @ 95%

Variation Two (For deadlift)

Week One	Week Two	Week Three
Dynamic Work - 5 sets of 2-3 reps @ 70%	Dynamic Work - 5 sets of 2-3 reps @ 70%	Dynamic Work - 5 sets of 2-3 reps @ 70%
1x1 @ 80%	1x1 @ 80%	1x1 @ 85%

5+ reps @ 85%

3+ reps @ 90%

1+ reps @ 95%

Boring But Big

The Boring But Big assistance program is by far the most popular and most used. It is boring as hell, but that doesn't mean it doesn't work. Boring But Big is simple: Do 5 sets of 10 reps @ 50% of your training max. For those who are new to the Boring But Big, DO NOT underestimate the amount of work and soreness you will get from this program. Before embarking on the actual program, you may want to do a 6-week prep of doing the 5 sets of 10 reps with 30-40% of your training max.

Training Templates for all Boring But Big Programs

For all the Boring But Big programs, there are two templates from which to choose. The only difference is the “5 x10” sets are done with the opposite exercise (see below for examples). In the scheme of things, it really doesn’t matter which one you choose because the same amount of work is done.

Template One

Day One	Day Two	Day Three	Day Four
Press - 5/3/1 sets/reps	Deadlift – 5/3/1 sets/reps	Bench Press– 5/3/1 sets/reps	Squat – 5/3/1 sets/reps
Press – 5x10	Deadlift – 5x10	Bench Press – 5x10	Squat– 5x10
Lat Work – 5x10	Abs	Lat Work – 5x10	Abs

Template Two

Day One	Day Two	Day Three	Day Four
Press - 5/3/1 sets/reps	Deadlift – 5/3/1 sets/reps	Bench Press– 5/3/1 sets/reps	Squat – 5/3/1 sets/reps
Bench Press – 5x10	Squat – 5x10	Press – 5x10	Deadlift– 5x10
Lat Work – 5x10	Abs	Lat Work – 5x10	Abs

Boring But Big Prep Phase/Program

Week	Work Sets	BBB Sets
1	3x5	5x10 @ 30-40%
2	3x3	5x10 @ 30-40%
3	5/3/1	5x10 @ 30-40%

4	3x5	5x10 @ 30-40%
5	3x3	5x10 @ 30-40%
6	5/3/1	5x10 @ 30-40%
7	Deload	Deload
8	3x5	5x10 @ 50%
9	3x3	5x10 @ 50%
10	5/3/1	5x10 @ 50%
11	3x5	5x10 @ 50%
12	3x3	5x10 @ 50%
13	5/3/1	5x10 @ 50%

Note: On any of the Boring But Big programs, you can do any of the following during the deload:

- Work sets of the 5/3/1 deload
- Work sets of the 5/3/1 deload and 5x10 @ 50%
- Work sets of the deload and 3x10 @ 50%
- Work sets of the deload and 5x5 @ 50%

The purpose of the deload is to refresh your body and get it ready for the next phase of training. So you MUST use your head.

Boring But Big, Variation I

This one takes some big cajones to pull off – and some resolve. If you lack the necessary metaphorical balls, don't even attempt it. If you are unwilling to eat to win, don't try this. This is not a program to try if you are a Cutting Queen or have an aversion to hard work and food. Weights become obnoxious and the soreness is unbelievable, especially after squatting.

This variation is very simple: Perform 5x10 sets with the weight that you performed for the first work set of the day.

Sets/Reps/Percentages

Week One	Week Two	Week Three
5 x 65%	3 x 70%	5 x 75%
5 x 75%	3 x 80%	3 x 85%
5+ x 85%	3+ x 90%	1+ x 95%
5 sets of 10 reps @ 65%	5 sets of 10 reps @ 70%	5 sets of 10 reps @ 75%

For this variation, I can only recommend that you use Template One. DO NOT use Template Two. Here is the 6-week program:

Week	Work Sets	BBB Sets
1	3x5	5x10 @ 65%
2	3x3	5x10 @ 70%
3	5/3/1	5x10 @ 75%
4	3x5	5x10 @ 65%
5	3x3	5x10 @ 70%
6	5/3/1	5x10 @ 75%

Boring But Big Variation II

This is a much easier variation of the Boring But Big program, but still very challenging. This is also a great way to get some more work in, get some necessary hypertrophy work in and still make some personal records. This is much more tame and logical.

Your training schedule (template) would be EXACTLY the same as the Boring But Big Variation (listed above). Don't go nuts with excessive assistance work.

Sets/Reps/Percentages (Variation II)

Week One	Week Two	Week Three
5 x 65%	3 x 70%	5 x 75%
5 x 75%	3 x 80%	3 x 85%
5+ x 85%	3+ x 90%	1+ x 95%
5 sets of 10 reps @ 65%	5 sets of 8 reps @ 70%	5 sets of 5 reps @ 75%

Boring But Big, 6 Week Challenge

This is similar to the *Boring But Big 3 Month Challenge* but done over 6 weeks. Here is the 6-week program mapped out in its entirety. Push the last set of the 5/3/1 sets (the work sets) every week. Remember the percentages for the “5x10” work are all based on your training max.

Week	Work Sets	BBB Sets
1	3x5	5x10 @ 50%
2	3x3	5x10 @ 50%
3	5/3/1	5x10 @ 60%
4	3x5	5x10 @ 60%
5	3x3	5x10 @ 70%
6	5/3/1	5x10 @ 70%

Boring But Big, 5x5 Variation

This is a different variation of Boring But Big that uses 5 sets of 5 reps, rather than the standard 5x10. The 5 sets of 5 reps are done with 80% of your *training max*. A good way to put this into your training is to start with the Boring But Big program for 6 weeks and then go right into the 5x5 BBB variation after the deload.

Week	Work Sets	BBB Sets
1	3x5	5x10 @ 50%
2	3x3	5x10 @ 50%
3	5/3/1	5x10 @ 50%
4	3x5	5x10 @ 50%
5	3x3	5x10 @ 50%
6	5/3/1	5x10 @ 50%
7	Deload	Deload
8	3x5	5x5 @ 80%
9	3x3	5x5 @ 80%
10	5/3/1	5x5 @ 80%
11	3x5	5x5 @ 80%
12	3x3	5x5 @ 80%
12	5/3/1	5x5 @ 80%

Boring But Big, 5x3 Variation

Like the 5x5 variation, this one does not use the 5x10 standard. Rather, it uses 5 sets of 3 reps at 90% of your training max. Remember that all the percentages are based on your training max. If you feel up to it, use the 5x5 Variation as a steppingstone to the 5x3.

Week	Work Sets	BBB Sets
1	3x5	5x10 @ 50%
2	3x3	5x10 @ 50%
3	5/3/1	5x10 @ 50%
4	3x5	5x10 @ 50%
5	3x3	5x10 @ 50%
6	5/3/1	5x10 @ 50%
7	Deload	Deload
8	3x5	5x5 @ 80%
9	3x3	5x5 @ 80%
10	5/3/1	5x5 @ 80%
11	3x5	5x5 @ 80%
12	3x3	5x5 @ 80%
12	5/3/1	5x5 @ 80%
13	Deload	Deload
14	3x5	5x3 @ 90%
15	3x3	5x3 @ 90%
16	5/3/1	5x3 @ 90%
17	3x5	5x3 @ 90%
18	3x3	5x3 @ 90%
19	5/3/1	5x3 @ 90%

Boring But Big, 5x1 Variation

I'm sure you can guess what this one is. Perform 5 sets of 1 rep with your training max. Again, you can build up to this over 27 weeks. For those who like to plan their training out, this will give you a half-year of training completely and 100% mapped out with no questions as to what you are, or will be doing. Nothing could be simpler, aside from maybe blinking your eyes. That might be a bit simpler than following this plan but it hasn't been proven.

Week	Work Sets	BBB Sets
1	3x5	5x10 @ 50%
2	3x3	5x10 @ 50%
3	5/3/1	5x10 @ 50%
4	3x5	5x10 @ 50%
5	3x3	5x10 @ 50%
6	5/3/1	5x10 @ 50%
7	Deload	Deload
8	3x5	5x5 @ 80%
9	3x3	5x5 @ 80%
10	5/3/1	5x5 @ 80%
11	3x5	5x5 @ 80%
12	3x3	5x5 @ 80%
13	5/3/1	5x5 @ 80%
14	Deload	Deload
15	3x5	5x3 @ 90%
16	3x3	5x3 @ 90%
17	5/3/1	5x3 @ 90%
18	3x5	5x3 @ 90%
19	3x3	5x3 @ 90%
20	5/3/1	5x3 @ 90%

21	Deload	Deload
22	3x5	5x1 @ TM
23	3x3	5x1 @ TM
24	5/3/1	5x1 @ TM
25	3x5	5x1 @ TM
26	3x3	5x1 @ TM
27	5/3/1	5x1 @ TM

TM = Training Max

Remember that at NO time would you ever *not* go for a PR on the last set of the 5/3/1 work sets. In other words, if you can't set a PR, then perform your "5x sets," you had best pick another physical pursuit. At all times in life, you must expect more from yourself. This is strength training and it is hard work.

Boring But Big, 13 Week Challenge

This 13-week challenge combines all of the Boring But Big challenges into one condensed program. This is ideal for people who don't want to spend half of the year doing the BBB program, or its variations.

Week	Work Sets	BBB Sets
1	3x5	5x10 @ 50%
2	3x3	5x10 @ 50%
3	5/3/1	5x10 @ 60%
4	3x5	5x10 @ 60%
5	3x3	5x10 @ 70%
6	5/3/1	5x10 @ 70%
7	Deload	Deload
8	3x5	5x5 @ 80%
9	3x3	5x5 @ 80%
10	5/3/1	5x3 @ 90%
11	3x5	5x3 @ 90%
12	3x3	5x1 @ TM
13	5/3/1	5x1 @ TM

Boring But Big, 2 Days/Week

Here is a great way to do a six-week challenge when training only two days/week. Many lifters can only train two days a week due to family, work or recovery issues. Here is the general template for this challenge:

Week One

Day One	Day Two
Squat – 3x5	Bench Press – 3x5
Deadlift– 5x10 @ 50%	Press @ 50%
Good Mornings - 3-5 sets of 10 reps (light)	Lat Work – 5 sets of 10 reps

Week Two

Day One	Day Two
Deadlift – 3x5	Press – 3x5
Squat – 5x10 @ 50%	Bench Press – 5x10 @ 50%
Good Mornings - 3-5 sets of 10 reps (light)	Lat Work – 5 sets of 10 reps

Week Three

Day One	Day Two
Squat – 3x3	Bench Press – 3x3
Deadlift– 5x10 @ 60%	Press – 5x10 @ 60%
Good Mornings - 3-5 sets of 10 reps (light)	Lat Work – 5 sets of 10 reps

Week Four

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Day One	Day Two
Deadlift – 3x3	Press – 3x3
Squat – 5x10 @ 60%	Bench Press – 5x10 @ 60%
Good Mornings - 3-5 sets of 10 reps (light)	Lat Work – 5 sets of 10 reps

Week Five

Day One	Day Two
Squat – 5/3/1	Bench Press – 5/3/1
Deadlift– 5x10 @ 70%	Press – 5x10 @ 70%
Good Mornings - 3-5 sets of 10 reps (light)	Lat Work – 5 sets of 10 reps

Week Six

Day One	Day Two
Deadlift – 5/3/1	Press – 5/3/1
Squat – 5x10 @ 70%	Bench Press – 5x10 @ 70%
Good Mornings - 3-5 sets of 10 reps (light)	Lat Work – 5 sets of 10 reps

Boring But Big, The Rule of 50

This is a variation of Boring But Big that's pretty simple to do. After the work sets, drop down and repeat the first work set. For example, do 65% of your training max on the 3x5 week, 70% of your training max on 3x3 week and 75% of your training max on 5/3/1 week. This is exactly like the two Boring But Big Variations listed above. The only difference is that you try to get a total of 50 reps by any means necessary. This could mean 5 sets of 10 reps, or, 10 sets of 5 reps; the reps can vary on each set. You can do more reps or less reps per set – the point is to get a total of 50 reps with the first work set of the day. Remember, this is done after the main work is done.

A good friend of mine would often time himself on the Rule of 50. He'd either go for a set time, say 15 or 20 minutes, depending on the lift. With the lower body movements, he'd give himself 20 minutes. The bench press and press were given 15 minutes. His goal was to do those 50 reps in that time period.

The key to doing this is not burning yourself out in one or two sets. You have to be smart about this and not be overzealous in the beginning. This concept is very similar to Charles Staley's EDT program. I admit to not being terribly familiar with EDT and I do not want to claim that this is the same thing without knowing all of the specifics.

Week	Work Sets	BBB Sets
1	3x5	50 reps total with 65% of your TM
2	3x3	50 reps total with 70% of your TM
3	5/3/1	50 reps total with 75% of your TM
4	3x5	50 reps total with 65% of your TM
5	3x3	50 reps total with 70% of your TM
6	5/3/1	50 reps total with 75% of your TM

5/3/1 and The Fatherland

When I was in college, the magazine that everyone would read was *Muscle Media* (not *Muscle Media 2000*, which came later, after Bill Phillips received his MBA). The original *Muscle Media* was the only magazine that talked about steroids and by god, if they talked about something taboo I was going to read it.

I didn't realize it then, but by the time *Muscle Media* made it into my world, I had enough lifting and knowledge base that I COULD have written for them. Like many people, I thought that if you wrote for a magazine or a big "lifting" company, you were really something. I thought that you had a big lifting penis and were free to impregnate all the young lifters minds.

I remember reading the magazine and some of the training advice and thinking, "Apparently I'm an idiot because I've been doing it all wrong." There is a huge distinction between what you see written by a Never Has Been and what the strong, fast and explosive Fuck Yeah Crue was doing.

One of the biggest fads that hit the training world via Muscle Media was Charles Poliquin's "German Volume Training" (GVT). GVT is nothing more than doing 10 sets of 10 reps with an exercise. People reported massive size gains from this program; obviously the volume done with a big exercise, and eating correctly, is a simple prescription for size. But where GVT falls short is strength.

I must admit that although there is a huge fascination with GVT, I think it's pretty stupid. When you have a high level lifter (or hell, any lifter) the soreness you get from doing this kind of training is not worth the benefit. The Boring But Big program is dangerously close to being too much for many lifters and not a very smart program for people who have reached the advanced stage of training. There is nothing wrong with being sore but being sore on a program whose results may not be worth the soreness isn't a great option. In any case, I was stupid enough to do it so maybe you will be too.

This is a combination of the 5/3/1 program and GVT. The combination of the two is pretty easy to figure out. Here are two versions of GVT that you can use with the 5/3/1 Program:

GVT Template One

Day One	Day Two	Day Three	Day Four
Press - 5/3/1 sets/reps	Deadlift – 5/3/1 sets/reps	Bench Press– 5/3/1 sets/reps	Squat – 5/3/1 sets/reps
Press – 10x10	Deadlift – 10x10	Bench Press – 10x10	Squat– 10x10
Lat Work – 10x10	Abs	Lat Work – 10x10	Abs

GVT Template Two

Day One	Day Two	Day Three	Day Four
Press - 5/3/1 sets/reps	Deadlift – 5/3/1 sets/reps	Bench Press– 5/3/1 sets/reps	Squat – 5/3/1 sets/reps
Bench Press – 10x10	Squat – 10x10	Press – 10x10	Deadlift– 10x10
Lat Work – 10x10	Abs	Lat Work – 10x10	Abs

You can use whatever percentage you think you can handle with the GVT work. Generally people use one weight for all their sets, but that's not set in stone. If you do use one weight, I highly recommend you use a very light weight the first time you try this program out, as you will get incredibly sore. You may only want to run the 5/3/1 GVT for 3 weeks (one 5/3/1 cycle). Use a Boring But Big Variation for the first three weeks and then GVT for the next three.

The amount of volume for the squats and deadlifts might leave you a bit crippled, so use the GVT for 1-2 lifts only – squats and presses, for example. For the other lifts, use any other 5/3/1 variation you want. Another great way of using the GVT in the 5/3/1 program is using it in a 3-day per week program or even a 2-day per week program. The 3-day per week program would simply look like this (this example has the lifter alternating the 5/3/1 lifts and the GVT lifts):

Week One

Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Press – 3x5	Deadlift – 3x5	Bench Press– 3x5
Bench Press – 10x10	Squat – 10x10	Press – 10x10
Lat Work – 10x10	Abs	Lat Work – 10x10

Week Two

Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Squat – 3x5	Press –3x3	Deadlift - 3x3
Deadlift – 10x10	Bench Press – 10x10	Squat – 10x10
Abs	Lat Work – 10x10	Abs

Week Three

Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Bench Press – 3x3	Squat – 3x3	Press– 5/3/1
Press – 10x10	Deadlift – 10x10	Bench Press – 10x10
Lat Work – 10x10	Abs	Lat Work – 10x10

Week Four

Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Deadlift –5/3/1	Bench Press –5/3/1	Squat – 5/3/1
Squat – 10x10	Press – 10x10	Deadlift– 10x10
Abs	Lat Work – 10x10	Abs

5/3/1 and GVT – 2 Days/Week

Week One

Day One	Day Two
Deadlift –5/3/1	Bench Press –5/3/1
Squat – 10x10	Press – 10x10
Abs	Lat Work – 10x10

Week Two

Day One	Day Two
Squat –5/3/1 sets/reps	Press –5/3/1 sets/reps
Deadlift – 10x10	Bench Press – 10x10
Abs	Lat Work – 10x10

5/3/1 SVR Training

This is one of the best set/rep combos of the 5/3/1 program and probably the most fun. It combines higher volume training, rep records and the use of heavy singles. The first week is the 3x3 week. On this week, perform the last set of the day (at 90% of your training max) and try to set a new rep record. The second week is done for 5 sets of 5 reps (see below). The third week is the 5/3/1 week. You do not go for max reps on the last set (95%) of the day. Instead, keep working up in weight for multiple singles. If you feel good, attempt a new max.

Week One	Week Two	Week Three
3 x 70%	5 x 65%	5 x 75%
3 x 80%	5 x 75%	3 x 85%
3+x 90%	5+ x 85%	1+ x 95%
This is the day you go for broke on your last set. Try to set a new rep record.	5 x 75%	Keep working up for 3-5 additional singles. Attempt a new max if you feel good.
	5+ x 65%	

The Rule of 10

Like the “Rule of 50,” the aim of this 5/3/1 variation is to achieve a total of 10 reps. The difference is that you want to get 10 reps with the last work set of the week (there are no down sets). You can take as many or as little sets to get to this number. Obviously, it will be easier to achieve 10 reps on the 3x5 week, but very difficult to get them on the 5/3/1 week, especially after doing several cycles of the program.

Week	Set 1	Set 2	Set 3
1	65% x 5	75% x 5	85% x 5+ (get a total of 10 reps by any means necessary)
2	70% x 3	80% x 3	90% x 3+ (get a total of 10 reps by any means necessary)
3	75% x 3	85% x 3	95% x 1+ (get a total of 10 reps by any means necessary)
4	65% x 5	75% x 5	85% x 5+ (get a total of 10 reps by any means necessary)
5	70% x 3	80% x 3	90% x 3+ (get a total of 10 reps by any means necessary)
6	75% x 3	85% x 3	95% x 1+ (get a total of 10 reps by any means necessary)

Joker Sets

This is the best new addition to the 5/3/1 program and I believe that Joker sets should always be in your training program. If you take anything from this book and add it to your training, let it be Joker sets. When I began working on the 5/3/1 program, I felt an enormous sense of satisfaction and relief when I finally figured out the basic outline, sets, reps and percentages and it all came together.

I feel the same about the addition of Joker Sets to the 5/3/1 program.

In fact, I believe in the Joker Sets and the First Set Last so much that I believe it should be a standard part of the 5/3/1 program. However, this style of training doesn't fit everyone's training needs, and this style of training is really based on auto-regulation. In other words, YOU must be accountable for your own actions and training. YOU must make decisions that affect YOUR success in the weight room. YOU must read your body and make great decisions. I can't teach people, in print, how to do any of this. It's like teaching someone how to love simply by writing about it – you just gotta go get your heart broken a few times. But I do believe this is the only program that has built-in parameters to help guide and help auto-regulate your training. As far as I know, this is the only program to ever attempt this and actually succeed.

If your goal is to get stronger, these three things should be present in your training:

- PR set
- Joker sets
- “First Set Last” down set. This can be done for one all-out set, or multiple sets of 10, 8 or 5 reps. Don't overanalyze this!
- 90% Training Max

Nearly a year after I wrote 5/3/1 for Powerlifting I came up with the idea of Joker sets. I wanted a way to program some heavier sets in the program and give the lifter (and the program) more programmable ways to auto-regulate your training. Simply telling people to “work up” works well for about 10% of the population. I wanted something concrete that I could give to people and

say, “This is your plan of attack.”

One of the inspirations for Joker Sets was John Broz’s attitude toward lifting and programming. He loves setting PR’s and working up to heavy weights. I do realize that there are other ways to train, but ever since I’ve started training, setting PR’s has become my driving force. It keeps me motivated in the weight room. It keeps me coming back and fighting. It helps me to set goals every time I daydream about lifting. It helps me set goals when I am preparing for my workout.

The 5/3/1 program and Joker sets are largely based on the idea of the Bulgarian style of training, not on classic periodization. This is because you are working for the best PR you can set THAT DAY. And guess what? Some days you feel like crap and can’t do anything. This is where the 90% training max comes into play – it gives you room to have a bad day, but still train. And you will have bad days. This is lifting weights and nothing is linear; there are peaks and valleys and the strongest and most experienced lifters understand this. One of the easiest ways to spot a novice lifter, in both training and attitude, is their complete breakdown after a bad workout or a bad month, or even a bad couple of months. The experienced lifter knows that the clouds will break and he keeps pushing. The weak will complain and try to blame the Butt Wink for their squat or their lack of proper supplementation. The strong, who know that success is just around the corner, will persevere and push harder and push smarter. I also believe that your attitude towards training shows itself in all aspects of your life. Those who understand that success does not happen overnight, that it is earned through work and struggle always come out on top. The success you earned through hardship is always the sweetest. No person with dignity and a soul wants a handout – they want to earn what they have.

Here is my bold statement: I truly believe that with the 5/3/1 program and its principles, the PR set, the Joker sets and the down sets (First Set Last) – you cannot get weaker. Based on my research, experience, and by using it myself, I believe these additions make it a near-perfect strength training program. Now understand that sometimes you have to back off on the Joker sets and up the First Set Last volume work. And at other times, you go balls out on the Joker sets and back off on the First Set Last. But in the end, both of these things are perfect compliments to the 5/3/1 program.

Joker sets are the best way to work up when you feel good during a workout, which allows you to take advantage of a great training day without constantly screwing around with your training max just because you have one good workout. Or one bad workout. Remember that a training max is your buffer zone – it has nothing to do with how strong you are. When using a TM of 85-90% of your real max, you have a built-in system that allows you to complete workouts even when you are feeling bad. This is beneficial in life, and in training.

The PR sets allow you to push hard and take advantage of the days when you feel good and Joker sets are just another way to take advantage of great days.

Joker sets are simple – after you push the last set (always push that last set for a PR, no matter what), increase 5% or 10% from the last set and perform 5 reps, 3 reps or 1 rep (depending on the week). Keep increasing 5% or 10% until you feel that you cannot make the requisite reps. Once you cannot get the reps, you are free to keep adding 10% jumps for singles. This is up to you and how you feel on that day.

The hardest part of Joker sets is using your training experience to know when you can make the jumps without training to failure. If you can't get that next rep, stop the set.

Here is an example of each week with Joker sets:

Week One		Week Two		Week Three	
%	Reps	%	Reps	%	Reps
65	5	70	3	75	5
75	5	80	3	85	3
85	5+	90	3+	95	1+
95	5	100	3	105	1
105	5	105	3	115	1
110	2	115	1	120	1

For those who only want to use this as a small part of their overall training, Joker sets are a great 6-week training cycle that can help you to push heavier

weights and get you physically and mentally ready for a meet.

Notes on Joker Sets:

Always push the last set of the 5/3/1 workout (not the Joker Sets) for a PR. I know people will get their panties in a bunch and say, “But I’ll be too tired to do Joker sets!” Really? Too tired? Are you afraid of fatigue? Make your training hard so that game day is easy.

You may want to cap your last sets, the PR sets, at 10 reps (or whatever you feel is best for you). I usually cap the PR set at 10, 8 or 5 reps. Even if you can do more, this will be a built-in stopping point. Most people should just cap it at between 5-10 reps. There is always temptation to do “just the required reps” so that you can hit the big money Joker Set, but the PR set is more than just a PR set. The mental and physical strength required to put it all on the line, to shoot for something bigger and put your balls on the chopping block, is something that cannot be measured. Expect greatness from yourself. Expect more from yourself.

One of the best ways to approach your training and your Joker sets is this: take short breaks between your training. For example, let’s say it is your 3x3 week and you have a training max of 500 pounds. This is how you would break up your training day:

Warm-up:

- Bar x 5 reps
- 135 x 5 reps
- 185 x 5 reps
- 235 x 5 reps
- 285 x 3 reps
- 335 x 1 rep
- 350 x 3 reps
- 400 x 3 reps
- 450 x 5 (PR set)

Take 5-10 minute break

- 500 x 3 reps
- 525 for 1 rep

Take 5 minute break

- 3-5 sets of 8 reps at 350

Using Supersets for the Upper Body

Here is an example of how to superset exercises with Joker Sets. This is ideal for people who are short on time and don't want to screw around with a ton of assistance work. Below is just one example of the exercises you can use. Generally, I like to do an easy exercise during my warm-ups and progress from there. You can choose any combination of exercises to superset. When doing a pushing exercise (the press or the bench press), also choose a pulling exercise. This training example is for the bench press, the 3x3 week and a training max of 300 pounds.

Warm-up:

- Bar x 10 reps
- 95 x 5 reps
- 125 x 5 reps
- 155 x 3 reps
- 185 x 3 reps
- All warm-up sets supersetted with band pullaparts for 20 reps (5 sets of 20 reps total)

Workout:

- 210 x 3 reps
- 240 x 3 reps
- 270 x 7 reps (PR set)
- All workout sets supersetted with dumbbell rows for 10-20 reps (3 sets of 10-20 reps total)

Joker Sets:

- 300 x 3 reps
- 330 x 2 reps
- 360 x 1 rep
- All Joker Sets supersetted with chin-ups for 10 reps (3 sets of 10 reps total)

First Set Last:

- 3 sets of 8 reps with 210 pounds
- All sets supersetted with barbell curls for 10 reps (3 sets of 10 reps total)

With lower body movements (squat and deadlift), supersets become a little bit tougher. I have used chins, rows, shrugs and abdominal work as supersets. The problem is that the lower body movements are “all inclusive” with the lower body. There is really no “opposite” exercise for squats and deadlifts, at least none that won’t compromise your overall training performance.

Beyond 5/3/1 – Training Maximally

This is one of the last things that I wrote for this book and one of the biggest training breakthroughs I've had. I'm thankful I put the "Beyond" in the title of this book because this new training program has nothing to do with the 5/3/1 program. The principles are the same but the sets and reps don't lend itself to a catchy name. It definitely has its roots in 5/3/1, but like a death metal band that claims Black Sabbath as its influence, this program has taken on a shape all its own.

The new program has a base to it, and from that base you choose your own adventure. Like the 5/3/1 program, you have a training max and set PR's, but this program is wrapped in heavier weights, more volume and endless possibilities. This program has taken years and years to try to figure out. I finally came up with the "FINALLY!" moment about 18 months ago – after years and years of trying to make this work. I continually stumble upon more and more options. I would be surprised if this doesn't turn into a book in the next 4-5 years. To say that I am excited about this program is an understatement.

This program is not for the casual lifter. There is a base program but it requires a lot of thought, experience and instinct. It is not for the trend hoppers, curl-mongers or diet-obsessed eunuchs that plague the lifting world. This is not for people who are scared of squatting or pulling. This is not for the Butt Wink Police or Cardio Queens. If you are scared of pushing big weights, having a bad workout, having a bad month or measure your self-worth by your Facebook pictures/posts or responses, this is not for you.

If you want to be strong without excuses, this is for you.

The Base of Beyond 5/3/1

Begin this program with a training max of 85% of your best training 1RM or use the max calculator to find your estimated max. Max calculator is:

$$\text{Weight Lifted} \times \text{Reps} \times .0333 + \text{Weight Lifted}$$

Program Base (all percentages are based on training max)

- 10% x 3-5 reps
- 20% x 3-5 reps
- 30% x 3-5 reps
- 40% x 3-5 reps
- 50% x 3-5 reps
- 60% x 3-5 reps
- 70% x 1-3 reps
- 80% x 1-3 reps
- 90% x 1
- 100% x 1 or a PR set.

NOTE: The PR set is not for max reps, rather it is for a rep PR. Whether or not you do a PR set or a single is 100% up to you.

After the PR set or single, you have several options:

Option 1: Perform singles at 5-10% increases (Joker Sets). Since your TM = 100%, your Joker sets could be 105%, 110%, 115% or 120%. How many Joker sets you do is up to you – you may want to do a 10% increase on your first set. For example, let's say that you have a 400 pound training max for the bench press, your workout would look like this (TM = 400):

Base Workout

- Bar x 10 reps
- 120 x 5 reps
- 160 x 5 reps
- 200 x 3 reps

- 240 x 3 reps
- 280 x 1 rep
- 320 x 1 rep
- 360 x 1 rep
- 400 x 6 reps

Joker Sets

- 420 x 1 rep
- 440 x 1 rep
- 460 x 1 rep

Option 2: This can, and should, be combined with Joker Sets. Simply perform 3-5 sets of 5-8 reps at 70-75% of your TM. So now your workout would look like this:

Base Workout

- Bar x 10 reps
- 120 x 5 reps
- 160 x 5 reps
- 200 x 3 reps
- 240 x 3 reps
- 280 x 1 rep
- 320 x 1 rep
- 360 x 1 rep
- 400 x 6 reps

Joker Sets

- 420 x 1 rep
- 440 x 1 rep

Down Sets

- 5 sets of 5-8 reps with 280

Option 3: This is a slight variation of the Base/Joker/Down Set but another

way to approach the training.

Base Workout

- Bar x 10 reps
- 120 x 5 reps
- 160 x 5 reps
- 200 x 3 reps
- 240 x 3 reps
- 280 x 1 rep
- 320 x 1 rep
- 360 x 1 rep
- 400 x 1 rep (no PR set)

Joker Sets

- 420 x PR set (do as many reps as needed for a PR)

Down Sets

- 5 sets of 5-8 reps with 280

Option 4: If you are having a bad day and need to work up again, this next option is best for you. I like this option when I need a few more sets to reset my body and get my mind where it needs to be. I have a friend that has been doing this programming for about a year now and when benching, he goes through the workout 3 different times, hitting his training max for a PR on the third time around.

Base Workout

- Bar x 10 reps
- 120 x 5 reps
- 160 x 5 reps
- 200 x 3 reps
- 240 x 3 reps
- 280 x 1 rep
- 320 x 1 rep

- 360 x 1 rep
- 400 x 1 rep (no PR set, feel like crap)
- 280 x 1 rep
- 320 x 1 rep
- 360 x 1 rep
- 400 x 1 rep of PR set

Note: After this PR set, you can try to work up to a Joker set OR do your down sets at 70-75%.

Option 5: Going to a true max. This combines a true max (for that day), the PR set and the down sets in one training session.

Base Workout

- Bar x 10 reps
- 120 x 5 reps
- 160 x 5 reps
- 200 x 3 reps
- 240 x 3 reps
- 280 x 1 rep
- 320 x 1 rep
- 360 x 1 rep
- 400 x 1 rep (no PR set)

Joker Sets

- 420 x 1 rep
- 440 x 1 rep
- 460 x 1 rep
- 480 x 1 rep

Down Sets

- 400 x PR set
- 3-5 sets of 5-8 reps @ 280

Option 6: This is for when you feel like absolute crap, can't set a PR for the

day but want to lift heavy.

Base Workout

- Bar x 10 reps
- 120 x 5 reps
- 160 x 5 reps
- 200 x 3 reps
- 240 x 3 reps
- 280 x 1 rep
- 320 x 1 rep
- 360 x 1 rep
- 400 x 1 rep (no PR set, feel like crap)
- 280 x 1 rep
- 320 x 1 rep
- 360 x 1 rep
- 400 x 1 rep
- 320 x 1 rep
- 360 x 1 rep
- 400 x 1 rep

Note: After this, you are free to do down sets at 70-75% if you feel like you need the extra work.

Option 7: Deload – this is only done when you need it. I recommend only doing it every 6 weeks or so. You simply work up to your training max for a single and move on.

Deload Base Workout

- Bar x 10 reps
- 120 x 5 reps
- 160 x 5 reps
- 200 x 3 reps
- 240 x 3 reps
- 280 x 1 rep
- 320 x 1 rep
- 360 x 1 rep

- 400 x 1 rep

Increase your training max by 10 pounds on the squat and deadlift and 5 pounds on the bench press and press; this is very much like the 5/3/1 program. Since just about everyone does each lift at least one day/week, you increase your training max after three weeks (much like the 5/3/1 program). You can do the lifts as frequently as you want.

With the addition of the Joker sets, you won't lose penis size based on your training max. But you will lose IQ points by trying to use your real max instead of a training max. In other words, if you do that you lose.

For the deadlift, I highly recommend cutting out the down sets or doing fewer reps. Instead of doing 5-8 reps, do 2-3 reps for the down sets (these are the ones done at 70-75%).

Now I know this can get a bit confusing because a lot of this training is auto-regulated and the decisions on WHAT to do are entirely based on how you feel that day. *Always remember that the general base of the program is working up to your TM for a PR set. After that, either work up to singles with Joker sets and/or do down sets at 70-75%.*

Assistance work is whatever you want it to be – remember to lift for balance, hypertrophy (size), to strengthen weak (and strong) areas of the body and to complement the four main lifts. You are welcome to choose whatever exercises you want. This is a program that is for lifters that know what they need and will address these needs with the proper assistance work.

Training Templates for Beyond 5/3/1 Training Program

There are a ton of different training schedules that you can use when training this way. I have come up with 11 different options. You can choose any of these or anything that suits your training and schedule. These are merely suggestions and can be modified any way you see fit.

Template 1 – 4 days/week

Monday	Tuesday	Thursday	Friday
Press	Deadlift	Bench Press	Squat

Note: You can switch the upper and lower body days as you see fit.

Template 2– 3 days/week

Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Squat	Bench Press	Deadlift/Press

Note: You can combine any of the lower/upper body days on Friday. So you could Deadlift/Bench Press, Squat/Press or Squat/Bench Press.

Template 3 – 4 days/week

Monday	Tuesday	Thursday	Friday
Deadlift/Press	Squat/Bench Press	Deadlift/Press	Squat/Bench Press

Template 4 – 3 days/week

Week One



Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Squat	Bench Press	Deadlift

Week Two

Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Press	Squat	Bench Press

Week Three

Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Deadlift	Press	Squat

Template 5 – 6 Days/Week

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Squat	Bench Press (or Press)	Squat Deadlift	Bench Press (or Press)	Squat	Bench Press (or Press)

Template 6 – 3 Days/Week

Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Squat Bench Press (or Press)	Deadlift	Squat Bench Press (or Press)

Template 7 – 7 Days/Week

Week One

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Squat	Bench	Deadlift	Press	Squat	Bench	Deadlift

Week Two

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Press	Squat	Bench	Deadlift	Press	Squat	Bench

Note: You can arrange the sequence of exercises any way you see fit.

Template 8 – 2 Days/Week

Monday	Thursday
Squat	Deadlift
Bench Press	Press

Template 9 – 3 days/Week, Full Body

Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Squat - DL	Squat - TM	Squat - DL
Bench Press - TM	DB Bench – 5 sets	Press - TM
Rows – 5 sets	Rows – 5 sets	Deadlift - TM

Notes:

DL = Deload, TM = Training Max PR, Jokers, Down sets

Template 10 – Full Body 2

Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Squat - DL	Squat - TM	Squat - DL
Bench Press - TM	Bench – DL	Bench - DL
Deadlift– DL	Deadlift – DL	Deadlift - TM

Notes:

DL = Deload. TM = Training Max PR, Jokers, Down sets

Template 11 – 3,2 Days/Week

Week One

Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Squat	Deadlift	Squat
Bench Press	Press	Bench

Week Two

Monday	Thursday
Deadlift	Squat
Press	Bench Press

Full Body Training

Along with the Boring But Big, the Full Body training template is the most popular 5/3/1 template. The program was written about extensively in the 5/3/1 2nd Edition, but I made a few changes to it and believe this is the superior version. However, you can still use the progression listed in the 2nd Edition.

Day One

- Squat – 5/3/1 sets and reps (going for a PR)
- Dumbbell Bench Press – 5 sets of 10 reps
- Dumbbell Rows – 5 sets of 10 reps

Day Two

- Squat – 65%x5, 75%X5, 85%x5 (all percentages based on training max, no PR set)
- Bench Press – 5/3/1 sets and reps (going for a PR)
- Chin-ups – 5 sets of 10 reps

Day Three

- Squat – 65%x5, 75X5, 85%x5 (all percentages based on raining max, no PR set)
- Press – 5/3/1
- Deadlift – 5/3/1

Note: The 65/75/85 for 5 reps can be changed to any of the following (all percentages based on the training max):

- 70%x3, 80%x3, 90%x3
- 75%x5, 85%x3, 95%x1
- 80%x1, 90%x1, 100%x1

Full Body Power Clean Variation

The Power Clean is an awesome exercise. Unfortunately, the Internet Form Squad think it vital that you only do these after spending \$1000 at a seminar hosted by your “Local Box Jumpers”. Furthermore, apparently the Power Clean, the Snatch and anything you do that a hook grip COULD be used on requires the same skill as walking a tight rope across the Grand Canyon. One mistake means death. Yep, nothing is more difficult or insane than walking up to a barbell, picking it up and placing it on your shoulders.

The Power Clean and Snatch is only hard because someone is telling you it is. Nothing is manlier than picking up a barbell and cleaning it. And if you want to know some trivia, a true clean will NEVER touch your body until it rests on your shoulders. Thus the name “clean”.

Day One

- Power Clean - 65%x3, 75%X3, 85%x3 (all percentages based on training max)
- Squat – 5/3/1
- Dumbbell Bench Press – 5 sets of 10 reps

Day Two

- Squat – 65%x5, 75%X5, 85%x5 (all percentages based on training max)
- Bench Press – 5/3/1
- Chin-ups – 5 sets of 10 reps

Day Three

- Squat – 65%x5, 75%X5, 85%x5 (all percentages based on training max)
- Power Clean – 5/3/1
- Press – 5/3/1

Note: The 65/75/85 for 3-5 reps can be changed to any of the following (all percentages based on the training max):

- 70%x3, 80%x3, 90%x3
- 75%x5, 85%x3, 95%x1
- 80%x1, 90%x1, 100%x1

Full Body Power Clean Variation, Part 2

I can already hear the questions now about the template below, “I want to deadlift too!” Then deadlift. Just take out one of the Power Clean workouts and replace it with the Deadlift. What day you do this is up to you, not me. You have to determine what is best for your schedule.

Day One

- Power Clean - 65%x3, 75%X3, 85%x3 (all percentages based on training max)
- Squat – 5/3/1
- Dumbbell Bench Press – 5 sets of 10 reps

Day Two

- Power Clean – 65%x3, 75%X3, 85%x3 (all percentages based on training max)
- Squat - 65%x3, 75%X3, 85%x3 (all percentages based on training max)
- Bench Press – 5/3/1

Day Three

- Squat – 65%x3, 75%X3, 85%x3 (all percentages based on training max)
- Power Clean – 5/3/1
- Press – 5/3/1

Note: The 65/75/85 for 3 reps can be changed to any of the following (all percentages based on the training max):

- 70%x3, 80%x3, 90%x3
- 75%x5, 85%x3, 95%x1
- 80%x1, 90%x1, 100%x1

Full Body, Full Boring

I can see this template giving uncomfortable boners to a lot of people. Personally, I think it is too much deadlifting but this may be perfect for a beginner. If you are a more advanced lifter and would like to try this but have the same reservations I have, the simple solution is to pull all your deadlifts with a double overhand grip. This will allow you to train your deadlift and let your grip limit the poundage.

Day One

- Squat – 5/3/1
- Bench Press – 65%x5, 75%X5, 85%x5 (all percentages based on training max)
- Deadlift – 65%x3, 75%X3, 85%x3 (all percentages based on training max)

Day Two

- Squat - 65%x5, 75%X5, 85%x5 (all percentages based on training max)
- Bench Press – 5/3/1
- Deadlift – 65%x3, 75%X3, 85%x3 (all percentages based on training max)

Day Three

- Squat - 65%x5, 75X5, 85%x5 (all percentages based on training max)
- Bench Press - 65%x5, 75%X5, 85%x5 (all percentages based on training max)
- Deadlift – 5/3/1

Note: The 65/75/85 for 3 reps and the 65/75/85 for 5 reps can be changed to any of the following (all percentages based on the training max):

- 70%x3, 80%x3, 90%x3
- 75%x5, 85%x3, 95%x1

- 80%x1, 90%x1, 100%x1

Spinal Tap Training (Volume goes to 11)

This 5/3/1 variation is a bit different the original 5/3/1 program. But it still fits into the 6-week training cycle. This is not for everyone. I just want to make that very, very clear. More isn't always better. I have used this variation with some lifters and they have made great gains, but their bodies and minds were ready for this training. And some completely shit the bed and had to stop because their bodies felt like crap. So use your best judgment when attempting this variation. Personally, I made gains with it, but I also felt like crap.

The one big difference with this variation is that the last set is not taken to a PR. What I did do is use Joker sets at ANY time during the training to work up to a heavy single, triple or set of five. Obviously, you will want to work up to a heavy single or triple, not a set of five.

You can do this variation for all lifts, or you can do it for whichever lift responds best to higher-volume training. The basics of this program are that you will perform all three weeks of the 5/3/1 training cycle in one training day. You DO NOT go for max reps on any set. Your training max will increase after EACH workout. For example, let's pretend a lifter has a TM of 500 pounds on the squat.

Week One (TM = 500)

Warm-up

Weight	Reps
150	5
200	5
250	3
300	3

Worksets

Weight	Reps
350	3
400	3
450	3
375	5
425	3
475	1
325	5
375	5
425	5

Week Two (TM = 510)

Warm-up

Weight	Reps
155	5
205	5
255	3
305	3

Worksets

Weight	Reps
360	3
410	3
460	3
385	5
435	3

485	1
335	5
385	5
435	5

Week Three (TM = 520)

Warm-up

Weight	Reps
155	5
210	5
260	3
310	3

Worksets

Weight	Reps
365	3
420	3
470	3
390	5
445	3
495	1
340	5
390	5
440	5

Spinal Tap Training (Volume goes to 11), part 2

This next variation is exactly the same as Part 1, except ALL the work sets are done for 3 reps. There are no fives or singles; only sets of 3 reps regardless of the percentage used. I used this variation myself because triples seem to be the sweet spot for me. This variation is probably best used on the deadlift.

Week One (TM = 500)

Warm-up

Weight	Reps
150	5
200	5
250	3
300	3

Worksets

Weight	Reps
350	3
400	3
450	3
375	3
425	3
475	3
325	3
375	3
425	3

Week Two (TM = 510)

Warm-up

Weight	Reps
155	5
205	5
255	3
305	3

Worksets

Weight	Reps
360	3
410	3
460	3
385	3
435	3
485	3
335	3
385	3
435	3

Week Three (TM = 520)

Warm-up

Weight	Reps
155	5

210	5
260	3
310	3

Worksets

Weight	Reps
365	3
420	3
470	3
390	3
445	3
495	3
340	3
390	3
440	3

5's Progression (Beginners and Advanced)

I've used the 5's Progression exclusively with my big assistance lifts for some time now, replacing the Simplest Strength Template. The main reason for the change is simple: I was forced to drastically change my training after a motorcycle accident. I had to find a way to program the big assistance lifts without using a ton of reps, and thus, the 5's Progression was born.

However, the 5's Progression can be used with the main lifts as well, and is an effective way to coach beginners. But before I touch on that, let's look at this programming and just how simple it is. The 5's Progression is nothing more than the basic 5/3/1 program, but 5 reps are done for every set, regardless of percentage. The same "Start light/Progress slow" principles apply. The same 5-10 pound increments apply.

Week One	Week Two	Week Three
65% x 5 reps	70% x 5 reps	75% x 5 reps
75% x 5 reps	80% x 5 reps	85% x 5 reps
85% x 5 reps	90% x 5 reps	95% x 5 reps

The 5's Progression is ideal for people new to the 5/3/1 program, new to lifting or returning from an injury. I never go for max reps on the last set, especially when using it for assistance work. If you are returning from an injury, the five rep cap is great to get your body back into training without pushing it too hard, too soon.

If you are coaching beginners, the 5's Progression is ideal. As a coach, you know that a lifter going for max reps can sometimes be a cluster fuck, especially the squat and deadlift. However, with beginners, I HIGHLY recommend that you, the coach, set the training max fairly low and simply use Joker sets (in 10% increments for sets of 5 reps) to help the athlete build up their confidence and add in some extra work when their form and strength dictate it. This allows you to keep the athletes progressing slowly with their TM at 90%, give them the opportunity to have good and bad days and challenge them when they need it. Here is a simple way to use Joker sets for

beginners:

Week One	Week Two	Week Three
65% x 5 reps	70% x 5 reps	75% x 5 reps
75% x 5 reps	80% x 5 reps	85% x 5 reps
85% x 5 reps	90% x 5 reps	95% x 5 reps
95% x 5 reps	100% x 5 reps	105% x 5 reps
105% x 5 reps	110% x 5 reps	115% x 5 reps

There are no caps on many lifts you do for your Joker sets – much of this is dependent on how much cushion you choose to have with the training max. Also, it depends on how dedicated the athlete is in terms of diet, sleep and recovery.

In a nutshell, this allows the coach a huge amount of latitude when training athletes and picking their weights. It also gives the athlete something they always want to do: add weight to the bar. When these two ideas, 5's Progression and Joker sets, came together, a huge weight was lifted off of my back. I believe this to be the best way to train beginner lifters.

More on the Deload

The point of the deload is to not have to take it when you need it, but rather to use it as a tool to NEVER need it. This seems to be pretty common sense to me. It is similar to preventative medicine, but since that has failed miserably in the United States, so has the deload. There are a number of ways to do the deload and to keep things more interesting, I have listed five options. Choose any of these five. Or, you can choose not to do it and find out the hard way.

Deload 1	Deload 2	Deload 3	Deload 4	Deload 5
Reps/%	Reps/%	Reps/%	Reps/%	Reps/%
5 x 40%	5 x 50%	3 x 65%	10 x 40%	10 x 50%
5 x 50%	5 x 60%	3 x 75%	8 x 50%	8 x 60%
5 x 60%	5 x 70%	3 x 85%	6 x 60%	6 x 70%

So which deload is right for you? If you are beat up and need a big break, 1 and 2 would work well for you. If you feel like you need to keep the heavy weights on your back to make progress, Deload 3 has your name written all over it. Deload 4 and 5 are good for those who want to do some higher rep work and their joints feel fine. I wouldn't over analyze the deloads, just take a break and come back stronger. They don't make you weaker. The amount of weight you lift over several years, your consistency, your ability to remain on a program with solid principles, your heart/determination, and your willingness to do what others are unwilling to do (also known as Kaiser Soze Syndrome) are what will make you strong and unbeatable.

Full Body Deload

This is something I haven't done since high school, until recently. The point of this deload is to take the stress off the body but still stress the muscles. The Full Body Deload is done three days/week regardless of how many days you usually train. The Full Body Deload follows the same template all three days.

Monday/Wednesday/Friday

Warm-up – Bike, run, agility work, jump rope – 10-20 minutes

Mobility/flexibility – 10-20 minutes

Strength -

- Hang Cleans – 5 sets of 5 reps (light)
- Single Leg Exercise (step ups, lunges or single leg squats) – 5 sets of 6 reps
- DB Pressing Exercise (bench, standing press or incline press) – 5 sets of 10 reps
- Lat Exercise – (chin-ups, pull-ups, rows or lat pulldowns) – 5 sets of 10 reps
- Abdominal – (sit-ups, crunches, planks, leg raises, ab wheel) - Pick one exercise and do a lot of it.
- Low Back – (reverse hypers or back raises) - Pick one exercise and do a lot of it.

After the strength training, repeat the warm-up and the mobility and flexibility work.

High Intensity Deload

This is another great way to deload and keeps the intensity of lifts high, but the volume low. This is a simple way to keep your body used to heavy weights. Work up in 10% increments until you reach your training max. With your training max, only do a single. Here is an example:

Training Max = 300 pounds

- Bar x 10
- 135 x 5
- 150 x 3 reps
- 180 x 3 reps
- 210 x 3 reps
- 240 x 3 reps
- 270 x 1-3
- 300 x 1

Note: You can do any amount of reps leading up to the TM. The reps above are only an example.

28 Weeks of Training

Here is a sample 28-week program using the above 5/3/1 variations. This sample will give you an idea of how to map out your training. I didn't write out every possible workout - that would bore the hell out of everyone, including me. What this does is give you a solid template for half of the training year. Remember that the principles are what matter – use the appropriate training max, progress slow and set PR's.

You have three template options for this 28 Week Training Cycle:

Option One: 4 Days/Week

- Monday - Squat
- Tuesday - Bench Press
- Thursday - Deadlift
- Friday – Press

Option Two: 2 Days/Week

- Monday - Squat/Bench Press
- Thursday - Deadlift/Press

Option Three - 3 Days/Week

- Monday - Squat
- Wednesday - Bench Press
- Friday - Deadlift/Press

Weeks 1-6 - Rep maxes + last set first

Example:

- 3 reps @ 70%
- 3 reps @ 80%
- 3+ reps @ 90%
- 70% x AMRAP (Rest Pause on upper body lifts. Lower body lifts are just

done for max reps.)

Week 7 - Deload

Week 8-13 - Rep maxes, Up/Down Ladder

Example:

- 3 reps @ 70%
- 3 reps @ 80%
- 3+ reps @ 90%
- 3+ reps @ 80%
- 3 + reps @ 70%

Week 14 - Deload

Week 15-20 - Rep maxes, TM for max reps

Example:

- 3 reps @ 70%
- 3 reps @ 80%
- 3+ reps @ 90%
- TM X AMRAP

Week 21 - Deload

Week 22-27 - Rep maxes, Joker sets

These are 10% jumps after the last set. So for example, on 3x3 day it would be:

- 70x3
- 80x3
- 90x3+
- 100x3
- 110x3
- etc....

Always go up 10% (to keep you accountable for not being a huge pussy and it will challenge you to try something awesome) and stick with the same reps (5 reps on 3x5, 3 reps on 3x3 and 1 rep on 5/3/1). Never cut the last set short unless you have a meet coming up. Expect greatness from yourself.

Week 28 - Deload

* Assistance work is whatever you want. If you train the main lifts correctly and push them, it will not matter how you do curls and face pulls.

Advanced 5/3/1

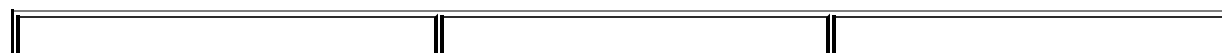
Many of my friends have used the Advanced 5/3/1 program and they loved it. These friends were all using the original 5/3/1 program and then the 5/3/1 for Powerlifting variation, and although they did get stronger their bodies couldn't handle the rep records. In other words, they had to scale back their rep records and not push as hard. Anyone who has trained to a high level knows that there is a huge difference, physically and mentally, between an advanced person pushing their bodies and a beginner or intermediate.

After talking to Sean Donegan, I began thinking of the different variations of what I've done over the years and how to adapt it to his training and his needs. After about a year or so, I created a couple of different variations but none of them were "it." They were clumsy and didn't have the spirit of the original. I couldn't put the pieces together to make it "simple and effective."

One day, after training, while painting my kitchen, it finally came to me. Armed with a pencil, I wrote the entire program on the unpainted wall, took a picture of it and resumed my work. I wish the story were a bit sexier but that's what you get; my epiphany moment came to me while painting my kitchen.

Before we get to the nuts and bolts of the training program, let me explain a few things first. The sets and reps are all based on A.S. Prilepin's Chart. This chart has been bastardized over the years and shown in a variety of different ways. Prilepin's chart is based on the optimum number of lifts, at a certain percentage for the classical Olympic lifts (clean and jerk and the snatch). To make it even simpler, Prilepin determined what the best reps are, at a given percentage, to ensure that both strength and speed are developed.

The chart is based on the Olympic lifts, which are quite different than the powerlifts. This is an obvious restriction, but the heart and soul of the numbers are what matter. In fact, this chart is reasonably the best way for an advanced lifter to combine strength and speed in his training without burning out. Here is the unabridged chart, as seen in the book *A System of Multi-Year Training in Weightlifting* by A.S. Medvedyev.



Percentage of Maximum	Number of Repetitions	Number of Lifts (total)
70	3-6	18
80	2-4	15
90	1-2	10 for snatch 7 for clean and jerk

For example, if one were to perform the clean and jerk at 70% of their maximum, he would do sets of 3-6 reps, for a total of 18 lifts. Think about that for a second and apply it to the bench press. Most people would do sets of 8-10 reps on the bench press with 70% of their max. This is the bodybuilding influence that has swept over powerlifting and sports training. There is nothing wrong with it, and it is simply a different approach that has made a lot of people strong, but there may be a better way for you.

I've taken a few liberties with the chart to create the Advanced 5/3/1 program.

But I believe that it is still pretty close to Prilipin's chart and the spirit remains, which is what I want to ensure. I want to combine strength and speed while keeping the advanced lifter's body and mind fresh.

Advanced 5/3/1 Rules

Start with 90% of your max. This is no different than the original 5/3/1 program.

You will progress the same after every three-week cycle: five pounds for the upper body lifts (bench press and press) and 10 pounds for the lower body lifts (deadlift and squat). If you wish to do power cleans on this program, increase five pounds every cycle.

The training cycle lasts three weeks. The fourth week can be used as a deload. As an advanced lifter, this is up to you - you know your body better than I do. Remember that a deload is a perfect way to prevent overtraining, not a way to overcome an overtrained state. In other words, deload before it is too late.

You can train 2, 3 or 4 days per week – this is up to you, your training schedule and what you (and your life) can handle. I will provide a variety of training schedules at the end of this section.

No extra reps are done on any set – just do the reps as outlined in the program.
NO MAX REPS.

The Advanced 5/3/1 Routine

- Week One – 5 sets of 5 reps @ 75% of Training Max
- Week Two – 5 sets of 3 reps @ 85% of Training Max
- Week Three – 5 sets of 1 rep @ 95% of Training Max
- Week Four (deload, optional) – 3 sets of 5 reps @ 60-70% of Training Max

Once you are done with the cycle, increase your training max accordingly and go back to week one.

The only part of the 5/3/1 philosophy not readily present in the Advanced 5/3/1 program is “breaking personal records.” I propose that on week three, if you feel strong, you can work up to a new 1RM. This isn’t required every time, but it does allow you to work up to a new record when you feel good, strong and fast.

When using the Advanced 5/3/1 program your form noticeably improves and you become faster as the sets go on. This is a huge advantage for dialing in your form and gaining confidence. Also, being able to hit heavier weights every third week is great for keeping that edge for lifting heavy weights. By keeping the weights based on your training max, you will always feel fresh. Lifting volume and a higher rep limit on the main exercises is also joint-friendly.

The only downside, and one that still keeps me from committing to this full-time, is that it’s boring as hell. I love the challenge of going for obscene rep maxes. Doing multiple sets at the same weight, or near the same weight, is boring. When I did “speed work,” aka Conjugate Training, the dynamic work was incredibly boring because not only were light weights used, but also the same weight for 8-10 sets. It was no surprise that I worked up in weights nearly every week. Other than that, I believe this program works EXTREMELY well to combine speed and strength work with optimal volume.

Advanced 5/3/1 Training Template

Week One

Monday	Tuesday	Thursday	Friday
Squat – 5x5 @ 75%	Bench Press – 5x5 @ 75%	Squat – 3x5 @ 75% (optional)	Press – 5x5 @ 75%
Deadlift – 3x5 @ 75% (optional)	Press – 3x5 @ 75% (optional)	Deadlift – 5x5 @ 75%	Bench Press – 3x5 @ 75% (optional)
Assistance Work	Assistance Work	Assistance Work	Assistance Work

Week Two

Monday	Tuesday	Thursday	Friday
Squat – 5x3 @ 85%	Bench Press – 5x3 @ 85%	Squat – 3x5 @ 75% (optional)	Press – 5x3 @ 85%
Deadlift – 3x5 @ 75% (optional)	Press 3x5 @ 75% (optional)	Deadlift – 5x3 @ 85%	Bench Press – 3x5 @ 75% (optional)
Assistance Work	Assistance Work	Assistance Work	Assistance Work

Week Three

Monday	Tuesday	Thursday	Friday
Squat – 5x1 @ 95%	Bench Press – 5x1 @ 95%	Squat – 3x5 @ 75% (optional)	Press – 5x1 @ 95%
Deadlift – 3x5 @ 75% (optional)	Press – 3x5 @ 75% (optional)	Deadlift – 5x1 @ 95%	Bench Press – 3x5 @ 75% (optional)
Assistance Work	Assistance Work	Assistance Work	Assistance Work

Assistance work for the 5/3/1 Advanced program

I won't go into any detail on assistance work for this program. If you need help figuring that out, you are not ready for this program.

2 Day/Week Training

I have two “go to” training schedules that always keep me coming back, allowing me to stay strong, pliable and in-shape. The 2x2x2 training program is one. It forces you to give ample time to flexibility/mobility, conditioning and strength. Most of us only like to hang out with one of those groups and the others seem to suffer. This program demands balanced training so no group suffers. Here are the basics the program:

- 6 training days per week (schedule below).
- 2 days are devoted to heavy weight training.
- 2 days are devoted to intensive static stretching, dynamic flexibility and mobility.
- 2 days are devoted to conditioning work.

Training Week

Below is the best training week, based on the above tenets, that I've used. You are more than welcome to change things up by doing different days based on your schedule, but this is all up to you. You may have access to the weight room and training partners on varied days, or your work schedule may interfere with getting to the weight room. Travel, work and family commitments may dictate training schedules. They may change week to week, but the point is this – get all 6 workouts in every week, regardless of their order. One workout is no more important than another. Strive for balance. Leaving one of these workouts out of your training schedule will cause you fall into the trap you are trying to avoid.

Stop thinking that you cannot get stronger training two times per week. In reality, you are training six days/week with an emphasis on recovery, mobility, strength, hypertrophy and conditioning. Again, strive for balance.

Monday	Lower Body Training
Tuesday	Flexibility/Mobility
Wednesday	Conditioning
Thursday	Upper Body Training
Friday	Flexibility/Mobility
Saturday	Conditioning

Flexibility/Mobility

I am no expert on mobility or flexibility. If I had to give myself an honest rating on where I fall on the “Are you a Mobility Expert?” scale, I would say I fall somewhere between Shitty and Awful. But what I do know is that persistent work pays off. I have struggled with mobility for a long time and it only got worse after a motorcycle accident. Like many of you, I did my research and every week a new expert pops up saying things such as:

Stretching will kill you and give you dick cancer.

Stretching is best thing ever.

Don't do hip circles.

Do hip circles.

In the end, I trusted myself and just did a lot of little stuff several times a day. Read that last part again. I had to swallow a lot of pride and suffer the humiliation of Going Full Mobility 3-4 times a day to get my body back on track. Like strength training, there are no magic programs or exercises just strong principles. And remember your mobility program doesn't have to be perfect, just consistent.

Mobility Session 1

This is what I like to do in the mornings and is very easy way to start the day:

Hips - Lay on your back, arms out to your sides. Bend your knees and bring your feet together. Slowly bring both knees to the left while keeping your torso on the ground. Bring the knees back up and repeat the motion to the right. This is one rep. Perform 6-10 reps.

Rolls – While sitting up, roll back and try to bring your legs over your head. Roll forward until you are sitting up. This is one rep. Do this for 6-10 reps.

Hamstrings – Lay on your back and bend your knees. Lace your fingers together and grab under your right hamstring. Straighten your right leg up and out, forcing a light hamstring stretch. Hold this position for 2 seconds and bend your knee. This is one rep. Do 6-10 reps per leg.

Bodyweight Squat – Perform 10 bodyweight squats. On the 10th rep, hold the bottom position and use your elbows to force your knees out. Hold this position for 10 seconds.

Hip Flexor Stretch – Perform the hip flexor stretch for 3 sets of 10 seconds on each leg.

Mobility Session 2

This is the popular Defranco Agile 8, developed by Joe Defranco and I take NO credit for it. It works incredibly well. This was, and still is, the backbone of my mobility work.

Foam Roll/PVC Pipe IT Band – Roll back and forth between your hip and knee. This is incredibly uncomfortable. Joe recommends 10-15 rolls per side but I recommend you do as many as you need in order to feel relief. This may mean 50-100 for some people.

Foam Roll/PVC pipe Adductors – The adductors are your inner thighs. If you thought the IT bands were sensitive just wait until you roll your adductors. It will take body manipulation, but you will find the right position quickly. Joe recommends 10-15 and that seems to be about all anyone can handle.

Glute/Piriformis Release with Lacrosse Ball – This can be a life saver for those who have back problems. Lie on your back with your knees bent. Cross your right foot over your left thigh. Place the lacrosse ball under your right butt cheek and roll around until you feel the tight spots. Do this until the spots release and you no longer feel tension. Repeat on the other side.

Rollovers into V-Sit – Roll your legs over your head and return to a seated position, with your legs in a V. Touch your toes for a count and return to the roll. Do this for 10 reps.

Fire Hydrant Circles – Get on all fours. Perform 10 forward hip circles and 10 backward hip circles with each leg.

Mountain Climbers – The key to mountain climbers is to bring your legs up as far as you can – really stretch the hip flexors. Don't be concerned with how fast you do these, but rather how LONG you can do these. Strive for a big stride. I like to hold each position for a second or two. Perform 10 reps per leg.

Groiners – Fall into a deep squat position. Put your hands on the ground and kick both legs in back of you, assuming a push-up position. Now jump your

legs back into a squat position. This is one rep. Do 10 reps and hold the last position and push your knees out with your elbows.

Hip Flexor Stretch – Perform a hip flexor stretch on each side for 3 sets of 10 seconds.

Static Stretching

Static stretching has gotten a bad rap these last few years. Some people think it makes you slower or less explosive. All I know is that I feel better after I stretch, and consistent stretching has made a huge difference from how I felt before. When combined with mobility work, it seems to provide the best of both worlds. For static stretching, I recommend getting any basic Yoga DVD and following along. If possible, attend a Yoga class one or two days a week.

Lifting

Training is divided into 2 phases: Hypertrophy and Strength, with each phase lasting 6 weeks. Essentially, you can run these phases indefinitely, as long as you understand the principles of each phase. Too many people just go to the weight room and lift with no end goal in mind – their lifting just exists in the Here and Now. With the plan below, you can seamlessly move from one phase to the next and keep making progress.

Also, by switching from phase to phase, it can offer the lifter plenty of time and experimentation to prevent becoming stale. You want to add in a new exercise for high volume work? Great! Use it during the Hypertrophy Phase. You want to add in rack pulls to strengthen your deadlift? Perfect to add into the Strength Phase. You want to add in some insane bodybuilder-style drop sets? Try it during the Hypertrophy phase. All you have to do is add it in the appropriate phase and keep the main principles of the program constant.

The end goal of this training is simple: get stronger in the press, bench press, squat and deadlift. Yes, I want people to feel better and healthier than they did when they started this program, which is why we are combining the lifting with a great emphasis on mobility/flexibility and conditioning work. But in the end, this programming is designed to make you stronger.

Hypertrophy Phase

Week One

Monday	Thursday
Squat – 5/3/1 sets and reps	Bench Press – 5/3/1 sets and reps
Safety Squat Bar (or variation) - 5 sets of 10	Press (or variation) – 5 sets of 10
Straight Leg Deadlift/Good Morning (or variation) - 5 sets of 10	Lat Work – 5 sets of 10

Week Two

Monday	Thursday
Deadlift – 5/3/1 sets and reps	Press – 5/3/1 sets and reps
Safety Squat Bar (or variation) – 5 sets of 10	Bench Press (or variation) – 5 sets of 10
Straight Leg Deadlift/Good Morning (or variation) - 5 sets of 10	Lat Work – 5 sets of 10

Notes for Hypertrophy Phase

Breaking this template down even further is this simple: On lower body day, follow up your main work with a big leg movement and a big “deadlift-like” movement. On upper body day, follow up the main pressing movement, (whether it be the press or the bench press) with the OPPOSITE movement. For example, after you bench press, you will use the press for the volume work.

After the main work is done, you are free to do anything you desire. This can include any additional work for injury prevention or any work that is simply cosmetic. This could include curls, neck work, rotator cuff, upper back, abdominal, etc. This is up to you and is not programmed as it is simply GPP work for the competitive lifter.

Push the final sets of your 5/3/1 work hard. The main purpose of this phase is to train using semi-heavy weights and up the volume of your assistance work. I work with many older lifters and I let them dictate how hard they want to push their final sets. In place of the final sets, I have many of the lifters do a heavy single after their final sets, even during this phase. Personally, I almost always hit a heavy set after each and every workout. You can use the Joker sets for this part of the training.

Hypertrophy Phase Changes – Bad Knees

If you find that the volume of the lower body work is too much for your knees, back or your overall body, LOWER IT! This can be as simple as choosing fewer reps (5 sets of 5 reps) or using fewer sets (3 sets of 10 reps). I wouldn't change the weight on the barbell.

If your body is beat to hell and you have bad knees, here are some changes that can and should be made to this part of training.

All squats should be done to a box. This is essential to keep the knees from getting too sore.

I cut out all of the squat assistance and use Prowler Walks and Sled Drags (forward and backward) to increase the leg volume. Prowler Walks are done for 6-8 40-yard walks with increasing weight on the Prowler. This is not done with any conditioning emphasis (although you will be out of breath). You are doing this to strengthen the legs, so push accordingly. This means walking with big steps, not sprinting. Sprinting will only serve to put more stress on your knees. Each set of Prowler walks are done with increased weight. This means you do 1-2 walks with 90 pounds and increase the weight every 1-2 40-yard walks. How heavy you go is up to you, your strength level and the surface on which you push. Remember that the point of using the Prowler at this time is to strengthen your legs and hips without stressing your knees or hips too much. So load it up and WALK! If you don't know how much weight to do or how many trips to do – follow this mantra: DO MORE.

The sled drags are done in a similar style – walk forward with the sled, and walk backward dragging the sled. This can be done while wearing a belt (attach the sled strap to the belt), using a sled harness (similar to what the Strongman competitors use) or simply holding on to the sled strap with your hands and walking forward and backward. Start with a light weight and keep adding weight every 1-2 40-yard walks. I recommend doing 4-6 drags forward and 4-6 drags backward. Load up the sled and move it – no one got weaker by moving heavy weight.

I recommend doing both the sled and the Prowler in the same workout.

I highly recommend using knee sleeves when you squat. There are numerous styles of knee sleeves – some are made loose and offer little support, but keep the knees warm. Others do both and are like wearing a knee wrap but not as tight. I like the latter – very tight knee sleeves that offer a ton of support and warmth. If you do not have knee sleeves, knee wraps are a great alternative. For the lighter sets and warm-up sets, don't wrap as tight. The heavier you go, the tighter you can wear them.

Hypertrophy Phase Changes – Bad Back

If your back does not agree with straight-leg deadlifts or good mornings, replace these exercises with one of the following: back raises, glute ham raises, 45-degree back raises or Reverse Hyperextensions. These all can be done for the 5 sets of 10 reps or even higher reps (if you can handle it). Also, using the Prowler and the sled is great for people with bad backs. In a perfect world, you would use the belt squat machine, but realistically, few people have this machine at their disposal. If you do have access to a belt squat machine and have a bad back, use it in place of the SS Bar Squat.

There seems to be a lot of Internet talk about the use of belts – just wear one if you want. You aren't proving anything to anyone by not wearing one. Some people love them and others think they are the work of Satan. As always, the answer lies somewhere in the middle. If you wear a belt because you don't want to train your lower back and abs, you are wearing it for the wrong reason. If you do train your midsection and are using a belt as a safety precaution, by all means do it.

Hypertrophy Phase Changes – Bad Shoulders

If your shoulders cannot handle the upper body volume, there are a couple things you can try. First, try using the Football Bar (Swiss bar) for all of your pressing movements. This includes the main sets and the accessory work. If your shoulders cannot handle the additional pressing volume for the assistance work, swap it out for one of the following:

Shoulder raises (front, rear and side).

Light presses giant setted with raises – a favorite of mine. It allows you to still use the press as an assistance movement but limit the weight you can use because of the exhaustion of the giant sets of raises. Here is how it is done: perform a set of 10-15 reps of the press, then do a set of front or side raises for 10-15 reps, then finish with a set of 10-15 reps of rear raises. This is ONE set, with minimal rest between the press and the raises. Do this 3-4 times through, with 1-2 minutes rest between each set.

The other option is to use the Buffalo Bar for your squat sets. This bar is a lifesaver for people with bad shoulders and is only sold through Iron Mind. The Buffalo Bar has a slight camber to it that allows you to squat with little stress on your shoulders. This is the only squat specialty bar that allows you to squat with the same form as a regular squat while relieving shoulder stress. The SS Bar Squat Bar and the Cambered Squat Bar do take stress off of your shoulders, but squat form is drastically different than a normal squat done with a straight bar.

Strength Phase

Week One

Monday	Thursday
Squat – 5/3/1 sets and reps	Bench Press – 5/3/1 sets and reps
Safety Squat Bar (or variation) - SST or 5's Progression	Bench Press (or variation) – SST or 5's Progression
Straight Leg Deadlift/Good Morning (or variation) - 5 sets of 10	Lat Work – 5 sets of 10

Week Two

Monday	Thursday
Deadlift – 5/3/1 sets and reps	Press – 5/3/1 sets and reps
Safety Squat Bar (or variation) – SST or 5's Progression (use same exercise as week one)	Bench Press (or variation) – SST or 5's Progression (use same exercise as week one)
Straight Leg Deadlift/Good Morning (or variation) - 5 sets of 10	Lat Work – 5 sets of 10

Notes for Strength Phase

The assistance work is lower in volume but higher in intensity, which will help prepare your body for heavier weights.

After the main work is done, you are free to do anything you desire, such as cosmetic or injury-prevention work, including curls, neck work, rotator cuff, upper back, abdominal, etc. This is up to you and is not programmed as it is simply GPP work for the competitive lifter.

Strength Phase – Changes

Like the Hypertrophy Phase, you may have to make changes based on your body being beat to hell. The same changes are applicable to this phase as well – use the sled and Prowler for lower-body volume work (don't have to change anything) if your knees and/or back can't handle it. Also, the shoulders and low back changes are as applicable as well. This means that you can't do the assistance work as prescribed, which is fine and you can definitely work around it.

Assistance Work – Strength Phase

5's Progression

This is very easy to do and to program. Simply use the normal 5/3/1 percentages and do 3 sets of 5 reps for ALL the weeks. To avoid any confusion, let me write it out:

Week One	Week Two	Week Three
5 reps at 65%	5 reps @ 70%	5 reps @ 75%
5 reps @ 75%	5 reps @ 80%	5 reps @ 85%
5 reps @ 85%	5 reps @ 90%	5 reps @ 95%

Use the same exercise for the squat and the pressing variation – allowing you to do 6 total workouts for each lift, which means that you will go through two 5/3/1 set/rep cycles. Use a training max for each of these lifts – I recommend using 85-90% of your actual max (or predicted max) for you training max.

Simplest Strength Template (SST)

This is all explained, in great detail, in the 5/3/1 2nd Edition.

Assistance Work

Each day, I answer about 50 question, and 49 of them are about assistance work. Therefore, I will now make it perfectly clear why I choose the assistance exercises detailed above and I will also provide variations.

Safety Squat Bar

It is easy on the shoulders and a great way to add leg volume without straining your shoulders or being externally rotated for long periods of time. It is perfect for an older lifter trying to get stronger, stay healthy and be able to press.

It is the “Prowler” of barbells. The Prowler is the easiest and simplest thing to do. You simply get behind the sled and push. There are no technique guidelines. If the sled doesn’t move it is simple: either drop your hips, or the weight is too heavy. In other words, get stronger. The SS Bar is much the same. Get in the yoke, push your ass back and squat. When you come up, you can strain and muscle your way to the top. It is truly a full-body movement when the weight becomes heavy, as all you have to worry about is pushing hard and holding on to the yoke.

It helps build the deadlift and squat. The SS Bar is great for strengthening your quads and the entire back side of the body, including hamstrings, glutes, low back, mid back and upper back.

One of the big hang-ups people have with this two day/week program is that you are only doing the main lifts once every two weeks. By using the SS Bar every week, you are now squatting every week. This solves that problem and the mental block.

Straight Leg Deadlift/Good Morning

The straight leg deadlift (SLDL) and good morning (GM) exercises are great ways to strengthen the lower back, glutes and hamstrings. These muscles are essential to building a good squat and deadlift. Because of the many muscles used in both of the exercises and the benefit to the main lifts, these exercises are great examples of Training Economy. Training Economy is using the least amount of exercises with the greatest overall effect, thus saving you time and energy.

The SLDL and GM are best used with a light to moderate weight, which ensures that your form is not compromised. Too often, these exercises are done using heavy weights, turning the SLDL into a deadlift and the GM into a bad-looking squat. This happens because too much weight causes the hips to drop just to complete the rep, and the loses its effectiveness and purpose. The purpose of the assistance lifts is NOT to get good at the GM or SLDL, but rather to strengthen the muscle groups that help the squat and deadlift. There are no crowns given to the Good Morning King. Because the lifts are best done with a light to moderate weight, a higher volume can be used. Thus, you can use them to get bigger and stronger.

As to which (SLDL or GM) exercise to do – this is entirely up to you and your training template. This will be better explained later in this section but both are great exercises.

Safety Squat Bar Variations

If you do not want to use a SS Bar (or don't have access to one) here is a list of acceptable variations. This is not exhaustive as you may have certain ones that you prefer or to which you have access.

- Front Squat
- Box Squat
- Hack Squat
- Leg Press
- Single Leg Work (Step Up, Lunge, One Leg Squat)

SLDL/GM Variations

- Trap Bar
- Snatch Grip Deadlift
- Rack Pulls
- Block Deadlift
- Deficit Deadlift
- Romanian Deadlift
- KB Swings (or Hungarian Core Blaster)

Bench Press/Press as Assistance Work

There really doesn't need to be any explanation as to why these lifts are done as assistance lifts – they are major exercises and have been proven to be tremendous strength and muscle builders. I am adamant about the use of the football bar (or Swiss bar) when doing the volume work for assistance. The reason for this is simple – it is 100% easier on the shoulders. This doesn't mean you can't use the straight bar for the volume training, rather it is merely a recommendation. This bar has neutral handles on it (similar to how one would hold dumbbells when pressing) and is so much easier on the shoulders and pecs.

The main focus of the upper body assistance work for this training is to choose a “big” pressing exercise – any kind of press will do. Using the press and the bench press is just an easy way to get more work in with the main lift. The big picture is simple: after the main exercise, choose a big pressing movement and do high-volume work.

Bench Press/Press Variations

- Football Bar Bench Press
- Football Bar Press
- Floor Press
- Incline Press
- Any kind of press done on Hammer Machine (or something similar)
- Dumbbell Pressing (supine, incline or standing)
- Dips (weighted or non-weighted)
- Push-ups

Lat Work

I am a big believer in lat work. With all the pressing we've done over the years, it certainly helps to keep that balance between push and pull. And since most of us have done far more pressing than pulling we have a lot of catching up to do.

I should mention that my lat work is also upper back work, as I am always conscious of pulling my shoulder blades together and pinching my lats and traps on each movement. I am not very "weight conscious" when I do lat and upper back work. In other words, I don't care how much weight I use on rows or how many chin-ups I can do. Instead, I make sure that I do the movements correctly. Amazing concept, right?

However, I do a lot of volume with lat work. I usually do 150-200 reps of lat work/balance work (i.e. work for the upper back) per workout. Although it is not written in the template, I always do some kind of pulling movement between the main sets (yes, even the squat and deadlift). This is usually chin-ups/pull-ups, T-Bar rows, face pulls, band pull-aparts or bent over lateral raises. Yeah, I know the last two aren't technically "lat work" but they are movements that help to balance the shoulder girdle.

The main lat movement of the day is always supersetted with the main pressing assistance work. This is not a time to be timing the rest periods – this is time for moving some weight. Let the conditioning happen on the other two days; you are in the weight room to get stronger not to become a Kipping Nancy. So make each and every set count.

My two main pulling movements are Rows and Chins/Pull-ups. This is simply because I have a garage gym and this is what I have access to. And really, you can't go wrong with these choices.

Two Day/Week – New Template

This new template is a bit more joint and muscle friendly than the others and allows you to do all four lifts in a week. There is a clear emphasis on one lower and one upper body lift per week. For example, the week that you are squatting heavy, the deadlift will still be done. However, it won't take a huge mental and physical commitment. You still get some quality work in and it should still be relatively heavy.

The lift that is being emphasized (on week one the squat and the bench press are these lifts) should be given your full attention and this when PR's are achieved, Jokers sets done and volume work done.

Week One

Day One	Day Two
Squat – 5/3/1 sets and reps	Bench Press – 5/3/1 sets and reps
Deadlift – 65% x 3, 75% x 3, 85% x 3	Press - 65% x 3, 75% x 3, 85% x 3
Assistance Work	Assistance Work

Week Two

Day One	Day Two
Squat – 65% x 3, 75% x 3, 85% x 3	Press – 5/3/1 sets and reps
Deadlift – 5/3/1 sets and reps	Bench Press - 65% x 3, 75% x 3, 85% x 3
Assistance Work	Assistance Work

Note: The 65%, 75%, 85% for 3 reps can be changed to any of the following (all percentages based on the training max):

- 70%x3, 80%x3, 90%x3
- 75%x5, 85%x3, 95%x1
- 80%x1, 90%x1, 100%x1

S.S.S. – Singles, Speed, Size

The training days per week are up to you – this can change from week to week as your recovery may vary. I highly recommend taking one or two days/between sessions.

Four main workouts: squat, bench press, press and deadlift. This remains a constant from the original 5/3/1 workout.

All percentages are based on your training max (TM). Like the original 5/3/1 workout, your TM begins at 90% of your 1RM.

After three full workouts of each lift, your TM will go up 5-10 pounds for the upper/lower body lifts. It may take you three weeks or six weeks to finish a cycle. This depends entirely on how often you train.

For every weight training workout that you do, you must do one recovery session. Your recovery work **MUST** be taken as seriously as your weight training.

You must eat. This should be a given when training for strength and combining it with size and speed work, but there is new breed of male out there and it does not look good for the future. “Diets” have replaced common sense. I will not discuss diet when everyone knows a T-Bone and a glass of milk (look at the big picture!) are more conducive to lifting big weights than tuna stuffed in a low-carb pita. If you do not know how to eat a steak, then this workout is not for you.

Deloads are done by how you feel and are up to you. A deload week is simply doing the main lifts for 3 sets of 5 reps at 70% and little to no assistance work. You will not do the 5x10 training during a deload.

Here is the basic daily template

Speed	Box Jumps, Hurdle Jumps, Long Jumps, Jump Rope, Medicine Ball Throws, 10 yard sprints/starts (15-30 jumps or throws per day)
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Strength	5 singles at 90%+ of your Training Max
Size	Hypertrophy Phase – 5 sets of 10 reps at approximately 50% of your TM. Strength Phase – Choose any one of these assistance templates: Simplest Strength Template, 5's Progression, or 3x5

Speed

On the field, in the weight room and on the road, speed kills. And there is no better way to learn how to use your body as a total unit like following the example of athletes. You can do all the squats with bands that you want, but you will not get fast and explosive unless you do things outside of the weight room. The fastest, most explosive people on earth throw and jump. So follow their lead or be left behind. Learn to use your entire body.

The best ways to do this are simple: throw objects, jump over and onto things and learn how to do short bursts of sprints. These include box jumps (probably the easiest), hurdle jumps, jumping over boxes/cones, jumping for distance (standing long jump) and jumping for height (touching the rim of a basketball hoop). You also need to learn to land and react. This is simple. Instead of sticking the landing of a box jump or hurdle jump, you quickly jump over another hurdle or onto another box. This is true plyometric work.

Throwing medicine balls overhead (backwards and forwards), from the knees, chest passes, single arm throws (think shot put) are all great ways of linking the upper and lower body to one cohesive unit.

10-20 yard sprints done from a variety of starting positions are great for developing body awareness and explosiveness. This would include 2-point stance, 3-point stance, 4-point stance (bear crawl position), on knees, on back, on stomach, sitting down and from a lunge position.

As a reference, I like to perform about 30 “reps” per session. This can be divided any way you see fit. 10 jumps, 10 throws and 10 starts - I like to vary it from time to time and keep myself amused. For example:

- 3x5 box jumps (15 reps)
- 10 overhead med ball throws (10 reps)
- 5 10-yard sprints

Strength

This is very simple – perform 5 singles at 90% of your training max. You can choose to work up heavier than 90% but you don't want to miss the weight. You can also do more than 5 singles. The minimum is 5 sets of 1 rep at 90% of your training max. Since most people train 4 days/week, the basic layout is simple:

Day One	Day Two	Day Three	Day Four
Press	Deadlift	Bench Press	Squat and Power Clean

Size

For the hypertrophy phase of this program, I recommend doing 5 sets of 10 reps at around 50%. I also recommend having a training max for each exercise you do. You don't have to do all the sets at one weight; you can pyramid up or down depending on how you feel. You can use a weight that is heavier or lighter than 50%. All that matters is that you get the work done. This is not about moving the weight - it's about building muscle.

You can choose to do a one-leg movement for the hypertrophy phase – you are free to do 5 sets of 10 reps with this exercise (obviously you don't work on %'s with one-leg movements since only a toothless mongrel would try to max out on a one-leg movement). You can also choose to do 5 sets of 6 reps with one-leg work.

When you choose the movement, I recommend NOT choosing the same movement you did singles with. Pick a movement that is similar in nature. Here is a list of examples:

Squat Size	Deadlift Size	Bench Press/Press Size
Box Squat	Good Morning (done light, no percentages used)	Dumbbell pressing (flat, incline, standing)
Front Squat	Straight Leg Deadlift (done light, no percentages used)	Incline Press
Safety Bar Squat	Snatch Grip Deadlift	Floor Press
Leg Press	Deficit Deadlift	Football Bar (flat, incline, standing)
Hack Squat	Trap Bar	Board Press (various boards)
One-Leg Movements (lunge, step up, one leg squat)	Rack Pull	Weighted Dips



Assistance Work

Now I know I'll need to address this so here is my statement – all assistance work done during this program has to be geared towards prehabilitation and imbalances. This is not a bodybuilding program, this is a program to make you bigger, faster and stronger. So, nothing is open for debate.

Assistance work will be any kind of lat/upper back work, abdominal training and work for the rotator cuff. Any low back training **MUST** be done with a back raise or reverse hyperextension. Curls can be done to help shoulders and elbows. Hamstring work can be done with a glute-ham raise. In short, all assistance work is to be non-intrusive to the main work. If in doubt, leave it out. You don't need it.

Setting up your 12-Week SSS Program

This is very easy, and I'll outline it completely for you. The first six weeks will be the off-season phase. The second six-week phase, will be the prep phase for peaking.

First 3-Week Phase (Off Season)

Monday	Tuesday	Thursday	Friday
Speed Work (jumps, throws, sprints)	Speed Work (jumps, throws, sprints)	Speed Work (jumps, throws, sprints)	Speed Work (jumps, throws, sprints)
Press – 5 singles at 90% of your TM	Deadlift – 5 singles at 90% of your TM	Bench Press – 5 singles at 90% of your TM	Squat – 5 singles at 90% of your TM
Dumbbell Bench Press – 5 sets of 10 reps	Straight Leg Deadlift – 5 sets of 10 reps	Incline Press – 5 sets of 10 reps	SS Bar Squat – 5 sets of 10 reps
Lat/Upper Back/Biceps	Abdominal Work	Lat/Upper Back/Biceps	Abdominal Work

Second 3-Week Phase (Off Season)

Note: Be sure to increase your TM on your upper-body movements by 5 pounds and your lower-body movements by 10 pounds).

Monday	Tuesday	Thursday	Friday
Speed Work (jumps, throws, sprints)	Speed Work (jumps, throws, sprints)	Speed Work (jumps, throws, sprints)	Speed Work (jumps, throws, sprints)
Press – 5 singles at 90% of your TM	Deadlift – 5 singles at 90% of your TM	Bench Press – 5 singles at 90% of your TM	Squat – 5 singles at 90% of your TM
DB Incline Press – 5 sets of 10 reps	Good Morning – 5 sets of 10 reps	Floor Press – 5 sets of 10 reps	Leg Press – 5 sets of 10 reps
Lat/Upper Back/Biceps	Abdominal Work	Lat/Upper Back/Biceps	Abdominal Work

Now we start the prep phase to peak. For this phase, replace the “5x10” with the “5’s Progression”. All six weeks of the program will use the same lifts for the 5’s Progression. Remember that after the third week of this prep phase, you MUST increase your TM. Also, don’t be afraid to work up higher on your singles.

Prep Phase – Final Six Weeks

Monday	Tuesday	Thursday	Friday
Speed Work (jumps, throws, sprints)	Speed Work (jumps, throws, sprints)	Speed Work (jumps, throws, sprints)	Speed Work (jumps, throws, sprints)
Press – 5 singles at 90% of your TM	Deadlift – 5 singles at 90% of your TM	Bench Press – 5 singles at 90% of your TM	Squat – 5 singles at 90% of your TM
Incline Press – 3x5	Front Squat – 3x5	Floor Press – 3x5	Trap Bar Deadlift – 3x5
Lat/Upper Back/Biceps	Abdominal Work	Lat/Upper Back/Biceps	Abdominal Work

Volume Work – 75/85

This might be the easiest workout to plan and train with in the world, even easier than the original 5/3/1 program. This is also one of the best ways to train if you are an advanced lifter. If you are still stuck in the bodybuilding-mode, then this is NOT for you.

A LOT of auto-regulation is needed for this program, so experience is necessary to succeed. You will have to adjust the number of sets and number of training days based on how you feel, your own experiences and how your body reacts.

In this training program, there are two workouts: an “A Workout” and a “B Workout”. The A Workout consists of two exercises – the squat and the bench press. The B Workout consists of the deadlift and the press. These four exercises make up the bulk of your training. You can choose whatever you want to do with assistance work but let’s say this: if you have energy or need to do anything other than these lifts and injury/supportive assistance work, you are clearly not using the program correctly. This isn’t training for the people who need to “feel like they need to get sore” or use any number of workout programs that hide behind “WORK HARD!!” because they don’t know how to work smart. All the reps done are crisp and you should walk out of the weight room without being worn down/out.

You can do as many “A” and “B” workouts a week as you want. You can also mix/match some portions of the training.

The objective of this program is to TRAIN, not to test you. This is the main difference between this program and the 5/3/1 program and some of the other variations. Personally, I love testing myself with PR sets and pushing every day. But once you get to a 2x bodyweight bench press and a 3x squat and deadlift, things aren’t the same. Those of you who have reached this point in your training know exactly what I’m talking about – you can’t maintain this level year-round. So we use multiple sets at lighter weights to build strength and speed. Let me make this clear – this is NOT dynamic work. This is sub-max training at its finest and this is what it’s designed for.

For the main lifts, you have two weights – the first weight is around 75% of your max and the second is 85%. Again, these are always approximations and they are always based on your training max, not your competitive max. Why would you base any lift in training on your competition max? It makes zero sense.

75% Volume Work

“A” Workout	“B” Workout
Squat	Deadlift
Bench Press	Press
3-10 sets of 3-5 reps @ 75%	3-10 sets of 3-5 reps @ 75% (You can do 1-2 reps with the deadlift)

The “A” Workout consists of multiple sets of 3-5 reps at around 75%. The “B” Workout consists of multiple sets of 3 reps at around 85%. How many sets you do are based on a number of variables and you can build up your volume over several weeks. For example:

Weeks 1-3

- Squat/Bench Press x 3 times/week – 5 sets of 5 reps

Weeks 4-6

- Squat/Bench Press x 3 times/week – 8 sets of 5 reps

If you want to squat every day, you can build up the volume over the span of a year using this method. Begin squatting 3 times/week with 3 sets of 5 reps. Then build up to 5 sets of 5 reps. Then build up to 4 times/week and so on, and so on. The key is building volume over a period of a year and approaching it methodically, with purpose.

You can spend quite a bit of time working in the 75% zone – this will help you build strength, and most importantly, not kill you.

The 85% training zone can be used for 3-6 weeks or so and is a great way to build to a short (1-2 weeks) peaking phase.

Eventually you will find the sweet spot for the volume that works for you and for each lift. You may find that you can spend more time and sets squatting and

pressing in the 75% range and that your bench press and deadlift require less volume. Or you may find that the squat only needs 4 weeks in the 75% zone while the bench press and deadlift thrive there. You may have to mix and match quite a bit to find the perfect volume for each lift. But this is what makes training fun – the work and commitment to be great.

85% Volume Work

"A" Workout	"B" Workout
Squat	Deadlift
Bench Press	Press
3-10 sets of 3 reps @ 85%	3-10 sets of 3 reps @ 85% (You can do 1-2 reps with the deadlift)

The key is to start with the amount of volume you can handle and push it up slowly. Don't try to be a hero with this kind of training and bite off more than you can handle – take a good year of pushing your training volume. If you want to get started, here is a sample program:

Weeks 1-3

Monday	Tuesday	Thursday	Friday
Squat – 3 sets of 5 reps @ 75%	Deadlift - 3 sets of 3 reps @ 75%	Squat – 3 sets of 5 reps @ 75%	Deadlift - 3 sets of 3 reps @ 75%
Bench Press - 3 sets of 5 reps @ 75%	Press - 3 sets of 5 reps @ 75%	Bench Press - 3 sets of 5 reps @ 75%	Press - 3 sets of 5 reps @ 75%

Weeks 4-6

Monday	Tuesday	Thursday	Friday
Squat – 5 sets of 5 reps @ 75%	Deadlift - 5 sets of 1 reps @ 75%	Squat – 5 sets of 5 reps @ 75%	Deadlift - 5 sets of 1 reps @ 75%
Bench Press - 5 sets of 5 reps @ 75%	Press - 5 sets of 5 reps @ 75%	Bench Press - 5 sets of 5 reps @ 75%	Press – 3 sets of 5 reps @ 75%

Weeks 7-9

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Monday	Tuesday	Thursday	Friday
Squat – 5 sets of 3 reps @ 85%	Deadlift - 3 sets of 1 reps @ 85%	Squat – 5 sets of 3 reps @ 85%	Deadlift – 3 sets of 1 reps @ 85%
Bench Press - 5 sets of 3 reps @ 85%	Press - 5 sets of 3 reps @ 85%	Bench Press - 5 sets of 3 reps @ 85%	Press – 5 sets of 3 reps @ 85%

Weeks 10-12

Monday	Tuesday	Thursday	Friday
Squat – 7 sets of 3 reps @ 85%	Deadlift - 5 sets of 1 reps @ 85%	Squat – 7 sets of 3 reps @ 85%	Deadlift – 5 sets of 1 reps @ 85%
Bench Press -7 sets of 3 reps @ 85%	Press -7 sets of 3 reps @ 75%	Bench Press - 7 sets of 3 reps @ 85%	Press – 7 sets of 3 reps @ 85%

As you can see, you can slowly build this up over time and if you have a meet coming up, all you need to do is transition for 3 weeks into the 85% phase, then 2-4 weeks of hitting around 95% and you are good to go. Please note that the percentages are all used as guidelines. One person who used this program used 365 for his 75% work and 455 for his 85% work. After 8 weeks, he squatted 550 for 4 reps. His end product is all that counts; performance is everything. It's all about starting at the appropriate level.

Peaking Phase

This is designed for the competitive lifter and will allow them to peak for a meet. The peaking phase will last 2-4 weeks. The amount of time will depend on the lifter and will he will have to use his experience and best judgment.

Monday	Tuesday	Thursday	Friday
Squat – 5-7 sets of 1 rep @ 95%	Deadlift – 3-5 sets of 1 reps @ 95%	Squat – 5-7 sets of 1 rep @ 95%	Deadlift – 3-5 sets of 1 reps @ 95%
Bench Press -5-7 sets of 1 rep @ 95%	Press -5-7 sets of 1 rep @ 95%	Bench Press 5-7 sets of 1 rep @ 95%	Press – 5-7 sets of 1 rep @ 95%

Suggested Templates for Volume Work

Template One: This is what has been used in the above examples. The only problem would be the recovery from the two times/week pulling. You can remedy this two ways: remove one of the deadlift workouts or decrease the total volume of work on the pull.

Monday	Tuesday	Thursday	Friday
Squat	Deadlift	Squat	Deadlift
Bench Press	Press	Bench Press	Press

Template Two: This is a template done over a two-week period, simply switching between the A and B workout.

Week One

Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Squat	Deadlift	Squat
Bench Press	Press	Bench Press

Week Two

Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Deadlift	Squat	Deadlift
Press	Bench Press	Press

Template Three: This is similar to template two except that you keep the squatting to two times per week (Monday and Friday) and the deadlifting to one day per week (Wednesday). You can press or bench press two times/week (up to you), or simply alternate them “A/B” style over the training cycle.

Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Squat	Deadlift	Squat

Bench Press | **Press** | **Bench Press**

Template Four: This template is done over a two-week schedule and optimum for those who have a busy schedule and need to recover. On the second week, you can (but don't have to) push the volume on the lifts a bit harder since you are only doing them one time per week.

Week One

Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Squat	Deadlift	Squat
Bench Press	Press	Bench Press

Week Two

Monday	Thursday
Squat	Deadlift
Bench Press	Press

Template Five: This is just a two-day per week program and ideal for those who are older and can't do the classic lifts that often. If you fall into this category, I highly recommend that your other days are used as movement work and light assistance. For example, 2-4 days would be devoted to Prowler WALKS, non-invasive lower back and shoulder training, one leg movements (done for range of motion) and mobility work.

Monday	Thursday
Squat	Deadlift
Bench Press	Press

5/3/1 Challenges

Having one goal is scary. Why? Because you might fail. Hell, you probably will fail numerous times. But you WILL succeed eventually. You will succeed if you keep your focus and your desire. If you are willing to do everything to get there, you'll always come out on top. Being a Fitness Hipster is par for society these days. Commit to nothing and be sure to never be disappointed. Be sure to always remain in the comfortable shade of mediocrity.

That's the thing about these challenges. They will set you apart and make you realize what you are made of. Sometimes the reality of it sucks. You'll realize how weak you are, an awful feeling of disappointment. I've been there many, many times. I've sat alone, feeling sorry for myself, asking why I didn't play more or why I missed a rep. Then I realized that it's my own goddamn fault that I failed. Because I was the only one to blame for my failure, I then realized that I am also responsible for my success. I control my success. When you accept personal responsibility for everything in your life, and I mean everything from appearance, finances, relationships, employment, you become a better person. No more self-pity or martyrdom. You will now have the power to change who you are and what you accomplish because you will always get what you deserve.

I got this attitude from my parents, who worked their asses off in the areas of life they thought to be important. Both retired now, they are still on individual quests to be better people. A few years ago, I thought that adopting this attitude was important to set an example for my kids.

Now I realize that doing it "for your children" is bullshit. I thought that I had to lose weight to be healthy "for my kids." I thought I had to strive to work hard for my kids, so they could have a great life. But now I realize that these pursuits need to be completely selfish desires. If they see how badly I want something, and how hard I am willing to work to get it, I've not only reached my goal, I've also set an example for my kids. I have had several friends go through Alcoholics Anonymous and addicts always fail when they get sober for anyone else but themselves. When the addict commits to getting sober for himself, the chance for recovery improves greatly.

I'm not telling you to ignore your family or your job. Far from that. When you commit to a goal, do it for yourself. Whether it is a lifting goal, a goal of writing a book or painting a self-portrait, do it because the fire inside you **MUST** be quenched. The desire to succeed cannot be for any other reason but an all out selfish pursuit of insanity.

Because you bought this book, you are already ahead of the pack. Not from the act of buying it but because you are probably familiar with my writing and my programming. There are no casual fitness people that know me, other than relatives. I'm not going to be on a talk show or do a guest spot on NBC. So we both know you are pretty damn serious about training.

What I'm asking of you is to complete these challenges with desire and single-mindedness. Make a pact to have no excuses. You miss a day? Suck it up and train two days in a row. You are sore? Get in line. No sleep? Try going through Hell Week as a Navy SEAL. Can't eat? Force yourself. I'm sick of the laundry lists of "can't" in the questions that I get. It's like I'm a full-time therapist for the weak and pathetic.

I thought my childhood was easy. Middle class and married parents. We lived in a good neighborhood and I was never hungry. Then I look around and read some of the questions I get and realize that half of the people wouldn't have survived a day with my father. Any self-pity or loathing or "woe is me" was not tolerated. My dad is quiet but the inferno that brewed under that exterior would have sent half of America crying to their mothers. Unfortunately, my mother would just say, "Quit being a pussy and stop crying."

I am 100% convinced that some people are just more competitive than others. Some are born more pitbull than poodle. But even the poodles and lap dogs can be groomed to fight. If you find yourself in the poodle category, I also believe that you can train yourself to be a harder individual. Tougher to kill. Tougher to beat. And this training, these challenges, should carry over to other things in your life. You won't be a doormat anymore. Women won't walk all over you and your boss won't take you as a chump. This is how you train yourself to be better – to be (as Henry Rollins said), Part Animal, Part Machine.

Good luck. You might fail, but you might succeed. Let your cock out and let it

swing.

The Challenges

The challenges below will test your strength, conditioning and pain threshold. The Prowler challenge sucks - you will be in phenomenal shape but you will hate every minute of it. The Boring But Big Challenge starts off easy but once that third cycle comes around you will struggle. All of these challenges offer something unique.

Here are the challenges:

- Boring But Big (Hypertrophy) Challenge
- Strength Challenge
- Prowler Challenge
- Rest Pause Challenge
- 100 Rep Challenge

All of these have performance goals. This will give you tangible, real-life proof of reaching your goals.

Boring But Big 3 Month Challenge

Performance Goal: perform 5 sets of 10 reps at 70% on each of the lifts for the final cycle.

Since I released the first edition of *5/3/1: The Simplest and Most Effective Training System for Building Raw Strength* in 2009, I have been asked numerous questions about assistance work. The most popular, effective and brutal accessory plan is something I coined Boring But Big. I came up with this idea in a Fudrucker's in Tucson, Arizona in 1998 or 1999. I was eating lunch with a friend of mine and I wrote the idea down on a ketchup-smeared napkin.

The Boring But Big assistance program is simple. After completing the strength work with the basic exercise (squat, press, bench press or deadlift), perform 5 sets of 10 reps with a lighter weight. This may not seem like a lot of work but believe me – this will lead to new gains in strength, hypertrophy and soreness.

The problem that most people face with the Boring But Big program is determining the correct weight size for the five sets. I have always recommended using 50% of your training max – and for the first cycle of the program that is exactly the prescription. However, the second and third months of the program will push the boundaries and lead to some bigger and better gains. I was recently inspired by my good friend Matt Kroczykowski's workout. He pushed the boundaries of good taste by doing 5 sets of 20 reps in the squat with 415 pounds. One set of 20 reps at 415 is pretty good. But 5 sets? Absolutely disgusting!

The problem with many hypertrophy-based programs is that they leave out the strength component. You might get bigger as a result of the program, but if you don't get any stronger, you are still a chump. I don't care how big you are, if you aren't strong you are a sham. That's not even debatable. Having big muscles and no strength is the same as wearing a strap-on. All show and no go.

The Big Lifts

The first part of the Boring But Big Challenge is that you will continue to perform the squat, bench, press and deadlift with the 5/3/1 sets and reps. You will increase the normal five pounds on the upper-body lifts and 10 pounds on the lower-body lifts after each cycle; nothing changes with regards to the progression. Make sure you begin this challenge with your training max set at 90% of your actual max. If you have to reassess your training max, then do so. The one thing that you will change is that you will NOT go for any extra reps on the last set. You will only do the required reps and move on to the 5 sets of 10 reps. This will have the following three results:

Because hypertrophy is the goal of the program, this will leave you fresher to perform the 5 sets of 10 reps and eventually do these at a higher weight.

It will AT LEAST maintain your strength levels – you are still tapping into heavy weights that will keep your body used to them.

Many people will get stronger when they dial back the last set. You don't always have to push to failure to make gains – this is a belief held by novices and those with limited knowledge.

The Assistance Lifts

The second part of the Boring But Big Challenge is the 5 sets of 10 reps. For those who have done this and done it correctly know that this is nothing to sneeze at (unless you are allergic to hard work and soreness). This is a brutal way to put on some size provided you do it correctly. And by do it correctly, I mean the following:

- The first month of the program: Perform the sets with 50% of your training max.
- Second month: Perform the sets with 60% of your training max.
- Third month: Perform the sets with 70% of your training max.

After you perform your 5/3/1 squat workout, do your 5 sets of 10 reps with the deadlift. Flip the other days as well – (see workout example below). This will keep things a little less boring.

You may have to do a few warm-up sets leading up to your 5x10 weight. This is fine. Just do 1-2 sets of 5 reps and then get to it. These warm-up sets do not count.

Feel free to superset the assistance work. This will shorten the workout time and keep you from sitting on your ass between sets.

The assistance work after the assistance work (yeah, I know that is confusing) is important but I wouldn't keep track of it. It's important that the upper-body work be paired with a pulling movement (in this case, some kind of row or chin up works best). I recommend changing your grip on chin-ups – pronated, supinated, close, medium, wide, narrow, rope/towel. It is very important to get stronger in all areas of tugging. Also, let's keep kipping where it belongs: in the trash.

Though it's been said a million times, if you can't do 10 reps of a chin up, do lat pulldowns instead. If you want to do another lat/upper back movement other than rows or chins that is up to you. These two movements have proved superior in developing your lats and upper back. For the lower body, I only recommend doing some abdominal work as extra assistance work. Your lower

back, hamstrings, quads and glutes are getting the beating of a lifetime with this program. You don't need any extra work. Stick with whatever abdominal exercises you like that keep you motivated to do ab work. I know how boring it can be so some variety might do you well. Also, if you can, take the belt off for all your 5x10 sets.

You are welcome to do some extra biceps, triceps or upper back work on the upper body day. The exercises that I recommend are:

- EZ Bar Curls/DB Curls/Straight Bar Curls
- Triceps Pushdown
- Face Pulls/Rear Laterals

This is done after the main work is done. I only recommend doing a few sets of 1-3 exercises and none of this should be anything that really "matters." It should be effort-free. The older, experienced lifters know exactly what I'm talking about. These are the guys that can do a curl with a 20-pound dumbbell and get more out of it than a kid doing a 135-pound barbell curl. There is an inverse relationship to what you do in the beginning of the workout and the end – the guys pulling 600 pounds for reps seem to try less hard on the curls than the kid pulling 285 for his first double. Something to think about.

Food

Now if you are going to embark on this quest for strength and mass (and who the hell doesn't want that?) you had better start eating like you want it. This is not a time to be eating like a bird. This is not a time to be swept away by the newest eating or diet claim. This is not a time to be scared by carbs or animal fats. Now if you are afraid to eat, then please don't do this program. This is not for you and not for someone that is scared that ONE NIGHT of eating big will make his skirt fit a bit tighter. So unless you are willing to eat big to get big, don't accept the challenge. I don't really care what your goals are but if a person is not willing to do all that is necessary than I cannot relate to him. And let's just all face the facts – having a few extra meals a day is hardly a sacrifice in life. It requires very little effort. Raising a family, having a full time job AND going to school – that's effort. Shoving some food down your mouth isn't a big deal.

If you have an awesome diet plan for yourself, one that you've used before when you needed calories – then do it! You are your own best resource. The keys to eating big are nothing new. What I'm about to write has been in every muscle magazine, article and book since Papa Weider started selling aminos and barbells. Here is a simple, sample diet plan for this workout. This is entirely adjusted to my tastes; my palate has not progressed much beyond the 2nd grade.

Breakfast

- 6 whole eggs (scrambled with cheese or hard boiled)
- 1-2 cups oatmeal
- 1 Apple

Lunch

- 10 oz steak
- 6-8 red potatoes
- Bagful of steamed vegetables

Lunch 2

- 2 chicken breasts
- 2 cups Spanish rice
- Bagful of steamed vegetables

Dinner

- 2 chicken breasts (or 10oz steak)
- Large bowl of pasta and marinara sauce
- Bagful of steamed vegetables

Supplements

Protein powder - This diet is perfect for me; the larger my appetite grows, the more I increase my portion sizes. If you want to add some more protein in the diet, I highly recommend having a few protein drinks. 3, 3 scoop servings of protein powder will add 180g of protein to your diet. These can be mixed in a small amount of water (I can use about 10-12oz of water for 3 scoops). Milk can also be used; 16oz of milk works well for 2-3 scoops.

As for other supplements other than protein powder, I recommend the following:

ZMA – this is my favorite supplement as this allows me to sleep longer and without waking up. Plus, I swear this helps me have larger amounts of ejaculate.

Vitamin C – Although I am no doctor (and I'm sure they will frown on this), I take about 6 grams of Vitamin C every day. I really believe that this helps my recovery and helps alleviate soreness. You aren't going to FREE from soreness but it can help.

Fish Oil – I take 2-3 pills a day. The benefits to your health are amazing – this should be a staple of your diet no matter what you do in your training.

Recovery Methods

Whenever a book or article touches on recovery they have some snappy saying like “You do your best growth outside the gym.” This is their way of saying how important recovery is. Still, I see most of the world in “recovery” mode and they seem pretty weak to me. But, if you are going to put the time in the weight room, you might as well reap the results by being big and strong. So let’s touch on a few SIMPLE things that will help you recover.

The first is diet – this is nothing new. It is outlined above.

The second is sleep. Again, I’m not breaking any ground here.

Third is proper supplementation. This has also been covered. You may have a few tricks up your sleeve so use those too.

Here are a few other things that anyone can do and afford:

Ice bags – icing your shoulders, elbows and knees (and other problem areas) is a great way to get rid of joint soreness. And a good excuse to sit your ass down in front of the TV and not move.

Stretching – do a 10 minute stretching routine, 3 times a day. Easy to do, you can do it anywhere and will do wonders if you are tight. I outline my 3 favorite stretches in the NOV section of my 5/3/1 book.

PVC/Foam Roll – Hitting problem areas like the hamstrings, quads, hips, piriformis and IT band has saved me a lot of pain and discomfort in my hips, legs and knees. A lacrosse ball can also be used to really dig into your upper back and piriformis.

Conditioning

I am not going to sway on this one at all. I recommend the following options with conditioning on this program.

- Walk 2 miles, 4 days/week
- Walk 1-2 miles, 4 days/week while wearing weight vest. I recommend the 88-pound XVest – this thing is amazing.
- Walk 2 miles, 2 days/week and push Prowler twice a week. The Prowler workout will be the following, done on asphalt: 10, 40-yard pushes (sprints or walks) with 90 pounds added to Prowler. The walking sessions can also be done Manly Style, i.e. with a weight vest.

The Prowler is great for this program because it allows the lifter to get a quality “hard” conditioning session in without a lot of soreness. The Prowler is the best conditioning tool I’ve ever used- it is GREAT for athletes and especially older lifters. NOTHING can compare and there is no substitute. Pushing a plate on a towel and gym floor is not the same thing. The conditioning days can be done whenever it works into your schedule.

The Deload

The only difference with the deload is that the 5 sets of 10 reps will now be cut to 3 sets of 10 reps. Everything else remains the same.

Monday

- Press – 5/3/1 sets
- Bench Press – 5 sets of 10 reps
- Chins – 5 sets of 10 reps
- Optional: Curls – 3 sets of 10 reps, Triceps Pushdowns – 3 sets of 10 reps, Face Pulls – 3 sets of 10 reps

Tuesday

- Deadlift – 5/3/1 sets
- Squat – 5 sets of 10 reps
- Ab Wheel – 5 sets of 10-20 reps

Thursday

- Bench Press – 5/3/1 sets
- Press – 5 sets of 10 reps
- DB Rows – 5 sets of 10 reps/arm
- Optional: Curls – 3 sets of 10 reps, Triceps Pushdowns – 3 sets of 10 reps, Face Pulls – 3 sets of 10 reps

Friday

- Squat – 5/3/1 sets
- Deadlift – 5 sets of 10 reps
- Hanging Leg Raise – 5 sets of 10 reps

Notes:

- All 5/3/1 sets and reps are explained in the 5/3/1 book.
- Last sets on the 5/3/1 are NOT taken to failure; only the required reps are

done.

- Month one – 5 sets of 10 reps at 50% of TM.
- Month two – 5 sets of 10 reps at 60% of TM.
- Month three – 5 sets of 10 reps at 70% of TM.
- When your TM goes up after each cycle, so does your BBB bar weight.
- All other assistance work is to be kept to a minimum.
- On upper body days, be sure to do some kind of pulling (rows or chins) exercise.
- This is a 4 day/week program, not 3 days/week, not 2.
- Exercise substitution will not be tolerated.

Strength Challenge

Performance Goal – Increase your 1RM on the squat, bench press and deadlift.

This part of the Year Training Program focuses on improving your 1RM strength the three main lifts (squat, bench and deadlift). You are welcome to test the press if you want, but the focus will be on the three classic powerlifts.

While many of you will simply test your numbers in the weight room I would HIGHLY encourage you to find a powerlifting meet in your area and compete. You don't have to be a certain strength to compete against yourself or the bar. You don't have to worry about being laughed at because if you show up and put your balls on the line EVERYONE at the meet will have respect for you.

This is because people who compete know that it is not easy. The people with fake message board names who sit behind keyboards criticizing people who compete are cancerous. The only reason why they internet-kneecap is because they hate themselves so much for being so pathetic and weak. Men compete physically and mentally. They strive to be better in mind and body, and competing is hard.

The first month of the Strength program focuses on two things: first you will push the last set of the 5/3/1 work sets on the first and third week AND do a heavy single at the end. The first two weeks have been switched so the first week is the "3x3" week. The third week remains the "5/3/1" week.

On the second week, the "3x5" week, you will just do the required reps and no singles. By doing this we have essentially laid out the 4 week plan as such:

- Week One: Hard (3 sets of 3+reps, plus a heavy single)
- Week Two: Medium (3 sets of 5 reps; just get the required reps)
- Week Three: Hard (5/3/1+ reps, plus a heavy single)
- Week Four: Easy (3 sets of 5 reps, deload)

This month is the hardest part of the Strength Program – you are pushing the last sets very hard and expected to man-up and hit a heavy single. Too bad. You

are prepping your body and mind to get ready for the testing on the final month. The best football coach I ever had, Dino Babers, used to say, “I will make practices hell so that games are easy. You will be begging for game day so you can get a break.”

Remember that there is a huge difference between training and working out. Workout is “for the day.” These are the people that go into the gym, do a few of these, a few of those and measure their fitness and “progress” by how tired they are. Yes, they may remember their best bench press or the fastest mile time but they don’t train specifically to be better; only to be tired. Somehow this makes sense to them.

And it will make sense if your goals in life are to be average.

If you fall into this category, I applaud your working out and general fitness efforts. But we are here for a different reason: to put together a comprehensive system with an end goal. So while this month may not be easy and your singles may struggle a bit, it is for a bigger goal than just being a Training Day All-American.

Strength Challenge – Food and Supplements

This is the same as the Boring But Big Challenge. Follow the simple diet plan if you want to get big and strong. Follow a fad, elimination diet if you want to follow trends and be a puss. I made my choice many years ago. Now it's time for you to either follow the fasting and no carb trend, or eat like you want to win. Let me let everyone in on a secret – fad diets have all come and gone. It's a 10-20 year cycle and what is popular today, will be replaced by some other no-name pencil neck trying to use scare tactics to make you follow his lead. You are smarter than that.

Strength Challenge – Weeks 1-4: The Singles

Things are programmed a bit differently than in the 5/3/1 for Powerlifting book. I've streamlined it to make it easier to follow with ZERO confusion. Seriously, this is the easiest way to include singles into your training. To make it even easier I will explain in both words AND a sample program. Remember on the first and third week of this month we will go for max (but NOT to failure) reps on the final set of the day AND do a heavy single.

The big question is going to be “At what weight will I perform the heavy single?”

The answer? It will be your Training Max. This will ensure that you will be hitting AT LEAST 90% of your real max. Provided you do the 5/3/1 Year Program, you have already done three months of the 5/3/1 program (which starts at 90% of your max) and you will be more than ready to do the singles at your training max. So if your training max for your bench press is 300 pounds (remember, this is not your actual max, but the number on which your training is based) you will perform a single using 300 pounds when bench pressing.

You will not need to do a set between the final set and the single – you can if you really need to but I highly doubt that you will ever need to do this. During the first cycle, after your last set on weeks one and three, you will do one set of one repetition (1x1) with your training max.

You will do the max reps AND the single for the squat, bench press and deadlift. Doing max reps and single for the press is NOT recommended nor is it part of the program. This is because it was not tested when the program was written and I cannot say it will work and cannot approve it. If you do wish to do this, you will do so at your own risk and realize it may compromise the entire program.

If you plan to compete with knee wraps, please begin using the knee wraps when you perform the heavy single. Do NOT use then knee wraps on your last work set. This will help you get used to the knee wraps. Also be sure to use a belt and wrist wraps if you plan to use them during the competition.

Strength Challenge – Weeks 1-4: The Last Set

There has been a lot of confusion about the last set in the 5/3/1 training program, all for which I take full responsibility. While you should push this last set hard when you feel good, you don't have to. You can still push hard and NOT set a record. Although it feels great, it's not always about the personal records on this set. It's about getting the requisite reps and pushing forward to the next week. So the only thing that really matters is that you get the required reps. Anything else after that is extra, a "good" extra, but not always necessary.

I highly recommend setting a goal for the end set. For me, this happens weeks in advance and I will tweak that goal as the day edges closer. I may feel better or worse than expected and this will reflect in the revised goal. How do I choose my goal? There is no rhyme or reason to it; sometimes it's just awesome to be that guy that who can overhead press 225 pounds for 8 reps on his 5/3/1 day.

But whatever you do, leave a rep (or more) in the tank. Do not go to failure.

In month four of the 5/3/1 Year Program, the last set will be pushed hard but not to failure. If you don't know where/when to stop when doing the set, err on the side of too early. No need to be plastered to the floor, rack or bar.

Strength Challenge – Weeks 1-4: Deload

On the deload week, perform the regular 5/3/1 deload sets and reps. Do not go for extra reps on any of the deload sets. For the assistance work, do only three work sets instead of the normal five. Conditioning work on the deload week is as written; no changes are to be made.

Strength Challenge – Weeks 1-4: Conditioning

I recommend doing three days of conditioning work during this month. You can mix and match any of the following conditioning exercises. These are the only ones that I recommend as I have used them all, and can attest their effectiveness for the given template. If you feel another conditioning tool or protocol is in your best interest to achieve a strength goal, that is your choice but I cannot nor will I approve of it. I can only approve of things that I have used and have worked.

Remember that you choose one of the following three days a week. You can choose to do one conditioning tool for all three workouts or choose three different ones in a week. So you can walk one day a week and push the Prowler two times per week. Or push the Prowler three times per week. The choice is yours; just make sure you get the work in.

- Prowler push – 90 pounds added to Prowler, 6-8 pushes for 40 yards, high handles. This can be done while sprinting or walking.
- 2 mile walk
- Weight Vest Walk – 1-2 miles
- Air Dyne – 20-30 minutes

Strength Challenge – Weeks 1-4: Assistance Work

Day One	Day Two	Day Three	Day Four
Press – 5/3/1 sets and reps	Deadlift – 5/3/1 sets and reps	Bench Press – 5/3/1 sets and reps	Squat – 5/3/1 sets and reps
Pressing exercise for 5 sets of 10 reps	Multi-joint leg exercise for 5 sets of 10 reps	Pressing exercise for 5 sets of 10 reps	Exercise for lower back for 5 sets of 10 reps
Pulling exercise for 5 sets of 10 reps	Abdominal work: I recommend choosing the abdominal wheel, hanging leg raise, dumbbell side bends or weighted sit-ups for 5 sets of 10-30 reps	Pulling exercise for 5 sets of 10 reps	Abdominal work: I recommend choosing the abdominal wheel, hanging leg raise, dumbbell side bends or weighted sit-ups for 5 sets of 10-30 reps
1-3 extra exercises for triceps, biceps and upper back (optional)	1-3 extra exercises for quads, hamstrings and grip (optional) Day Three – Bench Press	1-3 extra exercises for triceps, biceps and upper back (optional)	1-3 extra exercises for quads, hamstrings and grip (optional)

Notes:

I recommend using press and bench press exercises that target your weaker areas, or one that you know will improve your bench press.

These exercises include but are not limited to:

- Dumbbell Bench Press
- Dumbbell Incline Press
- Dumbbell Press
- Swiss Bar/Football Bar Bench Press
- Swiss Bar/Football Bar Press
- 2 Board Press
- 3 Board Press
- Incline Press
- Dips/Weighted Dips
- Floor Press
- Dumbbell Floor Press

Keep the reps and volume high on these sets for this month; 5 sets of around 8-12 reps. This will give you added tension and volume on a weaker area of your lift, build muscle mass and keep joint stress down. You are welcome to change and switch the exercises from day to day and workout to workout. The important thing is to get the work in. You are free to do all five sets at a given weight or work up/work down.

I recommend that the pulling (lat) exercises used on the press and bench press day are full-range movements done with high volume (again, 5 sets of 10-20 reps). This will build much needed muscle and balance for a strong bench press. You are free to do all five sets at a given weight or work up and work down. These exercises include but are not limited to:

- Dumbbell Rows
- Barbell Rows
- T-bar Rows
- Chest Supported Rows
- Lat Pulldowns (various bars/handles can be used)

- Chin-ups/Pull-ups
- Any seated rowing machine

The optional exercises done on the press and bench press day should not be stressful “big” exercises; these should be exercises chosen to round out the body and should be done without care for the amount of weight lifted. You should expend very little emotional or physical energy when performing these exercises. Limit yourself to small, isolation exercises that you feel that you need to do in order to remain balanced and injury-free. Do no more than three exercises per workout. Do no more than 1-3 sets and the reps should fall between 10-30. These include but are not limited to:

- Triceps Pushdowns
- Triceps Extensions
- Curls (any kind of curl is fine)
- Face Pulls
- Dumbbell Lateral Raises
- Dumbbell Rear Raises

The assistance work on your deadlift day will include a big multi-joint leg exercise. This is an exercise that will help complement the strength of your deadlift and your squat. These will be done with a higher volume (again 5 sets of 8-12 reps) to help build and strengthen the legs without the stress of heavier weights. You are free to do all the sets with one given weight or pyramid up and down. Exercises include but are not limited to:

- Front Squats
- Box Squats
- Safety Bar Squats
- Leg Press
- Hack Squat
- Power Squat

The assistance work on your squat day will include a big strength exercise for your lower back. You may have a favorite exercise that you believe will help your lower back get stronger; if so, use it. We will use a higher volume on this exercise (5 sets of 8-12 reps) in order to build muscle mass, increase tension on a weaker area, limit maximal weight on the lower back and strengthen the

squat and deadlift. You are free to use the same weight for all five sets or pyramid up and down. These exercises include but are not limited to:

- Good Mornings
- Straight Leg Deadlift
- Deficit Deadlift
- Romanian Deadlift
- Reverse Hyperextension
- Back Raise
- 45-Degree Back Raise

On both the squat and deadlift days, you must perform some kind of abdominal exercise. If you have a favorite exercise that you feel helps you get stronger, please do it. The rep ranges on these exercises vary greatly so you may do as little as 8 reps and as many as 50. You can do as little as one exercise or as many as three to four. These exercises include but are not limited to:

- Hanging Leg Raises
- Abdominal Wheel
- Sit-ups (weighted and non-weighted)
- Dumbbell Side Bends
- Crunches
- Lying Leg Raises
- Med Ball Slams

The optional assistance work on squat and deadlift day should not be stressful “big” exercises. These are exercises chosen to strengthen previously injured areas, complement your training and should be done with little emotional or physical stress to your body. In other words, these things should in no way affect your recovery. These exercises target areas such as grip, quadriceps, hamstrings and neck. Choose 1-3 of these exercises per workout, performing 1-3 sets of those chosen.

For single-leg work you can do as little as six reps per leg. The single-leg work is a great option for those with hip flexibility issues. No one cares what you can one-leg squat or lunge; use the correct weight to perform the exercises with the correct form. This may mean using your bodyweight, smaller dumbbells or even a light weight vest. Do not let your ego get in your way. I’d

rather perform a lunge with 135 pounds and perfect form than take short, ridiculous steps that take away from the purpose of the exercise. At no time should the weight used on ANY of the exercises chosen be challenging to the lifter; these are done for balance. These include but are not limited to:

- Step Ups
- Lunges
- One-Leg Squats
- Leg Curls
- Glute Ham Raises
- Calf Raises
- Grip work
- Neck Harness/4 Way Neck/Manual Neck
- Band Good Mornings
- Pull Throughs
- Kettlebell Swings

Strength Challenge – Weeks 1-4: Strength Template Overview

Week One

Day One	Day Two	Day Three	Day Four
Press – 3 sets of 3+ reps Pressing exercise – 5 sets	Deadlift – 3 sets of 3+ reps, plus one single at training max	Bench Press – 3 sets of 3+ reps, plus one single at training max	Squat – 3 sets of 3+reps, plus one single at training max
Pressing exercise – 5 sets	Leg Exercise – 5 sets	Pressing exercise – 5 sets	Lower Back/Hamstring Exercise – 5 sets
Pulling exercise – 5 sets	Abdominal Exercise – 5 sets	Pulling exercise – 5 sets	Abdominal Exercise – 5 sets
Optional assistance work – as needed	Optional assistance work – as needed	Optional assistance work – as needed	Optional assistance work – as needed

Note: For the “Pressing Exercise – 5 sets”, “Leg Exercise – 5 sets” and the “Lower Back/Hamstring Exercise – 5 sets” you can do the Last Set First for 5 sets of 5-8 reps. For example:

Day One

- Press – 3 sets of 3+ reps
- Bench Press – 5 sets of 5-8 reps @ 70%

Day Two

- Deadlift – 3 sets of 3+ reps, plus one single at training max

- Squat – 5 sets of 5-8 reps @ 70%

Day Three

- Bench Press – 3 sets of 3+ reps, plus one single at training max
- Press - 5 sets of 5-8 reps @ 70%

Day Four

- Squat – 3 sets of 3+reps, plus one single at training max
- Deadlift - 5 sets of 3-5 reps @ 70%

Of course, the additional assistance work is to be done. This is just an example of the first week but this can be done with each of the subsequent weeks. Just perform the First Set Last of the opposite exercise.

Week Two

Day One	Day Two	Day Three	Day Four
Press – 3 sets of 5 reps (only get prescribed reps)	Deadlift – 3 sets of 5 reps (only get prescribed reps)	Bench Press – 3 sets of 5 reps (only get prescribed reps)	Squat – 3 sets of 5 reps (only get prescribed reps)
Pressing exercise – 5 sets	Leg Exercise – 5 sets	Pressing exercise – 5 sets	Lower Back/Hamstring Exercise – 5 sets
Pulling exercise – 5 sets	Abdominal Exercise – 5 sets	Pulling exercise – 5 sets	Abdominal Exercise – 5 sets
Optional assistance work – as needed	Optional assistance work – as needed	Optional assistance work – as needed	Optional assistance work – as needed

Week Three

Day One	Day Two	Day Three	Day Four
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Press – 5/3/1+	Deadlift – 5/3/1+, plus one single at training max	Bench Press – 5/3/1+, plus one single at Training max	Squat – 5/3/1+, plus one single at Training max
Pressing exercise – 5 sets	Leg Exercise – 5 sets	Pressing exercise – 5 sets	Lower Back/Hamstring Exercise – 5 sets
Pulling exercise – 5 sets	Abdominal Exercise – 5 sets	Pulling exercise – 5 sets	Abdominal Exercise – 5 sets
Optional assistance work – as needed	Optional assistance work – as needed	Optional assistance work – as needed	Optional assistance work – as needed

Week Four (Deload)

This is an example of the deload you can do. Remember that there are several deload options that you can do that are listed in the “More on the Deload” section of this book.

Day One	Day Two	Day Three	Day Four
Press – 3 sets of 5 reps	Deadlift – 3 sets of 5 reps	Bench Press – 3 sets of 5 reps	Squat – 3 sets of 5 reps
Pressing exercise – 3 sets	Leg Exercise – 3 sets	Pressing exercise – 3 sets	Lower Back/Hamstring Exercise – 3 sets
Pulling exercise – 3 sets	Abdominal Exercise – 3 sets	Pulling exercise – 3 sets	Abdominal Exercise – 3 sets
Optional assistance work – as needed	Optional assistance work – as needed	Optional assistance work – as needed	Optional assistance work – as needed

Strength Challenge – Weeks 1-4: Summary

- Weeks one (3x5) and two are switched. Perform the 3x3 week on week one and the 3x5 week on week two.
- 1 set of 1 repetition will be done at YOUR training max after the squat, bench press and deadlift.
- The last set on your 5/3/1 sets will be pushed on the 3x3 and the 5/3/1 weeks, but never to failure. On the 3x5 week (now the second week) you will only get the prescribed reps and no more.
- The main assistance work will be high volume (5 sets).
- Optional assistance work can be done. This should not affect the main workouts and not affect your recovery.
- On the deload week, only 3 sets of assistance work will be done. This is in contrast to the normal 5 sets.
- Rest periods for main 5/3/1 sets and singles are whatever you'd like to do; the important thing is that the sets are done when you are mentally and physically ready. The rest periods for the assistance work can fall anywhere between 1 to 3 minutes.

Strength Challenge – Weeks 5-8: Singles

During the first cycle, you performed one set of one repetition (1x1) with your training max. In this new training cycle, your “single” will not be an actual single, but rather it will be an all out set with your training max (but never to failure). This should fall around 2-5 reps, depending on how you feel.

Strength Challenge – Weeks 5-8: Last Set

During the first cycle of the Strength program, you pushed the last set on the first week (3x3) and the third week (5/3/1). During this cycle month, you will NOT push the last set on any of the weeks. Save your strength and energy for the Rep Max with your training max.

Strength Challenge – Weeks 5-8: Deload

On the deload week, perform the regular 5/3/1 deload sets and reps. You do not go for extra reps on any of the deload sets. For the assistance work, do the three work sets and optional work if you want. Conditioning work on the deload week is as written. No changes are to be made.

Strength Challenge – Weeks 5-8: Conditioning

Conditioning work during this second phase will remain the same as the first. No changes are to be made. Please remember that this phase of training emphasizes STRENGTH and we simply want to maintain a good base of conditioning while striving for this goal. We do not want this to drop off but we also do not want to sacrifice strength levels for conditioning work. This is called prioritizing our training, also known as periodization. Periodization is nothing more than planning.

Strength Challenge – Weeks 5-8: Assistance Work

The assistance exercises and template will be exactly the same with the exception of the total amount of sets decreases from five to three. Instead of doing 5 sets of 10 repetitions of a given exercise (for example, front squats), you will do only 3 sets of 10 repetitions.

The number of sets is decreased to help taper the strength program toward the final goal while still working on developing these areas. The optional assistance work can stay in.

Strength Challenge – Weeks 5-8: Strength Template Overview

Week One

Day One	Day Two	Day Three	Day Four
Press – 3 sets of 3+ reps (the last set on the press can be pushed as no singles are done)	Deadlift – 3 sets of 3 reps, plus one all out set at training max (but not to failure)	Bench Press – 3 sets of 3 reps, plus one all out set at training max (but not to failure)	Squat – 3 sets of 3+reps, plus one all out set at training max (but not to failure)
Pressing exercise – 3 sets	Leg Exercise – 3 sets	Pressing exercise – 3 sets	Lower Back/Hamstring Exercise – 3 sets
Pulling exercise – 3 sets	Abdominal Exercise – 3 sets	Pulling exercise – 3 sets	Abdominal Exercise – 3 sets
Optional assistance work – as needed	Optional assistance work – as needed	Optional assistance work – as needed	Optional assistance work – as needed

Week Two

Day One	Day Two	Day Three	Day Four
Press – 3 sets of 5 reps (only get prescribed reps)	Deadlift – 3 sets of 5 reps (only get prescribed reps)	Bench Press – 3 sets of 5 reps (only get prescribed reps)	Squat – 3 sets of 5 reps (only get prescribed reps)
Pressing Exercise – 3 sets	Leg Exercise – 3 sets	Pressing Exercise – 3 sets	Lower Back/Hamstring Exercise – 3 sets
Pulling Exercise – 3 sets	Abdominal Exercise – 3 sets	Pulling Exercise – 3 sets	Abdominal Exercise – 3 sets
Optional Assistance Work	Optional Assistance Work –	Optional Assistance	Optional Assistance Work

– as needed	as needed	Work – as needed	– as needed
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Week Three

Day One	Day Two	Day Three	Day Four
Press – 5/3/1+ (the last set on the press can be pushed as no singles are done)	Deadlift – 5/3/1, plus one all out set at training max (but not to failure)	Bench Press – 5/3/1+, plus one all out set at training max (but not to failure)	Squat – 5/3/1+, plus one all out set at training max (but not to failure)
Pressing exercise – 3 sets	Leg Exercise – 3 sets	Pressing exercise – 3 sets	Lower Back/Hamstring Exercise – 3 sets
Pulling exercise – 3 sets	Abdominal Exercise – 3 sets	Pulling exercise – 3 sets	Abdominal Exercise – 3 sets
Optional assistance work – as needed	Optional assistance work – as needed	Optional assistance work – as needed	Optional assistance work – as needed

Week Four (Deload)

Day One	Day Two	Day Three	Day Four
Press – 3 sets of 5 reps	Deadlift – 3 sets of 5 reps	Bench Press – 3 sets of 5 reps	Squat – 3 sets of 5 reps
Pressing Exercise – 3 sets	Leg Exercise – 3 sets	Pressing Exercise – 3 sets	Lower Back/Hamstring Exercise – 3 sets
Pulling Exercise – 3 sets	Abdominal Exercise – 3 sets	Pulling Exercise – 3 sets	Abdominal Exercise – 3 sets
Optional Assistance Work – as needed	Optional Assistance Work – as needed	Optional Assistance Work – as needed	Optional Assistance Work – as needed

Note: For the pressing, leg exercises and back exercise you can do the First Set Last for the given exercise or the Second Set Last – both for 3 sets of 5 reps. For example, on the 3x3 week:

Day One

- Press – 3x3, (the last set on the press can be pushed as no singles are done)
- Bench Press – 3 sets of 5 reps @ 70% or 3 sets of 5 reps @ 80%

Day Two

- Deadlift - 3x3, plus one all out set at training max (but not to failure)
- Squat - 3 sets of 5 reps @ 70% or 3 sets of 5 reps @ 80%

Day Three

- Bench Press - 3x3, plus one all out set at training max (but not to failure)
- Press - 3 sets of 5 reps @ 70% or 3 sets of 5 reps @ 80%

Day Four

- Squat - 3x3, plus one all out set at training max (but not to failure)
- Deadlift - 3 sets of 3 reps @ 70% or 3 sets of 1-3 reps @ 80%

Strength Challenge – Weeks 5-8: Summary

Weeks one (3x5) and two (3x3) are switched. Perform the 3x3 week on week one and the 3x5 week on week two.

One all out set AFTER your main sets will be done with your training max. This will be done after the squat, bench press and deadlift. This set will be heavy and hard but should not be done to failure. You should not miss on this set.

The last set on your 5/3/1 sets (the main work sets of the week) will NOT be pushed. The only exception to this is the press. You can continue to push the last set on the press on the first and third weeks.

The main assistance work will be medium volume (3 sets).

Optional assistance work can be done. This should not affect the main workouts and not affect your recovery.

On the deload week, the assistance work will remain the same. 3 sets.

Rest periods for main 5/3/1 sets and all out Training Max Rep Max are whatever you'd like to do; the important thing is that the sets are done when you are mentally and physically ready. The rest periods for the assistance work can fall anywhere between 1 to 3 minutes.

Strength Challenge – Weeks 9-12: The Final Phase

This is when all the hard work and prep will come to a head. This is when you test your one-rep maxes on the squat, bench press and deadlift.

Strength Challenge – Weeks 9-12: Singles

Similar to months four and five, weeks one and two are switched. This means that you will be doing 3 sets of 3 reps on the first week and 3 sets of 5 reps on the second week. On month four, you did one set of one repetition on with your training max. Month five had one all set with your training max.

On month six, you will perform one set of one repetition at your training max on the first week (3x3 week) and an additional single at 110% of your training max.

On the second week (3x5 week), you will NOT perform any singles.

And on the third week (5/3/1 week) you will test your 1RM on the squat, bench press and deadlift. These will be tested on the third week (the 5/3/1 week) as this week's sets and reps provide you with a perfect way to work up to a new 1RM.

The “Month Six - Strength Template Overview” will provide you with exactly what to do.

Strength Challenge – Weeks 9-12: Last Set

Like month five, you will not take any extra reps on the last sets of the main lifts. Only do the prescribed reps.

Strength Challenge – Weeks 9-12: Deload

There are no changes to the deload on month six.

Strength Challenge – Weeks 9-12: Conditioning

The only change to assistance work is that Prowler work is cut out this month – only do “light” conditioning which will consist of:

- 1-2 Mile Walks
- 1-2 Mile Weight Vest Walks
- Air Dyne (20-30 minutes)

This is to be done three times a week, whenever works best for you. **DO NOT** cut out the conditioning. Use it for recovery. Use it to focus on what you will accomplish on the third week. Visualize your success.

Strength Challenge – Weeks 9-12: Assistance Work

There will be major changes to your assistance work. Because we are peaking for the third week, cut out the main assistance lifts and perform only smaller, easier lifts. Don't worry, you won't lose any size. You spent the first three months building your physique with high volume work and the first two months of the Strength Phase with some high volume, big exercises as your assistance work. This month, ease off the assistance work and make sure your body is fresh and strong. The Strength Template Overview below will completely outline what you need to do.

Strength Challenge – Weeks 9-12: Strength Template Overview

Week One

Day One	Day Two	Day Three	Day Four
Press – 3 sets of 3+ reps (the last set on the press can be pushed as no singles are done)	Deadlift – 3 sets of 3 reps, 1x1 @ TM, 1x1 @ 110%	Bench Press - 3 sets of 3 reps, 1x1 @ TM, 1x1 @ 110%	Squat - 3 sets of 3 reps, 1x1 @ TM, 1x1 @ 110%
Pressing Exercise – 3 sets	Leg Exercise – 3 sets	Pressing Exercise – 3 sets	Lower Back/Hamstring Exercise – 3 sets
Pulling Exercise – 3 sets	Abdominal Exercise – 3 sets	Pulling Exercise – 3 sets	Abdominal Exercise – 3 sets
Optional Assistance Work – as needed	Optional Assistance Work – as needed	Optional Assistance Work – as needed	Optional Assistance Work – as needed

Week Two

Day One	Day Two	Day Three	Day Four
Press – 3 sets of 5 reps (only get prescribed reps)	Deadlift – 3 sets of 5 reps (only get prescribed reps)	Bench Press – 3 sets of 5 reps (only get prescribed reps)	Squat – 3 sets of 5 reps (only get prescribed reps)
Pressing Exercise – 3 sets	Leg Exercise – 3 sets	Pressing Exercise – 3 sets	Lower Back/Hamstring Exercise – 3 sets
Pulling Exercise	Abdominal	Pulling Exercise – 3	Abdominal

– 3 sets	Exercise – 3 sets	sets	Exercise – 3 sets
Optional Assistance Work – as needed	Optional Assistance Work – as needed	Optional Assistance Work – as needed	Optional Assistance Work – as needed

Week Three

Day One	Day Two	Day Three	Day Four
Press – 5/3/1, no extra reps or assistance work	Deadlift – 5/3/1, no extra reps or assistance work	Bench Press – 5/3/1, no extra reps or assistance work	Squat – 5/3/1, no extra reps or assistance work

Week Four (Testing Week)

Day One – Work up to a new 1RM in the Deadlift

Day Two – Work up to new 1RM in the Bench Press

Day Three – Work up to new 1RM in the Squat

Note: You can change the testing days or even test on week three – do whatever you feel is right for you and when you feel good.

Prowler Challenge

Performance Goal: Perform 10 40-yard Prowler sprints with 180 pounds additional weight and 60 seconds rest between sprints.

I originally came up with this idea when I started thinking about how I would get into shape if I were to play football again. Of course, things started taking a life of their own and at 37 years old, I am not the same person I was in college. So I had to drastically alter things for my aging body.

Essentially this is a conditioning challenge. This will push your conditioning levels higher while maintaining your strength. This is not the challenge you want to do if your main goal is to get stronger in the main lifts. It's just how training works; you pick one goal and with a single-minded focus, attack it. You don't try to "lose weight and get stronger but still be able to run a marathon while becoming an amateur strongman and train for the police academy." That's a sure sign of a Fitness Hipster. Go be average on your own time, Fitness Hipster. We are training, not fitnessing.

The reasons why I chose the Prowler and not hill sprints (or any other "hard conditioning") are:

It is awesome – nothing builds character like heavy Prowler work. It also looks barbaric.

It is simple – just get behind the thing and push. There is no technique to the Prowler, you drop your hips and pump your legs.

It is easily loadable. A hill sprint is great but you can't prescribe a set number of hill sprints unless everyone has the same grade hill and same distance. It just doesn't work and you can't program it.

Prowler Challenge - Lifting

You will lift weights three times per week. All four lifts (the bench press, squat, press and deadlift) will be done in these three workouts. Monday you will squat. Wednesday you will bench press. On Friday, you will do both the deadlift and the press.

For the conditioning challenge you will reset your numbers. Your training max will now be lowered to 90% of your 1RM. Because there will be an emphasis on conditioning, we will strive to maintain, and possibly gain, strength. But that is all. You squat and deadlift will suffer. You will have some bad days. Suck it up and move forward. Expect greatness.

There will be no additional lower body lifting other than the main lifts because the Prowler already taxes your legs and we don't need anything else interfering with your goals.

You are welcome to do more reps on the last set, as the usual with the 5/3/1 program. This might be easy during the first month. The second and third month will start catching up to you and I highly recommend that you only do the prescribed reps on the squat and deadlift. You are welcome to push the upper body lifts as you see fit.

After each 5/3/1 cycle is complete, increase your training max as usual: five pounds for the upper body lifts and 10 pounds for the lower body lifts. On the fourth week, deload the weights as usual and keep the assistance work the same.

Prowler Challenge – Conditioning

All Prowler sprints will be done on the vertical horns. These are the black poles that the weights are loaded on. You can use the Econo Prowler or regular Prowler. However, if it is a knockoff version (not made by Williams Strength) then I am unfamiliar with it and do not know if the weights will still apply.

The Prowler Challenge is set to be pushed on a paved street. Not concrete, not the turf and not grass. You are welcome to push on these surfaces but the weights will probably have to change and I'm not familiar with what weights to use. If this is your choice, it is up to you to find the correct weights.

When my wife did this challenge we simply changed the weights to reflect her lighter bodyweight and strength level. There are three weights that are used during this challenge. The light weight is 90 added pounds, the medium weight is 140 added pounds and the heavy weight is 180 added pounds. In her case, we used the following: 20 added pounds was the light weight, 50 added pounds was the medium weight and 90 added pounds was the heavy weight. The weight of the Prowler is never factored in due to it being a constant.

Make your own light/medium/heavy weights according to your bodyweight and strength level. This, again, is up to you to determine.

You will perform three Prowler conditioning workouts per week. These can be done on any day that fits into your schedule, on training days after you lift or on the days off. Because the emphasis is on conditioning, I would rather do the conditioning work on the off days. But that may not be optimal for many. The key is this: get three workouts of lifting and three workouts of conditioning in per week.

Prowler Challenge – Diet

This is NOT the time to be cutting calories. Crazy, I know. But you will need to eat just like you were in the other challenges. If you want to get weaker and more awful, eat like a bird. If you want to maintain (and possibly gain) some strength and get in insane condition, you have to eat like a goddamn man, not a baby. Cutting calories and increasing energy expenditure is the sure way to get weaker. It never made sense to me. Supplementation is the same as always – quality fish oil, vitamin C and a multi-vitamin are crucial.

If you feel your lifts are suffering, increase your calories by eating bigger portions or increasing the number of meals.

Prowler Challenge – Lifting Template

The following lifting template will be used for the duration of the Prowler Challenge. It would be redundant to write it out each week since it is very simple and straightforward. I have added in some additional trap and arm work to make up for the lack of upper-body volume.

Monday

- Squat – 5/3/1 sets and reps
- Press – 3 sets of 10 reps @ 60% of your training max
- Pulling Exercise – choose one lat exercise for 3-5 sets of 10-20 reps
- Biceps Exercise – choose one biceps exercise for 3-5 sets of 10-20 reps
- Ab Exercise – choose one abdominal exercise for 3-5 sets of 10-20 reps

Wednesday

- Bench Press – 5/3/1 sets and reps
- Pulling Exercise – choose one lat exercise for 3-5 sets of 10-20 reps
- Barbell Shrugs – 5 sets of 10-20 reps
- Triceps Pushdowns or Extensions – 5 sets of 10 reps
- Ab Exercise – choose one abdominal exercise for 3-5 sets of 10-20 reps

Friday

- Deadlift- 5/3/1 sets and reps
- Press- 5/3/1 sets and reps
- Pulling Exercise – choose one lat exercise for 3-5 sets of 10-20 reps
- Biceps Exercise – choose one biceps exercise for 3-5 sets of 10-20 reps
- Ab Exercise – choose one abdominal exercise for 3-5 sets of 10-20 reps

Prowler Challenge – Conditioning for Weeks 1-4

Weeks 1-3 –10, 40-yard sprints with 90 added pounds. Do not time the rest periods. Get the work in and just be sure to get all 10 sprints in. Remember that you will do this three times per week.

Week 4

Day One

- 10, 20-yard sprints with 180 added pounds. Do not time rest periods.

Day Two

- 10, 20-yard sprints with 140 added pounds. Do not time rest periods.

Day Three

- 10, 40-yard sprints with 90 added pounds, 60 seconds rest between sprints.

Prowler Challenge – Conditioning for Weeks 5-8

Week 5

Day One

- 10, 40-yard sprints with 90 added pounds, 60 seconds rest between sprints.

Day Two

- 6, 40-yard sprints with 140 added pounds, 90 seconds rest between sprints.

Day Three

- 4, 40-yard sprints with 140 added pounds, 90 seconds rest between sprints.
- Rest 5-10 minutes.
- 8, 40-yard sprints with 90 added pounds, 60 seconds rest between sprints.

Week 6

Day One

- 12, 40-yard sprints with 90 added pounds, 60 seconds rest between sprints.

Day Two

- 8, 40-yard sprints with 140 added pounds, 90 seconds rest between sprints

Day Three

- 6, 40-yard sprints with 180 added pounds, Do not time rest periods.

- Rest 5-10 minutes.
- 4, 40-yard sprints with 90 added pounds, 60 seconds rest between sprints.

Week 7

Day One

- 12, 40-yard sprints with 90 added pounds, 60 seconds rest between sprints.

Day Two

- 6, 40-yard sprints with 140 added pounds, 60 seconds rest between sprints.

Rest 5-10 minutes.

- 6, 40-yard sprints, with 90 added pounds, 60 seconds rest between sprints.

Day Three

- 4, 40-yard sprints with 180 added pounds, 90 seconds rest between sprints

Rest 5-10 minutes.

- 4, 40-yard sprints with 90 added pounds, 60 seconds rest between sprints.

Week 8

Day One

- 12, 40-yard sprints with 90 added pounds, 60 seconds rest between sprints.

Day Two

- 6, 40-yard sprints with 140 added pounds, 60 seconds rest between sprints.
- Rest 5-10 minutes.
- 8, 40-yard sprints, with 90 added pounds, 60 seconds rest between sprints.

Day Three

- 6, 40-yard sprints with 180 added pounds, 90 seconds rest between sprints
- Rest 5-10 minutes.
- 4, 40-yard sprints with 90 added pounds, 60 seconds rest between sprints.

Prowler Challenge – Conditioning for Weeks 9-12

Week 9

Day One

- 15, 40-yard sprints with 90 added pounds, 60 seconds rest between sprints.

Day Two

- 8, 40-yard sprints with 140 added pounds, 60 seconds rest between sprints.

Rest 5-10 minutes.

- 6, 40-yard sprints, with 90 added pounds, 60 seconds rest between sprints.

Day Three

- 6, 40-yard sprints with 180 added pounds, 90 seconds rest between sprints
- Rest 5-10 minutes.
- 6, 40-yard sprints with 90 added pounds, 60 seconds rest between sprints.

Week 10

Day One

- 15, 40-yard sprints with 90 added pounds, 60 seconds rest between sprints.

Day Two

- 10, 40-yard sprints with 140 added pounds, 60 seconds rest between

sprints.

Day Three

- 6, 40-yard sprints with 180 added pounds, 90 seconds rest between sprints
- Rest 5-10 minutes.
- 4, 40-yard sprints with 140 added pounds, 60 seconds rest between sprints.

Week 11

Day One

- 15, 40-yard sprints with 90 added pounds, 60 seconds rest between sprints.

Day Two

- 10, 40-yard sprints with 140 added pounds, 60 seconds rest between sprints.

Day Three

- 8, 40-yard sprints with 180 added pounds, 90 seconds rest between sprints
- Rest 5-10 minutes.
- 4, 40-yard sprints with 140 added pounds, 60 seconds rest between sprints.

Week 12

Cut out the lifting this week – we are completely focused on hitting the goal.

Day One

- 12, 40-yard sprints with 90 added pounds, 60 seconds rest between sprints.

Day Two

- 12, 40-yard sprints with 90 added pounds, 60 seconds rest between sprints.

Day Three - Conditioning Test

- 10, 40-yard sprints with 180 added pounds with 60 seconds rest between sprints.

100 Rep Challenge

I love challenges – even if they are somewhat pointless or don't really mean anything. There is something amazing about setting out on the hard path, struggling like mad and reaching the final destination. Many people shake their heads at those that do that and continually ask why anyone would subject themselves to such “trivial” things. But the work and the perseverance to reach the goal is what really matters – these things harden the body and the mind. They teach you resolve and how to fight through mental and physical pain.

Challenges also give you the opportunity to test your limits. How far are you willing to go? Do you have what it takes when you can't see the light at the end of the tunnel? More importantly, these challenges, if hard enough, teach you that anything can be possible. I'm not ignorant enough to think that one day I'll grow wings and fly – but sometimes when an obstacle seems too tall to climb over, you can draw on the strength built over these “trivial” challenges. In other words, these things can carry over to real life.

The performance goal of the 100 Rep Challenge is simple – complete all the workouts listed below. Not a day or rep missed. We are not looking to “Increase Your Bench Press 30 Pounds in Two Weeks!” or “Add a Half Inch to Your Arms in One Workout!” What we are training is hard work, mental fortitude and work ethic.

This workout is not haphazardly put together. I've combined strength work, conditioning work and hypertrophy work in a manner that allows you to build each over a 6-week period. I've used many of these 100-rep exercises in this manner during my rehab and over the years. It wasn't until Paul Carter and I took the time to brainstorm about how to incorporate them into a proper training program that this workout was shaped. There are numerous ways to do this but the 100-Rep Challenge is something special. The strength work comes with the heavy barbell lifts. The conditioning work comes with Prowler pushes and the 100-rep work. The hypertrophy work comes with the 100-rep work. Each is given attention and each has the proper attention given.

You will be outrageously sore during this time. Expect it and embrace it. It's

only six weeks – hardly a life time and something you SHOULD demand from yourself. If you are unfamiliar with simple recovery methods, TNation has dozens of articles to help you. This is not a time to cut out sleep, stretching or mobility work. This is not a time to be “cutting.” Cutting is for people who don’t have the discipline to eat right the majority of the time.

This training will allow you to earn the right to eat hearty. It will force you to learn about recovery.

The 100-Rep Work is great for hypertrophy – you will be tapping into a rep range most never venture into. It is also terrific for strengthening your tendons (and give you an outrageous pump!) Your body will change in these six weeks – your arms, traps and hamstrings will grow, and your conditioning will also improve.

Enough with the small talk, let’s get to the training.

Training Week – Overview

- Monday – Lower Body Weight Training
- Tuesday – Lower Body 100
- Wednesday – Prowler Walk
- Thursday – Upper Body Weight Training
- Friday – Upper Body 100
- Saturday – Prowler Walk

Notice that there are two days devoted to strength, two days devoted to conditioning and two days devoted to hypertrophy.

100-Rep Work

The following exercises will be used exclusively for the 100-rep work. It's not hard to do; just do 100 reps in one set. There are only three exercises per day and trust me, this is all you will need. Don't feel the need to add more exercises; just do them as prescribed. If you feel any of the weights are too heavy for your current level, simply do less. The weights listed are what most people who have five or more years of training can handle. They are not easy but they are doable. And if you have any doubts, stop it. You must expect more from yourself.

Upper Body 100

- Front Plate Raise – this is done with a full range of motion, until the hands/plate are over the head. Using this range of motion greatly taxes the upper back and shoulders. Weight used = 25-pound plate
- Barbell Curls – Weight used = 45-lb barbell
- Kirk Karwoski Rows – Weight used = Barbell with 135 pounds. Straps are not allowed.

Lower Body 100

- One Leg Squat – this is also known as a Bulgarian squat. This is done with one leg in front and the other foot on a bench. Only your bodyweight is used. Finish all the reps on one side before switching. You will do 100 TOTAL reps – meaning you will do 50 reps PER LEG.
- Hamstring Curl – this is done with 10 to 20-pound ankle weights. Lay on the floor or on the bench. Do both legs at the same time.
- Sit-ups – lock your feet under something stable, cross your arms on your chest and do a sit-up.

100 Rep Notes

You are free to substitute any exercise you wish, but I can only approve of the ones listed above. These were picked for a variety of reasons, namely to target weak points, target areas people want and need to develop, ease of performing 100 reps with, mobility and the simple challenge of getting better.

You can rest during the 100-rep set but you cannot put bar down and you cannot make the exercise “easier” during this time, i.e. laying down during a rest period during a sit-up. If you are in doubt of what constitutes rest, you are probably doing it wrong.

At the top of the front plate raise, squeeze your traps and upper back. Use as straight of arms as possible.

Karwoski Rows are explained in the Yoke article I wrote on TNation earlier this year.

Your form will probably get sloppy, which is to be expected. You must try to maintain some integrity during the set. The weight is light enough that you will not get hurt but the point of the doing the exercise is to exhaust and annihilate the muscle, not to just get the reps.

You will be sore – expect it.

You can rest as much as you want between exercises. Don't bring a stop watch – we are in the weight room, not on a track.

You must learn how to relax your mind during these sets – don't focus on the pain. You have to learn to disassociate yourself from reality.

I usually attack the first 50-60 reps without stopping. I take a short break and catch my breath (not really) then hammer out sets of 10 reps. This makes it easier to mentally handle. It helps greatly if you have someone counting the reps for you. You will invariably lose count as your mind starts to wander away from the pain.

Weight Training Overview

Week 1

Monday

- Squat – 5/3/1 sets and reps
- Good Morning or Straight Leg Deadlift – 3-5 sets of 5-10 reps
- Hanging Leg Raises – 3-5 sets of 10-15 reps

Thursday

- Bench Press – 5/3/1 sets and reps
- Press – 5 sets of 10 reps (you choose the weight)
- TBar Rows or DB Rows – 5 sets of 10-15 reps

Week 2

Monday

- Deadlift – 5/3/1 sets and reps
- Good Morning or Straight Leg Deadlift – 3-5 sets of 10-15 reps
- Hanging Leg Raise – 3-5 sets of 10-15 reps

Thursday

- Press – 5/3/1 sets and reps
- Bench Press – 5 sets of 10 reps (you choose the weight)
- TBar Rows or DB Rows – 5 sets of 10-15 reps

Lifting Notes

This is a six-week program, lifting will be done two times per week. Since only two exercises are done per week, you will only go through one 5/3/1 cycle in the six week period. In other words, the first two weeks will be 3 sets of 5 reps. The third and fourth week will be done with 3 sets of 3 reps and the final two weeks will be the 5/3/1 week.

No substitution of any exercise. You are free to do so but it is no longer the program.

The “5 sets of 10 reps” of the bench press and press are done with approximately 50% of your training max. This is just a baseline number and can change. The important thing is to push yourself and get the required reps.

Hanging Leg Raises can be done with bent knees or straight legs (or a combination of both).

You are welcome to push the last set hard on the 5/3/1 sets – this is up to you and how you feel for that day. I would recommend you push the sets hard but always leave 2-3 reps “in the tank”.

Prowler Notes

The Prowler is done for both conditioning and strength. You will perform six Prowler trips of 40 yards on Wednesday and Saturday. I highly recommend you WALK when doing the Prowler. The slower work will force you to use full steps and strengthen your legs.

Pick three weights for the Prowler – heavy, medium and light. For example, I use the following weights: Heavy – 270 pounds, Medium – 180 pounds, Light – 90 pounds. You will need to adjust these weights for your strength level, bodyweight and the surface on which you push the Prowler.

Wednesday – Two trips of 40 yards will be done with each weight; light, medium and heavy. In my case, I will do two 40-yard walks with 90 pounds, two 40-yard walks with 180 pounds and two 40-yard walks with 270 pounds.

Saturday – all six trips of 40 yards will be done with the medium weight. For example, I will do six 40-yard walks with 180 pounds.

No rest periods are given because it doesn't matter. Get the work in – this is about getting the legs stronger. The conditioning will improve.

Final Thoughts

If you are unsure about the challenge, I highly recommend taking the next 4 weeks incorporating a few of the 100-rep lifts in your current training and see how you fair. This will give you some time to get used to the breathing and the soreness. If you feel you are ready, jump in, don't just toe the water.

If you make the commitment, I want you to take 36 blank sheets of paper. On each paper, write down EACH workout. So each workout has its own page. Write the complete workout you will do each day. Write it, don't type it. Writing it gives it personal meaning and realness, something tangible. It becomes reality. Go get a small, 3-ring binder and put these pages in it. Label the binder, "100-Rep Challenge". Now leave your phone in your car or gym bag – the binder is all you need.

Leave a space at the bottom to make notes – write down what you ate, how much slept and what you did to improve your recovery for the next session. Be proactive in all departments. This binder will give you accountability for all areas of your training and lets you see what needs improvement and at what you excel. Yes, this 6 week challenge sucks. But it will teach you about yourself and you will develop the mental and physical granite that many of us seek from the iron. Thanks to Paul Carter for his valuable input and friendship – thank you Paul!

God Luck and Good Speed!

5/3/1 and Rest Pause Training – 6-Week Challenge

Like many people, I was introduced to Rest Pause training via Dante Trudell. Dante Trudell is the creator of Dogg Crapp training (aka DC Training). Dante's DC Training has been making waves in the training world and it shatters a lot of the bodybuilding dogma. If you are interested in his story, do some research about how he created the system and the work he put into it.

I love Rest Pause training ala Dogg Crapp – I think it's fun because it makes each exercise count, you keep a log book to record your rep records (and can chart your progress), you have goals each time you train and you don't fuck around in the gym. And I think that when combined with the 5/3/1 program, you have a unique blend of size and strength. Actually, I am currently working on developing a percentage-based system for the rest pause assistance work (for the Kroc rows, barbell curls and triceps extensions) for this program but haven't perfected it yet. This will help give the lifter some guidance for his assistance work and be able to periodize it over a long period of time.

When I developed this challenge, I wanted to accomplish several things:

Stay as true to DC Training as I could. This program is NOT in any way endorsed by Dante. I don't know him but I respect the work that he has done. I can certainly recognize the time and effort he has put into creating the system and expanding on it.

Stay 100% true to the principles of my 5/3/1 program. I believe in the four principles of the 5/3/1 program – these have helped guide me throughout my training career and ones that I believe work. I have expanded and changed parts of the program but the core of the program, THE PRINCIPLES, remain steadfast.

The workouts can be done in a barebones training facility, i.e. this is tailor made for the garage lifter. Machines or special equipment are not required for the program, mostly because I don't have access to them! I've made three great decisions in my life: marrying Juliet, buying a Sunn Model T and investing in a home gym. While I realize that a home gym is not in the cards for many people, reading this article (space and money) if you CAN make it work, DO IT.

Having your own strength facility that isn't bombarded with egomaniacs, manic depressive owner/managers, poor music selections and pointless equipment is like winning the lottery. I could go on and on but the fact is this: a home gym = freedom.

Have an emphasis on strength AND hypertrophy. This goes with #2 (not bowel movements) but I have no interest at this point in my life in being weak. Seems kind of pointless.

How to do a Rest Pause Set

A rest pause set is pretty simple. You are doing 3 sets in 1. After a few warm-up sets (this is up to you) perform an all out set of an exercise, rest, then repeat it with the same weight, rest again, and perform the last set. The rest period can be timed with a watch, by counting breaths or by counting in your head. Dante recommends taking 15 deep breaths between sets. Here is an example of a rest pause set.

Barbell Curls

- 95 pounds for 15 reps.
- Rest 20-30 seconds
- 95 pounds for 6 reps
- Rest 20-30 seconds
- 95 pounds for 3 reps

Program Overview

This workout program consists of two training days per week. Yes, only two. But trust me when I say for this challenge, it is enough. I know the current trend on the Internet is the constant jerking to training 43 times a day. And I know people look at those programs with the same sparkle that Mr. Hands had for horses. I believe that for this program two days is ideal.

The exercises that you will perform rest pause sets are:

- Bench Press
- Press
- Chins
- Barbell Curls
- Triceps Extensions

As with DC Training, you will not do any rest pause sets with the squat and deadlift. This is incredibly unsafe. Instead, you will do a down set for these lower body lifts. Because it is amazingly easy to program, we will simply use the FIRST WORK set of the particular week as your down set. For example, on the 3x5 week you will use 65% of your training max (TM) for this set. Dante calls this set a “widowmaker” (20 reps). I won’t prescribe the amount of reps to do on the down set but you’ll know if you gave it your all or not.

I wanted to do a row variation in the program and immediately thought of the Kroc Row. This is a perfect exercise for this challenge. You do not perform a rest pause set with the Kroc Row.

Here is the sample training template for the first three weeks.

Week One

Monday	Thursday
Squat – 3 sets of 5 reps, 65% x max reps	Deadlift – 3 sets of 5 reps, 65% x max reps

Bench Press – 3 sets of 5 reps, 65% x Rest Pause (RP)	Press – 3 sets of 5 reps, 65% x RP
Chins – 1-2 warm-up set, 1 set RP	Kroc Row – 1-2 warm-up set, 1 all out set
Barbell Triceps Extensions – 1-2 warm-up set, 1 set RP	Barbell Curls – 1-2 warm-up set, 1 set RP
Ab Work	Ab Work

Week Two

Monday	Thursday
Squat – 3 sets of 3 reps, 70% x max reps	Deadlift – 3 sets of 3 reps, 70% x max reps
Bench Press – 3 sets of 3 reps, 70% x RP	Press – 3 sets of 3 reps, 70% x RP
Chins – 1-2 warm-up set, 1 set RP	Kroc Row – 1-2 warm-up sets, 1 all out set
Barbell Triceps Extensions – 1-2 warm-up sets, 1 set RP	Barbell Curls – 1-2 warm-up set, 1 set RP
Ab Work	Ab Work

Week Three

Monday	Thursday
Squat – 5/3/1, 75% x max reps	Deadlift– 5/3/1, 75% x max reps
Bench Press – 5/3/1, 75% x RP	Press – 5/3/1, 75% x RP
Chins – 1 warm-up set, 1 set RP	Kroc Row – 1 warm-up sets, 1 all out set
Barbell Triceps Extensions – 1-2 warm-up sets, 1 set RP	Barbell Curls - 1 warm-up sets, 1 set RP

||Ab Work

||Ab Work

Note: Weeks 4, 5, 6: Repeat first 3 weeks. Be sure to increase your Training Max by 5 or 10 pounds, depending on the lift. Try to beat your previous rest pause records by weight, reps or by estimated max.

Program Notes

Those of you who are familiar with DC Training know that Dante advocates extreme stretching between sets. I have never done it so I cannot comment on it. If you do the research and believe it works, then give it a shot.

The exercises above are non-negotiable. If you want to switch out an exercise then DO IT! I cannot recommend any change to the program. This is what I believe and know works. I am 100% for everyone to find their own way and develop their own training; if you know something else with the program needs to be tweaked for your own benefit or goals, I want YOU to make that decision and go for it.

Diet is simple: eat 1.5 to 2g of protein per pound of bodyweight. Base your carbs on how fat you are or how paranoid you are.

You can use bodyweight or weighted chins. That's up to you and dependent on your strength level. If you don't know which one to use, then use your bodyweight.

I believe "easy" cardio (Air Dyne bike, for example) needs to be done on the off days. 30 minutes on all non-training days. If you personally want to do something different as it fits your goals, I recommend you do it. You know your body better than I do – I can only recommend the things that I believe.

I don't recommend going to failure on your last 5/3/1 sets; push these for PR's but never go to failure.

Log all of your exercises, weights and reps. For your RP sets, record the total amount of reps you achieve.

After the 6th week, take a deload week and attack again or try another template.

Example Workout

Squat (TM = 500)

Bench press (TM = 300)

- Squat – warm-up sets, 350x3, 400x3, 450x7, 350x17
- Bench Press – warm-up sets, 210x3, 240x3, 270x5
- Bench Press (RP) - 210x15, 210x5, 210x3
- Chins (RP) – 1x18, 1x6, 1x2
- Barbell Triceps Extensions (RP) – 115x20, 115x 12, 115x8
- Hanging Leg Raise – 3 sets

Good luck to all of you that try this challenge. Of all the challenges I've written, this is the one that I am most excited about. This combines two programs that have the part of training that I most enjoy – breaking records.

5/3/1 Frequency Project

I wrote the Frequency Project a couple years ago and had it as a free download on my website in 2012. This was a huge hit and I think people really enjoyed the more frequent training. Please remember that the more you train doesn't always mean the better you will be. In some cases, it can be. I'd rather have quality training sessions than quantity training sessions.

It's no secret that the younger and weaker you are, the more you can train. It is easy to bench or squat 225 every day. The problem is this: too much time lifting, not enough time running, jumping and throwing. There is more to training than just lifting weights. If you want to be fast, strong and explosive it wouldn't kill you to actually train like an athlete. An athlete sprints, jumps and throws.

So the next time you ponder weak points, floor presses vs. incline presses or other such nonsense, go do something fast. Go jump. Sprint.

Program Overview

- Two 5/3/1 Training Cycles per month (no deload)
- 24 workouts per month
- Final sets are done for minimal reps only; never go for max reps
- You have 3 options for every squat, press and bench press workout:
- Do minimum reps
- Do minimum reps and a single at your training max.
- Do minimum reps, a single at your training max and keep working up.
- The three options will be entirely based on how you feel each workout. None of the options are programmed so you must use your body, mind and best judgment.
- Deadlift workouts will be done for minimum reps only. There will be no singles done.
- Deadlift workouts will never do more than 3 reps per set. On the “3x5” days, you will do 3 sets of 3 reps, with the same percentages as the “3x5” days. Only the reps change. On the “5/3/1” day, you will do “3/3/1” – only the reps change; percentages stay the same.
- There will be no conditioning done during the 5/3/1 Frequency Project. If your goals are conditioning based, do not choose this workout.
- Recovery is paramount. Take proper steps to ensure that your body and mind are ready for each workout.
- Nutrition: eat 1.5-2g of protein/pound of bodyweight per day. Majority of protein must come from food sources such as chicken, fish, beef and eggs. I highly recommend dark meat chicken, beef and whole eggs.
- Not recommend for anyone who is unable to commit to a training program, mentally weak, complains about having a bad workout or is unsure about assistant work. No questions about assistant work will be answered in regards to this program. This program is also not recommended for those who just “want to progress faster.” That is not the point of this program.
- Start at 90% of your max and progress as normal between cycles.
- You will have 24 workouts to do each month – off days are based on your own schedule. Choose them wisely. If you are sore, you are doing the program wrong as your body is not ready for this training and your recovery protocols are not well established. You must learn to walk

before you run.

- The program will take a 3/5/1 approach to the weeks; this is similar to the 5/3/1 for Powerlifting program.
- Lat /Upper Back exercises recommended: dumbbell rows, chest supported rows, chin-ups/pull-ups, any machine row, lat pulldown, band pull-aparts, rear raises and face pulls. Choose 1 exercise per workout for 3-5 sets. Do not do barbell rows due to stress on lower back; this is non-negotiable.
- Rotator and biceps work – all based on rehab protocols.
- Only lower back work recommended is back raises and Reverse Hyperextensions – these are done for 3 sets of 10-15 reps. Abdominal exercises and sets/reps based on your preference.

Workout 1	Workout 2	Workout 3	Workout 4	Workout 5
Press – 3 sets of 3 reps, singles if desired.	Squat – 3 sets of 3 reps (using 3x5 percentages)	Bench Press – 3 sets of 3 reps, singles if desired.	Squat – 3 sets of 3 reps, singles if desired.	Press – 3 sets of 5 reps, singles if desired.
Lat, Upper Back, Biceps, Rotator Work – as needed.	Deadlift – 3 sets of 3 reps	Lat, Upper Back, Biceps, Rotator Work – as needed.	Back Raises or Reverse Hyperextensions – 3 sets	Lat, Upper Back, Biceps, Rotator Work – as needed.
	Back Raise/Ab Work – 3 sets		Ab Work – 3 sets	

Workout 6	Workout 7	Workout 8	Workout 9	Workout 10
Squat – 3 sets of 3 reps (using 3x5 percentages)	Bench Press – 3 sets of 5 reps, singles if desired.	Squat – 3 sets of 5 reps, singles if desired.	Press – 5/3/1, singles if desired.	Squat – 3 sets of 3 reps (using 3x5 percentages)
	Lat, Upper		Lat, Upper	

Deadlift – 3 sets of 3 reps (using 3x5 percentages)	Back, Biceps, Rotator Work – as needed.	Back Raises or Reverse Hyperextensions – 3 sets	Back, Biceps, Rotator Work – as needed.	Deadlift – 3/3/1 (using 5/3/1 percentages)
Back Raises or Reverse Hyperextensions – 3 sets		Ab Work – 3 sets		Back Raises or Reverse Hyperextensions – 3 sets
Ab Work – 3 sets				Ab Work – 3 sets

Workout 11	Workout 12
Press – 5/3/1, singles if desired.	Squat – 5/3/1, singles if desired.
Lat, Upper Back, Biceps, Rotator Work – as needed.	Back Raises or Reverse Hyperextensions – 3 sets
	Ab Work – 3 sets

After Workout 12, increase training maxes for each lift accordingly.

Workout 13	Workout 14	Workout 15	Workout 16	Workout 17
Bench Press – 3 sets of 3 reps, singles if desired.	Squat – 3 sets of 3 reps (using 3x5 percentages)	Press – 3 sets of 3 reps, singles if desired.	Squat – 3 sets of 3 reps, singles if desired.	Bench Press – 3 sets of 5 reps, singles if desired.
Lat, Upper Back, Biceps, Rotator Work – as needed.	Deadlift – 3 sets of 3 reps	Lat, Upper Back, Biceps, Rotator Work – as needed.	Back Raises or Reverse Hyperextensions – 3 sets	Lat, Upper Back, Biceps, Rotator Work – as

				needed.
	Back Raises or Reverse Hyperextensions – 3 sets		Ab Work – 3 sets	
	Ab Work – 3 sets			

Workout 18	Workout 19	Workout 20	Workout 21	Workout 22
Squat – 3 sets of 3 reps (using 3x5 percentages)	Press – 3 sets of 5 reps, singles if desired.	Squat – 3 sets of 5 reps, singles if desired.	Bench Press – 5/3/1, singles if desired.	Squat – 3 sets of 3 reps (using 3x5 percentages)
Deadlift – 3 sets of 3 reps (using 3x5 percentages)	Lat, Upper Back, Biceps, Rotator Work – as needed.	Back Raises or Reverse Hyperextensions – 3 sets	Lat, upper back, biceps, rotator work – as needed.	Deadlift – 3/3/1 (using 5/3/1 percentages)
Back Raises or Reverse Hyperextensions – 3 sets		Ab Work – 3 sets		Back Raises or Reverse Hyperextensions – 3 sets
Ab Work – 3 sets				Ab work – 3 sets

Workout 23	Workout 24
Press – 5/3/1, singles if desired.	Squat – 5/3/1, singles if desired.
Lat, upper back, biceps, rotator work – as needed.	Back Raises or Reverse Hyperextensions – 3 sets

|| Ab Work – 3 sets ||

After Workout 24, increase training maxes for each lift accordingly.

5/3/1 Frequency Project 2.0

This version of the Frequency Project is much more fun and an easier layout than the original.

Notes:

- This workout is based on three lifts: squat, bench press and deadlift.
- Squat and bench press will be trained three times per week.
- The deadlift will be trained one day per week.
- You will go through entire 5/3/1 training cycle in one week.
- Deadlift will only be trained with 3x3 percentages.
- Final sets are done for minimal reps only; never go for max reps
- You have three options for every squat, press and bench press workout:
 - Do minimum reps
 - Do minimum reps and a single at your training max.
 - Do minimum reps, a single at your training max and keep working up.
- The three options will be entirely based on how you feel each workout. None of the options are programmed so you must use your body, mind and best judgment.
- Deadlift workouts will be done for minimum reps only. There will be no singles done.
- There will be no conditioning done during the 5/3/1 Frequency Project 2.0. If your goals are conditioning based, do not choose this workout.
- Recovery is paramount. Take proper steps to ensure that your body and mind are ready for each workout.
- Nutrition: eat 1.5-2g of protein/pound of bodyweight per day. Majority of protein must come from food sources such as chicken, fish, beef and eggs. I highly recommend dark meat chicken, beef and whole eggs.
- Not recommend for anyone who is unable to commit to a training program, mentally weak, complains about having a bad workout or is unsure about assistant work. No questions about assistant work will be answered in regards to this program. This program is also not recommended for those that just “want to progress faster.” That is not the point of this program.
- Start at 90% of your max and progress as normal between cycles.

- The program will take a 3/5/1 approach to the weeks; this is similar to the 5/3/1 for Powerlifting program.
- Lat /Upper Back exercises recommended: dumbbell rows, chest supported rows, chin-ups/pull-ups, any machine row, lat pulldown, band pull-aparts, rear raises and face pulls. Choose one exercise per workout for 3-5 sets. Do not do barbell rows due to stress on lower back; this is non-negotiable.
- Rotator and biceps work – all based on rehab protocols.
- Only lower-back work recommended is back raises and reverse hyperextensions – these are done for 3 sets of 10-15 reps. Abdominal exercises and sets/reps based on your preference.

5/3/1 Frequency Project 2.0, Sample Training Week

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Squat – 3x3	Bench – 3x3	Squat – 3x5	Bench – 3x5	Squat – 5/3/1	Bench – 5/3/1
Low Back – 3 sets	Lat, Upper Back, Biceps, Rotator Work – as needed.	Deadlift – 3x3	Lat, Upper Back, Biceps, Rotator Work – as needed.	Low Back – 3 sets	Lat, Upper Back, Biceps, Rotator Work – as needed.
Ab Work – 3 sets		Low Back/Ab Work – 3 sets		Ab Work – 3 sets	

Training Maxes are increased as usual and new training week starts on Monday.

The Big Question

One of the questions I get asked the most is how many days a week is optimal to train. This comes up quite a bit with older lifters and beginner lifters. Thankfully I have the answer. All you have to do is answer this question:

How many days of the week are you willing to emotionally, socially and physically commit to training?

Emotionally

Everyone has great intentions when they first start training or embark on a new training program. But eventually reality sets in and the lifter realizes that he may only be motivated to train 3 days out of the week. You must decide how many days a week you can train and still walk into the gym and be motivated to succeed.

Physically

This one is a bitter pill to swallow for many lifters that have spent a lifetime under the bar. They may have all the mental drive in the world but their bodies have failed them. Their back or knees may only allow them one good lower body workout a week. You have to know your body's limitations and strive to maximize them.

Socially

This is the curse of the father, husband and full-time employee. You have other things in your life that require attention other than training. You may have a job that requires 10 hour work days and a daughter that wants her father at her recital. You have responsibilities to others that demand your attention.

The key to answering these questions is to be honest with yourself. Once you do that, the rest is easy: make it work. Sure, your lifting heroes may have trained 7 days a week but you don't have that luxury. So make it work.

You can only squat once every two weeks? Make it work.

Commit to your training limitations. Your only other option is to fail and have an awful excuse. "If only I had more time," never works with winners.

About the Author

Jim Wendler is the author of *5/3/1: The Simplest and Most Effective Training System for Raw Strength* and 6 other books on training. He is a three-time letter winner at the University of Arizona where he played football. He has squatted 1000 pounds in competition and continues to train, coach and mentor lifters from all over the world.

Join Us

For more articles and insight into training check out www.JimWendler.com. There are free articles and training tips to help every lifter that is dedicated to making himself better. There is also a pay forum that allows you access to unique articles and hosts some of the smartest and informed lifters in the world. Join us! We are looking for a few strong individuals.

Special Thanks

I'd like to thank Laura Koss for helping me edit this book – you came through when I needed it and I am thankful. You know who else made a huge difference in my life? My parents. Those two people are the most caring, understanding people in the world. They always bring Portillos Beefs when they come visit. Thanks to Joey Waters for being the better musical half of Locust Whip, the blackened sludge/doom outfit that I make noise with. Training heavy and playing loud, monstrous riffs: few things are finer. May we never tour! Finally, my best friend and wife, Juliet. In my world, the sun rises and sets with her. Alongside (not behind) every great man is a great woman.

I hope all of you find your Juliet. I hope you all find the friends that sit behind a drum kit and laugh as you play the slowest riffs known to man. I hope you spend as much time with your kids and friends as you can. Stay off the computer and enjoy the experience of life. I still have that anger, that drive, that fire to get stronger. I still want to prove people wrong and make them eat their words. But I am happy and have that passion for life – no man should be without passion. No man should be miserable and chain himself to meaningless tasks and be a slave to others. Throw your glove down and demand this life be yours.