

Mathias Method

By Ryan Mathias

Strength to Change the World

Level 5- Variation

This program level is only for advanced athletes who are very strong and have significant explosive power. Your body and mind are now powerful machines that are ready for a change. They are used to the same style of training for years and want to continue growth through many exercise variations. You will now vary everything in your training in cycles. There will be no room for stagnation. You will attack your body with everything you have from multiple angles to create the greatest potential for continuous growth. After allowing a significant amount of time for your body and mind to overcome the confusion of training with great variation, you will be ready to give it a new stimulus that will change the strength game forever, through the Mathias Method level 6.

Variation in training is a very useful tool to continue growth while building up weaknesses. There are many ways to vary exercises in order to gain strength in all areas with differing stimuli. Some simple ways to vary an exercise are; rep variation, intensity, foot or hand position, bar or equipment being used, change of angle, varying the range of motion, pausing and adding accommodating resistance. The limit of variation is only what you can come up with, but no matter what variation you utilize, it needs to make your main lift stronger. The farther you vary away from your main lift, the less effective it will be. It is most optimal to only change one or two variables from the lift, or motion, you are trying to improve. Generally, the simplest variation of a lift is rep variation, or utilizing a different rep range week to week. By doing 3 reps to build up your one rep max you are utilizing variation. In the Mathias Method, the repetitions constantly staying within an optimal range; which in turn will maintain a variation in intensity. Therefore these will not count towards your weekly variation. From here you can change the lift in one or two more ways. This can be a change of equipment utilized, and/or way the lift is performed. For any variation you use, avoid doing it again over the next 2-3 weeks. This will allow enough time for other variations to build strength in different ways. A powerful plan is to utilize a 4 week cycle in which you use four base variations that will build strength in a different way for each main lift. For example, one week you can do the main lift as it is meant to be, and then work on static strength (pauses), next partial range of motion and anything else you come up with. Variation among accessory work only occurs every other week. This allows you to ensure you are progressing by doing more than you did the previous week. Some of the accessory work is listed with two variations to rotate between. These can be changed but the purpose should stay the same. Every accessory exercise is meant to work a specific plane of motion, increase training volume, train weaknesses, build muscle and improve the main lifts. Find what is most effective for you and work it hard. Though variation is important in training at this level, do not lose focus of your goals. Enjoy changing things up, but work smart and hard.



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



Weeks 1-2:**Day 1- Heavy Squat/ Deadlift Training****Warm-Up & Technique Work:**

Box Jump Variation

3-5 x 3

- *Choose any box jump variation and raise the height or hold dumbbells to increase the intensity.*

Weighted Chin-Ups

- x 25

- *Use a weight that allows you to get 5-10 good repetitions each set.*

Light Squat/ Deadlift Variation

3 x 5

- *Pick any exercise that targets your weaknesses and will build up the main lift for the day.*

Main Lifts:

Squat/ Deadlift Variation

- x 1-5

- *Choose a number of repetitions for the day and stick with it for all sets. Work up to a heavy weight and do as many sets as you need to improve or find a max for that day. Switch between a squat and deadlift variation weekly.*

Deadlift/ Squat Variation

3-5 x 3-6

- *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.*

Barbell Rows

4 x 6-8

- *Maintain a neutral spine and allow your shoulders to round forward slightly, flaring your elbows, as it is lowered before pulling your elbows back behind you. Allow your body to create some momentum to start the lift, but maintain control.*

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 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. To increase the intensity, you may place your feet on a raised surface if needed.*

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 2- Heavy Olympic Lift/ Bench Press Training

Warm-Up & Technique Work:

Olympic Lift Complex 3 x 3

- *Use the same lift variation that you will use for the day in your main sets. Break the lift into multiple parts and do any squat motions with a 4 second descent for balance work. For example; in the snatch, do 3 power snatches and then 3 slow overhead squats.*

Olympic Lift 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.*

Incline Press/ Light Press Variation 3 x 5

- *Choose any pressing variation that you need to build up, other than the main lift for the day, and do some light technique work to warm-up.*

Main Lifts:

Bench Press Variation - x 1-5

- *Choose a number of repetitions for the day and stick with it for all sets. Work up to a moderate or heavy weight and do as many sets as you need to improve or find a max for that day. When using >85% on Olympic Lifts, use <80% for bench press.*

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:

Dumbbell Press 4 x 6-8

- *Try to mimic your bench press technique and be explosive.*

Dumbbell Military Press 4 x 6-8

- *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.*

Reverse Flyes 4 x 8-10

- *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 8-10

- *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.*

Hanging Leg Raises - x 25

- *Raise your legs as high as you can while curling your hips to your chest, and control the descent slowly.*

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 3- Light Squat Training

Warm-Up & Technique Work:

Pull-Ups - x 50

- *Do as many sets as it takes to get 50 total good repetitions, resting as needed. Do not go to failure. You can do 10 x 5, 5x 10 or anything you can handle.*

Front Squat/ Light Squat Variation 3 x 5

- *Pick any exercise that targets your weaknesses and will build up the main lift for the day.*

Main Lift:

Squat 3 x 8-10

- *Choose a weight that is difficult but manageable for all three sets. Work on your technique and pause to take a breath between each rep as you reset.*

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 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 60-90 sec.

- *Keep your glutes activated and stay straight from your head to heels. Breath 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 Olympic Lift

3 x 10

- *Choose a standing Olympic lift variation to work on and keep everything above your knees, with no squatting. Use about 40-50% of your max and work on your technique.*

Incline Press/ Light Press Variation

3 x 5

- *Choose any pressing variation that you need to build up, other than the main lift for the day, and do some light technique work to warm-up.*

Main Lift:

Bench Press

3 x 8-10

- *Choose a weight that is difficult but manageable for all three sets. Work on your technique and move efficiently.*

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.*

Dips

- x 50-75

- *Do as many sets as it takes to complete 100 total good repetitions. Keep your whole body tight and core braced while moving as fast as possible. Last 1-2 sets can go to failure.*

Triceps Extension Variation

3 x 10-15

- *Choose any extension variation that works best for you and build it up with volume.*

Face Pulls

3-4 x 10-20

- *Keep your elbows high and use moderate to high intensity. Pull your elbows all the way behind you and hold before controlling the descent.*

Crunches

- x 50-75

- *With your knees bent, curl your chest to your hips explosively, controlling the descent.*

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.*



Weeks 3-4:**Day 1- Heavy Squat/ Deadlift Training****Warm-Up & Technique Work:**

Box Jump Variation 3-5 x 3

- *Choose any box jump variation and raise the height or hold dumbbells to increase the intensity.*

Weighted Pull-Ups - x 25

- *Use a weight that allows you to get 5-10 good repetitions each set.*

Light Squat/ Deadlift Variation 3 x 5

- *Pick any exercise that targets your weaknesses and will build up the main lift for the day.*

Main Lifts:

Squat/ Deadlift Variation - x 1-5

- *Choose a number of repetitions for the day and stick with it for all sets. Work up to a heavy weight and do as many sets as you need to improve or find a max for that day. Switch between a squat and deadlift variation weekly.*

Deadlift/ Squat Variation 3-5 x 3-6

- *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 Curl

3 x 8-10

- *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.*

Dumbbell Rows

4 x 6-8

- *Lead with your elbow and pull it high behind you. Allow your body to do a slight rotation as the weight is lowered and raised to build the entire back pulling musculature.*

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 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. To increase the intensity, you may place your feet on a raised surface if needed.*

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 2- Heavy Olympic Lift/ Bench Press Training

Warm-Up & Technique Work:

Olympic Lift Complex 3 x 3

- *Use the same lift variation that you will use for the day in your main sets. Break the lift into multiple parts and do any squat motions with a 4 second descent for balance work. For example; in the snatch, do 3 power snatches and then 3 slow overhead squats.*

Olympic Lift 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.*

Incline Press/ Light Press Variation 3 x 5

- *Choose any pressing variation that you need to build up, other than the main lift for the day, and do some light technique work to warm-up.*

Main Lift:

Bench Press Variation - x 1-5

- *Choose a number of repetitions for the day and stick with it for all sets. Work up to a moderate or heavy weight and do as many sets as you need to improve or find a max for that day. When using >85% on Olympic Lifts, use <80% for bench press.*

Prilepin's Table

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80-90	2-4	15	10-20
90+	1-2	4	1-10

Accessory Work on Next Page...



Accessory Work:

Incline Dumbbell Press

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

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 to high intensity. Pull your elbows all the way behind you and hold before controlling the descent.*

Decline Crunches

- x 50

- *Do as many sets as it takes to do 50 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 to find out more.*



Day 3- Light Squat Training

Warm-Up & Technique Work:

Chin-Ups - x 50

- *Do as many sets as it takes to get 50 total good repetitions, resting as needed. Do not go to failure. You can do 10 x 5, 5x 10 or anything you can handle.*

Front Squat/ Light Squat Variation 3 x 5

- *Pick any exercise that targets your weaknesses and will build up the main lift for the day.*

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 Press Variation 3 x 10-15

- *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.*

Accessory Work Continued...



Lat Pull-Downs

5 x 10-15

- *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 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 60-90 sec.

- *Keep your glutes activated and stay straight from your head to heels. Breath 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 Olympic Lift 3 x 10

- *Choose a standing Olympic lift variation to work on and keep everything above your knees, with no squatting. Use about 40-50% of your max and work on your technique.*

Incline Press/ Light Press Variation 3 x 5

- *Choose any pressing variation that you need to build up, other than the main lift for the day, and do some light technique work to warm-up.*

Main Lift:

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 - x 50-75

- *Do as many sets as it takes to complete 50-75 total good repetitions. Keep your whole body tight and core braced.*

Accessory Work Continued...



Triceps Extension Variation

3 x 10-15

- *Choose any extension variation that works best for you and build it up with volume.*

Reverse Flyes

3-4 x 10-20

- *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 50-75

- *Do as many sets as it takes to complete 50-75 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 to find out more.*

