TECHNIQUE OF THE DEADLIFT

By Gary Benford

Techniques of Deadlift

The deadlift is performed by raising the bar, which is laid horizontally before the lifter's feet, until the lifter is standing erect. In the performance of the lift the bar must continue upwards in one continuous motion. At the completion of the lift, the knees must be locked and the shoulders thrust back. Knee extension is provided through the rectus femoris, vastus medialis and lateralis; and shoulder lockout achieved by outward rotation of the shoulder utilizing the infraspinatus, teres major and minor, and trapezius.

The foot spacing is optional, with lifters generally electing either: a) feet positioned close together at the center of the bar and knees inside of the elbows, or b) with feet positioned wider and elbows inside of the knees. The feet may not shift or raise from the floor during the lift.

The hand grip is, also, optional with three hand positions generally used. The lifter may elect to employ: a) with the right hand over the bar and the right forearm pronated, while the left hand is under the bar with the left forearm supinated, b) with the right hand under the bar and the right forearm supinated while the left hand is over the bar and the left forearm is pronated, or c) with both the right and left hands over the bar with both the right and left forearms pronated. All of these positions have the thumbs locked under the bar. Grip strength and stability is provided by the brachialis, brachioradialis and flexors of the hands. Supination occurs with the dominant hand, thus the biceps brachii is susceptible to large amounts of force.

Anatomy of Deadlift

In the deadlift, hand contact with the bar is obtained through flexion of the lower limbs. The possibility for extension can then provide the needed force. Force is generated primarily through the hip extensors. The work is done by the large muscles crossing the knees and hips. Specifically, the gluteus maximus, glutaeus minimus, erector spinae, hamstrings and latissimus dorsi. In all heavy lifting the back is kept straight and acts as a single lever, with fulcrum at the hips. Antagonistic muscle strength is provided by the transverse abdominis, iliopsoas and gracilis.

The lifter, in the starting position, should have the feet under the bar and the ankles as close to the bar as possible. The linear motion should be directly vertical from the floor to lockout position. The bar, as it travels upward, should remain close to the lifter's body.
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