

Maxing Out

By

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Maxing Out... What is it and better still – what for and; when? The subject comes up in most conversations when two or more lifters get together. Over the years I've heard maxing out talked about and mentioned more than almost any other subject or topic you can think of related to bodybuilding. Well, except for arms that is. When referring to maxing out one is talking about lifting the most weight possible for a low number of reps usually a single rep. This can be done for just about every exercise and every body part. Almost every bodybuilder does it at some point in time in their training. Most do it many times. Some do it monthly, some every two or three months, some a couple times a year and, some every workout.

I maxed out on a semi regular basis. What does that mean? It means I did it from time to time without actually planning to max out. I did it when I felt like it. This usually occurred during times when I was in my bulking phase of training, lifting heavy with fewer reps. I also did it each workout for extended times. By this I mean I carried an exercise to failure which is another way of maxing out. Heavy and hard was the order of the day when youth controlled my body. I enjoyed maxing out. I liked the feel of pushing myself to the limits of my strength.

I understand the desire to test strength by lifting maximum poundage; it's a natural part of lifting. Even though I do understand the need to undertake the challenge I can also tell you from experience that carried out frequently enough, and over an extended period of time, it will result in joints that don't function very well – pain – loss of training time – and conditions you would be better off without. In fact you will discover a whole new world of pain and discomfort for

your efforts. I believe testing yourself to see how much you can bench press is fine, its natural, its part of any weightlifters or bodybuilders makeup. We all want to know how much we can lift.

Care must be given however, to avoid injury of any kind. This means you should not attempt to exceed what is a reasonable poundage. Forget attempting to set world records. Warm up thoroughly. Have equipment strong enough to accommodate the weight you will be using. Have spotters in place that know what to do and when to do it. In other words, acting responsibly and not like some jerk.

Each year serious injuries befall those who attempt to lift too much or lift without the proper equipment and not having experienced spotters present. No matter how much caution I try to insert there will still be those who will fail to heed the advice I have offered to help - not hinder.

Although the bench press is both the most popular and the most publicized movement for maxing out, there are others just as exciting to use as a gauge. Some others are: squats, deadlifts, military press, power cleans, curls, dips, triceps press, and the Incline press. These are among the ones most bodybuilders will work with. As I mentioned earlier, almost any movement can be used to test your strength progress, free weights or machines, both work well, just be smart and avoid injury.

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