



Preventing Shoulder Injuries While Lifting

Here are some simple rules to follow when weight training to protect your shoulders. Remember, you can make all of the changes in the world, but if you continue to lift beyond your capacity or lift incorrectly, it won't be a matter of "if you get hurt", you WILL hurt yourself. Technique is everything. Do it right or don't do it at all.

The Don't's of Weight Training: Protect the Shoulder

1. No bench pressing with a straight bar
2. No lat pulls behind the neck
3. No overhead pressing
4. No upright rows
5. No "empty can" exercises (modified empty can is fine)

1. No Straight Bar

- Use dumbbells to replace straight bar on flat and incline bench.
- Dumbbells strengthen the "weak link", rotator cuff, stress proprioception.
- Straight bar weakens and damages the shoulder.

2. No Lat Pulls Behind the Neck

- Replace with front pull (bring chest to the bar) or reverse grips.
- Lat pulls behind the neck cause shoulder instability neck pain.

3. No Upright Rows

- They cause shoulder impingement;
- They cause abduction/internal rotation;
- Normal shoulder motion is to externally rotate and abduct.

4. No Overhead Presses

- At-risk position; for anterior shoulder instability;
- Shoulder impingement, especially internal impingement.

5. No Empty-Can Exercises

- Internal with abduction causes impingement.
- Replace with "full-can" exercises.
- Also side-lying abduction; side-lying lateral raise; full can.



Other Errors

- One-arm rows: Letting the weight traction the shoulder during this exercise.
- Knee extensions: Open-chain exercise causes shear in the tibia.
- Squats: Squat using body weight only first for conditioning.
- Back extensions: Don't swing; elevate incrementally.
- Seated rows: Don't flex the back; be sure to retract shoulder blades first, then pull with shoulders and elbows. Use ropes or chains when possible; this allows the shoulder blades to fully retract around the thorax.

Increasing Weight

- Pick a weight you can perform for 12 reps.
- Give three to four weeks for accommodation.
- After four weeks, add five pounds to dumbbell exercises and 10 pounds to two -arm exercises.
- Increase weight on one exercise per workout.
- When weight is increased, decrease reps to six.
- Every two weeks, increase by two repetitions until you reach 12 reps.
- Stay at 12 reps for two weeks, then increase weight and decrease reps as previously detailed.

Pyramid Workouts

- Decrease boredom and increase strength gains.
- Example: Flat dumbbell bench press

Set #1	50lbs	12 reps
Set #2	55lbs	10 reps
Set #3	60lbs	8 reps
Set #4	65lbs	6 reps

Changing Weight in the Pyramid

- Perform the pyramid one to two times per week. The other workouts for example, would be performed using 55 lbs, for two to four sets. When 12 reps can be performed with this weight for two weeks, the pyramid shifts so that 55 lbs is the new starting weight.

Set #1	55lbs	12 reps
Set #2	60lbs	10 reps
Set #3	65lbs	8 reps
Set #4	70lbs	6 reps



Flexibility

- Posterior capsule stretch (behind the back or across-body while pulling on your arm);
- Triceps stretch;
- Behind-the-back stretch;
- These exercises can be performed using a towel, bat, stick or golf club.

Summary

- Train the weak link.
- Realistic goals and expectations will reduce injuries.
- Adopt the "condition to train" philosophy.
- Safe training keeps you doing what you love to do.
- If you have pain, it "won't just go away" call me right away!

Yours In Health,

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