

THE
CUBE
METHOD

by BRANDON LILLY

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Before you pursue any physical fitness program, especially one as intense as powerlifting please, consult a doctor.

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I dedicate this book to my Dad. A man that says what he means, and means what he says. A man's man. Our name means something, and I am trying to honor that in my own way. Thank you for teaching me the reward for hard work, high standards, and discipline. This book would never have been possible without the lessons you have given me, and I will gladly, publicly admit that as much as I bucked, you never gave me the wrong advice.

SPECIAL THANK YOU'S:

Bunky Harkleroad, you pushed me every single day that you coached me. You believed in me more than anyone I had ever come across in my life. You saw something within me that I could not have extracted without your guidance and friendship. You lit a fire in me that has never gone out. I'll never let my arm's drop...

Mark Bell, you have been a solid friend, and mentor to me. You will never know how much I respect your guidance.

Chad Smith, you took a chance on me, gave me a voice, and a platform to speak. You helped me find a way to channel my ideas.

All my past and present teammates, all of you had a hand in this book. Whether you built me up, or tore me down, I am who I am as a lifter because of you all. Thanks to Danny, Jimmy, Pat, Ryan, Mike, Frank, Pete, Grizz, Murph, Lynn, Bandy and all the rest of Lexen for taking a chance on me.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Brandon Lilly is the creator of the Cube Method, and currently trains at Berea Barbell in Berea, KY. Brandon has trained at some of the world's best powerlifting gyms including Westside Barbell, Lexen Xtreme, and Guerrilla Squad Barbell. As of this publishing, Brandon holds the number one ranking in both the 308s, and Super Heavy Weight Raw, with Knee Wraps, divisions with 2105 lbs. (308), and 2204 lbs. (SHW, which is also tied for 16th All-Time



Brandon Lilly has quickly become an icon in powerlifting through his no BS attitude and crossover success in raw and geared lifting.

regardless of weight class), and also has the number six ranking amongst Multi-Ply Lifters with 2530 lbs., making him one of the most successful crossover powerlifters ever. Brandon's best raw lifts are 826 lbs. in the squat, 573 lbs. in the bench, and 804 lbs. in the deadlift. His best Multi-Ply Lifts are 1005 lbs. squat, and 820 lbs. bench.

Surprisingly Brandon's background in athletics began with basketball and soccer, earning honors on the Soccer pitch. It was his quest for a soccer scholarship that led him to the weight room, where he began his strength journey. After high school he took his talents to Berea College in Berea, KY and was a successful Track and Field athlete in both the Shot Put, and the Hammer. Coached by Hall of Famer Mike Johnson, he was further encouraged to pursue his weight training, and this is how he found powerlifting.

Since creating the Cube Method and watching it evolve with his own training, his teammates, and his trainees, Brandon has become an icon of sorts within powerlifting as he is not reserved with his beliefs, and his dedication to results.

WHY YOU NEED THIS BOOK

This book is call to action. A declaration of war on the state of powerlifting in America. What the hell is wrong with us? It's no surprise to me that we have let powerlifting become what it has. We hold nothing sacred anymore. Nothing. Look around you, and there are a million examples of how our world has gone wrong. Well I for one and not going to stand for it any longer. At least in the powerlifting world. I feel I can elicit some positive change .I'm sick of people being told there is only one way to get strong, that it is damaging to "just be strong" we only need to train the muscles that we might use, that you need a myriad of miracle machines, and special potions that you do in a combination at exactly 3:32 PM, standing on one foot, or the results aren't guaranteed. I'm sick of watching people thinking that we are getting smarter when we are the lowest level of intelligence this world has known since we started walking upright.

Watch a Multi-Ply powerlifting meet, you tell me what you see is wrong. You don't see it? I sure do, because I lived it. I hid behind layers of canvas, and polyester material that allowed me to showcase my "talents". What were those talents? Getting fat, and getting weak, getting my gear altered so that I would get more "pop" rather than getting strong enough to move weights. If you say to yourself that somehow this is ok then read no further. Maybe you think it's "ok", and if you do, I am talking to you. I was drinking the Kool-Aid hard too, but you're allowed to open your eyes and open your mind.

I don't give a damn if I bomb every meet because of what I say, somewhere a kid will read this and benefit from it. Look me in the face and tell me you can hold a candle to Bill Kazmaier, Doug Young, Pacifico, Reinhoudt, Kuc, Coan, Karwoski, Mike Bridges, Gant, Crain, Franz and I will tell you that unless you are one of a handful of lifters that you are full of shit.

You think I'm a gear basher? Not at all. I love the excitement gear can bring to the sport. I love the possibilities that gear brings. I just hate that in a day and age with limitless knowledge at our fingertips via the internet we have meets where guys can't squat 315 without briefs on, end up squatting 800 lbs. in a suit. This is ok? I'm wrong for not celebrating their ability to succeed in the gear? All I want is credibility. It is no wonder the Europeans look at our lifting as a joke. What is even more saddening than that is the fact "The American Way" is actually trickling slowly into Europe. I keep seeing meets over there where the lifts are getting higher and higher.

Why is it that in raw divisions and single ply that across the board most of the judging looks really good? If anything you see guys getting robbed of squats. Maybe it's the layers of material that skew the judging so badly, but every competition weekend you can bet by Monday there will be a load of videos from a Multi-Ply meet of lifters squatting a mile high— AND YES YOU CAN JUDGE A SQUAT FROM THE FRONT.

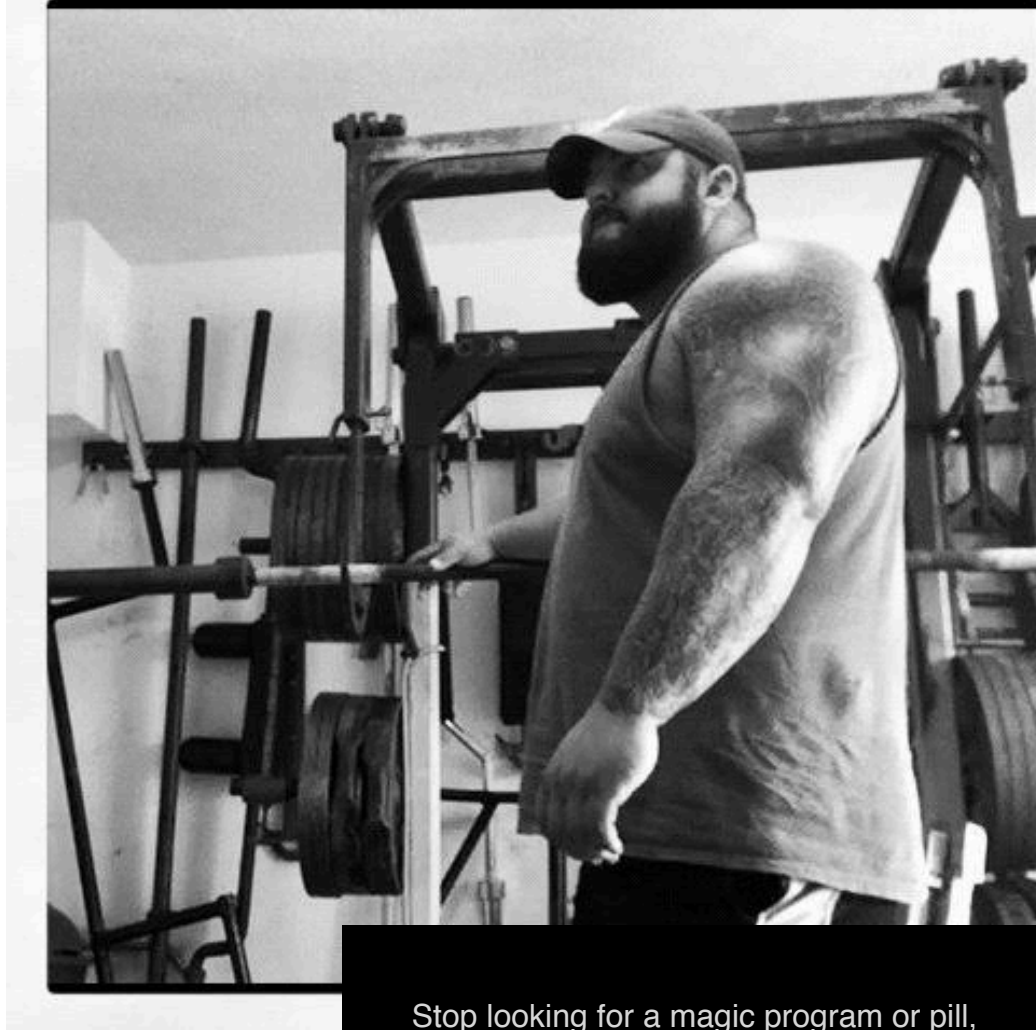
We have the ability to fix this. We are the lifters, if we demand more of ourselves, and then demand more from our teammates, and then more from our competitors, at some point the promoters, and the federations will hear us. As long as we give away World Records as quick as you can load the bar, and when the figure heads that say they stand "for what is right" support records that are obviously bogus then the sport loses credibility. We as lifters lose credibility. It's time to take back our sport. And the time is right now.

IF YOU WANNA BE A BOSS YOU GOTTA PAY THE COSTS

I am gonna tell most of you reading this a “secret”. How do I know it’s a “secret”? Because everyone I have trained has told me they cannot believe how difficult this training is. You ready for it? You don’t train hard. How do I know?

Because it’s a sad reality for all of us. I used to train hard. Before I got so smart and I had a plan that was so complicated I didn’t understand. I remember going to the gym as a kid and having one bent barbell, and a bunch of shitty weight plates and I was able to get stronger. I had no rhyme or reason, I just trained because I liked it, I loved the pain it induced. I loved the battle that waged in my head, one side begging me to drop the weight, the other screaming “don’t be a pussy”.

You know who is training hard? Strongmen! Those guys are killing powerlifters in so many ways. We all know that 800 lbs. in the deadlift is one of those lifts that kind of “separates the good from the great”, but in the strongman world 800 lbs. is a deadlift that is done for multiple reps. Strongmen view 900 lbs. much like we view the 800 lbs. They commonly squat weights we consider



Stop looking for a magic program or pill, the only path to true success is hard work and time.

good for numerous reps in just a weight belt. Proof? My good friend Chad Smith was fairly well known as a shot putter, and all around strength specialist, in his first meet he squatted 865 lbs. raw with knee wraps, and in his second he squatted 905 lbs. for an American Raw w/Knee wraps record. Did he train powerlifting specific? No, he was well rounded, and had a high expectation for strength in multiple disciplines.

There is nothing wrong with training in Strongman, my old training partner Jake Anderson and I met when we were competing in strongman, and man were we strong, agile, and fast. We used to kill each other in the gym, and in competition, Jake has totaled 2730 lbs., with an 860 lbs. deadlift at 308 lbs. You don't achieve those numbers without having a huge base, and rep training does that.

Training like that netted me 20 lbs. of muscle gain within 15 months. I did a million reps for a million sets it seemed, and it worked very well. Then I started reading the magazines that were selling me on the idea that "less is more", that there was a recipe for success. Well that recipe spelled ten years of chasing my tail never knowing how strong I truly was, guessing at weights on meet day, being so burned out I was dying to quit but I had so much time invested I couldn't let myself. What was I going to do?

WHAT IS THE CUBE METHOD?

The Cube Method grew out of my absolute frustration with my training, myself, and the sport of powerlifting. I was extremely tired of spending hours upon hours in the gym, hours that compromised friendships and personal relationships, and not seeing the results I expected, or witnessed around me. I had trained the same way for 11 years, and while I had some success it was a roller coaster, and I can never really remember a time where I would say I loved any of my training cycles. Sure, I would have some great days, and hit PR's along the way, but I hated the gym most days. While I would be strong as a bull throughout my cycle, my full strength was never fully displayed at meets. What was the problem?

To tell you the truth the answer was simple. I had stopped lifting how I wanted to. What I believed in and started following what others said or did just because they were stronger than me. I stopped thinking, or rather stopped listening to what I was thinking, and what my body was telling me, and stuck to a method that left me spinning my wheels. I wanted to quit the sport.



That was until Danny Dague (owner of Lexen Xtreme in Grove City, OH) pulled me aside in the gym and said to “Lilly, you don’t look like you are having fun anymore. You look like you hate the gym. Just simplify. Go back to what got you to the gym in the first place.” Just like that he had awakened something inside of

The Cube Method is built around the simple idea of hard work with a barbell and straight weight. It is this idea that can help you reclaim true strength.

me. He got my wheels turning, and I looked back over my training logs (I have kept a detailed training journal since my very first workout), and what I found was that I was actually much stronger raw before I ever moved to Columbus, OH than at any point ever since. My multi ply numbers had gone up, but my physique had become soft, and pudgy, and I was carrying around a lot of size, but none of it was actually new muscle for strength. It was fat for leverage.

So, I decided to go back to my roots, like most of us I began with a bodybuilding routine, so that was where I began. I found four things that I needed.

Piece one of the puzzle was muscle hypertrophy as a goal

Piece two was rep work. My time in Ohio was spent chasing the ever important 1 Rep Max, and I seldom ever did reps over a triple. I had gotten damn strong doing sets of 6, 8, 10, and 15's before, so I needed to get back to that.

Piece three was heavy training. I had to come up with a systematic approach to training heavy without going backwards, and also find a way to lift the heaviest weight possible on meet day.

**“JUST SIMPLIFY. GO
BACK TO WHAT GOT
YOU TO THE GYM IN
THE FIRST PLACE.”**

-Danny Dague

The final piece was explosive power. I noticed that when I had trained with just a barbell I was damn strong, and very damn fast. I had used bands a lot, and chains even more, and I had slowed down.

That's not to say those tools don't work, I had just never utilized them properly, so I wanted to start over with just a bar, then add in the extra tools as I saw fit.

The Cube Method is somewhat of a throwback and I appreciate it every time I hear it referred to as “old school”. The reason the Cube will work is because it is very basic but can be applied to all

levels. The “secret” is the rotation of the lifts and the waves involved.

On this method you will notice a variety of rep ranges, exercises, and an intense focus on realizing that a training cycle is supposed to build you up and prepare you for one day: Meet Day. On this method Meet Day will become something sacred to you. It should, that is the only place the lifts count. In a day and age of immediate social media networking anyone can become what I like to call a “YouTube Superhero”. These are guys that PR every workout and somehow never produce at meets. On my method you may be the guy that showcases solid training in your videos or logs, but nothing over the top, and then BOOM a meet full of PR’s. You decide where your biggest lifts matter, and if it isn’t on the platform, and you need an ego boost every time you walk in the gym, then I apologize... This method is not for you. This type of training will kick your ass, and humble you. But like an unpolished stone along the way you will see the reps and sets are getting easier and easier until you walk under the bar for your opening squat and destroy it... MEET DAY IS KING!!

CUBE METHOD PHILOSOPHY

Every single powerlifter has one common goal in mind. That is to become the best that they can be. Some will strive to be the best in their gym, the best at a meet, state, country, or World, but all that means is we have a desire to improve. If you don't want to get better then I don't understand why you chose powerlifting, as it is incredibly difficult, and I'm not sure why you are reading this book. I believe that each powerlifter has a deeper connection with themselves than the average person. I believe if times were different we would be the ones waging wars on the battlefield. Why do I say this? Because this sport has cost me dearly, but I can't turn it off. It is a refusal to be complacent, or average. If I didn't have this sport I can almost guarantee you I would be in prison for beating the shit out of someone daily. Nothing fulfills me like heavy weight.

On the platform we have to perform the three classic lifts: the Squat, Bench, and Deadlift. On the Cube we will attack them intelligently, but we will also bring back into the fold a much over looked lift, the Military Press. Ideas I like to adhere to:

1. The only PR's that matter are those on the platform, and for those of you that don't compete the PR's at the end of the cycle is what we train for. You may not hit a PR for 9 weeks, but when you test them on week 10 you should blow your old PR's away. Now, for those of you freaking out right now you will have chances to PR before then, but you need to buy into the fact that a 5 lbs. PR today is ok, but I want a 20 lbs. PR later, so don't let your short term training diminish your long term results.
2. Stop one set early. We all know the feeling of defeat when you are in the gym, you hit a good lift, then the next jump is iffy, we take it anyway and miss. We WILL NO LONGER MISS WEIGHTS. Make a plan, stick to it, hurt feelings. I haven't missed a weight because of strength in over 15 months. I

might miss on a technical failure, but if that is the case I can reset and immediately do the weight. Check your ego at the door.

3. Your rep and speed day are just as important as your Max day because they are what lead to successful PR's, take them seriously, attack the weights each time you are in the gym.

CUBE PROGRAMMING

On the Cube you will train three or four days per week, I prefer four. It is a 10 week cycle. Upon completion of the cycle you should either do a meet, or a “mock meet” in your gym to establish new PR’s. Base your next 10 week cycle off of your new PR’s.

My waves are 3 weeks for squat, bench, and deadlift and they are modeled below:

WEEK 1

Heavy Work Day, Explosive Work Day, Rep Work Day, Body Day

WEEK 2

Explosive Work Day, Rep Work Day, Heavy Work Day, Body Day

WEEK 3

Rep Work Day, Heavy Work Day, Explosive Work Day, Body Day

WEEK 4

Recycle the Wave

I called it "Cube Training" as when it’s mapped out it looks like a “Cube”. I never lift heavy on two lifts within a week. If I deadlift heavy training, my bench is explosive training, and my squat is for repetitions, and as the weeks rotate the “Work Days” are rotated also.

HERE'S THE SETUP:

WEEK-	1	2	3 ¹	4	5	6 ²	7	8	9 ³	10
DEADS-	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	X
BENCH-	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	X
SQUAT-	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	X

Key- 1=End of Wave 1, 2=End of Wave 2, 3=End of Wave 3, , x=Meet Week

Sundays are always a bodybuilding day. Every Sunday I have three exercises that are never rotated. They are Military Press, Bicep Curls, and Calf Raises. From there I pick three weak bodyparts, and I choose one exercise for each. I vary my sets and reps depending on feel. If I am feeling beat up from the week I will do more sets (no more than 5 per bodypart, never less than 3 sets) with more reps (never more than 20, never less than 6 reps), if I feel fresh I do less sets with heavier weight for fewer reps.

A TYPICAL SUNDAY:

Military Press- 3 x 10

Bicep Curls w/EZ Curl Bar- 4 x 15

Calf Raises- 4 x 15

WEAK POINT TRAINING

Leg Curls for Hamstrings- 5 x 20

Lat Pulldowns- 4 x 12

Pec Flyes w/Dumbbells- 3 x 12

Abs (Abs are done every training day)

HOW THE WAVES WORK

(Only Covering The Main Movement, Accessories Covered Later)

Each lift in the cycle will have 3 Heavy Work Days, 3 Rep Work Days, and 3 Explosive Work Days. Base All Training Percentages Off of 95% of PR's On Squat, Bench, and Deadlift.

HEAVY DAY 1

80% x 2 reps x 5 sets

HEAVY DAY 2

85% x 2 reps x 3 sets

HEAVY DAY 3

90% x 1 rep, 92.5% x 1 rep, 95% x 1 rep

REP DAY 1

70% x 8 reps x 1 set

REP DAY 2

80% x 6 reps x 1 set

REP DAY 3

85% x 2 reps x 1 set

EXPLOSIVE DAY 1

60% x 3 reps x 8 sets

EXPLOSIVE DAY 2

65% x 2 reps x 6 sets

EXPLOSIVE DAY 3

70% x 2 reps x 5 sets

In each of the main lifts (Squat, Bench, and Deadlift) I have exercises that will be used. If you have a desire to change on that is fine by me, but what I am giving you is the best exercises as determined by over 100 test lifters...

SQUAT

The only movement we do on the main movement is the squat. This is because the squat is subjective. Unlike the bench where you touch your chest and then lock the weight out, or in the deadlift where you stand up, there is no determining point of "Depth" other than opinion, so we train the squat with no box, and to depth every single time. If you can't get to depth, I'd say you are wrong. Take depth seriously. This is the basic judging standard that powerlifters judge each other by. I can tell you every single I compete against that squats properly, and I can tell you the guys who squat a mile high. Earn the respect of yourself, and the others will have to follow suit. We all have the ability to squat to depth, and sometimes it takes an ego check to drop the weight a little bit to learn to squat to depth, and build up those muscles. Full squats are done every day whether it is heavy, explosive, or rep.

"HOW MUCH YOU BENCH?" IS BRO LANGUAGE FOR: "I DON'T REALLY LIFT WEIGHTS, I JUST WANT TO CONVERSE AS IF I DO."

BENCH

I rotate Floor Press, 2 Board, and Full Benches. The first two are strength builders, the last is a strength tester. We need to stop testing our strength more than we are building it. These three lifts are rotated regardless of the day. One thing I've started doing more of is explosive work with a pause one inch off my chest, or with the Buffalo Bar to increase range of motion. Lock out every single rep. It sounds like a small detail, but what do most guys do when they perform reps? They short lock? How do most guys miss benches? They don't lock out. Lock out your benches every single rep, even on warm ups, it pays off.

DEADLIFTS

This lift usually gives people the most difficulty, so we attack the lift in a multitude of ways. On Heavy Days we use a 1" deficit, 2" blocks, or 4" inch blocks. We only pull heavy from the floor at the meet. Our rep day is done from wherever we need work. Pins, deficits, floor, or barbell rows instead of deads. Explosive work is done with full gear (whatever that may be on competition day) and from the floor. I also like to do my explosive work with less than 15 seconds between the sets. I want you guys to become deadlifting animals, nothing is more satisfying than a big deadlift at the end of the meet, where you are standing holding a bending bar. I imagine myself holding a slain enemies body displaying him to my opponents. Sounds crazy but you have to find what works. Deadlift with a purpose.

THE POWER LIFTS BY DESCRIPTION

(This section will be extremely redundant if you have ever lifted before. Some of these tips are good reminders though.)

SQUAT

Squats are the first lift in a powerlifting meet, and arguably squats are what “separate the men from the boys”. Powerlifting is full of Bench Only lifters, Push/Pull lifters, but only Full Power lifters get the squat. It is my opinion you are not a “Powerlifter” unless you do all three. Bench Only leaves you a Bench Specialist, Push/Pull leaves you a Push/Puller. We are all lifters nonetheless, and we all work hard so it’s mere semantics on my end. What I am getting at is the Squat is a very difficult lift to master, and it will always humble you if you let it. Nothing in the sport is more shocking than the feeling of massive weight strapped across your shoulders as you descend.

I DO NOT WANT PEOPLE BOX SQUATTING UNLESS YOU ARE INJURED

Box Squats are a wonderful tool when used correctly, and I can tell you I have had the best coaches in the world and only ever felt like I got a few singles right off a box. Too many people sit too far back, knees come in, back rounds and so on. If you free squat you learn to squat. Would you swing a baseball bat to learn to shoot a basketball? No. I watch guys that box squat at meets and just laugh because they look like Hula Hoop dancers. Two inches above parallel they look amazing, then when the box would come into play, their hips start swimming, and their knees dance around. Not an image of strength. If you want strong hips and explosive power squat deep and free squat. Its simple.



Squatting to depth, ALWAYS, is a critical component of Cube Method squat training.

HERE ARE THINGS I TRY TO FOCUS ON WHEN I SQUAT:

1. Plant your feet. They should be flat on the ground, about shoulder-width apart. Get below the bar and bend your knees slightly. You'll want equal weight distribution throughout each foot during the exercise.
2. Point your feet slightly outward, not straight ahead.
3. Don't stand with your feet much further than shoulder width apart (wide stance). That'll bring your adductors (inner thighs) into the movement, which can cause stress to the medial collateral ligament, abnormal cartilage loading, and improper patellar tracking. Likewise, keeping your feet too close together (close stance) can place a great deal of strain on your knees.

4. Never let your knees extend beyond your toes, as this will increase the likelihood of damage to the patellar tendon and ligament in the knee.
5. Position of the bar. Place the bar over your trapezius muscle, not over your neck, and across the back of your shoulders. Grasp the bar with your hands at a spot that is comfortable, usually about six inches (15cm) from your shoulders.
6. Raise and dismount the barbell from the rack (take a step forward or back if the rack will interfere in the motion).
7. Look straight ahead. DO NOT LOOK UP. Keeping your back straight, bend at your knees as if you were going to sit back in a chair. Keep your heels on the floor. Make sure that you get your quads parallel to the ground, for full range of motion.
8. Thrust your hips forward (do not stick your butt out). Keep your lower back in a near neutral position (a slightly arched back might be unavoidable).
9. Tighten your whole body when you perform the squat. Let your body assist you in managing the weight.
10. Lower yourself in a controlled manner slowly lower yourself down and back so that your upper legs are nearly parallel with the floor. Do not overly extend below parallel.
11. Keep the weight distributed on your upper thighs and the heels or balls of your feet, not on your toes or your knees.
12. From lower position, push up off your heels and lift the weight while maintaining good, proper and safe form. Use almost every part of your body except your knees.
13. Your back should stay between a 45 and 90-degree angle for safe execution.



Brandon and his 573 bench, have made him one of the top full meet raw benchers in the world.

BENCH PRESS

If there has ever been a lift associated with strength the bench press has to be the number one lift in that regard. “How much you bench?” Is bro language for I don’t really

lift weights I just want to converse as if I do. Anyway, it is a very technical lift, and one that takes a great deal of time to master. Here is how to perform the bench press:

1. Begin by lying flat on the bench, with your body in a natural and relaxed position. Make sure that you are not holding your shoulders in an awkward position. Be sure to have a natural spinal curve. You do not want to have your lower back completely flat on the bench, but you do not want to force it to curve too much either. Instead, opt for a comfortable and natural position. You should have your feet flat on the ground and your shoulders touching the bench.
2. Choose a proper bench that fits your shoulder width. A narrow bench is unstable and a wide bench prevents the upper arm from bending back.
3. Put your arms straight out to either side of you, and then bend your elbows, bringing your hands up to touch the bar. This is where you should position your hands. You can make your grip slightly wider to increase the amount of

pectoral muscles involved in this exercise, and you can bring your grip in slightly to increase your triceps involvement. For a standard bench press, opt for the normal grip.

4. Begin with just the bar weight. Lift the bar off the rack and position it directly above the middle of your chest. Inhale as you lower it down, gently touching your chest with the bar. Do not bounce the bar off your chest, as this can cause serious injury. Begin to exhale as you push the bar up and away from your body. Extend your arms to just under full extension. Repeat this for eight repetitions as a warm up set.
5. Practice extra caution if tall. Tall lifters with wide grips should use care not to crush their hands when racking the bar. Weight benches were made for someone somewhat tall (6 feet tall and not for a lifter 6 feet 8 inches tall). Tall lifters should not use an extra wide grip. An extra wide grip also strains the wrist with excessive radial flexion. Close and wide grips can make the wrist more prone to injury.
6. Avoid using the thumbless grip. If the bar slips off your hands, it would be disastrous. When being spotted by spotters and by a spotting device the thumbless grip is not as dangerous, but the spotting device has to be very, very solid. The thumbless grips is easier on the wrist and conducts power to the bar more directly (you can lift more). Use chalk with both grips. There are lifters who will use the thumbless grips despite the possible danger.
7. Be sure to have a spotter to help you whenever you lift a heavy weight. You never want to drop the bar on yourself.



The deadlift training in the Cube Method has helped Brandon add 75 pounds to his deadlift in a matter of months.

DEADLIFT

I have always been told that deadlifts are the purest test of strength, and I couldn't agree more. Whether you pull conventional (feet close together), or sumo (wide foot placement) you had better have your mind made up when you grab the bar that you are going to pull for all you are worth. Here is how to deadlift:

1. Place the barbell on the ground and attach weights to it, according to your strength and fitness level. If it is your first time performing the deadlift, make sure to keep this in mind instead of stacking up the plates. It is always easy to add weight later, but you will regret it if you hurt yourself through over-exertion. Perfect your form before you test your physical limits with this lift.

2. Step up to the bar so that your feet are approximately shoulder width apart under the bar pointing forward or slightly outward. Looking vertically, the bar should be over the balls of your feet.
3. Squat down and grasp the bar. Your hands should be slightly more than shoulder width apart (on the outside of your legs). Although you can use any grip you are comfortable with, an alternate grip is recommended. An alternate grip is when you grasp the bar with one of your palms facing you and the other facing away from you. This tends to stabilize the bar as it may roll out of your hands if both palms are facing the same direction, especially if you are a beginner or have a poor grip.
4. For Olympic lifting, many people use the hook grip, which is more secure but is painful at first. It is similar to the overhand grip, except that instead of the thumb over the remaining fingers, it is hooked underneath them.
5. Lower your hips so that your thighs are parallel to the floor. As you lower your hips, be sure to keep the lower part of your legs mostly vertical. You are going to stick your butt out quite a bit, so use the weight for leverage to maintain your balance. You want the angle between your foot and your lower leg to be close to 90 degrees.
6. Flatten your back and look straight ahead. Never lose the natural arch of your back. If you are bent over, you will hurt your lower back. See Warnings below.
7. Some people use a belt to keep the back stabilized. This may help prevent injury, or it may prevent the development of stabilizer muscles, thus increasing the likelihood of injury as weight is increased. Opinions differ, and this is something to be considered by the individual lifter.

8. Lift the bar off the ground by standing up, raising your hips and shoulders at the same rate and maintaining a flat back. The weight should hang with your arms straight. Come to a standing position with upright posture. The bar should just be "hanging" in front of your hips, do not try to lift it any higher. Pull your shoulders back if they are rounded forward. The bar should travel in a vertical path and not arch around your knees.



Becoming a great strength athlete isn't just about training, it is about attitude-The Alpha Attitude

UNDERSTANDING HOW I AM DIFFERENT AND HOW THAT MAKES THIS METHOD DIFFERENT

I understand that there are many lifters that want some sort of exact diagram laid out with fancy words and scientific research. Let me clear something up right now. I AM NOT THAT GUY. I do not train that way, and personally I believe that is what bogs down peoples training. "Ok I'm supposed to do 70% of this for 3.25 reps x 4.67 sets with a bar speed of 1.8 meters per who gives a shit?"

What happened to us that we quit lifting weights to lift weights? The only

science behind what I am telling you is that what I used to do sucked, and what I'm doing now works. Pretty simple. Every person I have trained has gotten results. Every single one. How? I don't

overload them on terminology that will be mispronounced and forgotten. I pride myself on simplicity. What I have learned from myself, and other lifters is this: We have gotten lazy as athletes. We have let gear, and the idea that there is one supreme way to train, and if we take enough drugs we will be ok. It's bullshit, and I hate it.

I have laid out percentages for people, and set up rep and set ranges, but I hate all of that. Oh, the numbers I laid out will get you strong, but somewhere along the way instinct is lost this way, and I will never doubt my own instinct again, and neither should you. If I have laid out for you to do 70% for 5 sets of 3, what if on a given day you are feeling like crap and stop at 4 sets? Or, what if you want to keep going? My answer will always be do it. You are inside your skin, you know what is going on better than I do so you have to follow that lead. Believe in the method, but believe in yourself more.

CHANGING THE BELIEF THAT ONLY 1 REP MAXES COUNT

If you are so arrogant to think that only one rep maxes are the only indicator of strength I'd like to introduce you to a load of strongmen who are currently repping your one rep max for a set of eight. I've said before that we have become ignorant through intelligence, and we have. We have also gotten lazy or maybe our training has beaten the shit out of us that we can only muster one rep. Either way we have become so supremely focused on max effort training that we are no longer strength training, we are "strength testing".

Who gives two shits if you hit a PR in the gym? You, and maybe your mom? Gym lifts don't count for anything. If you lift weights at any level I encourage you to compete. I want you to compete. I want all of you that might read this to become a part of a movement that changes this sport as we know it.

We have to keep track of our progress so we can truly improve. Become meticulous in your logs, keep a journal, blog, do whatever you can to keep your information recorded so you can know without a doubt what is working. Keep track of everything.

Also keep track of what you do for triples, fives, and eight's as well. This lends to the mentality of success. The more you identify yourself with success and

progression, the more confidence you will create, and the more dominant you will become. As we all know powerlifting is very much a mental sport as well, so training this way is conditioning you mentally along the way.

Submaximal training is a great option for lifters as it doesn't break the body down constantly, allows your confidence to improve, and allows you to train hard year round while making consistent gains without regression. Training near Maximum weights all the time did nothing for me except leave me feeling drained, and hating my training. Also having the expectation of a new PR every single heavy workout became an insurmountable task. I believe that type of training is loved by beginners so much because the gains are coming constantly, but when you reach a certain level of strength the body just cannot keep up at the same rate.

Allowing ourselves to use submaximal loads, 60-90% of your 1 rep max, and moving them with maximal force, allows you to train and condition your muscles, tendons, and ligaments without overtaxing the central nervous system. One of the "Rules" I like to adhere to is never missing weights in the gym. What this does is allow us continued progression, and improved confidence without ever missing a weight.

Imagine a full 10 week cycle in which you achieved every rep, and every weight you set out to. When the meet rolls around why would you have anything but supreme confidence in yourself and your lifting? I remember Dave Hoff telling me he hadn't missed a weight in 20 months in the gym. We all know what kind of lifter Hoff is, and it begins with building his confidence when no one is watching.

Nothing is gained from doing a weight and missing

**WHAT I USED TO DO
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it. I always encourage my lifters to leave some for the next time, but I also challenge them to keep going ONLY IF THEY FEEL PERFECT AND KNOW THEY WILL NOT MISS. I like what taking a few chances will do for a lifter, it helps build a kind of confidence that carries over to meet day. In my mind we all need to strive to go 7-9 for 9 on meet day. What is wrong with leaving a little on the platform? You can always do another meet. If you adapt to this way of thinking you can begin to enjoy the sport more as a journey than a sprint.

HOW DO WE DETERMINE A 1 REP MAX?

REP MAXES

How do you figure out your 5-rep max to your 3-rep max? How do you know which one is better? Is your new 6-rep max better than your 2-rep max? The formula below is a very basic and accepted way to figure it out. It will allow you to where you are in training and see how your training has progressed without having to take a true 1RM. This formula is not a 100% accurate indicator of your 1RM, but it allows you a good way to gauge your progress. Obviously our biggest determining factor will be a meet, or “mock meet” at the end of our cycle, but this guides us along the way. Here it is:

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{(WEIGHT} \times \text{REPS} \times \text{.033)} \\ & \quad + \\ & \quad \text{WEIGHT} \\ & \quad = \\ & \text{ESTIMATED 1RM} \end{aligned}$$

The only constant in this formula is 0.0333. All the other numbers will be determined by what you do in the gym. Let's look at an 8 rep max and a 3 rep max for comparison. Example:

$$500 \times 8 \times 0.0333 + 500 = 633.2$$

$$575 \times 3 \times 0.0333 + 575 = 632.44$$

So as you can see the lifter would be replicating within a pound the same weight. This would indicate that the lifter had not progressed. Let's see what a fourth rep would yield:

$$575 \times 4 \times 0.0333 + 575 = 651.6$$

$$570 \times 5 \times 0.0333 + 570 = 664.9$$

The extra rep makes a significant difference in this case, so make sure in your training you choose weights that will be a true indicator of your strength level. As you can see a lifter that would have missed 575 for a fifth rep, let's say half way up, but achieved 570 for a fifth rep shows a 13 lbs. difference and will give a better expression of an estimated 1RM. Be smart with your weights.

TRAIN LIKE AN ALPHA

I want to make very clear to every one of you that I am an Alpha Male. I am not some tyrant that runs around beating his chest to tell you I am strong or the best. I let my lifting do the talking. When I am in the gym I come to work, I am not there to listen to you talk about your dog, or your spouse, or anything. I am there to train. I come to the gym to raise hell, and kick ass. When you walk in the gym you don't have to be cocky, trust me I am far from cocky, but you have to have a purpose in what you do. Ignorance is not an Alpha trait, ignorance is walking into a gym full of iron thinking you can peacefully walk through your workout. It will fail you if you approach it with that mentality. You have got to find your fire, become a war machine. Don't apologize to anyone for your dominance.

I sat and watched the cursor blink at me for close to 45 minutes before the words ever came. I have made jokes and Facebook status galore about being a man, and an Alpha at that. What the hell does that even mean?

The truth of the matter is before you can ever realize who you are, you have to realize what you are. There are good people who will always do good, there are bad people who will always be bad, and there are people who are bad that struggle to do good.

I am in the latter category. I don't know why I am, I was raised in a Christian home with a mother who worked hard, and a father is the most honorable human being I've ever met. I always found myself in trouble. Always. I hated authority, and bucked it every chance I got. Early on in my life I found a taste for alcohol, and recreational drugs. Didn't matter to me that many of my family members were alcoholics or into drugs themselves, I didn't do it to fit in, I did it because of a self loathing.

I wanted to get caught, I liked being labeled the trouble maker because in many ways I knew I could get my dad's attention easier that way than by doing well. I hated that too. I hated being the kid with no dad in the crowd at my games cause his job came first, I hated that my mom didn't come because she didn't understand what it would have meant to me. It wasn't until my senior year of high school that they were mainstays in the stands, but because I had switched schools my senior year I seldom played. I did however receive the Eagle Award which was given to the player who showed 100% effort in practice, and games. For some reason that award still sits in my closet. I hate lack of effort.

My papaw once told me that my name Lilly was special. That it meant something as a man to carry that name. This was told to me as an 17 year old kid from a 70 year old man in his death bed. He talked to me about honor, family, and struggle. He had his demons too but he didn't run from them or paint a picture that was brighter than who he was. He told me "a man wears his scars with pride, but he also learns from them."

**I COME TO THE GYM
TO RAISE HELL, AND
KICK ASS. WHEN YOU
WALK IN THE GYM
YOU DON'T HAVE TO
BE COCKY, TRUST ME
I AM FAR FROM
COCKY, BUT YOU
HAVE TO HAVE A
PURPOSE IN WHAT
YOU DO.**

Shortly after that conversation I went out to a party and never gave it much thought. He died a few days later, and I didn't even begin to understand the gift he had given me. At 17 maybe I wasn't ready to, but everyday of my life I've searched for a meaning and a purpose. I've burned a million bridges, I've hurt wonderful people, and I've let golden opportunities slip through my hands.

I now realize those are MY "scars". I've learned painfully that the man in the mirror is not a reflection of one moment, it's the reflection of 30 years of good and bad, right and wrong choices. But that to me is what being an Alpha is, knowing who and what you are, trying to better yourself, but

letting go of the shame, and guilt of yesterday. I am by no means perfect, I am by no means good, but I am better than I was yesterday, and I'll be better tomorrow too.

It's funny how as we age we look at things different. I still have a hard time talking to my dad because I respect him so much, but I now see without all the hours he logged at work we wouldn't have had the things we did. I see now my mom just worried about keeping her job, and the house kept and it was easier to do those things with two boys on her heels than three. They've both told me they regret it too. But one thing my dad has taught me is to work hard for what you want and believe in. In my time this is what I've learned.

Let life take its course, stop fighting the path that is laid before you and stand proud in who you are. It sounds absolutely irrelevant to powerlifting but the day I stopped doing things in the gym I didn't believe in, and told myself to do it for myself, success or failure do it my way. Forget the pressures of anything but self satisfaction for a job well done. For in the gym like life, doing your best is all you can do, nothing more... That is what makes you successful, that is what makes me an Alpha.

On heavy days if you are feeling really good, try some of your heavy sets for a double, or triple, or if you 100% believe a 1 rep PR is there, take it. But you cannot miss. Use your judgement.

On Rep days if you have a calling for 3 sets of 8 reps, complete your first two sets, and then take the third for a rep PR. Go to failure or just short.

On Explosive days I am not a huge proponent of trying to set a PR on this day, but I do from time to time like to do my recommended sets, and then add a little weight for 1-2 more sets just to get a feel for the weight.

K.I.S.S. (KEEP IT SIMPLE STUPID)

I want you to forget all the bullshit and lies you have been told, and sold. Jim Wendler shares some similarities with me in the paths we have taken, and he has been a sounding board for change, and I am following in suit. Think about it... We both agree on a multitude of ideas about how lifters have been given misinformation. Maybe there is something to be learned from our mistakes. I know this much, if I hadn't made a change I would be out of the sport by now.

Listen very closely to what I am telling you, this is the truth, numbers sell. Such and such program that will put 200 lbs. on your squat in six months, such and such supplement will put 50 lbs. on your bench and extend your erection by up to six hours. You know why it sells? Because we buy it. I am telling you that the Cube Method will make you stronger, but I am also trying to get you to realize that a 5 lbs. PR is still a PR. You have weights besides 25's and 45's. Use the 2.5's, 5's, and 10's to mark your progress. Don't buy into the crap that you have prove yourself to anyone. Look in the mirror if you want someone to impress, do things on your terms, don't chase some pipe dream because it sounds cool. Go to the gym, bust your ass, lift like a warrior, and go home.

Simple.

TRAINING DAYS: WHAT IS EXPECTED

WARMING UP

As I have gotten stronger I have learned to listen to advice when it is given with my benefit in mind. Corey Hayes has been instrumental in my ability to increase my mobility and training readiness.

Everyone one of us are going MAN-MODE in the gym right? I know you're going MAN-MODE in the kitchen, throwing down eggs, beef and rice like it's going out of style, right? Now how many of you can touch your toes and move around like a kid? Exactly...This is going to cover the most over looked link in the lifting world, the pre-workout.

To become great at anything you do, you must have longevity. Too many times you see people rise to fame just to become nobody's shortly after. Why is that? 9 times out of 10 it is injuries." Well, "ain't nobody got time for dat." Let me show you how to avoid it.

A GOOD PRE-WORKOUT ROUTINE HAS 3 STEPS.

Mash

Stretch

Warm up

Notice I say pre-workout, not warm up. The warm up is just one part of a proper pre-workout routine.

The mash is simple, its foam rolling or lacrosse ball work on overly stiff tissues like the IT bands, the pecs, lats, etc. Everyone has spots that are worse than

others, so what we are going to do is pick 2-3 different areas and roll for just 2-3 minutes each. Simple enough, right?

The stretch is the most skipped portion of a proper pre-workout because well, we are men. That's all the scientific proof i need to make that statement. That needs to change. Why? If you can't get in the proper form positions, how do you maximize your poundage? You can't. It's that simple. Again, everyone is different so we choose 2-3 problematic positions and get to where we can move around in those positions better, however long that may take. We are only looking for proper range of motion and nothing more.

The warm up is a no brainer but I often see people jumping straight into barbell work. CRAZY... A warm muscle moves better, it fires better, and it doesn't tear as easily. Why skip it? The warm up doesn't need to be fancy, 2-3 movements with a light load and high repetition. You're focus here is to really get the bloodflowing into the muscles and get the synovial fluid lubing up the joints.

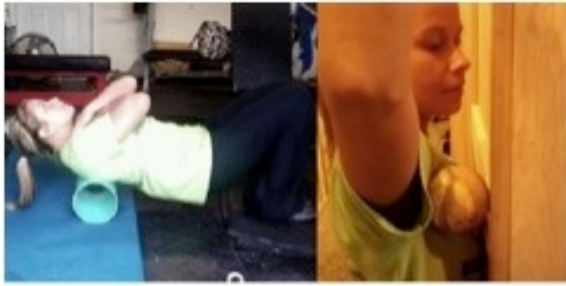
Everyone has different problems of course but I laid out a sample upper and lower pre-workout routine to address the majority of everyone's problems.

UPPER PRE-WORKOUT:

- 1) 3 minutes of each: Baseball the pecs and foam roll the upper back
- 2) 1-2 minutes of each: Wall Internal rotators, band bicep/forearm stretch, band pec stretch
- 3) 3x15 on each: Pushups, pull aparts, band pushdown

LOWER PRE- WORKOUT:

- 3 minutes of each: foam roll - It bands and low back
- 2 minutes of each: hip distracted hamstring stretch ,hip distracted IT bands stretch , Low back hang
- 2x15 on each: Band GMs, BW lunges, band adductors, band abduction



The Cube Method Pre-Workout protocol is simple but effective in keeping you mobile and healthy.



Don't be afraid to break a sweat here and you'll find yourself moving and feeling better, in and out of the gym.

MAIN MOVEMENT

These have been laid out for you, and you will see how they flow below when I lay out a training week.

ASSISTANCE MOVEMENTS

After our main exercise we stop thinking like powerlifters, because as powerlifters we are trying to move maximum weights. On our assistance work we need to become bodybuilders. I don't care to think I am going on a posing stage, but I am "building" my physique in such a way that maximizes my potential in powerlifting. I want to "look" like I lift weights. All of our assistance

work will be 3-5 exercises after the main movement, and 3-4 sets per exercise.
The goals for accessories:

1. Build Muscle and Attack Weak Body Parts
2. Create an Environment for Hypertrophy and Increase Fat Burning
3. Help Strengthen Muscles and Create Balance in Physique
4. Help to Prevent Injury
5. If a Movement Doesn't Benefit "The Big 3" Drop It

SQUAT AND DEADLIFT ASSISTANCE MOVEMENTS

Front Squats

Olympic Squats

Leg Press

Lunges

Stiff Leg Deads

Leg Extensions

Leg Curls

Good Mornings

Snatch Grip Deadlifts (My Favorite)

Barbell Rows

Dumbbell Rows

Lat Pulldowns

Chest Supported Rows

Shrugs

Abs

Glute Ham Raises
Back Raises
Planks

BENCH PRESS ASSISTANCE MOVEMENTS

Close Grip
Tricep Pushdowns
Kaz Presses
Military Press
Bicep Curls
Shoulder Front and Side Raises
Upright Rows
Vogelpohl Rows
Abs
Forearm Rolls
Pec Flyes
Fat Bar Bench
Push Ups

BANDS AND CHAINS

My take on bands and chains is that they are tools. We lift weights on the platform not bands or chains. I use them sparingly, and I seldom if ever use bands from the floor. I like one, maybe two chains if hanging from a bar, as this can drive lockout, but when the chains and/or bands begin dictating the bar path, you can count me out.

I used to experience lots of bar drift on my deadlifts, and I watched some video. I was using bands dominantly and the bands were acting like a Smythe Machine and allowing me to cheat my form. Every time I would take the bands away I would look awful, so I dropped the bands and started pulling straight weight,

and I eliminated the drift. Same thing in the squat too. So how do I set my percentage?

Original Way of Band Deadlifts

Example: 45% bar weight + 25% Band Tension at The Top= 70%

I watch guys that pull with bands a lot and what sense does it make to have the weight the lightest at the floor, when most guys are weakest off the floor? So instead of starting with 45%, and ending with 70%, I subtracted 10% from the top end percentage and came up with a weight that allowed me to be fast, but also worked the muscles, not just my speed. This was the method I used to go from a 725 lbs. raw deadlift on April 20th, 2012 to an 804 lbs. deadlift on November 3rd, 2012. Prior to this I spent nearly two years between 725 and 765 in my multiply gear, so obviously it works. Another example is John Bieg. John was in my second test group and had been stuck at 655 for two years, 8 weeks later after dropping the bands he pulled 700 in a meet. Don't drink the Kool-Aid of thinking bands and chains are the only way. A hell of a lot of lifters got very damn strong before these things were common place in training gyms.

New Way of Deadlifting

**Old Percentage of Weight at Top (70%)-10%=
Straight Weight to Be Used For Sets**

POWERLIFTING GEAR

I compete in Multi-Ply as well as raw so I do not hate the gear for competition. I hate how weak gear has allowed lifters to become. Guys take the shortcut of getting tighter gear, or getting fatter, rather than getting stronger. If you train in the gear I challenge you to take ten weeks and do a raw cycle of the Cube, then come back and do 10 weeks in gear. I bet you would shock yourself. I do not care how gear is used in this training I just know that for me I use briefs

sometimes when I train for a raw meet, and when training for a geared meet. Only on my heaviest sets do I add my suit. I do encourage people that lift in gear to use knee wraps. I came from a way of thinking to only use them at meets, well if you learn how to use them right they can benefit you more. I like warming up raw, adding briefs and hitting a good number, then taking one more set in briefs with wraps on, then all my sets in my suit are with briefs. You are going to use them in a meet with your suit on why not in training?

The only training that is really any different is the bench and I will attach that program as well. But the number one rule I have for guys in gear, since you will be free squatting, squat deeper than you think you need to in a meet. Trust me, you may lose 100 lbs. at first but if you commit to squatting to REAL PARALLEL when you go to a meet and get a call ½” inch high you will be singing the praises of the Cube and buying me a Thank You Card.

WHAT A 3 WEEK WAVE LOOKS LIKE

WEEK 1

DEADS - REPS	SETS	REPS	%
Deadlift From 1" Deficit	1	8	70
4" Block pull	2	3	80
SSB Olympic Stance Squat - Raw	3	8	50
Glute Ham Raises (GHR)	4	10	
Back Raises		50	

*Warm Up Slowly. Stretch and really get ready to lift. This has been a huge benefit for me.

*If you are a geared lifter, use it. If you are raw, I like to pull in my briefs sometimes to overload, and also, use knee wraps on your squat sets.

*When warming up, be smart, make small jumps. I like quarter, plate, quarter, plate until near my work sets, then 10's and 5's apply.

*Use %'S of your best lift (either in meet or gym)—DO NOT use a crappy lift for your %! Id recommend starting with 95% of your best.

*Do your best to rig-up the reverse bands in any way that you can. It's very important to the program.

Get with me if unavailable.

BENCH- HEAVY	SETS	REPS	%
Floor Press	5	2	80
Bench	2	15	60-70
Lat Pulldown	3	12	
Band Pressdown	4	25	
DB Shrugs (squeeze!)	3	15	
Military Press	3	12	

*Use an average band for your Rev Band sets, and I will show you how to rig them.

*Assistance work without percentages: this should end up with the top set being about 3-4 reps shy of failure.

*Now, on some of the movements with less than 8 reps, this is harder to judge, so don't apply.

*This mainly applies to the higher rep assistance: Lat pull-downs or fly etc. I want the block pulls, stiffs, decline, close grip work's top set to be heavy, but not to failure

SQUAT- EXPLOSION	SETS	REPS	%
Squat	8	3	60
Squat with Reverse Avg Band or Double Mini Band Per Side	1	2	80
Olympic Squat- Shoulder width, deep as you can go	5	5	
Leg Press	4	15	
Reverse Hyper	3	12	
KB/DB Swings	3	15	

WEEK 2

DEADS - EXPLOSION	SETS	REPS	%
Deadlift from the Floor	8	3	60
4" Block Pull - Straight Weight Snatch Grip	3	12	50
Squat - SSB or Straight Bar (close stance)	3	8	
Barbell Shrugs	3	12	
Back Raises		50	
Band or Machine Lat Pulldown	4	15	

BENCH- REPS	SETS	REPS	%
Incline Bench Press	1	8	70
Incline DB (pick a weight you would fail at 23 reps)	2	20	
Close Grip (pick a weight that challenges you)	3	12	
Band Fly	3	15	
Tricep Pressdown w/Band or Cable		100	
Military Press	3	12	

SQUAT- HEAVY	SETS	REPS	%
Squat	5	2	80
Goodmorning (go down until you want to double over then explode up)	3	8	
Leg Press	3	20	
Reverse Hypers or Lunges	3	12	
Back Raises		60	
Band Leg Curls	2	50	

WEEK 3

DEADS - HEAVY	SETS	REPS	%
Max DL Off 4" Blocks or Pins Set at Mid Shin	5	2	80
Snatch Grip Deads	2	8	65
Dumbbell Rows	3	10	
Dumbbell Shrugs	2	20	
Up and Down Plank		50	

*Warm Up Slowly. Plate, quarter, Plate, quarter. Now we are going for a heavy single, but do not miss. If you find yourself pulling a hard rep. Either stop, or make a small jump, then shut it down. WE DO NOT MISS REPS!

BENCH- EXPLOSION	SETS	REPS	%
Floor Press (% based on max bench)	8	3	60
Incline DB Press (Make your fail point right around 15. Do not make these an easy 15)	3	15	
Band Press Down		100	
Standing DB Military Press	3	10	
Band Fly	3	15	
Abs		50	

SQUAT- REPS	SETS	REPS	%
Squat - Geared: Briefs Only/Raw (wraps if you like)	1	8	70
SSB or Straight Bar Wide stance GM	3	8	
Lunges (holding a challenging DB weight in each hand)	3	15	
Olympic Squats (do not rack the bar until you hit 50 reps, shallow reps don't count. Women 75-95 lbs. Men 135 lbs.)	1	50	135lb
Abs		60	

DAY FOUR

This day is totally committed to bodybuilding. I always do three lifts before anything else. These lifts are Military Press, Bicep Curls, and Calf Raises. Then I pick three to four bodyparts that need work, and I pick one exercise for each. So, on a given Day 4 you may have 6-7 exercises, for a total of 18-35 sets depending on how you feel. Learn to trust your body. Weight is not important on this day, just go in and get the work done quickly. 30-45 minutes is all you should need to complete the work. Break a sweat, keep the rest periods brief, and if you like do supersets, giant sets, or one big circuit.

HERE IS A MODEL:

Military Press- 225 x 8 x 4 sets
Bicep EZ Curl- 75 x 12 x 3 sets
Calf Raises in Leg Press- 405 x 15 x 5 sets
Leg Curls- 75 x 10 x 4 sets
Lat Pulldowns- 160 x 20 x 3 sets
Shrugs- 315 x 10 x 3 sets

As I stated that is just a model, but the last three exercises should always be different.

3 DAYS A WEEK

Just adhere to the regular model and since we shoot for six exercises on Day 4, just take two of the six lifts, and implant them into the other three days. Simple.



High volume work on the Big 3 and their variations is at the foundation of success with the Cube Method.

SHIRTED BENCH ROUTINE

This is the routine I used to bench 760, 800, 810, and 820, so it has proven itself to me, but others have had success as well. Just drop the original Bench mainmovement and implement the following.

WEEK 1

ME – Max Effort Bench – floor press with 3chains on each side

WEEK 2

ME – Max Effort Bench – floor press with 2chains on each side

WEEK 3

ME - Max Effort Bench – Reverse Blue Band or “hanging blues” (out of a power rack)

WEEK 4

ME – Max Effort Bench Press – Opener to a 1 bd, 2nd to a two

WEEK 5

ME – Max Effort Bench Press – raw 3 board press

WEEK 6

ME - Max Effort bench – floor press STRAIGHT WEIGHT

WEEK 7

ME – Max Effort Bench Press – SHIRT WORK take all 3 meet attempts to a 2 board

WEEK 8

ME – Max Effort Bench Press – SHIRT WORK– take opener to half board

WEEK 9

ME - Max Effort Bench Press – floor press STRAIGHT WEIGHT

WEEK 10

ME – would be meet day

ONE BARBELL: ONE GOAL

I started out in a gym with a few bars, and a couple of rusty old machines. As I stated before it was basic, it was old, it was ugly, but it worked. As I type this I am trying to get closer to this mentality again, that what worked years ago can work now. We have machines with all these fancy bells and whistles that counter balance, and hold your hand while you lift. What the hell have we become? Pathetic really. This section is for anyone that has a bar and some weights.

This is a plan for someone who wants it basic. As simple as they come. All movements will be performed on a barbell. Think about all the videos that have come out with Dmitry Klokov, Konstantin Konstantinov, Andrey Belyaev, they all got badass strong using just a barbell. There is some ease of use with some of the machines that have been created over time, but it is my belief that the barbell is king.

For the main movements you won't see much variety, just stick to those as it is drawn out. But for your assistance movements I want you to get creative, find ways to implement just a barbell into your routine. These exercises are great accessories that are done with just a straight bar:

BENCH ACCESSORIES

Close Grip Bench

Board Benches

Tricep Extensions

JM Presses

Military Press

Upright Rows

Barbell Rows

Barbell Curls
Front Raises
Reverse Curls
Forearm Rolls

SQUAT AND DEADLIFT

Front Squat
Sumo Pulls
Snatch Grip Deadlift
Barbell Rows
Upright Rows
Cleans
Lunges
Barbell Shrugs
Stiff Leg Deadlift
Olympic Squat
Deficit Deadlift

When using this method you need to keep a few things in mind, you have to keep the training as diverse as you can so you don't go stale. Make sure after your main movement on upper days you pick 4-5 exercises from the list provided. One to focus on each of the following: Pecs, Shoulders/Traps, Lats, Triceps, Biceps. Always do Abs.

On lower days pick 3-5 after the main movement one for each of the following: Quads, Hamstrings, Back/Lats, Glutes. Always do Abs.



Brandon has a simple approach to nutrition for strength and mass: Lots of Real Food.

DIET

You want proof I am simple? I guarantee if I spent two weeks writing out a detailed perfect diet no one would follow it. So here is the truth. 90% of lifters I meet think they eat enough. I've eaten two steaks since I started typing this sentence. YOU HAVE TO EAT LIKE A BIG BOY TO BE A BIG BOY (Or lady). There are people who have way more letters after their name than me who can tell you the micro details of why, but here are a few tips on the "how". No secret, no bullshit. If you want to get big, do this. If you start storing fat, clean it up, but you have to eat like a machine.

Eat like a freaking beast. I don't want to hear any excuses as to why you aren't gaining. In five months I gained 21 lbs, and can see my abs in the morning, Jimmy Harris gained 30, and got leaner as well, and we did not eat diet food, we ate to be strong. The nights before you lift make sure to eat big carb meals, and I suggest eating lots of carbs every 3 hours. I weigh 325 and hit maybe 200-250 grams of protein per day, but I always get close to 1000 carbs a day. Eat tons of good fats, coconut oil, nuts, olive oil in your shakes, almond butter, natural peanut butter, regular peanut butter, I don't care, but I am not creating marathon runners, I am out to make beasts. And lastly Chocolate milk is your new best friend, at minimum a half gallon a day. No excuses, cheapest, tastiest calories you can buy, and for those that doubt that tip, you doubt me? Chuck Vogelpohl, Chad Smith, and myself that I know of first hand are adhering to the same rule.

SUPPLEMENTATION

Supplements, I'm a little wishy washy on this subject, I prefer whole food first and foremost then supplements to fill in holes. I don't want you drinking four shakes a day unless it is your only option and I would find that hard to believe. Like I said for \$15 you can get two pounds of beef, a pound of chicken, and two boxes of pasta, and that's a pretty good day of food after your half gallon of chocolate milk. Eat like a beast, train like a beast. Multi vitamin is good, creatine, amino acids, and protein powder of course. That's about as fancy as I ever get.

USING THE SLED & PROWLER

Sled and Prowler movements have become very popular because of the ease of use and effectiveness. They both have a wide range of uses for rehab, recovery, conditioning, speed development and strength training, and fat burning. Most people over-think how to use them so I will give you some ideas.

REHAB AND RECOVERY

If recovery is the goal, walk with a light load on the sled for 15-20 minutes. It's a great way to improve blood flow to the lower body, helping to reduce soreness and promote recovery. It's an excellent option for both your off days during the offseason, and for in-season athletes who can't handle being sore in between games or practice.

METABOLIC CONDITIONING

While conditioning is very specific to each sport, performing 5-10 minutes of explosive sled drags with moderate weight after your training session is a great way to improve conditioning. When cardiovascular conditioning is the goal, perform sled drags two times per week; one distance day and one burst day.

The long day should consist of dragging the sled for 3-5 sets or 100-300 feet with a light to moderate weight, and 1 minute of rest between sets. The burst day should consist of dragging the sled for 5 or more sets of 100 feet with a moderate to heavy amount of weight, and 30 to 45 seconds of rest between sets.

Remember that the idea with any conditioning is progressive, so each week by shorten the rest periods, or increase the number of sets you do. This metabolic conditioning is a great way to build muscle and burn fat.

ACCELERATION TRAINING

Resisted sled sprints are, as mentioned above, are another great way to improve acceleration, as they offer similar benefits to very heavy sled drags. Perform 6-8 sets of 15-20 yards with full recovery between sets. Experiment with both variations and see what works for you.

STRENGTH AND HYPERTROPHY TRAINING

Lastly, the sled is a very effective in aiding strength gains and packing on muscle mass. For strength, perform heavy sled drags, either forward or backward, at the end of your workout over 10-30 yard intervals. To increase muscle mass, add in extra volume with the sled.

MAN UP

In powerlifting you might expect to find the manliest of men, but often, actually more often than not you'll find men with fragile egos. This causes them to cheat themselves. I don't understand why I see these three things over and over but I do.

1. Most people love to squat big weight. If you don't I am not certain why you would powerlift, but one crucial part of the squat is "the hole". If you wanna see real entertainment go to a tightly judged powerlifting meet and watch lifters actually have to hit depth and their hips make moves that would cause Elvis to blush. Why? Because when people hit depth their squats go down, so they compete where high squats pass and train to high calls or even worse a high box. If you free fall in the hole, why set a box under your ass to stop you? Why not try strengthening your hips with lighter weight and reps to actual depth, then working your way back up. That's called WORK. To reach the top you'll need some of that. Chuck always told me "Train deeper than you have to and the meets will be easy."
2. Bench shirts are a staple in powerlifting, so you would think it would be fundamental that people learn to touch the shirts. However it's not fundamental at all. What is fundamental is people barely strong enough to bench a solid raw bench strapping on a bench shirt that would be extreme by anyone's measure and blasting up hundreds of pounds off of two and three boards and boasting ridiculous claims of strength. The best bencher I have ever seen and maybe one day ever, Dave Hoff lived on learning to touch lighter weights. He never reasoned that it meant anything to touch 1000 lbs to a two board if you couldn't touch 700. Dave systematically showed me how to touch weights in my shirt I never dreamed possible, and once we established being able to touch then we went to work on adding strength or setting the shirt to handle more weight. Learn to walk before you run.

3. Deadlifts. This one may surprise you but I think the worst thing guys can do in the gym is wear straps. I understand MAYBE using them on a high rep set or a rep set with heavy weight, but why on earth would a man not only use but become dependent upon straps in training when you can't use them in competition? I know several guys who bitch and whine about grip being an issue, well you know what Einstein? The straps aren't doing much to make your hands any better. Want some lotion for those woman hands? Grab the bar and man up. Build thick callouses, build meaty hands that refuse to let go. Stop stroking your ego by using straps to pull big weights. Dedicate your hands to the Deadlift as you do your legs and back and you'll be better off.

Now some people may read this and feel like its directed at them. Actually it's directed at a great many people so if you feel like its aimed at you — it is. Train to be stronger than you have to be and you'd be surprised what happens.



MAKE A PLAN, STICK TO IT, HURT
FEELINGS

FINAL WORD

This method is simply the method that has worked for me. I was ready to give up on the sport and needed to give it one more training cycle. The truth is, as I branched out, only a few guys stood beside me in the gym and I went to a meet basically by myself, and ended up having the best geared meet to date — 2530 lbs. at 308 lbs. BWT, in York, Pennsylvania. Why is that relevant? Because you are reading this book for one of two reasons: One, you want to bash me. That's fine. Or, two, you have come to this method looking for something more, something you can believe in.

It was that spark that kept me going, and slowly others started believing in this method, and I used all that I viewed as wrong in my past training as a way to drive me forward in pursuing this. I know how impossible the goals you set can seem, but if you set out with a plan, make small gains, and never give up, somewhere along the way you will start gaining momentum, and confidence. You will start to believe in yourself to the point that you believe you can do anything.

That is where I stand today. I remember for years chasing an 800 lbs. deadlift, and absolutely trembling at the thought of it. I had nightmares about it. But at Mark Bell's "Backyard Meet of the Century" I was facing 800 on the platform with a chance to break 2,200 lbs. raw, and PROVE to myself for once and for all that I belonged. As I approached the bar, I remember feeling like the world stood still. I knew inside of myself if I gave it everything I had I could pull it. I bent down, and I could feel the fear starting to come over, but I pulled the bar before it could, and boom!! I was standing up with 800 lbs. I put the bar down and couldn't ever celebrate I was numb. In an instant I felt gratification. I remembered all the people who said I was done, and the people who bashed me online, and I knew that no matter what they can't bash the truth. They cannot deny that I was better than they thought.

I want all of you who read this to have a moment where you realize it was all worth it. Where the hours in the gym, the sweat, the chalk all come together and your feel validated by strength. No one can ever take that away from you. No one can touch what you achieve. This is my call of action to you: Believe in this method, give it all you have, train like you have nothing to lose, and most of all believe in yourself. When you look back over the course of your training cycle, and you have pulled your last deadlift at your meet, or on the battlefield that is your gym, remember what it took, what was sacrificed for improvement. Stand there proud you reclaimed your strength.

SPECIAL EXERCISES FOR THE CUBE METHOD

Any method you find on the internet, or tucked away in some Russian Coaches, there will be exercises that are not necessarily exclusive to, but rather important to the method. These are exercises that I have found to be crucially important in my development, and the others that have been on the Cube:

SNATCH GRIP DEADLIFT



These have become associated with the Cube from almost day one. What you need to do is grab a bar (use wrist straps), wider than the rings, and with the weight setting on a 2", or 4" block deadlift the weight. I usually do these for 1-3 sets, ranging from 8-20 reps. We stay in lower weight ranges 45-55% and try to do them quickly. These really tax the middle back, and glutes better than any other exercise I've ever done. They helped my deadlift lockout like crazy.

KLOKOV PRESS



This is much different than just a typical overhead press. With hands against the collar pull out on the bar, and let the torque drive the bar upward, rather than "pushing" the weight up. This is extremely difficult, and will tax your forearms, triceps, upper, and middle back. We keep the reps high because shoulder health is about health not weight.

FLOOR PRESS



Not a new exercise but I believe that there is direct correlation to a big bench when you get your floor press stronger. Vary your grips, and truly let your triceps relax on the floor, don't barely touch the ground and go. This is really good for tricep strength.

CAT BACK ROWS



We do these by elevating our feet on the base of the Chest Supported Row, and extend very far forward rounding over like a "Cat", and pull the weight up,

and when it stops, arch your back squeezing the erectors. This is not a must, but if you have access to a CSR this will really blow your back up. Keep the reps medium to high.

FRONT SQUATS



There is no secret to these. They are hard as nails, and will make your quads grow in spades. Do these and forever know you are bad son of a bitch. Do them heavy, do them for high reps, do them days a week. Who cares? Do them! That's it for "Special Exercises", but I assure you those four movements will make you a better lifter. No glitz, no glam, just hard ass work. In the end that's what is special about the Cube. It's just hard work.

BUILDING A BADASS BENCH

When I began training, I was a horrible bench presser, but as time progressed I found myself improving greatly in the bench. Then I hit a big block. I found that nothing was working for my bench, and at times I was regressing. Why? Because I began strength "testing" instead of strength "building". That is a common theme in the Cube program is to continue building, and to build anything you have to understand what the end goal is, and how to put the pieces together to end up with the desired result.

I was a huge lover of one rep max's. I found myself taking a max every week, and beating myself up if I didn't set a new one. What I didn't take into account was life, my nutrition, sleep, and how all those things impact us in our training. So, when I wized up I looked at my training, examined where I was weak and I set out with a plan.

THE BENCH IN PARTS

To bench big you need in this order:

1. Triceps, especially the middle, and lower inner head.
2. Lats, the most underutilized muscle in the bench press. The lats are important for lowering, and creating the initial reversal of the bar. If you don't feel your lats when you bench, you are 100% benching incorrectly.
3. Delts, the delts have a huge often misunderstood role in the benchpress. We use our delts to lower, and stabilize our bar when benching. Why people neglect their delts is beyond me.
4. Pecs, the pecs are not that important for powerlifters, in a power bench, but I can tell you this, try building a big bench, and staying healthy without

addressing your pec muscles. You better strengthen them as much for injury prevention as anything.

5. Bicep/Forearms, trying benching huge weight on skinny ass forearms. Your bones will break before you do. The biceps can actually act as a cushion for the arm to drive off of in the hole. Most times a big bencher will have both big biceps and massive forearms.

I had my individualized parts, but I needed a plan. Conventional speed work was not carrying over to my max work, as I was always very explosive and never found my speed improved when I implemented it. So what to replace it with? Overhead work. When training for Strongman I did overhead work all the time, and coincidentally my bench was at an all time high. I came back to do a powerlifting meet, dropped the overheads, and my bench fell as well.

I was too stubborn to realize what I was doing so for years I abandoned the overhead work. Once I added it back in, BOOM!!! My bench started rocketing up, going from 425-475 in under 3 months. Lat work needed to be done every day. I believe the body has a unique way of adapting at a far better rate than we give it credit so I hit my lats hard and heavy every time I train, sometimes choosing multiple exercises to attack the lats. Triceps became supremely important, and I focused primarily on close grips.

I know a lot of people will tell you that machines isolate the triceps, and make them look pretty, well lets see how many of them can bench 800+ in a shirt, and 575 raw? Not too many. Big triceps come from heavy ass tricep work, and there is no better place to start than close grips. Why powerlifters don't train triceps is beyond me.

I hear guys with tears, and tendonitis from the squat bar, guys its simple. If you wanna be strong top to bottom, be strong top to bottom!! Do not neglect one body part for any reason.

When I began the Cube I was benching just over 500 lbs. and not very consistently. This was after benching 545, and then 560 off a one board very easily just a year before. I liked the rotation I was in, as two weeks were dedicated to building, and one week testing. I also found that for myself, and most others that floor press was a great indicator of strength on the bench, as well as two board work helped the lockout. I always like full range work to keep my form in check, so thus my bench rotation was born:

FLOOR PRESS

2 or 3 Board (Depends on Arm Length)

Chest Benches or Bow Bar

Reverse Bands

In no time my bench was climbing in and out of the shirt, and often times after my prescribed work sets if I was feeling good I would throw on the Slingshot for a couple singles going up in weight. Here is how my bench was laid out and how I build my shirted bench to a PR of 820 lbs. and 573 lbs. raw on the Cube!!

SHIRTED ROUTINE

Week 1

ME - Max Effort Bench - floor press with 3chains on each side

Week 2

ME - Max Effort Bench - floor press with 2chains on each side

Week 3

ME - Max Effort Bench - Reverse Blue Band or "hanging blues" (out of a power rack)

Week 4

ME - Max Effort Bench Press - Opener to a 1 bd, 2nd to a two

Week 5

ME - Max Effort Bench Press - raw 3 board press

Week 6

ME - Max Effort bench - floor press STRAIGHT WEIGHT

Week 7

ME - Max Effort Bench Press - SHIRT WORK take all 3 meet attempts to a 2 board

Week 8

ME - Max Effort Bench Press - SHIRT WORK- take opener to half board

Week 9

ME - Max Effort Bench Press - floor press STRAIGHT WEIGHT

Week 10

ME - would be meet day

(Technique is paramount. I do not believe in overloads. I do straight weight just like a meet. Take nothing heavier than your planned attempts.)

RAW BENCH CYCLE

I based my numbers off of a 540 bench that I achieved with a pause at my meet in May.

Week 1 Reps

Regular bench: 375 x 5 x 3 sets

Close Grip Off Board Lat Pull Downs Tricep Pushdowns Abs

Week 2 Speed

Regular Bench: 300 x 3 x 10 (30 secs rest between sets) Pause Presses

Lat Pull Downs

Tricep Extensions

Lateral Raises Shrugs

Abs

Week 3 Max

(I don't always Max Out, but this is my heaviest week in the rotation)

Regular Bench: 470 x 5 x 2 sets

Incline DB Press

Lat Pull Downs Shrugs

Tricep Extensions

Week 4 Reps

Regular Bench: 400 x 3 x 3 sets Close Grip Off Board

Lat Pull Downs

Dips

Abs

Week 5 Speed

Regular Bench: 315 x 2 x 8 Close Grip

Lat Pull Downs

Front Raises

Shrugs Abs

Week 6 Max

Regular Bench: 515 x 3, 530 x 2 Incline DB Hands Facing In

Lat Pull Downs

Week 7 Reps

Regular Bench: 425 x 3 x 3 Close Grip Off Board

Lat Pull Downs

Skull Crushers

Abs

Week 8 Speed

Regular Bench: 365 x 3 x 5

Band Pull Aparts

Shrugs

Lat Pull Downs

(This week was super light on accessories knowing my next week was for a new PR attempt.)

Week 9 Max

Regular Bench: 515 x 1, 545 x 1 PR (Not a gym PR, but paused PR, 560 was my gym PR), 575 x 1

*I only took 575 for 1 because 545 went PERFECTLY, and I had trained well and felt a new lifetime PR was in my sights.

High Rep Close Grip

(Shut down knowing next week is Rep PR attempt)

Week 10 Reps

Regular Bench: 545 x 2 PR! Close Grip off Boards

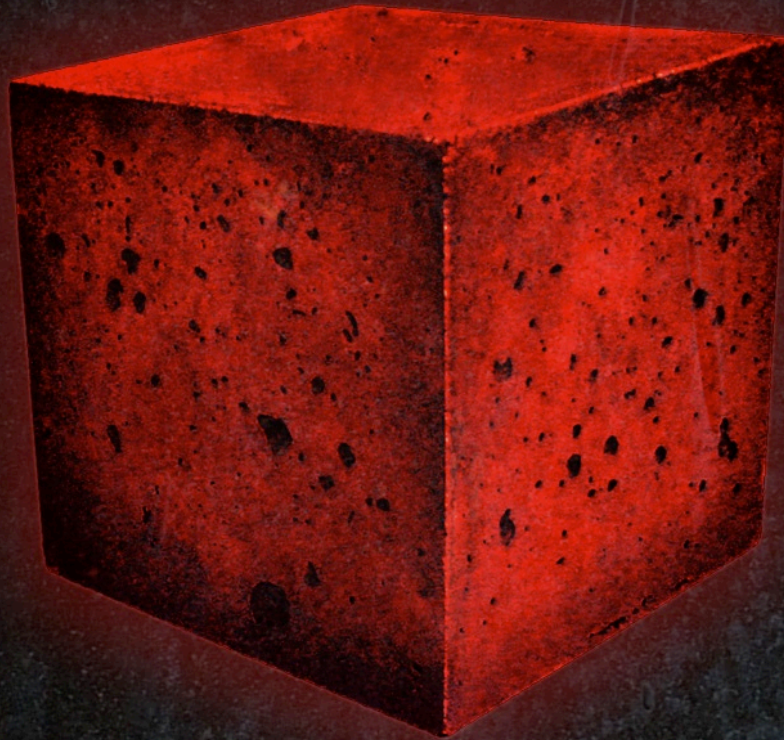
Tricep Push Downs Lat Pull Downs

Now you are equipped to smash bench PR's for yourself!!!

DEADLIFT ACCESSORY TRAINING VIDEOS

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THE
CUBE
METHOD

by BRANDON LILLY