

Add Olympic Lifts to your Workout

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Olympic-style weightlifting is a long-established and commonly misunderstood form of resistance training. When performed correctly, Olympic lifts can be some of the most beneficial exercises that exist today, and may likely have a place in your regular workout routine.

What are "Olympic-Style Lifts"?

Olympic lifts are exercises where you move relatively heavy weight over your head in a quick, concise movement.

Traditionally only the snatch and the clean & jerk are considered to be Olympic lifts, as they are used for Olympic competition. In non-competitive environment, however, similar lifts such as the power clean, push jerk, as well as many variations involving subtle shifts in grip and body position also qualify.

Do not be afraid!

Olympic lifts often take a backseat with the general population because of fears surrounding accidental injury. Fear not! When done correctly, Olympic-style lifts are some of the safest activities available in the weight room, including those sit-down resistance-training devices.

Olympic lifts have unique advantages: they utilize the entire body, require complete core involvement, promote strength and power development, teach you to generate force utilizing muscles in sequence, and accustom the individual to distribute and accept force correctly.

Also, the extension of the hips, knees, and ankles utilized in Olympic lifting exists in virtually all athletic activities. For those who value power production, which translates to moving quickly, jumping higher, hitting harder, and the like, Olympic lifts are right up your alley.

Before you get Started...

You need to log some serious hours training in the weight room. If it is your first week back to the gym in a few years, Olympic lifting may not be best for you. It takes a certain amount of structure (created with hypertrophy training) as well as requisite strength to perform an Olympic lift effectively. It is a good idea to become proficient in some simpler exercises that utilize the components of the Olympic lifts, like the back squat, deadlift, Romanian deadlift, bench press, and overhead press before beginning an Olympic-style routine.

Safety First!

As stated earlier, Olympic lifting, when done correctly, is a very safe activity. As with all exercise, there are risks inherent to the performance of Olympic lifts, so do your research! To mitigate the risk, ensure you put in the necessary training hours prior to beginning an Olympic program, begin with a reasonable weight, make sure you have enough room, familiarize yourself with appropriate spotting and escape techniques, and attain the correct equipment.

There is no substitute (this article included) for instruction from a qualified professional. If you are interested in learning about Olympic lifting consult a strength coach or an experienced and qualified personal trainer.

