



Reps & Rest Periods

There is a huge misconception in the fitness industry when it comes to finding the ideal number of repetitions that are ideal for strength, hypertrophy, and fat loss and how long we should be resting for in between sets.

When it comes to training, most people focus on performing a certain amount of reps, or for resting a short amount of time to increase fat loss potential or build strength and size. It's much more than that. It comes down to EFFORT. If you're giving every working set everything you got, then you're going to burn enough energy to burn body fat, as long as you're eating in a caloric deficit.

You can burn fat by performing "strength-specific" workouts utilizing a '5 sets of 5 reps' training scheme and resting 3-5 minutes in between sets. You can also build strength by performing "fat burning-specific" workouts utilizing a '3 sets of 15-20 reps' training scheme and resting 30 seconds in between sets.

Where most people fail is by completely ignoring rest periods. They either take too long or too little in between each set, essentially wasting valuable time in the gym. It's important to bust your ass during each set but it is equally as important to monitor your rest periods, especially when the goal is to burn body fat and preserve or even build muscle strength.

Unless stated otherwise in a training program - stick to longer rest periods for heavier exercises (2-3 minutes) and shorter rest periods for lighter

exercises (45 seconds - 1.5 minutes). The key is to stick with this rest period for each set! And monitor your progress week over week. With that said, reps and rest periods do not make up the full picture. Your training must be strategically paired with proper nutrition, cardio, proper progression, and effort to be the most effective.

Rate of Perceived Exertion or “RPE”

RPE is a way to manage fatigue, recovery, and growth. Essentially, it's a measure of how many reps you should do while using a weight that varies in difficulty.

RPE is measured on a scale of 1-10:

1-4 = Very light weight and very little effort.

5-6 = You could do 4-6 more reps

7 = You could do 3 more reps

7.5 = You could do 2 more reps, with a strong chance at a 3rd

8 = You could do 2 more reps

8.5 = You could do 1 more rep, with a strong chance at a 2nd

9 = You could do 1 more rep

9.5 = You could NOT do any more reps, but you could do slightly more load (weight)

10 = You could not do more reps or load without breaking proper form

Superset

This training method allows you to get more work done in a shorter period of time by pairing workouts together with no rest in between. Example: a dumbbell curl superset with skull-crushers looks like this - perform your dumbbell curls until failure and then immediately pick up the bar and superset the exercise with skull-crushers. Once you have completed both of these exercises then you will be able to rest for allotted time you are given.

Example:

3 Set Superset:

Dumbbell Curl: 20 reps

Skull-Crushers: 10 reps

Perform 20 curls and then immediately jump into skullcrushers. Then take a rest break. Do this two more times for a total of 3 sets

Other variations:

Triple-set = 3 exercises back-to-back

Giant-set = 4 exercises or more back-to-back

Drop Set

Drop sets are similar to rest/pause sets in that they allow you to push more blood into your muscles for longer for both better muscle pumps and increased endurance. Simply perform your normal working set until you reach failure. Then drop the weight by 20-30% and continue as many reps as possible until you reach failure.

For example:

Barbell Curls

3 sets of 10 reps (last set = drop set)

on the 3rd set, perform 10 reps until failure, and then immediately drop the weight and continue repping until failure again

Pause Set

Rest/Pause sets are great for adding strength and size as they enable you to add more intensity to your training by pushing yourself beyond failure. Simply put, perform X amount of reps until failure, re-rack the weight, and then rest for 15-20 seconds. After this short rest period, grab the weight and try to rep it out for about 3-5 more reps. If you're not pushing yourself to failure on this then you're not working hard enough.

For example:

Barbell Curls

3 sets of 10 reps (last set = pause set)

on the 3rd set, perform 10 reps until failure, and then rest for 15 seconds. After resting, continue repping the weight until failure