

Training Advice

Third 4-week block (weeks 9 – 12) at Week 10

Dealing with Expectation

At this stage of the competition build-up, an issue that regularly occurs is that athletes arrive at the gym with expectations of what they can achieve, especially if the session appears to be marked as a heavy session.

This leads the athlete to assess their own performance, set by set. The athlete's mind will focus on whether they feel strong, whether the weights feel easy, and whether they are on track to improve performance, etc. The result is often negative thoughts as the athlete imagines that weights *should* be easier, technique seems to have disappeared, strength has vanished, and their confidence is shattered.

As often stated, the truth of the matter is that the nature of the sport means that we lift heavy stuff. So, from a mental skills point of view, you should never hope or expect that training sessions at this stage of the build-up will be easy. Sessions marked with singles at 90% on Snatch and Clean & Jerk will require great focus to succeed. Just like when you are warming up in a competition. Your last warm-up attempt will be around 90% and those of you who experienced will know that you are just grateful to get that last warm up before going on to your first lift on the competition platform. You will observe many a competitor really struggling to get their last warm-up. It's the nature of the sport.

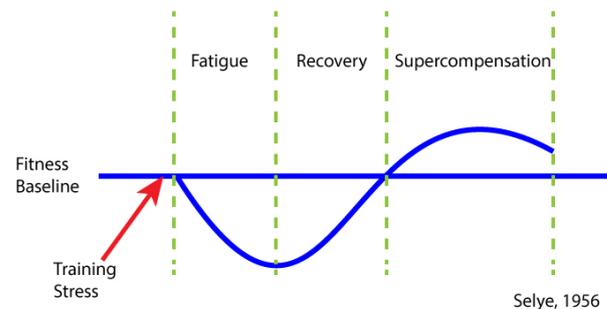
So never assume that if a session is marked 90%, you should be able to lift the weight easy and that you will automatically be going to higher percentages. Keep your mind in check and take one step at a time. Just focus on the lift in hand, not the one before and not the one to come after.

Physical peaks and troughs

Especially if you have had a series of good sessions, there is no doubt you will experience some days when you feel devoid of strength, uncoordinated, and little energy to train. Again, it is the nature of the sport. You must expect such days and when they inevitably arrive, simply reduce training load sharply (Volume AND Intensity). If you reduce training load for a couple of days, you will recover. Sometimes these days

come at times when you were really looking forward to a "big" session. But it cannot be helped. Do not try to struggle through regardless. Instead, take action early in the session and immediately reduce loading.

This phenomenon is well known in sport.



You really cannot do good training and expect to not suffer in this way!

Consistency of Training

As athletes have lives outside of training with pressure of work, academic assignments, and family commitments, it is occasionally difficult to attend training. This is understandable.

However, if you cannot make training on time or you have to cut training short, do not assume a short session isn't worthwhile.

If you can get to the gym for just 30 minutes, it is hugely better than missing the session altogether. Regular training is not merely a matter of keeping strength up but also it provides a measure of protection from injury. A period of three days off will make you feel great because you will feel "loose". But to effect muscular control and coordination, too much looseness may increase your injury risk and reduce your performance. There is a Goldilocks zone for muscle tonicity, not too loose, not too tight. It's a reason why doing too little and having too many days off in last week before a competition is an issue.

But in any case, in 30 minutes training you can do two exercises well and go home feeling you did a useful session even if quite light in intensity. For example, 8 sets of squats might take you only 15 minutes and if you add some Romanian Deadlifts or Push Press, it will make a good session.