

Beginner Developmental Training – Olympic Weightlifting

The first stage has a 24 week duration. The main objectives to be accomplished during the time are:

General Physical Development

- Aerobic and anaerobic systems
- Muscular strength
- Power speed
- Agility and coordination
- Flexibility

Psychological Preparation

- Motivation, discipline and proper conduct
- Concentration
- Visualization
- Relaxation

Technical Preparation

- Teaching process from simple to complex exercises
- Reinforcing technique with focus on critical body positions

Tactical Preparation

- Continuous improvement in results

As you can observe, the development menu is multi-faceted which will create a sound basis for Sport Specialization in the years to come. For this reason, it's highly inappropriate to accelerate the training process because necessary changes and adaptations require adequate time to take their course.

The Weekly Cycle

Weekly cycles represent a very important unit in organization of the training process. They are valuable indicators of effort in our sport. Analysis of weekly cycle enables the coach to quickly evaluate athlete effort on the basis of the number of practice hours, number of exercises and their intensity, the number of sets or repetitions performed.

The frequency and duration of training has a substantial significance on the development of muscle strength and related skills. As performance increases there's a tendency to increase the total number of training days and their duration. This is done according to the principle of overloading. Thus the number of training sessions and their duration depends on the experience of the athlete. Generally, the higher the experience the more frequent and longer the training sessions. In our program for this stage we have chosen the following variants:

Three practice sessions per week during week 1 – 4

Days	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Total
Practice	1.5 hour		1.5 hour		1.5 hour			4.5 hours

Three practice sessions per week during week 5-12

Days	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Total
Practice	2 hours		2 hours		2 hours			6 hours

Four practice sessions per week during week 13-24

Days	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Total
Practice	2 hours		2 hours		2 hours	1.5 hour		7.5 hours

Evaluation of Teaching Process

Young weightlifters do not always approach mastery of lifting technique as priority. They often believe the important measurement is how much weight they can lift. For that reason, evaluation of technical preparation has to be incorporated into the program.

During the 24 weeks of training I perform the evaluation on a quarterly basis and as follow:

After 4 weeks of training:

- Power snatch – 90%
- Power clean & jerk – 90%

After 8 weeks of training:

- Snatch – 90%
- Clean & jerk – 90%

After 12 weeks of training:

- Snatch – 95%
- Clean & jerk – 95%

After 16 weeks of training:

- Snatch – 95%
- Clean & jerk – 95%
- Back squats – 95%

After 20 weeks of training:

- Snatch – 95%
- Clean & jerk – 95%
- Back squats – 95%

And during weeks 23-24

- Snatch – 100%
- Clean & jerk – 100%
- Back squats – 100%

Training Guidelines

Before each training session, the athlete should be engaged in a general body warm-up, consisting of exercises such as jogging, cycling, stepper, mobility exercises and stretching.

Before each new exercise a specific warm-up should be performed. This type of warm-up will consist of movements that are similar to that specific exercise. Once completed, resistance will be gradually increased corresponding with the training session's objective

The cool-down period after each training session should consist of low intensity exercises, core work and stretching.

Loading code:

$$\frac{50}{5} \quad 4 \quad = \quad \frac{\text{load \%}}{\text{\# of reps}} \quad \text{\# of sets}$$

The amount of weight should be administered to the athlete on an individual basis, depending on their ability level. At the start of the Beginner Developmental Program and until you establish results for the Snatch and the Clean & Jerk think of the percentages as training zones. For this reason, we use the following system to determine the amount of weight lifted:

50 %	or	warm-up weight
60 %	or	light weight
70 %	or	medium weight
80 %	or	medium-heavy weight
90 %	or	heavy weight
100%	or	very heavy weight

When the results and the strength grow you need to revise the kilogram numbers, in most cases the revision will happen every 6 – 12 weeks. Because everyone reacts to training load in a different way I personally don't use any strict timelines. The art of coaching is to observe and analyze. The main task is to guide the loading in order to train at the threshold of being challenged, not under trained and not over trained.

Squat Weight Selection

Selection of weights for squats is rather tricky. We don't advise to test front or back squats during the first several weeks of the Beginner Developmental Program. As a rule, we use % of clean & jerk as a foundation and then modify the numbers based on the individual lifter. At the beginning create a loading chart where you start with comfortable weights. Train for 2-3 weeks and if the weights prove to be not challenging enough revise upward. The objective is to lift heavier and heavier but you only raise the numbers if the posture is correct and the effort diminishes due to the strength development.

Below is the loading chart example where based on the athlete evaluation you would use expected clean & jerk performance numbers, then add 10% for the front squats and 20% for the back squats to create the loading chart:

	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%
Expected clean & jerk	40 kg	48 kg	56 kg	64 kg	71 kg	80 kg
Front squat example +10%	44 kg	53 kg	61 kg	70 kg	78 kg	88 kg
Back squat example +20%	48 kg	58 kg	66 kg	76 kg	86 kg	96 kg

Notes:

Exercises should be performed over a full range of motion using strict form at all times, without undue strain.

Auxiliary exercises such as up-right rowing or deltoid flies should be performed with light to medium weights. Their purpose is that of general development and not as main loading exercises. I don't add these repetitions to the overall program volume or intensity.

The rest between exercises should be 3-4 minutes.

The rest between sets in an exercise will vary depending on the number of repetitions, complexity of the exercise and the intensity. On average, this should be anywhere from 1-3 minutes between sets per exercise.

Proper breathing is also very important, and it should be stressed that extended breath holding can be very dangerous.

There might be a need to slightly modify the program based on the individual circumstances. It must be kept in mind however, that such modifications would not result in a dramatic change of the program structure. Rather, a change in smaller variables such as shifting a workout or two, reducing or increasing sets or repetitions, would be target.

When engaged in a regular training, an athlete should also pay special attention to adequate rest and nutrition.

Exercise Descriptions

Vertical jumps – squat down and jump up, hold straight back, swing arms in a “touch the floor and touch the ceiling” fashion, do not stop between repetitions.

Snatch Squats – hold the barbell overhead with the snatch grip, squat down into the full bottom position

Lifts from the hang – start with the barbell at the hip level, lower weight to right above the knees

Lifts below the knees – start with the barbell at the hip level, lower weight right down to the platform without placing it on ground

Snatch pulls full extension – it is a fast pulling motion without the jump, emphasis on hip and body extension with a raise on toes at the end of the pull

Pulls with 4 stops – stop for 2 seconds in 4 positions on the way up: right above the platform, knee height, halfway up the thighs, and full extension at the hip level without bending the arms. On the way down, lower the weight slowly in one continuous motion

Slow tempo – 3-5 seconds down and 3-5 seconds up

Half squat jumps – with the barbell behind the neck perform half squat, jump up, perform continues jumping for the prescribed number of repetitions

Back squat with raise on toes – perform regular back squat with an addition of toes raise to finish the standing up part

RDL's – hold the barbell at the waist level, unlock the knees, lower the weight by bending over at the hip joints, don't use legs, bring the barbell back to the waist level

90 % mini test – after proper warm-ups continue increasing weight till you reach approximately 90 % of your current potential. Do not increase weight if the technique is incorrect.

In most cases I ask the lifter to perform warm-up with the bar and then use regular progressing with 50% two sets with 4 repetitions, 60% one or two sets with 3 repetitions, 70% one set with 2 repetitions, 80% one set with 2 repetitions, 85% one or two set with 1 repetition, then 90% one set with 1 repetition.

95 % mini test – as with 90 % but continue to increase weight till you reach 95 % of your potential. Stop progressing weight if you are failing with correct technique or dropping the weight.