

# Lifting Questions

September 22, 2019 | 4 upvotes | by [SkimTheDross](#)

---

38M, 178 lb, 6' 1", 13% BF

Estimated 1 RM's according to [symmetricstrength.com](#)...

SQ - 320, DL - 365, BP - 220, OHP - 135

Currently bulking at 3,200 cal/day with 225 grams protein per day.

Current program is 5/3/1 For Hardgainers

Questions -

- Is it a good idea to have a recovery week every few cycles to lift light (65-70% of training load)? Program cycle is 3 weeks and I've run 5 cycles without an recovery/light week.
- I've got lots of ceiling ahead of me on DL and SQ. I'm getting more than 5 reps on the 95% of training load set. Program says to get at least 5 reps. But, I'm micro loading 2-3 lbs per cycle on BP and OHP. How long should you stay on a program before switching? I'm thinking to stay on this until the weight on DL and SQ gets that heavy that I can't get 5 reps on the heavy set of the cycle after two try's.
- Is testing your 1RM's worth the risk and something to do periodically?
- The program has a 20 rep widow maker set of squats following the heavy set. The WM is done at 65, 70 or 75% of training load. I can surpass the 5 reps on the heavy set, but I'm starting to fail at 16-18 reps on the WM. Is going to failure and set it down on the safeties the better way like I am or de-load the WM to where I can get 20?

---

Archived from [theredarchive.com](#)

---

## Comments

---

Deep\_Strength • 1 point • 22 September, 2019 02:44 PM

Is it a good idea to have a recovery week every few cycles to lift light (65-70% of training load)? Program cycle is 3 weeks and I've run 5 cycles without an recovery/light week.

If you're feeling beat down or your joints or tendons are feeling sore then usually yes. If the program is allowing you to progress without increasing the chances of injury then it's usually fine to skip it. But you can always take a few days to a week off and see how you feel too.

I've got lots of ceiling ahead of me on DL and SQ. I'm getting more than 5 reps on the 95% of training load set. Program says to get at least 5 reps. But, I'm micro loading 2-3 lbs per cycle on BP and OHP. How long should you stay on a program before switching? I'm thinking to stay on this until the weight on DL and SQ gets that heavy that I can't get 5 reps on the heavy set of the cycle after two try's.

Most programs you'll go until you plateau for a few workouts.

Is testing your 1RM's worth the risk and something to do periodically?

I used to do it, but I personally don't think it's worth it anymore. You can generally estimate. pretty easily... a 3 RM will give you an additional 15-20 lbs for a 1 RM usually.

The program has a 20 rep widow maker set of squats following the heavy set. The WM is done at 65, 70 or 75% of training load. I can surpass the 5 reps on the heavy set, but I'm starting to fail at 16-18 reps on the WM. Is going to failure and set it down on the safeties the better way like I am or de-load the WM to where I can get 20?

I'd drop down the weight to do the program strict. However, I've seen both ways be successful with some strategic pauses. As long as you're logging progress and know that you're starting to minimize pauses eventually it's good

SkimTheDross[S] • 1 point • 23 September, 2019 01:02 PM

Thanks for taking the time to reply. I've been using the symmetricstrength.com website that someone over at MRP linked. Seems to be pretty reasonable 1RM estimates.

rocknrollchuck • 1 point • 23 September, 2019 12:43 AM

Is it a good idea to have a recovery week every few cycles to lift light (65-70% of training load)? Program cycle is 3 weeks and I've run 5 cycles without an recovery/light week.

Yes. It's not only important for proper recovery, but for avoiding injury. Your body can only handle so much continuous stress on it for so long without a break. Compare it to sleep: you can go for a while on 3-4 hours a night if you absolutely must. But eventually you need to take a break or you will crash.

Is testing your 1RM's worth the risk and something to do periodically?

It depends on if it's worth the risk *to you*. I ended up with a hernia deadlifting my 1RM. I suspect it had been

there for a while and I just aggravated it, but it really wasn't worth it *for me*. And the older you get, the greater the risk.

Is going to failure and set it down on the safeties the better way like I am or de-load the WM to where I can get 20?

Well, the whole point of the widowmaker set is to push yourself beyond where you currently are through volume. So on that note, try to push through to failure and set it down on the safeties if you need - that's what they're there for after all. I would say if you fail to hit 20 reps on the widowmaker set on 3 different occasions, deload **10 lbs. below** where you can get to 20 and work your way back up.

Red-Curious • 1 point • 23 September, 2019 03:24 AM

Is it a good idea to have a recovery week every few cycles to lift light (65-70% of training load)?

The guys to listen to say yes. I realized my best gains without any off-time or light weeks. But I was also going for rote strength, not physique. The recommendations are different. Physique inherently relies on lower weights for more reps, which is a lot easier on your body in general.

How long should you stay on a program before switching?

I agree with Deep. Go until you plateau.

Is testing your 1RM's worth the risk and something to do periodically?

I only do it with a spotter. I haven't done it in 4 months. No, it's not worth it other than bragging rights.

Is going to failure and set it down on the safeties the better way like I am or de-load the WM to where I can get 20?

That depends. If your goal is strength, stick with the higher weight, even if you can't get the full 20. But the fact that you're doing WMs at all tells me you're going for physique, in which case you're better off lowering the weight to go for the higher reps.

SkimTheDross[S] • 1 point • 23 September, 2019 12:55 PM

You're uncovering an on-going conflict of goals that I have - and probably something other guys have as well. The conflict of strength, hypertrophy and aesthetics/leanness.

I've settled on a mission of get strong - looking like I'm strong will be by-product. I have an ectomorph frame, so I shouldn't easily get the looks of a typical power lifter. What I'm doing may not work for a mesomorph.

I gravitated towards the 5/3/1 programs with higher volume like Boring But Big and For Hardgainers because they have the strength component but also some good volume.

So far, I'm pleased with what I'm seeing. Both in the mirror and what's being added to the bar.

OsmiumZulu • 1 point • 24 September, 2019 08:09 AM

Is it a good idea to have a recovery week every few cycles to lift light (65-70% of training load)? Program cycle is 3 weeks and I've run 5 cycles without an recovery/light week.

Every 3 weeks seems excessive, but I have noticed several times that returning from a rest yields new maxes and

plateau breakthroughs.

I've got lots of ceiling ahead of me on DL and SQ. I'm getting more than 5 reps on the 95% of training load set. Program says to get at least 5 reps. But, I'm micro loading 2-3 lbs per cycle on BP and OHP. How long should you stay on a program before switching?

Stick until it isn't working anymore. I've been running roughly the same program for years and still haven't stopped making steady gains.

Is testing your 1RM's worth the risk and something to do periodically?

I am a believer in true periodic 1RM tests. The psychological benefits alone are worth it. Seeing a calculator spit out my theoretical DL 1RM above 400 wasn't nearly as satisfying as actually pulling 405.

The program has a 20 rep widow maker set of squats following the heavy set. The WM is done at 65, 70 or 75% of training load. I can surpass the 5 reps on the heavy set, but I'm starting to fail at 16-18 reps on the WM. Is going to failure and set it down on the safeties the better way like I am or de-load the WM to where I can get 20?

I don't see a ton of value in taking compound lifts to failure since the risk of catastrophic injury is elevated compared to something like a bicep curl.