

The Deadlift

The Deadlift is one of the original tests of strength and has a very long history on the weightlifting family tree. The standard Deadlift is also one of the vital components of a Power lifting competition with the current world record at the time of writing being a phenomenal 1003lbs/454.95Kg set by Andrew Bolton of the U.K. in 2006. However what makes the Deadlift very important to us is that it represents the foundation of the other Olympic lifts frequently used by Strength and Condition professionals in order to promote explosive strength in their athletes.

The Deadlift is a compound “closed chain” exercise which promotes many benefits when practised in its own rights. It is an excellent exercise for promoting Core strength when performed correctly. In addition, the exercise also has many movement similarities to a variety of sports leading to a great deal of “functional carryover” when practised.

There are a number of variations to the “conventional Deadlift” and these include:

- Romanian
- Stiff Leg
- Sumo
- One Handed
- Steve Reeves

Method

Execution

1. Stand over the bar with the feet roughly hip width apart and the toes angled slightly outwards if desired. A common mistake is to start with the feet behind the bar, whereas they should be under the bar. As the old saying goes, “Laces under bar”.
2. Before grasping the bar check your body and make sure that you are already in a good position. The knees should be slightly soft, the core should be engaged to allow a neutral spine to be achieved, the shoulders should be retracted and the head up and looking forward.
3. When coaching this lift for the first time, I often work with the “top down “ approach, however for the benefit of this course we will work from the “bottom up”
4. Flex the hips and knees and grasp the bar with an overhand or “pronated” grip that is slightly wider than shoulder width. Other grips are frequently used by experienced lifters, the most common of which is the alternate grip.

5. Ensure you check your body position at this stage:
 - a) Bar over laces
 - b) Pronated grip, with the inside of the forearm just brushing the outside of the knee. Elbows fully extended.

- c) Knees slightly lower than hips and slightly in front of the bar.
- d) Shoulders higher than hips and in front of the bar
- e) Neutral spine.
- f) Chest held up and out.
- g) Scapula retracted.
- h) Eyes forward.

6. Upward Movement Phase

7. **Take the strain!** Whilst not actively found in many coaching manuals, a good tip is to take any slack movement out of the bar. This will promote a smoother lift and help to maintain control over the Scapula and Spine. A good analogy is to think of a “Tug of War” contest.
8. Whilst maintaining good control over the Scapula, lift the bar from the floor by extending the hips and knees. Until the bar reaches the knees ensure that the back angle remains the same as the start position.
9. Ensure that the bar remains close to the shins.
10. As the bar passes the knees, move the hips towards the bar until the thighs contact the bar. The knees will naturally rebend slightly and move under and slightly in front of the bar.
11. Allow the body to come to an erect position whilst maintaining full control over the Scapula and keeping the chest up and out and the eyes forward.
12. It is important at this stage to maintain control over the core and refrain from hyper extending the lower back
13. Refrain from simply dropping the bar at this point! Return the bar to the floor by following the teaching points in opposite order.

Note: Whilst it is not vital to understand it at this point, the Deadlift represents the movements of the 1st Pull and the Transition phase that are actively coached when learning the Clean and Snatch lifts.

