



Unchained Chest Workout

CHAIN REACTION: WHAT CAN CHAINS DO FOR YOU?

You might be thinking to yourself that chains are a gimmick and don't belong in your workout program. I have to admit, usually I would agree. I hate how every time a new device or new piece of equipment is invented it becomes the rage in gyms...when most trainers don't understand WHY they're making their clients use them and even HOW to properly use them as they were intended. What you wind up with is something that resembles a circus act! People with bad balance standing on a BOSU while juggling dumbbells...or something like that...at least that's what it looks like to me. Anyway, the point is: Just because something looks cool doesn't mean that it actually is worth doing!

In the case of chains...I definitely think they have a purpose and actually provide a unique advantage that few if any other methods of training can provide. That is...Accelerative Variable Resistance or AVR as I call it. What the hell is that and what does it mean for you? Good question. Well, we know that variable resistance is important in keeping the muscles under optimal tension throughout a single rep (and you know how important I think it is to keep a muscle under tension for optimal muscle growth!). So, if we could create a scenario where we could match resistance to strength levels at every point in the rep, we could really push the limits of our size response to our workouts.

Traditional sets don't provide this. Think about it. You get ready to do a set of bench presses and you throw on 225 lbs for instance. Well, whether you're at the top of the rep or the bottom of the rep, you're still lifting 225 lbs. Not so with chains. Drape a couple of these over the ends of the bars and let them just touch the ground when the bar is in the arms straight position. Now imagine the rep. You lower the bar to your chest and the chains start collecting into a pile on the ground beneath the bar. If each chain weighs say 20 lbs, and lets say 80% of the chain is lying on the floor when the bar is just above your chest...then you've got about 4 extra pounds on each end of the bar for a total weight of 233 pounds (225 lbs from before plus the extra 8 from the chains).

Now, as you press the bar back up...you must be able to power through the sticking point, which is obviously your biggest obstacle to moving heavier weights. Remember, you're only as strong as your weakest link. If you could technically lift 265 lbs but can't get more than 235 through the sticking point at the bottom...then unless you have a spotter present, you're not lifting more than 235 lbs that day (or any day for that matter!). So what the chains will do is allow you to load up the bar with two 20lb chains and essentially be pushing 233 pounds at the sticking point and as you reach completion of the rep...just before lockout, you'll be pushing close to 265 lbs (with the added weight of the chains as you lifted them off the floor with the bar!

So if you're trying to devise a way to get the most out of your rep...at every moment in time of the rep, you've just done it with chains! But that's not all they do!

Chains will also allow you to train in a unique way for sports. I mentioned the term AVR before or Accelerative Variable Resistance. This is where the "accelerative" part comes in. In order to achieve "POWER" in movement we need to have a speed component. Power after all is defined as Mass x Velocity or speed. The area where it's most crucial to be able to develop speed and power is at the amortization point of a movement. What the F&K did you just say Jeff? Sorry about that guys...I was just giving you the technical term. What it means is the point where the movement reverses direction. So, if you were looking at the bench press for example, the amortization phase would be where you stop moving the bar down towards your chest and reverse direction to press the weight back up. It is at this shift in time that you want to execute

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the change with acceleration and speed. Do you think you could do this with a heavy weight that limits you in the sticking point range (which by the way happens to be the same exact place in the rep!)? Highly unlikely. So, what the chains will do is allow you to maintain a high enough resistance to promote strength gains and to keep the “MASS” part of the Mass X Velocity equation high, while still allowing you to achieve velocity for added power.

It works like this. Let’s say you can bench 225 for 10 reps, but you want to train more for power and realize that it’s tough to accelerate this heavy a weight at the bottom of the rep. Well, put 185lbs on the bar and add your 20lb chain to each end. What you’ve just created is a bar that weighs and feels like 200+ pounds from the half way point on up and feels like 185 to 190lbs at the bottom of the rep! Do you think that you could accelerate that 185 or 190lbs a lot quicker than you could the 225? You betcha. And you still get the benefit of the extra weight as the bar continues towards the completion of the rep.

Very rare that you’ll be able to recreate this type of response any other way in the gym...or at least not for less than the \$40 that it took me to create my own set of chains!

Through combining the elements of strength and power together into one exercise (and in fact...the same set of that exercise) the benefits of the movements and use of chains is readily apparent. You guys know that I’m not into the idea of wasting time at the gym. One of the biggest reasons why busy guys quit going is that they simply don’t have the time to devote to it...and that’s totally preventable. Start doing exercises that give you a high return on your gym time investment and, just like in business...you’ll thrive. Not to mention, this is one “fad” that actually works and most likely will increase your enjoyment of training again! There’s something to be said for pressing chains that makes you feel like a warrior. Use that to your advantage to “unchain” your potential to develop that AthLEAN body in no time!

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