Lactate Tolerance Training

Now that I’m training more so for performance AND appearance, as opposed to my bodybuilding days when it was all about appearance, I find myself going back in time here and again to those good ol’ bodybuilding days.

For example, back in my days of bodybuilding, training for the burn was a big goal. I was always working to engorge the muscles with as much blood as possible to get that much sought after pump.

This usually came through the Repetition / Repeated Effort Method (high reps). This also resulted in greater TUT (time under tension). This style of training was very tough and painful. Getting under heavy weight takes guts and a mind set like a freight train, determined to move the weight no matter what!

The RE method induces a lot of pain, so you better be tough for this style of training as well! It’s always easy to quit when your body can actually handle another 10 – 20 reps! Guys who go through this pain regularly are spec ops soldiers and combat athletes. They do tons of high rep bodyweight training, carrying logs and rafts overhead for long distances, walking, running and climbing with heavy gear and even climbing ropes, cargo nets and more bodyweight training with extra loads. This style of training also helps develop mental toughness.
Above, Navy SEALs go through core training in the wet sand. These guys just don’t have quitting in them. Quitting is NOT an option!

Training mostly combat athletes, here are the top three reasons we use the RE method:

- Develop lactate tolerance
- Improve mental toughness
- Increase muscle mass / hypertrophy

For example, with this awesome weather, our athletes have been performing a lot of sled work mixed in with sprints with incomplete recoveries. The sled work gives a lot of TUT on the lower body, and the backwards drags are killer for developing lactate tolerance in the quads. For our grapplers, this is crucial for when they are in those tough matches and

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the guy who loses is the guy who can barely stand on his legs. This is what we don’t want happening!

Due to large group sizes, we’ll stagger sled work with sprints. Which is fine because if the legs are too exhausted, we won’t be developing power through the sprints. Still, we keep rest periods low here to improve lactate tolerance of the lower body. This has been working very well for us and we are improving speed as well. You can’t beat that!

For speed and power development, you can rest 5 minutes between sets of sprints.

Above, a Football player sprints in between rounds of sled work!

Here is how we define sprinting at The Underground: On a scale of 1 to 10, you’re moving at 20!
Above, a mix of athletes mid way through some sled training / backwards drags.

If you’re not doing sled work, you are limiting your potential to develop strong, powerful legs! In addition, you’ll improve GPP, often a big problem with Football players. Don’t be afraid to move heavy loads on the sled. Obviously, dragging on grass will be much harder than the cement. If you go to a park with fresh, live grass, be ready to work super hard trudging your way through that grass!

If you don’t have cash for a sled, no worries! Go see our article on how to build your own sled for FREE – using only a tire!

**Our sled / sprint routine usually looks like the workout below:**

*NOTE* we perform 3 – 4 rounds of sled work, and 3 – 4 rounds of sprints. Each round of sprints = 2 sprints.

1A) forward drag x 150 ft
1B) row (any style) 6 – 10 reps
1C) backwards drag x 50 ft
1D) forward sled sprint x 25 – 40 ft.
rest 1 minute
2A) sprint x 150 ft, walk back, repeat 1 more time
2B) repeat sled circuit

photo courtesy of http://defrancostraining.com

The above picture shows Atlanta Thrashers defenseman, Mark Popovic, performing backward sled drags in our legendary back parking lot!

For the upper body, we love using bodyweight exercises and kettlebell movements to develop lactate tolerance in the upper body. Even our skinnier guys will use the RE method / lactate tolerance training. This has proven to be very beneficial because they’ve added muscle mass which in turn has increased their strength in and out of the training zone.

Here’s a sample upper body circuit using the RE method with bodyweight only:

1A) BW Squat x 20
1B) BW forward reach lunge x 20
1C) BW reverse lunge with rotation x 20
1D) pull ups x max reps
1E) feet elevated push ups x 15 – 25
1F) deck squat x 10

Here’s a sample upper body circuit we use at the playground near by w/kettlebells and bodyweight:
1A) pull ups x submax reps (leave 2 in the tank)
1B) Kettlebell walking swing x 10 – 12 steps
1C) hand walking on parallel bars to end, followed by dip – leg raise combo x 10 reps
1D) hand walk back to kettlebell
1E) 2 hand kettlebell hi pull & catch combo x 10
1F) 2 hand walking swings back to starting point (approx. 12 reps)

Above, high rep snatches to develop lactate tolerance through the upper body and the posterior chain.

Don’t be misled by the fact that combative individuals use this style of training only. You’ll also find powerlifters and strongmen competitors using these circuits as well. These circuits help develop greater muscle mass for them = greater strength. This is also
beneficial for them when performing a lot of their medleys or the events which require multiple reps.

Think about events such as the fingle fingers or the stone lifting. Each additional rep is with a heavier load, increasing the difficulty each rep. Combining strength and lactate tolerance / RE work will help your performance soar. And, you’ll also build muscle if you’re after a better body!

For more innovative methods, articles and interviews to help you skyrocket your performance go to http://UndergroundStrengthCoach.com