



Some Simple & Sensible Rules for Safe Training

- **FORM!** Always make sure your form is perfect. Do not wiggle your body around, contort yourself, decrease the range of motion, etc. just so you can achieve your reps. When you can attain the required reps with a specific weight in a comfortable manner, then you may progress upward.

Remember, cheating on an exercise is really cheating yourself.

- **FOCUS!** Your concentration while training is imperative to your progress as well as to your safety. Wondering eyes or mind can certainly hinder your performance and set you up for injury, so when you are training, focus on the matter at hand.
- **BREATHE!** There is a proper way to breathe when lifting weights and not breathing properly can elevate blood pressure to abnormal levels and can cause black outs. The proper sequence of breathing is gradually inhale as you are lowering the weight, gradually exhale as you are raising the weight.

Two examples: For pressing movements such as the bench press, you are pressing the bar off your chest, slowly exhaling to completion of the rep, inhaling as you lower the bar back to your chest, exhale as you push. For pulling movements like a chin-up, exhale as you pull yourself up and inhale as you lower yourself.

- **CONTROL!** You are always in control of the weight; the weight should never be in control of you. What that means is that a weight, even if it is light enough for you to handle, should always be under control throughout the movement. You should NOT use momentum to perform the repetition, bounce

the weight, lower it quickly, ignore the contraction, explode the weight up or lose FORM.

- STABILIZE! When you perform an exercise you need to stay "tight". What I mean by that is you cannot relax your body (or mind) while performing an exercise. If you do, there is a good chance you will injure yourself, maybe not immediately, but eventually. When doing exercises lying down, you need to retract your scapula (pull your shoulder blades together slightly) to support your shoulders and stabilize yourself so you don't move. If you are performing an exercise standing you need to keep your "core" tight. Your core is your midsection, lower back and hip area and depending on the exercise, you may need to retract your scapula as well (like in an over head press). Movements involving pulling will also require you to have a tight midsection and a slight retraction of the shoulder blades to prevent your shoulders from "rounding" which again can lead to shoulder problems.
- EXECUTION! The physical aspect of executing of a repetition is quite simple. In the "start" position you flex and squeeze the muscles being worked and proceed through the full ROM (range of motion) of the movement in a CONTROLLED manner, pausing and flexing in the contracted position. You then slowly and under control lower the weight to benefit from the negative (eccentric) portion of the exercise, pause briefly and perform another rep. When the weight is in the start position and you pause briefly, it is not a relaxed state at all, it is merely a means to reduce momentum and make the most out of the exercise.

Example: If you are performing a chest press, you have the bar (dumbbell) at chest level ready to start the repetition. You DO NOT let the weight sink into your chest or go past a point of the shoulders where injury can occur, you hold it at chest level briefly, squeeze it off your chest and flex your pectorals at the top of the movement, then you lower down under control, pause and continue on.

These are some important guidelines that we can discuss in greater detail but if you follow these recommendations throughout your training career, you will help reduce chances of injury and help optimize your physical goals.

As always, if you have any questions, feel free to contact me.

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