MCNICOL
STRENGTH
Solutions



THE 90-DAY PEAK BENCH PROTOCOL

A 12-WEEK PHASIC STRENGTH SYSTEM



SECTION 1

PROGRAM ARCHITECTURE AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

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Consult a physician before beginning any high-intensity exercise program. McNicol Strength Solutions is not liable for any injuries or damages resulting from the execution of this training system.

Target Audience

This program is built for lifters of all experience levels who want to systematically break through plateaus and build a bigger bench press. Whether someone is building their initial foundation or they are a seasoned athlete optimising their peak strength, this program scales directly to their current abilities by using customised percentages and personal exertion targets.

The Mechanism: Phase Potentiation

This program relies on phase potentiation. This means each 4-week block builds the specific physical or neurological traits required to maximise the success of the next block.



Phase 1
builds muscle size, movement consistency, and joint durability.



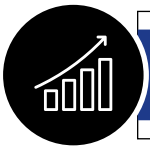
Phase 2
converts that foundation into raw force.



Phase 3
refines the nervous system to display that force in a single max-effort repetition.

Training Frequency & Split

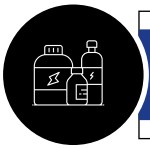
The program operates on a 3-day upper body training split embedded into a standard 4-day or 5-day weekly routine. Remaining days should be allocated to lower-body training and general recovery.



Day 1 Primary Bench Press (Intensity and Progression)



Day 2 Upper Body Pull and Shoulder Health (No Pressing)



Day 3 Supplemental Bench Variation (Technique and Weak-point Fixes)

SECTION 2 THE 90-DAY MASTER TRAINING MANIFESTO

PHASE 1 ACCUMULATION (Weeks 1 to 4)



Phase Objective

Increase muscle cross-sectional area (hypertrophy), strengthen secondary movers, and build joint tolerance. This phase builds the physical runway for heavy weights.



The Vibe

High volume, intense muscle pumps, and maximum bar speed on every single rep. Do not grind these reps.

Day 1

Primary Bench

- **Week 1:** 4 sets x 8 reps at 70% 1RM (Target RPE 7)
- **Week 2:** 4 sets x 7 reps at 73% 1RM (Target RPE 7.5)
- **Week 3:** 5 sets x 6 reps at 75% 1RM (Target RPE 8)
- **Week 4 (Deload):** 3 sets x 6 reps at 60% 1RM (Target RPE 5)
- **Accessory 1 (Heavy Pull):** Dumbbell Rows or Pendlay Rows (4 sets x 8 reps)
- **Accessory 2 (Shoulder Overhead):** Seated Dumbbell Shoulder Press (3 sets x 10 reps)
- **Accessory 3 (Tricep Isolation):** Cable Overhead Tricep Extensions (4 sets x 12 reps)

Day 2

Upper Pull and Structural Health

- **Primary Movement:** Weighted or Bodyweight Chin-ups (4 sets x max reps)
- **Accessory 1:** Seated Cable Rows with a wide grip (3 sets x 12 reps)
- **Accessory 2:** Dumbbell Lateral Raises (4 sets x 15 reps)
- **Accessory 3:** Rear Delt Face Pulls (4 sets x 20 reps)

Day 3

Supplemental Press

- **Supplemental Variation:** Spoto Press or Larsen Press (3 sets x 6 reps at 65% of Bench 1RM)
- **Accessory 1:** Incline Dumbbell Bench Press (3 sets x 10 reps)
- **Accessory 2:** Chest-Supported Machine Rows (4 sets x 10 reps)
- **Accessory 3:** Incline Dumbbell Bicep Curls (3 sets x 12 reps)

PHASE 2 INTENSIFICATION (Weeks 5 to 8)



Phase Objective

Force the central nervous system to adapt to heavier loads. The program drops total rep volume and cranks up the intensity. This teaches the lifter to handle heavy weights in front of their face without panic.



The Vibe

Heavy triples and fives. Deep focus, absolute tightness, and aggressive execution.

Day 1 Primary Bench

- **Week 5:** 4 sets x 5 reps at 80% 1RM (Target RPE 8)
- **Week 6:** 4 sets x 4 reps at 83% 1RM (Target RPE 8.5)
- **Week 7:** 5 sets x 3 reps at 85% 1RM (Target RPE 9)
- **Week 8 (Deload):** 3 sets x 3 reps at 65% 1RM (Target RPE 6)

- **Accessory 1 (Heavy Pull):** Heavy Weighted Chin-ups or Heavy Cable Rows (4 sets x 6 reps)
- **Accessory 2 (Chest/Tricep Overload):** Heavy Weighted Dips (3 sets x 6 to 8 reps)
- **Accessory 3 (Tricep Isolation):** Heavy Dumbbell Skull Crushers (3 sets x 8 reps)

Day 2 Upper Pull and Structural Health

- **Primary Movement:** Lat Pulldowns with a heavy, strict cadence (4 sets x 8 reps)
- **Accessory 1:** Single-Arm Dumbbell Rows (3 sets x 8 reps per side)
- **Accessory 2:** Heavy Dumbbell Lateral Raises (4 sets x 10 reps, use a slight cheat on the last reps)
- **Accessory 3:** Face Pulls with a hold at the chest (4 sets x 15 reps)

Day 3 Supplemental Press

- **Supplemental Variation:** Pin Press or 2-Board Press. Set the pins or board at the specific sticking point (3 sets x 4 reps at 80% of Bench 1RM).
- **Accessory 1:** Flat Bench Dumbbell Press (3 sets x 8 reps)
- **Accessory 2:** Barbell Meadows Rows or T-Bar Rows (4 sets x 8 reps)
- **Accessory 3:** Hammer Curls (3 sets x 10 reps)

PHASE 3 PEAKING AND REALISATION (Weeks 9 to 12)



Phase Objective

Dissipate all residual training fatigue while keeping neurological readiness at its absolute maximum peak. Volume drops significantly while intensity reaches its highest point.



The Vibe

Heavy singles and doubles. Perfect execution of one high-effort rep at a time.

Day 1 Primary Bench

Primary Bench Press Progression:

- **Week 9:** 3 sets x 2 reps at 90% 1RM (Target RPE 9)
- **Week 10:** 2 sets x 2 reps at 93% 1RM , followed by 1 single rep at 95% 1RM
- **Week 11(Taper):** 3 sets x 1 rep at 85% 1RM (Keeping the pattern fresh but removing structural stress)
- **Week 12 (PR Week):** See the PR week protocol below.
- **Accessory 1 (Heavy Pull):** Moderate Chest-Supported Rows (3 sets x 8 reps to avoid lower back fatigue)
- **Accessory 2 (Shoulder Health):** Light Dumbbell Lateral Raises (3 sets x 12 reps)

Day 2 Upper Pull and Structural Health

- **Primary Movement:** Lat Pulldowns with strict control (3 sets x 10 reps)
- **Accessory 1:** Band Pull-aparts (4 sets x 25 reps)
- **Accessory 2:** Face Pulls (3 sets x 20 reps)

Day 3 Supplemental Press (Discontinued after Week 10)

- **Weeks 9 and 10 Only:** Close Grip Bench Press (3 sets x 3 reps at 75% 1RM)
- **Weeks 11 and 12:** Discontinue Day 3 entirely to maximise chest and tricep recovery for the PR attempt.

SECTION 3 THE WEEK 12 PR LAUNCHPAD TIMELINE

To hit a true 1RM peak, the final week must be executed exactly to schedule.

Day 85 (Early Week): Light Technical Touch

- Warm up thoroughly.
- Execute 3 sets x 2 reps at 60% 1RM.
- Every rep must be lightning fast. This keeps neurological pathways open without tearing down muscle tissue.
- Do no accessory work. Leave the gym fresh.

Day 86 to 89: Complete Rest

- Focus on high carbohydrate intake, deep hydration, and at least 8 hours of sleep per night.

Day 90: THE FINALE (MAX EFFORT PR)

- **Warm-up Progression:**
  - Empty Bar x 10 to 15 reps
  - 50% 1RM x 5 reps
  - 65% 1RM x 3 reps
  - 80% 1RM x 1 rep
  - 90% 1RM x 1 rep
  - 97% to 100% 1RM x 1 rep (This is the current max or a match of the old PR)
  - **THE NEW PR ATTEMPT:** Load the target weight (the new target peak) and execute.

SECTION 4 THE GOLDEN RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Rule 1

The RPE Safeguard

Percentages dictate the target weight for the day, but RPE rules the actual session. If you have poor sleep, high life stress, or poor recovery, 85% might feel like a max effort RPE 10. If this happens, you are instructed to drop the load by 2% to 3% to match your daily target RPE. This preserves your nervous system and prevents injury.

Rule 2

Non-Negotiable Deloads

Weeks 4 and 8 will feel too easy for you. You will want to push harder. You must not do this. The deload is where your fatigue clears, allowing your body to super-compensate and express new strength in the following phase. If you skip the deload, you will hit a hard performance crash by Week 6 or Week 10.

Rule 3

Compensatory Acceleration

You must drive the barbell off your chest as violently as possible on every single rep of Phase 1 and Phase
2. Moving light or moderate weights with maximum force trains your nervous system to recruit highthreshold motor units. This builds the raw speed you need to push past your mid-range sticking point during a max effort attempt.