Progression Logic

Logistic

Magnitude

Goal/Stimuli

Logistical Limitations

- What progression options do you have
- What's the smallest/largest load adjustment you can make.
  - Next Dumbbell size, machine selection, smallest plates to add etc.
- Are you maxing out your loading options?
  - Already using the Heaviest DBs, out of plates at the home gym, maxing out a machine?

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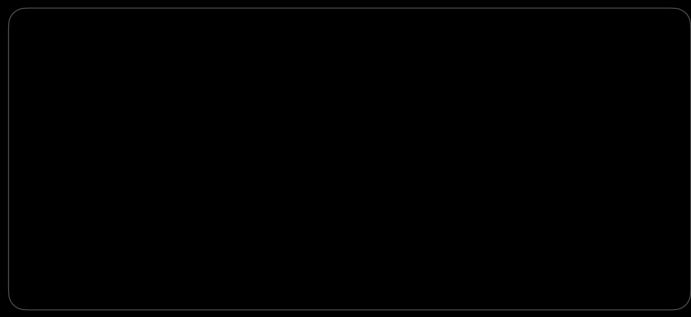
MAGNITUDE

- How large of progression do you need?
  - If its a small progression you may have limited options.
    - This will be magnified when working at the extremes of rep ranges.
  - If you want a large progression you will often have more options unless you have maxed out your loading options.

Goal Specific Progressions

- Specified Rep Range
  - You may have rep ranges you are trying to stay within to maintain a specific type of stimulus
    - If you're at the bottom of the rep range, adding reps may make more sense, if you are at the top, adding load or tempo makes more sense.
    - If you are at the top of the range, you may be able to afford to lose reps when adding load, and it opens up progression options in the future.
- Specified Rep Progressions
  - You may be intentionally climbing or dropping reps as part of your progression method over a mesocycle.



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Progression Objective

- Choosing from what is logistically available, choose a progression that meets the magnitude you want that fits within the parameters of your goal.

Progressing Beginners

- Progressions will be faster
- Using more rep progressions may be beneficial for learning moving patterns, and
- Can use larger “steps” for progressions
- Might be able to progress weight and reps at the same time in some cases
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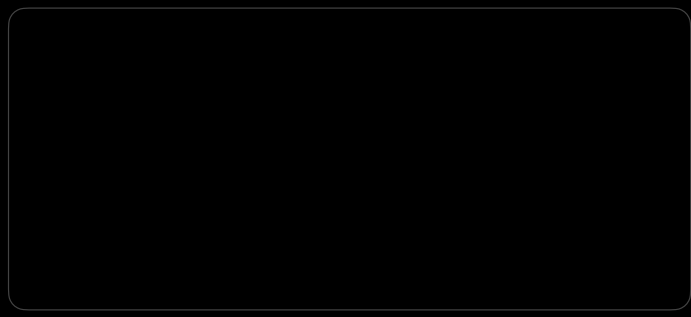
Progressing Intermediates

- Potentially the group that will need the most flexibility for optimal progressions
- Rep range or step methods will likely be a bit tighter
- Should see consistent progression, but to a lesser magnitude, and less chaotic than a beginner.



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Progressing Advanced Trainees

- Progression types are likely the most predictable, but also smaller in magnitude
- May need strategies to micro progress, or use variables to be able to express smaller progressions.
- Will be the most sensitive to over progressing or progressing too fast.

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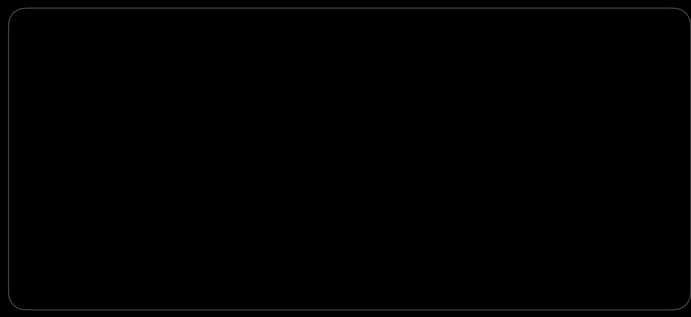
Progressing For Performance Goals

- Rep ranges and variables are going to be more constrained to align with the performance target.
- May have a progressive change in variables to move closer to the performance demands.
- There is likely more of an emphasis on quality of work than quantity of stimulus when using lifts were the performance is closely aligned with a motor pattern.



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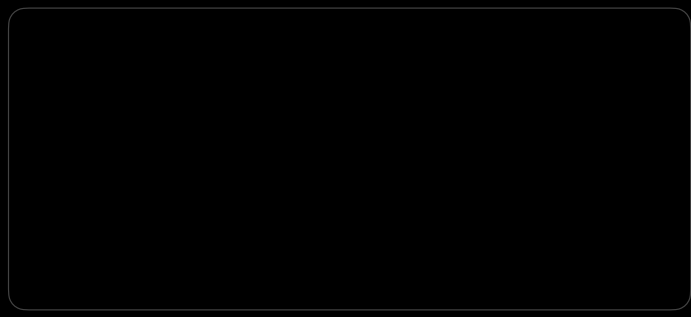
Progressing For Physique Goals

- You will have the most flexibility in the variables and strategies you can use.
- How becomes less important than just finding a way to drive stimulus
- Total stimulus is more important than single set performance.
- Likely more important to consider the totality of work and stimulus.
- Can get complicated when using special set methods.



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Managing Progression in a Deficit

- The focus becomes more about maintaining stimulus sometimes rather than increasing it.
- Similar to hypertrophy based physique goals, in a deficit, the totality of stimulus and volume becomes more important.
- Some evidence suggest you should be maintaining a certain threshold of loading to maintain muscle.
- Efficiency can be used as a tool.
  - Intentionally inefficient to increase volume or work, vs being super inefficient to manage fatigue:stimulus

Linear Progressing reps

- Trying to increase reps each cycle
  - Leads to greater TUT over the mesocycle
    - Greatest change in relative physiological demand over a meso
  - Lowest average load over the mesocycle
  - Can be the easiest to implement
    - High confidence, easy to apply, tends to be very motivating in regards to encouraging effort. Very easy to auto regulate in a session.
  - Probably the least applicable to intermediate and advanced people.

Linear Progressing Load

- Increasing load each cycle
  - The least amount of change in TUT and physiological type of stimulus over a meso
  - Keeps the stimulus the most consistent across a meso.
  - Simple to apply, but not as easy to auto regulate as reps.
  - Applicable to pretty much any population and goal.

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Linear Progressing Reps Load

- Moving from the bottom of a rep range to the top of a rep range over a meso, while sometimes choosing to use load instead of reps, without regressing reps.
- Usually only applicable to beginners because of the requirement for large consistent progressions.
- Often used more as a elongated step loading protocol.

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Progression + Regression Methods

- Dropping Reps and Adding Load (step loading)
- Dropping tempo and Adding Load/Reps
- Dropping Load and Adding Reps***

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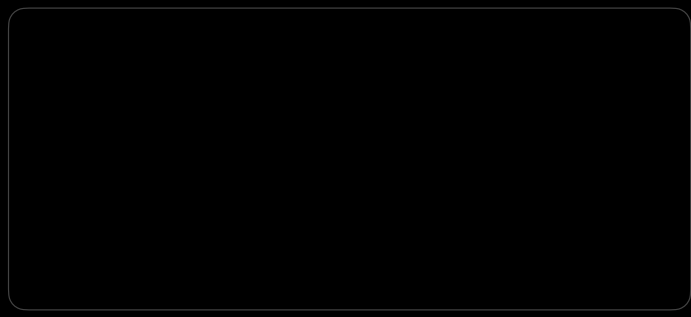
Step Loading (Reps & Load)

- Using a combination of load and rep progressions.
  - Done as rep progressions, followed by a load progression with a rep regression.
- Allows for more flexibility, and the psychological benefits of rep progressions, while being a bit more physiologically appropriate for intermediate and advanced populations by constraining the TUT and type of stimulus.



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Progressive Loading (with tempo regressions)

- Progressing from longer to shorter tempo over a meso.
- Allows for near guaranteed load progressions.
- Great for improving technique and performance qualities, and learning to control new loads.
- Allows for a progression from more of a hypertrophy based goal, to a strength/performance goal over a meso cycle.
- Psychologically rewarding because of the performance improvements with tempo regressions.
- Can be combined with rep manipulations as well.

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Progressing Reps (with Load regressions)

- Very Rarely Used, only programmed it a couple times in my whole career.
    - Typically for transitioning someone to increased metabolic demand or overall work volume.
- Usually done in combination with someone building an aerobic base, as a bridge that is logistically or psychologically favorable to the athlete.