REGULATING INTENSITY

A new and easy method to track and rate your training intensity

NEEDING TO KNOW YOUR 1-RM AND THEN USING MATH TO DETERMINE YOUR TRAINING INTENSITY AND THE APPROPRIATE WEIGHT ON THE BAR MAY BE A THING OF THE PAST.

Original Research
Duncan, M., and Y. Al-Nakeeb. Perceived exertion is related to muscle activity during leg extension exercise. *Research in Sports Medicine* 14:179-189, 2006.

In most magazine articles about athletic training, the advice typically revolves around what exercises to do for a given body part, how many sets to do per exercise, and how many repetitions to do per set. *The* most critical information, however, is missing-what training intensity to use. In a scientific training approach to gaining strength and power, the intensity of your effort is, without doubt, the most critical component of your success. In such a program, the training intensity is expressed as a percentage of your 1-rep max (1-RM), the heaviest weight you can lift for one repetition. So if you can squat 300 pounds and today's training calls for an intensity of 80%, then you know that you must load the bar with 240 pounds. However, unless you know your 1-RM, 80% is a shot in the dark. And what if you are doing a new exercise? Clearly you do not want to max out on something foreign to your musculature, possibly inviting injury, just to figure out how much weight to lift. So what are you to do? Use RPE instead!

Power Key: training intensity, max weight, ratings of perceived exertion