



Exercise Order

Many people train using programs they have written themselves and may not be aware the effect that the order of your exercises and training sessions has on your outcomes. There are a number of determinants that can influence what order to perform your exercises, some of them are discussed below. As I always re-iterate, you must first consider what your training goals are and base your decisions around those.

Large muscle groups first: Training your quadriceps, by doing squats for example, requires far more energy than training your biceps, barbell curls. Therefore you should train your large muscle groups first when your energy stores are highest.

Pre-exhaustion training: This is a training system that dictates the order of exercises. As the name suggests, the goal is to exhaust a muscle group prior to the main exercise. For example, to train your deltoids (shoulder muscles) if you find that shoulder presses are limited by your triceps, rather than the target deltoid group, then you would perform a single joint exercise, like dumbbell raises, to target and 'pre-exhaust' the deltoids before performing the multi-joint compound exercise, shoulder press. You could similarly pre-exhaust the pectoral muscles (chest) by performing dumbbell flies before bench press.

Power exercises first: If you are incorporating power exercises in your training program; cleans, snatches, bench throws, bench pulls, jump squats, to name a few. Then these exercises should be performed at the start of your program. The energy systems used when your muscles are recruited to develop power and quickly depleted and take a long time to fully replenish, for this reason these exercises should be performed before the slower movement velocity strength exercises.

New exercises and those being learnt: When learning a new skill it is important that you are physically and mentally aware. New skills include new exercises such as those mentioned above cleans, snatches, etc. and other exercises such as squats, bent-over rows, it is necessary to consider weight training exercises as skills that need to be learnt. These exercises must be programmed first so that they



can be learnt particularly while you are still mentally alert. This may contradict some of the points made above, but often your weight lifted in these exercises will be limited by your skill and not strength. Consequently, the training response elicited will be different to what it will be once you have learnt the exercise and lifting heavier loads.

Whole body programs: If your time is limited in the gym, you may be performing a whole body routine. If this is the case consider the muscle groups that the exercises are targeting. You may choose exercise around a joint, for example, tricep pull-downs followed by bicep curls. You may choose a number of exercises for the same muscle group. Alternatively, you may order your exercises so that you are forcing the body to shunt the blood from your calves, calf raises, to your upper body, bench press, and back to your lower body, leg curls. The order you choose for whole body programs can make each session feel vastly different as well potentially altering the program outcomes.

These are some of the considerations you should keep in mind when structuring your training programs. But remember, first ask yourself what is goal, and let that be your overarching reason behind program design.

Hopefully this article has given you tips and motivated you to keep training or to get training.

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See you,

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