

Newsletter

October 2013

The Periodized Workout Training Difference

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You have witnessed individuals following the same initial strength conditioning program month after month, year after year, using the same weightloads, exercises sets and repetitions, trying to lose those extra 10 pounds or improve their strength to no avail. There is a prime reason these people no longer see results in their strength conditioning program or their health and fitness goals... They fail to utilize periodization in their training program. To keep your workout primed and progressive, you must follow a few simple variables of periodization training. These variables will keep you on track for making gains toward your personal fitness goals as well as keep you from stagnating or worse yet, injuring yourself in the process.

Periodization is not a new term or concept in the field of athletics. Eastern Bloc countries were using forms of it with their athletes in the 60's. Not too many years later the Western countries began to catch on and used their variations of periodization in athletic training. Today, this type of program is near universal with certified strength and conditioning specialists working with sport athletes. It is used with athletes of all ages to assist them in efficiently reaching new goals in an organized and planned manner, while helping them peak with their athletic performance at the right time and still reduce the potential for program plateau or injury. The wonderful part about all of these athletes using periodization over the years is that the process has been well tested and proven for its effectiveness in exercise programming. Now, these same principles are being spread into the world of general fitness programs and the opportunity for individuals to realize new and renewed achievements has arrived.

Specifically, periodization of a fitness program has to do with breaking that program into various periods. The training periods are called different things by various group or in different regions of the globe, but essentially they are: Endurance Phase, Hypertrophy Phase, Strength Phase, Power Phase, and generally after you have cycled at least once through the various training periods you will take a short active rest before starting another cycle of a periodized program. Each phase is distinct from the others in its primary target goal during that period and this difference is accomplished by either the type of exercise or the number of exercise repetitions and the rest we give our selves in between each exercise set. Working with a certified personal trainer will assist you a great deal in understanding and properly establishing an organized periodized program.

Briefly, here are the basic variables for each training period:

- Endurance - (sets 4-6) (rest less than 30 seconds) (repetitions more than 12) (Intensity low) (volume very high)
- Hypertrophy - (sets 3-5) (rest 30-90 seconds) (repetitions 8-12) (Intensity moderate) (volume high)
- Strength - (sets 3-5) (rest 120-240 seconds) (repetitions 2-6) (Intensity high) (volume moderate)
- Power - (sets 3-5) (rest 180-300 seconds) (repetitions 1-5) (Intensity very high) (volume moderate)
- Active Rest - think of this as generally a 1-2 week period where you will not actively follow a resistance training program, but will instead participate in various rec sport type activities that you have not been participating in during your just completed cycle.

Now, with a basic understanding of periodization and the efficiencies it has proven to add to goal achievement in fitness programming, we have two primary variations to be concerned with in completing our periodized training program... Will our program be designed in a "linear" or "non-linear" format. Similarly this asks the question as to how long will each periodized cycle run? Ultimately, either is fine when compared to a standard "non-varied" program (ie. one that for example does 5 sets of 10 repetitions for multiple months in a row). The most current research appears to show that a non-linear program provides the greatest results in strength gain, muscle development, and likely body composition of fat free mass when compared directly to the linear periodized program.

- Linear Training Program - A periodized exercise program that utilizes equal or near equal time allotments for each period of the program. Each period can be as short as one week, but have most often ranged from 2-6 weeks per period.
- Non-Linear Training Program (*also called undulating periodization*) - A periodized exercise program that treats each day as a new period. Hypertrophy training may be the target of the first exercise session of the week, while strength and then endurance are the targets on sessions 2 & 3 respectively. Active rest is inserted after a selected length of time for a break.

These basics of periodization training really do only scratch the surface of the many factors that go into a exercise training program for an athlete, or an enthusiast who is looking to simply improve their general fitness profile. The efficiencies gained while utilizing a properly designed program are significant and will often make the difference in whether participants will even provide the time commitment in an attempt to reach their goals. Enthusiasts are **STRONGLY** encouraged to seek out the counsel of a certified fitness professional for their assistance in goal setting through proper assessment as well as the development of their personal training program. These and multiple other training variables will be taken into account and a properly designed program will be created specific to the needs and desires of the enthusiast.