

Precision Nutrition

Developing Maximal Strength

Dave Tate

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Developing Maximal Strength by Dave Tate

Introduction - Who Is This Program For?

This program is designed for the beginner to intermediate lifter that's interested in developing maximal strength. Now, I know this will turn some of you off as you may consider yourself advanced. Well, here's a quick question that will determine whether or not you're advanced.

Are you considering using this program?

If the answer is yes – you're not advanced.

Advanced max strength lifters don't need a program in the first place. That's the definition of advanced – you've spent plenty of time under the bar, you know your body well, and you're able to design your own programs.

So, if you're considering following someone else's program, you're still in the beginner or intermediate phase of training. And trust me, there's nothing wrong with that! No one looks down on beginner and intermediate lifters who honestly want to make progress, least of all me. I've spent plenty of time as a beginning and intermediate lifter. And many advanced lifters have helped me out along the way. Now that I'm an advanced lifter, it's my time to give back.

Program Emphasis

At this point, I want to highlight the emphasis of this program. As you'll see by the template below, the program is based around two lifts: the squat and bench press. That's right; we're focusing only on two of the big three competition (powerlifting) lifts.

Why exclude the deadlift? Well, the main reason is this – there's no way of knowing your spinal loading history. If you've got a healthy back, there's a different deadlifting approach vs. if you have an unhealthy back. Since I don't want to be responsible for creating injury (more on this below), I decided to reduce the injury-risk potential of this program. But don't mistake this for a sacrifice of results. Even without training your deadlift, this program will increase your deadlift. I know, it may sound counter-intuitive. But trust me, if you use the methods and parameters outlined below, your deadlift will improve.

Back to the injury comment above, I should be clear on one other thing. The truth is – I'm not a fan of pre-designed written programs for large populations. After all, everyone is different and may have unique structural

and biomechanical needs – for both injury prevention and for optimizing lifting form. Further, great programming requires constant feedback and many adjustments along the way.

At this point you might be asking yourself why I even bothered to write this program. Well, everyone needs to start somewhere. While I prefer you to learn how design your own programs, that takes time. And in the interim, you've gotta do something. So use this program to help you establish a baseline to work with while you get to work on learning how to design your own plans.

Required Reading

One way to both kick this program off right and start learning the art of max strength program design is to read the following articles immediately.

[The Eight Keys Part I](#)
[The Eight Keys Part II](#)
[The Eight Keys Part III](#)
[The Eight Keys Part IV](#)
[Bench Press 600lbs](#)
[Squatting From Head to Toe](#)

Seriously, don't even bother starting this program without giving these articles their due. Not only do they provide an essential introduction to maximal strength training – the right way – they are invaluable in terms of adopting the right training mindset and in terms of practicing the right form.

Program Notes

As you read through this program, you'll find a variety of notes, notes that provide important information and coaching cues. This takes up a lot of space and makes this program quite long. However it's worth the trade-off as you'll have the notes and cues available while you need them most – at the gym and throughout your training session.

Further, you'll find exercise options in many cases. You see, I often like to prescribe movement patterns (for example: torso flexion movement pattern) and leave a few exercise options for you to choose from (hanging leg raise, spread eagle sit-ups, or cable crunches). This helps include variety in the program while still ensuring that you work the relevant movement patterns necessary for progress.

Finally, you'll find changing rep/set/loading parameters from one week to the next. This is put in place to ensure progression and neuromuscular adaptation.

Now, for some of you, this format may be confusing while for others it'll make complete sense and feel natural. If you're in the former camp and the

program gets confusing, here's what to do. Break out your training log and write down each weekly program as you're going to perform it in the gym. Then bring your training log to the gym instead of this program.

Maximal Strength Program Phase 1: Preparation (3 weeks)

Day 1 (Monday)

Warm Ups		
Forward Sled Dragging	2 sets 50 reps	If you do not own a sled then try using a treadmill with the motor off. Try to find the tightest belt you can. It should be hard to get started.
Backward Sled Dragging	2 sets 50 reps Add 5 steps to each set every week.	
Max Effort Squat-Deadlift Movement		
Close Stance Low Box Squats (2-4 inches below parallel with feet 12 inches apart)	<p>Week 1 2x5 Week 2 2x3 Week 3 3x1</p> <p>Start this movement with an unloaded bar. Continue by adding small weight increases (each increase would be equivalent to ~10% of your projected 1 rep max). When the weight reaches 60% of your 1 rep max, you will perform 2 sets of 5 reps using 2-minute rest periods. Don't go to failure. You should have 2-3 reps left "in the tank" at the end of each set.</p> <p>Week 2 – (2 work sets of 3 reps) use the same rep sequence to warm up but add 10% to your last two working sets and drop the parameters to 2 sets 3 reps.</p> <p>Week 3 – (3 work sets of 1 rep) use same rep sequence to warm up as week 1 and 2 but add 10% to week 2 weights so that you get 3 sets of 1 rep. These work sets should be hard but you should not do supramaximal efforts,</p>	<p>IMPORTANT – In this first phase a break in form is a missed rep. In other words when form breaks the set is OVER. This is an introduction to max effort training. Form is essential to maximum strength development and needs to be done in a tight controlled fashion. Do not think of the muscles working but instead on the movement. Make sure you use perfect form and keep all muscles in the body as tight as you can.</p>

	missing repetitions.	
Posterior Chain Movement (select one of these movements)		
a. Pull Throughs b. Romanian Deadlifts c. Glute Ham Raises	Week 1 – 4x8 Week 2 – 4x7 Week 3 – 3x6 2 minutes rest between sets.	I am giving you a few different options here because there is no way of knowing what you have access to. It is important to stay with the same movement for the entire three-week block. Make sure to use warm up sets to get to your working weight. Then use a weight that makes it hard to get the established set. Each week add more weight. You should not be able to get one extra rep. In other words, go to concentric failure.
Torso Movement - Bend (select one of these movements)		
a. Standing Pull Down Abs (Cable Crunches) b. Hanging Leg Raises c. Spread Eagle Sit Ups	Weeks 1-3 – 4x8 1:30 min rest between sets	You will select one movement from the list above and stick with this movement for the entire block. The sets and reps will stay the same with the goal of adding weight each week.
Torso Movement - Arch (select one of these movements)		
a. Reverse Hyperextensions b. 45-Degree Back Raises c. Good Mornings	Weeks 1-3 – 4x8 1:30 min rest between sets	You will select one movement from the list above and stick with this movement for the entire block. The sets and reps will stay the same with the goal of adding weight each week.
Vertical Pull Movement (select one of these movements)		
a. Chin Ups b. Pull Downs (any wide version)	Weeks 1-3 – 2x8 1:30 min rest between sets	You will select one movement from the list above and stick with this movement for the entire block. The sets and reps will stay the same with the goal of adding weight each week.
Cool Down		
*This will be what I call FREE TIME. You have 12 minutes to do whatever you want at a moderate intensity level.		

Day 2 (Wednesday)

Warm Ups		
Face Pulls Push Ups External Shoulder Rotations Front Pillar Bridge 45 Degree Back Raises	1 set of 15 reps for each exercise (30 seconds for the Front Pillar Bridges)	This is intended to warm up for the work ahead. Keep the rep speed slow and controlled with a full range of motion. Move fast between sets with no more than 30 seconds rest.
Max Effort Bench Press Movement		
Floor Press	<p>Week 1 2x5 Week 2 2x3 Week 3 3x1</p> <p>Start this movement with an unloaded bar. Continue by adding small weight increases (each increase would be equivalent to ~10% of your projected 1 rep max). When the weight reaches 60% of your 1 rep max, you will perform 2 sets of 5 reps using 2-minute rest periods. Don't go to failure. You should have 2-3 reps left "in the tank" at the end of each set.</p> <p>Week 2 – (2 work sets of 3 reps) use the same rep sequence to warm up but add 10% to your last two working sets and drop the parameters to 2 sets 3 reps.</p> <p>Week 3 – (3 work sets of 1 rep) use same rep sequence to warm up as week 1 and 2 but add 10% to week 2 weights so that you get 3 sets of 1 rep. These work sets should be hard but you should not do supramaximal efforts, missing repetitions.</p>	<p>IMPORTANT – In this first phase a break in form is a missed rep. In other words when form breaks the set is OVER. This is an introduction to max effort training. Form is essential to maximum strength development and needs to be done in a tight controlled fashion. Do not think of the muscles working but instead on the movement. Make sure you use perfect form and keep all muscles in the body as tight as you can.</p>
Triceps Movement (select one of these movements)		
a. Close Grip Incline Press b. Close Grip Partial Pin	Week 1 – 4x6 Week 2 – 3x6	I am giving you a few different options here

Press (top 1/2 of movement only)	Week 3 – 3x5 2 minutes rest between sets.	because there is no way of knowing what you have access to. It is important to stay with the same movement for the entire three-week block. Make sure to use warm up sets to get to your working weight. Then use a weight that makes it hard to get the established set. Each week add more weight. You should not be able to get one extra rep. In other words, go to concentric failure.
Shoulder Movement		
Side Lateral Raises	Weeks 1-3 – 3x8	This movement should be done with moderate weight (if I was to guess I would say 75% of what you would normally use). Keep the weight the same for the entire training block.
Horizontal Pull Movement - Close (select one of these movements)		
a. Chest Supported Rows b. Seated Machine Rows c. Dumbbell Rows	Week 1 – 3x8 Week 2 – 3x6 Week 3 – 2x5 2 minutes rest between sets.	Once again I have given you a few choices. I think it is best to do your pulls with your chest supported. Make sure your chest is over the pad and keep your back arched and chest up. Stay with the same movement for the entire block. Warm up if needed and move onto the work sets listed. Add weight each week.
Cool Down		
*This will be what I call FREE TIME. You have 12 minutes to do whatever you want at a moderate intensity level.		

Day 3 (Friday)

Warm Ups		
Forward Sled Dragging	2 sets 50 reps	If you do not own a sled then try using a treadmill with the motor off. Try to find the tightest belt you can. It should be hard to get started.
Backward Sled Dragging	2 sets 50 reps Add 5 steps to each set every week.	
Dynamic Effort Squat Movement		
Box Squats	Week 1 20 sets x 3 Week 2 20 sets x 3 Week 3 20 sets x 3 The goal of these sets is very simple. PERFECT TECHNIQUE. Keep the weight light, defined as less than 30% of your 1RM for the entire phase. Keep the rest periods at 1 minute or less.	<p>This will be an introduction to the Dynamic Effort Method. This method will help you to develop explosive strength BUT technique must be addressed first. This phase will address this aspect so stick to the guidelines listed below, regardless of how much experience you think you have.</p> <p>In my experience of working with hundreds of athletes and lifters, I always see the same things. Weak points are mental, physical or technical.</p> <p>Everyone wants to focus on the physical aspects while they only account to what I guess to be 10% of the equation.</p> <p>What I am trying to say here is you can make SIGNAFICANT improvements in your strength with better technique. I have found the best way to do this is by using multiple sets of 2-3 reps.</p>
Posterior Chain Movement (select one of these movements)		
a. Pull Throughs b. Romanian Deadlifts c. Glute Ham Raises You must choose a different movement than you did for Day 1	Week 1 – 3x12 Week 2 – 3x10 Week 3 – 2x8 2 minutes rest between sets.	I am giving you a few different options here because there is no way of knowing what you have access to. It is important to stay with the same movement for the entire

(Monday).		three-week block. The sets and reps will be as follows. Use warm up sets to get to your working weight. Then use a weight that is hard to get the established set. Each week add more weight. You should not be able to get one extra rep.
Torso Movement - Bend (select one of these movements)		
a. Standing Pull Down Abs (Cable Crunches) b. Hanging Leg Raises c. Spread Eagle Sit Ups You must choose a different movement than you did for Day 1 (Monday).	Weeks 1-3 – 2x15 1:30 min rest between sets	You will select one movement from the list above and stick with this movement for the entire block. The sets and reps will stay the same with the goal of adding weight each week.
Torso Movement - Arch (select one of these movements)		
a. Reverse Hyperextensions b. 45-Degree Back Raises c. Good Mornings You must choose a different movement than you did for Day 1 (Monday).	Weeks 1-3 – 3x10 1:30 min rest between sets	You will select one movement from the list above and stick with this movement for the entire block. The sets and reps will stay the same with the goal of adding weight each week.
Vertical Pull Movement (select one of these movements)		
a. Chin Ups b. Pull Downs (any wide version)	Weeks 1-3 – 2x8 1:30 min rest between sets	You will select one movement from the list above and stick with this movement for the entire block. The sets and reps will stay the same with the goal of adding weight each week.
Cool Down		
*This will be what I call FREE TIME. You have 12 minutes to do whatever you want at a moderate intensity level.		

Day 4 (Saturday or Sunday)

Warm Ups		
Face Pulls Push Ups External Shoulder Rotations Front Pillar Bridge 45 Degree Back Raises	1 set of 15 reps for each exercise (30 seconds for the Front Pillar Bridges)	This is intended to warm up for the work ahead. Keep the rep speed slow and controlled with a full range of motion. Move fast between sets with no more than 30 seconds rest.
Bench Press Movement		
Bench Press	Week 1 20 sets x 3 Week 2 20 sets x 3 Week 3 20 sets x 3 Take your time with these reps and make sure every one is done with perfect technique. Take your mind off the pecs and put it into the movement. To development max strength in pressing movements you have to become a master of pressing your body away from the bar and using every muscle in your body to do so. Keep the rest periods at 1 minute or less.	As with the squat, technique needs to be addressed first. Bench Press technique in most lifters is awful and is in dire need of adjustments. This is due to many years or poor form and coaching. Leave your ego at the door and start from the beginning.
Triceps Movement (select one of these movements)		
a. Dumbbell Triceps Extensions b. Wide Grip Press Downs c. Reverse Grip Press Downs	Week 1 - 3x12 Week 2 - 4x10 Week 3 - 3x12 1:30 minutes rest between sets.	I have given you three movements to choose from. Pick one and stick with it for the entire block. Make sure to add weight to the movement over the three week period.
Shoulder Movement		
Rear Lateral Raises Any rear lateral movement with machines or dumbbells will do.	Weeks 1-3 - 3x10	This movement should be done with moderate weight (if I was to guess I would say 75% of what you would normally use). Keep the weight the same for the entire training block.
Horizontal Pull Movement - Wide (select one of these movements)		
a. Seated Rows b. Chest Supported Rows	Week 1 - 3x5 Week 2 - 3x5	Once again I have given you a few choices. I think

<p>c. Barbell Rows</p> <p>Chose a wide grip for these movements.</p>	<p>Week 3 – 2x3</p> <p>2 minutes rest between sets.</p>	<p>it is best to do your pulls with your chest supported. Make sure you chest is over the pad and keep your back arched and chest up. Stay with the same movement for the entire block. Warm up if needed and move onto the work sets listed below. Add weight each week.</p>
<p>Cool Down</p>		
<p>*This will be what I call FREE TIME. You have 12 minutes to do whatever you want at a moderate intensity level.</p>		

Maximal Strength Program Phase 2: Max Strength (6 weeks)

Day 1 (Monday)

Warm Ups		
Forward Sled Dragging	2 sets 50 reps	If you do not own a sled then try using a treadmill with the motor off. Try to find the tightest belt you can. It should be hard to get started.
Backward Sled Dragging	2 sets 50 reps Reduce by 5 steps every week.	
Max Effort Squat-Deadlift Movement		
<p>Week 4 – Pin Pulls (mid-shin)</p> <p>Week 5 – Skip this movement</p> <p>Week 6 – Close Stance Box Squats (2"-4" below parallel)</p> <p>Week 7 – Close Stance Box Squats (2"-4" below parallel)</p> <p>Week 8 – Wide Stance High Box Squats (4" above parallel)</p> <p>Week 9 - Wide Stance High Box Squats (4" above parallel)</p>	<p>On week 4 begin with the bar and add 20-30 pounds per set if your projected max is under 450 pounds, or 40-50 pounds if your max is over 450 pounds.</p> <p>Use 5 reps per set until you get to the 50% range and then drop the reps to 3 per set.</p> <p>When the weight begins to feel heavy for three reps cut the weight jumps in half and keep going until a 3 rep max is reached. For a 300 pound max this would look like this:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">45x5 65x5 85x5 105x5 135x5 165x3 195x3 225x3 255x3 270x3 285x3</p> <p>In terms of rest, rest is based on how you feel. You can use shorter rest periods for your warm up sets (60-1:30) and expand them as the weight gets</p>	<p>Starting with week 6, the goal here is to use a two-week wave, with the first week ending with a max set of 3 (as shown in the other column) and the second week's final 6 sets to be a heavy singles (increasing the weights appropriately so that you achieve a new 1RM on these days).</p> <p>Keep in mind, this is NOT about saving yourself for the last set; it is about the entire process. You need this volume.</p> <p>IMPORTANT – In this phase a break in form is a missed rep. In other words when form break the set is OVER. This is an introduction to max effort training. This is essential to maximum strength development and needs to be done in a tight controlled fashion. Do not think of the muscles working but instead on the movement. Make sure you use perfect form and keep all muscles in the body as tight as you can.</p>

	heavier. When you get to the last two sets make sure you are ready and rested before attempting the lifts.	
Posterior Chain Movement (select one of these movements)		
a. Pull Throughs b. Romanian Deadlifts c. Glute Ham Raises d. Kettle bell Swings Stay with the same movement for two weeks and then change to another (and so on).	Week 4-9 – 2x6-8 2 minutes rest between sets.	It is important to up the weight or reps with each session for the two-week wave. These sets should be very hard to do and no reps should be left “in the tank” at the end of the set. If this means adding a couple extra reps then do so.
Torso Movement - Bend (select one of these movements)		
a. Standing Pull Down Abs (Cable Crunches) b. Hanging Leg Raises c. Spread Eagle Sit Ups	Weeks 4-9 – 4x8-12 1:30 min rest between sets	You will select one movement from the list above and stick with this movement for the entire block. The sets and reps will stay the same with the goal of adding weight each week. However, if you feel stale, change the movement – even if it means you have to change it during the same session.
Torso Movement - Arch (select one of these movements)		
a. Reverse Hyperextensions b. 45-Degree Back Raises c. Good Mornings	Weeks 4-9 – 4x8-12 1:30 min rest between sets	You will select one movement from the list above and stick with this movement for the entire block. The sets and reps will stay the same with the goal of adding weight each week. However, if you feel stale, change the movement – even if it means you have to change it during the same session.
Vertical Pull Movement (select one of these movements)		
a. Chin Ups b. Pull Downs (any wide version)	Weeks 4-9 – 2x8-12 1:30 min rest between	It is important to up the weight or reps with each session for the three-week

<p>Stay with the same movement for two weeks and then change to another (and so on).</p>	<p>sets</p>	<p>wave.</p> <p>These sets should be very hard to do but you should leave 1-2 reps "in the tank" at the end of the set.</p>
<p>Cool Down</p>		
<p>This will be what I call FREE TIME. You have 12 minutes to do whatever you want at a moderate intensity level. I would suggest some light quad work here. I would also suggest this movement be of a single leg nature to keep the spinal loading minimized.</p>		

Day 2 (Wednesday)

Warm Ups		
Face Pulls Push Ups External Shoulder Rotations Front Pillar Bridge 45 Degree Back Raises	1 set of 15 reps for each exercise (30 seconds for the Front Pillar Bridges)	This is intended to warm up for the work ahead. Keep the rep speed slow and controlled with a full range of motion. Move fast between sets with no more than 30 seconds rest.
Max Effort Bench Press Movement		
Week 4 – Board Presses (2 board) Week 5 – Board Presses (2 board) Week 6 – Close Grip Incline Press Week 7 – Close Grip Incline Press Week 8 – High Rep Dumbbell Press (this week gives you a break from max work; do 3 sets of 15-20 reps with 5 minute rest periods) Week 9 – Floor Press	<p>On week 4 begin with the bar and add 20-30 pounds per set if your projected max is under 450 pounds, or 40-50 pounds if your max is over 450 pounds.</p> <p>Use 5 reps per set until you get to the 50% range and then drop the reps to 3 per set.</p> <p>When the weight begins to feel heavy for three reps cut the weight jumps in half and keep going until a 3 rep max is reached. For a 300 pound max this would look like this:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> 45x5 65x5 85x5 105x5 135x5 165x3 195x3 225x3 255x3 270x3 285x3 </p> <p>In terms of rest, rest is based on how you feel. You can use shorter rest periods for your warm up sets (60-1:30) and expand them as the weight gets heavier. When you get to the last two sets make sure you are ready and rested before attempting</p>	<p>Starting with week 4, the goal here is to use a two-week wave, with the first week ending with a max set of 3 (as shown in the other column) and the second week's final 6 sets to be a heavy singles (increasing the weights appropriately so that you achieve a new 1RM on these days).</p> <p>Keep in mind, this is NOT about saving yourself for the last set; it is about the entire process. You need this volume.</p> <p>IMPORTANT – In this phase a break in form is a missed rep. In other words when form break the set is OVER. This is an introduction to max effort training. This is essential to maximum strength development and needs to be done in a tight controlled fashion. Do not think of the muscles working but instead on the movement. Make sure you use perfect form and keep all muscles in the body as tight as you can.</p>

	the lifts.	
Triceps Movement Close (select one of these movements)		
a. Close Grip Incline Press b. Close Grip Partial Pin Press (top ½ of movement only) c. Close Grip 4 Board Press d. Close Grip Floor Press Stay with the same movement for two weeks and then change to another (and so on).	Week 4 – 3x5 Week 5 – 2x5 Week 6 – 1x5 Week 7 – skip this exercise Week 8 – 2x8 Week 9 – 2x5 2 minutes rest between sets.	I am giving you two different options here because there is no way of knowing what you have access to. Use warm up sets to get to your working weight. Then use a weight that is hard to get the established set. Each week add more weight. You should not be able to get one extra rep.
Shoulder Movement		
Side Lateral Raises	Weeks 1-3 – 3x8	This movement should be done with moderate weight (if I was to guess I would say 75% of what you would normally use). Keep the weight the same for the entire training block.
Horizontal Pull Movement - Close (select one of these movements)		
a. Chest Supported Rows b. Seated Machine Rows c. Dumbbell Rows Stay with the same movement for two weeks and then change to another (and so on).	Week 4 – 3x10 Week 5 – 2x8 Week 6 – 3x10 Week 7 – 2x8 Week 8 – skip this exercise Week 9 – 2x8 2 minutes rest between sets.	Once again I have given you a few choices. I think it is best to do your pulls with your chest supported. Make sure your chest is over the pad and keep your back arched and chest up. Warm up if needed and move onto the work sets listed below.
Cool Down		
*This will be what I call FREE TIME. You have 12 minutes to do whatever you want at a moderate intensity level.		

Day 3 (Friday)

Warm Ups		
Forward Sled Dragging	2 sets 50 reps	If you do not own a sled then try using a treadmill with the motor off. Try to find the tightest belt you can. It should be hard to get started.
Backward Sled Dragging	2 sets 50 reps Reduce by 5 steps every week.	
Dynamic Effort Squat Movement		
Box Squats	<p>Week 4 – Establish 1RM then perform 5x2 at 45% 1RM</p> <p>Week 5 – 8x2 at 60%</p> <p>Week 6 – 10x2 at 50%</p> <p>Week 7 – 8x2 at 62%</p> <p>Week 8 – 6x2 at 64%; 1x2 at 70%, and 1x1 at 75%</p> <p>Week 9 – 6x2 at 67%</p> <p>1 minute rest between sets</p> <p>If you feel good and form feels tight then feel free to add one or two more sets at the end of any of these weeks (except week 6). For these extra sets add more weight. Keep working up as long as bar speed is the same as the training sets.</p> <p>This is not about maxing out but getting the speed to carry over to bigger weights. This should not and can not be done every week.</p>	<p>During week 4, we need to establish your 1RM for the exercise.</p> <p>Begin with the bar and use the same rap-up method you would use for the max effort method (small increases). As you work up focus on exploding up as fast as you can. You will keep going up until you reach a 1RM or your form breaks.</p> <p>These should be done with a controlled decent, pause for one second on the box (while staying tight) and then exploding up as fast as you can.</p>
Posterior Chain Movement (select one of these movements)		
<p>a. Pull Throughs</p> <p>b. Romanian Deadlifts</p> <p>c. Glute Ham Raises</p> <p>d. Good Mornings</p> <p>e. Kettle Bell Swings</p> <p>You must choose a different movement than you did for Day 1 (Monday).</p>	<p>Week 4 – 3x8</p> <p>Week 5 – 3x10</p> <p>Week 6 – 2x8</p> <p>Week 7 – skip this movement</p> <p>Week 8 – 1x5</p> <p>Week 9 – 2x5</p> <p>1:30 minutes rest between sets.</p>	<p>I am giving you a few different options here because there is no way of knowing what you have access to. It is important to stay with the same movement for the entire three-week block. The sets and reps will be as follows. Use warm up sets to get to your working weight. Then use a weight that is hard to get the established set.</p>

		Each week add more weight. You should not be able to get one extra rep.
Torso Movement - Bend (select one of these movements)		
a. Standing Pull Down Abs (Cable Crunches) b. Hanging Leg Raises c. Spread Eagle Sit Ups You must choose a different movement than you did for Day 1 (Monday).	Weeks 4-9 - 2x15 1:30 min rest between sets	You will select one movement from the list above and stick with this movement for the entire block. The sets and reps will stay the same with the goal of adding weight each week.
Torso Movement - Arch (select one of these movements)		
a. Reverse Hyperextensions b. 45-Degree Back Raises c. Good Mornings You must choose a different movement than you did for Day 1 (Monday).	Weeks 4-9 - 3x10 1:30 min rest between sets	You will select one movement from the list above and stick with this movement for the entire block. The sets and reps will stay the same with the goal of adding weight each week.
Vertical Pull Movement (select one of these movements)		
a. Chin Ups b. Pull Downs (any wide version) Stay with the same movement for two weeks and then change to another (and so on).	Weeks 1-3 - 2x8 1:30 min rest between sets	The sets and reps will stay the same with the goal of adding weight each week.
Cool Down		
*This will be what I call FREE TIME. You have 12 minutes to do whatever you want at a moderate intensity level.		

Day 4 (Saturday or Sunday)

Warm Ups		
Face Pulls Push Ups External Shoulder Rotations Front Pillar Bridge 45 Degree Back Raises	1 set of 15 reps for each exercise (30 seconds for the Front Pillar Bridges)	This is intended to warm up for the work ahead. Keep the rep speed slow and controlled with a full range of motion. Move fast between sets with no more than 30 seconds rest.
Bench Press Movement		
Dynamic Bench Press	<p>Week 4 – 50% for 8x3 Week 5 – 50% for 8x3 Week 6 – 50% for 8x3 Week 7 - 50% for 8x3 Week 8 - 50% for 8x3 Week 9 - 50% for 8x3</p> <p>1 minute rest between sets</p> <p>If you feel good and form feels tight then feel free to add one or two more sets at the end of any of these weeks. For these extra sets add more weight and keep the reps to 3. Keep working up as long as bar speed is the same as the training sets. This is not about maxing out but getting the speed to carry over to bigger weights. This should not and cannot be done every week.</p>	<p>*There is no need to re-establish a one-rep max on the bench press because just about everyone I know already knows it or come very close at guessing. Rather than waste a training session in this use your best guess.</p> <p>The percents will be based on what you feel your 1 rep max is right now. Do not base this on what you want to bench press. These reps are to be done controlled on the way down but as fast as you can on the way up.</p> <p>This means lowering the barbell as fast as you can (BUT SILL UNDER CONTROL) and press back up with as much explosive force as you can.</p>
Triceps Movement (select one of these movements)		
<p>a. Dumbbell Triceps Extensions b. Wide Grip Press Downs c. Reverse Grip Press Downs d. Wide Grip Board Press e. Wide Grip Weighted Push Ups</p> <p>Stay with the same movement for two weeks and then change to another (and so on).</p>	<p>Week 4 – 3x5 Week 5 – 2x5 Week 6 – skip this exercise Week 7 – 1x5 Week 8 - 3x5 Week 9 – 2x5</p> <p>1:30 minutes rest between sets.</p>	<p>These are work sets and should be done as hard and as heavy as you can for the desired sets and reps.</p>

Shoulder Movement		
Rear Lateral Raises Any rear lateral movement with machines or dumbbells will do.	Weeks 4-9 - 3x10	This movement should be done with moderate weight (if I was to guess I would say 75% of what you would normally use). Keep the weight the same for the entire training block.
Horizontal Pull Movement - Wide (select one of these movements)		
a. Seated Rows b. Chest Supported Rows c. Barbell Rows Chose a wide grip for these movements.	Week 4 - 2x10 Week 5 - 3x10 Week 6 - 1x6 Week 7 - 2x6 Week 8 - skip this movement Week 9 - 2x10 1:30 minutes rest between sets.	Once again I have given you a few choices. I think it is best to do your pulls with your chest supported. Make sure you chest is over the pad and keep your back arched and chest up. Stay with the same movement for the entire block. Warm up if needed and move onto the work sets listed below. Add weight each week.
Cool Down		
*None		

Maximal Strength Program

Phase 3: Deloading (3 weeks)

Week 10

Day 1 (Monday)

- No max effort work
- Select one movement from each group (Squat-Deadlift, Posterior Chain, Torso Bend, Torso Arch, Vertical Pull) and do a couple sets with a moderate weight. No need to go hard or heavy. Just get the blood moving. It's ok not to have a plan.

Day 2 (Wednesday)

- No max effort work
- Select one movement from each group (Bench Press, Triceps, Shoulder, Horizontal Pull) and do a couple sets with a moderate weight. No need to go hard or heavy. Just get the blood moving. It's ok not to have a plan.

Day 3 (Friday)

- Dynamic Box Squats – 50% of 1RM for 5x2
- One Posterior Chain movement and one ab movement

Day 4 (Saturday or Sunday)

- Dynamic Bench Press – 50% of 1RM for 4x3

Week 11

On either Wednesday or Friday, work up to a 1RM on the Box Squat and a 1RM on the Bench Press. Take the rest of the week off.

WEEK 12

Take the entire week off.

About Dave Tate



Dave Tate is the founder and CEO of [Elite Fitness Systems](#), a company dedicated to providing strength coaches, athletes, and trainers with the highest quality equipment, personalized service, and knowledge needed to advance their training programs.

A veteran of the strength and conditioning field, Dave has worked as a coach and consultant since 1986. He has logged more than 10,000 hours of personal training and strength consulting sessions with professional, elite, and novice athletes as well as with professional and university strength coaches at all levels. He has been involved in the sport of powerlifting since 1982, achieving Elite in three weight classes with best lifts of a 935 squat, 610 bench press, 740 deadlift, and 2205 total.

Through Elite Fitness Systems, Dave has conducted over 200 seminars and clinics on strength training for gyms, training centers, schools, and universities. He has authored over 100 articles on training and has contributed to several magazines and websites including Powerlifting USA, Men's Fitness, Men's Health, and T-Nation.com. A previous member of the advisory board for Men's Fitness, he wrote the book, *Under the Bar*, which is available through www.elitefts.com. He also works as a small business advisor.

Dave was also the 2005 recipient of the SWIS Lifetime Achievement award. He lives with his family in London, Ohio.