

# Mathias Method

By Ryan Mathias

## Strength to Change the World

### Level 4- Becoming Explosive

This is a program for those who already have built a significant amount of strength and are ready to put that strength to use through explosive training. To be explosive you first must be strong. Now that the strength is there it is time to build your explosive power through Olympic style lifting and jumping motions. You will learn to better move your body through space both with and without a load. This will promote greater strength gains and greatly improve your athletic ability. After this program you will be able to jump higher, run faster and grow stronger. After becoming reasonably explosive it is time to advance to the next level; level 5 of the Mathias Method.

Explosive power is the ability to move an object through space quickly. To be explosive you must be fast and strong. Some examples of explosive athletes are sprinters, jumpers, Olympic Lifters and elite powerlifters. Each of these athletes must move an object through space quickly. Louie Simmons, owner of Westside Barbell, legendary powerlifter and powerlifting coach, once said, "You cannot lift heavy weights slow." He is right. If you do not believe him, put 90% of your max or more weight on the bar and do any one of your main lifts slow both down and up. Not very effective, right? Though maximal weights do relatively move slower than sub-maximal weights, the intended acceleration is very high. Your muscles have to create a contraction strong enough to not only counter the deceleration of gravity (-9.8m/s) but also apply an acceleration above that to move the weight upward. To make your muscles more efficient at accelerating their contractions, they must be trained to do so. This is best done with maximal exertion on sub-maximal weights, which will fire all of your muscle fibers, better preparing them for maximal loads. The simplest load to use when building explosive power is your own bodyweight. By doing plyometric exercises you will not only become better at moving your body through space, but you will be able to lift heavier loads through accelerated contraction speeds. Plyometrics are best trained early on in a session and have been found to better prepare your body for handling maximal loads afterwards. For this, box jumps are implemented just before heavy lifts on squat/deadlift days. In this level of training you will also begin to learn basic Olympic style lifts. This is to improve your explosive power while holding a load and to build more stable shoulder joints. To progress, make sure that you follow the proper Training Principle for Olympic Lifting Steps. You should make a Power Clean PR (personal record) goal that you must achieve before advancing to the next level. Just be within reason (1-1.5 x bodyweight, or 205-225lbs). You will begin to use your muscles in a way that you may not be accustomed too, so start small and progress over time. Time to start leaping forward.



## Squat/ Deadlift Mobility Warm-Up

### General Warm-Up and Systems Check:

|                     |              |
|---------------------|--------------|
| Toe Reach           | x 10         |
| The Bow             | x 10-30 sec. |
| Torso Twist & Reach | x 10 total   |
| Side Bend & Reach   | x 10 total   |
| Hip Circles         | x 10 total   |
| Hip Open-Close      | x 1 each     |
| Paleo Squat         | x 30+ sec.   |

### The Daily 30:

|             |      |
|-------------|------|
| Paleo Squat | x 10 |
| Push-Ups    | x 10 |
| Prone Cobra | x 10 |

### Training Specific Mobility:

|                           |              |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| Lat Stretch- Underhand    | x 10-30 sec. |
| Bicep Stretch             | x 10-30 sec. |
| Squat & Extend            | x 3          |
| Dynamic Hamstring Stretch | x 10 total   |
| Deep Lunges               | x 10 total   |
| Dynamic Pigeon Stretch    | x 10 each    |

\*\*Add any additional mobility stretches here to fit your specific needs\*\*

### Activation Techniques:

|                              |           |
|------------------------------|-----------|
| Single Leg Romanian Deadlift | x 10 each |
| Hip Airplanes                | x 10 each |
| Bulgarian Split Squat        | x 10 each |

### **BONUS- Calf Mobility**

|                                  |               |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| Static Single Leg Calf Stretch   | x 2 min. each |
| Weighted Deep Squat Calf Stretch | x 1 min. each |



## Bench Press/ Olympic Lift Mobility Warm-Up

### General Warm-Up and Systems Check:

|                     |              |
|---------------------|--------------|
| Toe Reach           | x 10         |
| The Bow             | x 10-30 sec. |
| Torso Twist & Reach | x 10 total   |
| Side Bend & Reach   | x 10 total   |
| Hip Circles         | x 10 total   |
| Hip Open-Close      | x 1 each     |
| Paleo Squat         | x 30+ sec.   |

### The Daily 30:

|             |      |
|-------------|------|
| Paleo Squat | x 10 |
| Push-Ups    | x 10 |
| Prone Cobra | x 10 |

### Training Specific Mobility:

|                                  |                 |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Arm Circles                      | x 10 each       |
| Horizontal Hug & Open            | x 10            |
| Shoulder Flexion-Extension       | x 10            |
| Single Arm Swings                | x 10 each way   |
| Scapular Rotations               | x 10 each       |
| Chest Stretch                    | x 10 sec.       |
| Lat Stretch- Overhand            | x 10-30 sec.    |
| Doorway/ Pec Minor Stretch       | x 10-30 sec.    |
| Scapular Abduction Stretch       | x 10-30 sec.    |
| Calf-Hamstring Stretch           | x 30+ sec. each |
| Exaggerated Lunge                | x 30+ sec. each |
| Weighted Deep Squat Calf Stretch | x 1 min. each   |

\*\*Add any additional mobility stretches here to fit your specific needs\*\*

### Activation Techniques:

#### Dumbbell Shoulder Warm-Up

|                       |      |
|-----------------------|------|
| Lateral Raises        | x 10 |
| Front Raises          | x 10 |
| Reverse Flyes         | x 10 |
| Military Press        | x 10 |
| Shoulder Dislocations | x 10 |



## Day 1- Heavy Squat/ Deadlift Training

### Warm-Up & Technique Work:

Box Jump 3-5 x 3

- *Start with a box between 24-36 inches. Each week attempt to add 1-2 inches to the height until it becomes difficult. Never fail on these, so keep the height 4-6 inches away from your max jump. Always step down safely by making a 1-2 step staircase down.*

Chin-Ups - x 25

- *Do as many sets as it takes to get 25 total good repetitions, resting as needed. Do not go to failure. You can do 8x3+1, 5x5 or anything you can handle.*

Box Squat/ Deficit Deadlift 3 x 5

- *Choose the exercise most similar to the first main lift of the day and treat this as a warm-up. Use perfect technique with light weight to warm-up.*

### Main Lifts:

Squat/ Deadlift 3-5 x 1-5

- *Vary week to week between starting with squats or deadlifts. Pick a number of repetitions for the day and stick to it for all sets, working up to 3-5 hard working sets. When doing less than 3 repetitions on the first main lift, do 4-5 repetitions on the second main lift.*

Deadlift/ Squat 3-5 x 1-5

- *Choose a squat or deadlift variation, switching opposite the main exercise that you did, and use a moderate weight to work on volume.*

**Accessory Work on Next Page...**



**Accessory Work:**

## Leg Press Variation

3 x 8-10

- *Choose an exercise that allows for a below squat depth range of motion and place your feet near shoulder width or closer. Some exercises examples are leg press, front squat or close stance-low box squats. Focus on utilizing all of your leg muscles in unison.*

## Lat-Pull downs

3-5 x 8-10

- *Using a machine or cable attachment, row the weight back and down behind you by trying to pull your elbows together behind you. Vary your grip, or the attachment, every 1-2 weeks and lead the motion by pulling your elbows far behind you.*

## Bicep Curl Variation

3 x 8-10

- *Choose any curl variation and use a full range of motion. Do not cheat or swing the weights.*

## Side Planks

3 x 30-45 sec.

- *Engage your entire core musculature, flex your glutes and maintain a neutral spine in all planes so that your entire body makes one straight line.*

## Mobility Work

10+ min.

- *You can foam roll any tight or sore muscles or just stretch the muscles used. Hold each stretch for at least 2 minutes but be active by moving through the tight positions under control. Go to the Mobility Tab at [MathiasMethod.com](http://MathiasMethod.com) to find out more.*



## Day 2- Heavy Olympic Lift/ Bench Press Training

### Warm-Up & Technique Work:

Olympic Lift Complex 3 x 3

- *To work on your Full Clean technique, break the lift into multiple parts, completing 3 of each part before moving on. Do 3 moderate pace deadlifts finished with a calf raise and shrug. Then do 3 hang cleans catching the bar on your collar bones with your elbows in front of you. Finish with 3 front squats with a 3 second descent and 1 second pause at the bottom. Do 3 rounds with a very light weight you can handle.*

Power Clean Prilepin's Table

- *Choose a weight, or percentage, from Prilepin's Table and do the written work for that intensity. When going heavy on bench press (>85%), use less than 80% for this lift.*

Closegrip Bench Press 3 x 5

- *Descend under control and pause on your chest before explosively pressing back to the top. Keep your elbows in line with your wrists and pulled in close to your sides. Use a light weight.*

### Main Lift:

Bench Press 3-5 x 1-5

- *Pick a number of repetitions for the day and stick to it for all working sets, leading up to 3-5 hard working sets.*

### Prilepin's Table

| Percentage of Max | Reps per Set | Total Optimal Reps | Optimal Total Reps Range |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| 55-65             | 3-6          | 24                 | 18-30                    |
| 70-80             | 3-6          | 18                 | 12-24                    |
| 80-90             | 2-4          | 15                 | 10-20                    |
| 90+               | 1-2          | 4                  | 1-10                     |

**Accessory Work on Next Page...**



**Accessory Work:**

## Incline Dumbbell Press

3-4 x 6-8

- *With your shoulders tucked, chest high and elbows faired at the top, rotate the dumbbells slightly into a neutral position, where your palms face each other, at the bottom before pressing them back to the top, as you flair your elbows again. This is similar to what we do in the bench press.*

## Military Press

3-4 x 6-8

- *Maintain form and only increase the weight if you can still control the movement. Keep your glutes activated and do not arch your back. Push your head through to finish the lift.*

## Face Pulls

4 x 8-10

- *Keep your elbows high and use moderate weights. Pull your elbows all the way behind you and hold for a second before controlling the descent.*

## Decline Crunches

- x 30

- *Do as many sets as it takes to do 30 total good repetitions. If you can do more than 10 at a time, hold a weight across your chest.*

## Mobility Work

10+ min.

- *You can foam roll any tight or sore muscles or just stretch the muscles used. Hold each stretch for at least 2 minutes but be active by moving through the tight positions under control. Go to the Mobility Tab at [MathiasMethod.com](http://MathiasMethod.com) to find out more.*



## Day 3- Light Squat Training

### Warm-Up & Technique Work:

Pull-Ups - x 25

- *Do as many sets as it takes to get 25 total good repetitions, resting as needed. Do not go to failure. You can do 8x3+1, 5x5 or anything you can handle.*

Front Squat 3 x 5

- *Descend slowly under control keeping your heels down, pause at the bottom and explode back up. Focus on perfecting your form and use a light weight.*

### Main Lift:

Squat 3 x 8-10

- *Do each repetition separately as to make the first look the same as the last, pausing between each to take a breath. Only increase the weight if you can still maintain form.*

### Accessory Work:

Good Mornings/ Back Extensions 3 x 10-15

- *Pick which of the two exercises works best for you, or that you want to do for that day and move under control. Descend slowly before exploding up, maintaining a neutral spine and tight core throughout the lift.*

Leg Curls 3 x 10-15

- *Choose a leg curl variation such as seated, standing or lying. Explosively curl the weight and lower it slowly under control. Point your toes to focus on your hamstrings.*

Seated Rows 3-5 x 10-15

- *Using a machine or cable attachment, row the weight low by keeping your elbows close to your body. Vary your grip, or the attachment, every 1-2 weeks and lead the motion by pulling your elbows far behind you.*

Bicep Curls Variation 3 x 10-15

- *Choose any curl variation and use a full range of motion. Do not cheat or swing the weights.*

Planks 3 x 60 sec.

- *Keep your glutes activated and stay straight from your head to heels. Breathe normally.*

Mobility Work 10+ min.

- *You can foam roll any tight or sore muscles or just stretch the muscles used. Hold each stretch for at least 2 minutes but be active by moving through the tight positions under control. Go to the Mobility Tab at MathiasMethod.com to find out more.*



## Day 4- Light Olympic Lift/ Bench Press Training

### Warm-Up & Technique Work:

Hang Power Clean 3 x 10

- *Use about 40-50% of your max to work on your technique and keep everything above your knees, with no squatting. Ensure that you catch the bar properly every time.*

Incline Press-Paused 3 x 5

- *Using either dumbbells or a barbell, focus on perfecting the movement. Pause on your chest with your elbows tucked, avoiding a stretch.*

### Main Lifts:

Bench Press 3 x 8-10

- *Move as efficiently as you can while doing multiple repetitions, making sure to tuck and flair your elbows each time. Keep your whole body tight and keep your hips down on the bench. Only increase the weight if you can still maintain form.*

### Accessory Work:

Dumbbell Military Press 3 x 10-15

- *Start with a neutral grip, where your palms are facing towards each other while hovering over your shoulders, then flair your elbows out as you press overhead, so that your palms face forward. Control the weight throughout the lift and finish with your head pushed through, just like with a barbell.*

Push-Ups/ Dips (Pick One Weekly) - x 30-50

- *Do as many sets as it takes to complete 30-50 total good repetitions. Keep your whole body tight and core braced.*

### Accessory Work Continued...



## Press Downs

3 x 10-15

- *If a cable is not available, choose any light triceps extension exercise. Vary your cable attachment every 1-2 weeks and utilize a full range of motion. Take one step back from the cable and lean slightly forward, to where your head would not touch the cable. Control the movement and pause at the bottom and top each time.*

## Reverse Flyes

3 x 10-15

- *Utilize any variation such as dumbbell, cable or a machine that works best for you. Lead the movement by pulling your elbows horizontally behind you and control the descent.*

## Lateral Raises

3 x 10-15

- *Utilize any variation such as dumbbell, cable or a machine that works best for you. Lean slightly forward, bringing the dumbbells above shoulder level and control the descent.*

## Leg Raises

- x 50

- *Do as many sets as it takes to complete 50 total good repetitions, with your legs straight. Keep your back pressed into the floor and only lower your legs as far as you can before your lower back begins to round.*

## Mobility Work

10+ min.

- *You can foam roll any tight or sore muscles or just stretch the muscles used. Hold each stretch for at least 2 minutes but be active by moving through the tight positions under control. Go to the Mobility Tab at [MathiasMethod.com](http://MathiasMethod.com) to find out more.*

