

Progression in the Gym

Why do I find certain weights easier in a session but struggle at the same weight a week later? Has my progress stalled?

Lifting weights comes with a great deal of integration between the central and peripheral nervous system. At times when you are slightly stressed or have consumed environmental influencers (alcohol) an impaired ability to relax and subsequently contract will be limited. Progress is not only measured through the load you lift but also how you execute the lift, when your tempo is on point a steady progression of exercise is noticed, although an overall gross amount of weight lifted may be slightly less. In short progress is never linear and taking your day to day biological state into consideration will prove to be far more effective toward progress over a year long period, slight regression of load lifted to the benefit of better technique is actually progress on the road to body composition change.

How do you combat loss of confidence when you don't perform to your best in a session?

Humanity is so obsessed with economics especially when it comes to health or training. More in does not always equate to more results, understanding that you are an organic being that may have a bad day goes a long way toward being more confident and comfortable in your weight lifting routine. Look to increase your awareness of how you are feeling through measurable objective factors such as blood glucose evaluation and heart rate variability analysis, an understanding of where your current state of biology is will go a long way toward optimal lifting and complete progress.

How important is confidence to good performance in the gym?

There are two major psychological factors in the gym; fear and confidence. If you have a hesitation to a particular lift, go slow don't push the mark and increase your proprioception to the skill of the lift, over time you will notice increased confidence. Through increased confidence brought about by good coaching and progressive skill development your performance will be far more fluid and consistent.

How do you motivate yourself to get back into the gym after a session that doesn't go as planned?

Consistency is not always easy to implement, especially when your trying to establish new habits. However creating a priority of your physical development will inevitably create a lifestyle to which you will feel more comfortable in the good and bad days of training. Going full throttle in every session when your simply having a bad day is not necessary nor will it sustain the gains you worked so hard for.

What are the factors that can see you struggle to perform at your highest level?

Sleep is by far the most important factor toward improved performance. As we drift off to slumber our bodies go through a complex recovery cycle which detoxifies neurological junk we accumulate

throughout the day. From rapid eye movement to deep wave sleep, getting a good nights rest is imperative toward progression.

Should you alter your nutrition if you've struggled in a session?

It all depends on what has caused the struggle in your session. If you have engaged in a night out with friends and wake up in a state of dehydration due to your hangover, then yes a change in nutrition would serve great purpose. However if your going through personal psychological issues then perhaps changing the type of training you are doing may be of more benefit. Yoga is a great practice of balance both in body and mind. Those going through a hard time may benefit from backing off the high adrenaline sessions and opt for balance through yoga and basic stretching, this does not mean weights are all bad for the depressed rather the quantity or ratio to which overall training is committed to should be considered.

If progression in terms of strength is not linear, what other aspects should we consider to give a more balanced account of how our progress is going?

Great question, the answer is rather simple: proprioception. When our range of motion improves and our control of an external load imposed on our bodies is increased we will prove to become more complete in our structural balance and complete biomechanics. Move better, feel better and look awesome!

How can you push past the plateau both mentally and physically?

Mental plateaus take far more consideration that just the physical. As the mind controls the body it would be wise to assume that fixing the mind will cure the body. Brain activity is influence able with basic lifestyle habit introductions, waking up with a feeling of heavy dread toward the day ahead may not be so severe if you switch on a motivation clip on YouTube for 10min whilst doing your blood glucose and HRV evaluation. Mindset can shift from the dyer to a state of glee by influencing perception, change how you see yourself, do not criticize the smallest actions but rather look to applaud the smallest changes. Before going to bed taking a moment to reflect on all the positive actions you took today will prove to lay you into a state of positive slumber one in which your judgment is subdued by admiration of yourself as a good person.

Physical plateaus can be broken through by a multitude of shock strategy such as negative overload, higher intensity or volume integrations not to mention a few. However, any physical shock strategy is only as effective as your state of mind. Psychological strength is far more valuable than physical capacity, look to increase you minds ability before your body's gross effort.