

## Three Kings of True Strength

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Many years ago in a land far, far away lived a king...

This king was the same as all other kings at the time. He lived by the same schedule, rested at the same intervals, walked with the same temp and even did the same things at the same time each week. The king's people also lived and died by the same rules and always produced the same results: good but not great. His people were happy, but they could have been outstanding. You see, when you live by the same rules as everyone else, you will get the same results as everyone else! As you read on, things will become clearer, but only if you are willing to step out of your kingdom for a while.

So who is this king and what does this all mean?

The above king is the one method of training most trainers follow: the Repetition Method. With this method, sub maximal weight is lifted multiple times; in other words, a weight between 55-70 percent for eight or more repetitions. Regardless of the definition, this is the only method being used. However, most of the time this method is not being used effectively.

### The Repetition Method

Sandy and John are two trainers from opposite ends of the US. Both Sandy and John have been to all of the conferences and even have a few certifications to show for their hard work. They both feel very confident in their programming skills. They know all of the best movements. They know how to wave training volumes. They even have clients who show up all the time. Yet something is missing: they are not getting any stronger, and the muscle development is not coming as fast as they would have expected.

Sandy and John are having their clients use multiple sets (two to five) of higher reps (eight to 12) with sub maximal loads. They have become the master of one king, but they don't understand for this one king to rule, it is the last reps performed that are the most important. If the client is programmed to do 10 reps but 12 could have been done, the set is useless, right? Well, not entirely. They will still develop muscular coordination, but the main training application has been limited. We are not saying total failure as this may be too much for most clients. To be the best in this kingdom, new rules and definitions need to be established:

1. When using the repetition method, the set should cease one rep shy of failure.
2. Failure will be defined as the moment the movement can't be completed with good technique.
3. Weight and reps goals should be established and met.

With these new rules, your first king will become stronger, but there are other kings (methods) that should be a part of every program. These two other kings are the Max Effort Method and Dynamic Effort Method.

### The Max Effort Method

This king is the strongest of them all, and he is feared by most of those in the kingdom. They are scared they will be hurt when in his presence. They avoid him and make excuses as to why he is not important. Yet, there are the select few who embrace him and have built armies of strength others can only imagine. So who is this king and how can he be used?

According to Vladimir Zatsiorsky, author of *Science and Practice of Strength Training*, the Max Effort Method is considered superior for improving both intramuscular and intermuscular coordination; the muscles and central nervous system can only adapt to the loads placed upon them. This method is used for the development of strength. Is this not a main goal of most clients? Yet, this method is never used because most trainers do not understand the method and its applications.

In short, the Max Effort Method is lifting weights in the 85 percent plus range for one to three reps. This is what scares many trainers. They feel their clients will get hurt using such methods. Yes, this is very true when good form is not used, the client has not been taught how to strain and breathe through heavy training and/or the client is de-conditioned. All of this can be corrected by you in a relatively short period of time (this will have to be another article). Here are a few keys to making this method work in your programming:

1. Select two movements per week (one upper body and one lower body) and do them first in the workout. These can be on the same day or two different days. Have your client start with the bar and take seven to 10 percent jumps as they work up to a one or three rep max. As with the Repetition Method, the set is over when a breakdown in technique happens.

2. This movement should always be a multi-joint compound movement (i.e., squats, bench presses, incline presses, leg presses, etc.).
3. Stick with the same movement for three weeks. Use the first week to introduce the movement. Teach clients how to do it, work up using sets of three to five reps and stop when the weight gets heavy. On the second week, have them work up slightly past the first week's weight but only using three reps. On the final week, have clients again work up past the second week's weight, but this time use one rep per set. After three weeks, switch to a new movement. This is to decrease the demand on the CNS.
4. Use great technique.
5. Use your head. If form breaks down or clients do not look or feel right, STOP.
6. Make sure your client can handle the loading.
7. Lower the volume the rest of the session as this is a very demanding method. As a rule, cut your total volume in half of what it would normally be. This training session should be made up of three to five movements total, usually less.

Now you have an understanding of the biggest king (Repetition Method) and the strongest king (Max Effort Method), but there is still one more king you need to know about. This is the speed king known as the Dynamic Effort Method.

### The Dynamic Effort Method

This method is designed to increase and develop explosive strength by using sub maximal weight at high speeds. This method will train the CNS to become more explosive and thus stronger. To move a weight (or your body), slow and strong is one thing, but how often does this happen? This method is one of the best for developing athletic strength ranging from the weekend warrior to the professional athlete. Here are some basic guidelines for using this method:

1. Pick two movements per week (one upper body and one lower body) and use eight to 12 sets of three reps. This movement should be first in the programming.
2. Use lower rest periods (45 to 60 seconds).
3. Perform each repetition as explosive as you can while maintaining good form and technique.

### The Challenge

Shortly after the speed king entered the valley, a great contest was held. The other kings felt the pressure and did not want to share the kingdom with anyone else. The people were in an uproar. They were having a hard enough time working with two kings, let alone three. Banishment was on the verge, and the speed king had to act fast.

Before the competition and great feast was held, all three kings were present as were their great advisors. After much ale and argument, the strength king started speaking of how he was the strongest king and without him all would perish. Then the repetition king spoke up and said HE was the strongest king because rarely does the effort last just one time but multiple times. The king of speed sat back and shook his head. He then did something that affected the kingdom for all days to come.

He grabbed the other two kings and walked to the head of the table. He looked to the strength king and said "Jump," but use the same tempo you speak of. The strength king could not jump on the table. He was strong but could not get high enough. Then the repetition king was asked to head the table. "Jump!" said the speed king. He was not strong enough and could not jump on the table. The speed king walked up to the table, and with EXPLOSIVE force never seen before, he leaped on the table with little effort.

"But could you jump higher?" asked the strength king. "Yes," replied the speed king. "If I had your strength with my speed and his (the repetition king) muscle and conditioning, I (WE) could jump as high as the mountains."

Then they all got it.

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