Lubricating equipment

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The lubrication of equipment is an important aspect of any weightroom's program of maintenance. In fact, failure to keep equipment in your weightroom properly lubricated will have the same effect on your weightroom machines as the failure to keep an automobile lubricated. Metal rubbing or sliding across metal causes friction and wear. Most moveable parts of the strength training equipment in a weightroom are metal. Consequently, friction and wear are a serious problem. Proper lubrication with a light oil or lubricant allows for smooth interaction of the moving parts and extends the longevity of the equipment.

Another critical need for lubrication is caused by oxidation. This can be very detrimental to weightroom equipment, including equipment that has no moveable parts (bars, plates, etc.). This problem can be magnified if your facility is geographically located in a region of the country which has a high humidity level, or if your weightroom has limited ventilation.

Lubrication is a crucial part of weightroom maintenance. The following are specific areas in need of special attention:

Chains: Chains are an integral part of many types of strength training equipment. Whether a chain interacts with a gear or a cam, lubrication provides for smooth operation. Chains will tend to bind up or break due to lack of lubrication. A lubrication that can be sprayed directly on the chain is the most convenient to use. A light oil spray lubricant can also be used to remove dirt and excess lubricant. After cleaning the chain, follow up with a light application of spray lubricant directly to the chain.

Plate Stack Shafts or Rods: These are the shafts or rods which support and guide the movement of the plates of a plate-loaded machine. Clean and lubricate shafts in the same fashion as the procedure mentioned for chains. If plate shafts are not kept clean and lubricated, it could cause plates to bind against shafts or hinder the sliding action of the plates. A selected choice of resistance may feel heavier than the indicated poundage if shafts aren't lubricated.

Pulleys and Cams: Bushings and rods or shafts in which the pulley or cam rotates on must be lubricated to prevent unnecessary strain on cables and chains.

Olympic and Exercise Bars: The rotating sleeves of an olympic bar and any metal sleeve on the end of exercise bars are always targets for oxidation. Spray sleeves with lubrication and wipe away any rust or dirt that has accumulated on sleeves. It is also important to keep the inner spinning mechanism of the rotating sleeve lubricated on olympic type bars.

Plates: All types of metal plates are subject to oxidation, especially the center hole which has no protective coating. The center hole comes in contact with the bar sleeves constantly as plates are taken on and off bars. Lubrication is crucial for easy placement and removal of plates on sleeves and to prevent oxidation. (Note: Be sure to always use collars since these plates can slide easily)

A checklist or a schedule of inspections for areas in a weightroom that need lubrication is very helpful. Checklists help staff stay abreast of all equipment that needs cleaning or lubrication. Equipment that is dependent on lubrication for proper function should be checked weekly.

As stated throughout this article, lubrication is a very vital part of any preventive maintenance program. Lubrication allows for smooth operation of metal parts which interact with each other and helps prevent a strength coach and his staff from spending a lot of unnecessary time repairing damaged equipment.