

*World Class
Bench Pressing*



***Super Heavyweight Ken Lain's
Record Breaking Crusades
In the Bench Press***

By
Dennis B. Weis "The Yukon Hercules"

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Back in the early 1990's the 700 pound bench press wars were in their infancy and it was no surprise when I received a long distance phone call from Publisher and Executive Editor of MuscleMag International, Robert Kennedy to tell me about another new member of the elite 700 pound bench press club . His call was to inform me that a Super Heavyweight powerlifter named Ken Lain had broken Ted Arcidi's 705.5 pound world record bench press, with a dynamic and successful attempt of 708.3 pounds and only on his second attempt, at The Deadliest Deadlift In the World meet in Longview, Texas on October 7, 1989.

Quickly, my mind raced as I tried to recall the name Ken Lain, but it was to no avail. I commented to Bob that my enthusiasm over this news would be much more evident if he had said that the 5'7" 335 pound superman Anthony Clark had broken Ted Arcidi's four and a half year old world record bench press. Clark has received some rather extensive press lately regarding his attempts to crack the 700 pound barrier big time. Anthony Clark's name I recognized, but the mention of Ken Lain's name, I did not recognize. I asked Bob to tell me more about this fellow named Ken Lain.

He said that he would be glad to since the second reason for calling me was to see if I would be interested in interviewing Ken Lain regarding his training philosophy. Bob went on to say that Ken Lain is 31 years old, is married and has two children, and at the time he blasted through the 700 pound barrier, his bodyweight was around 295 pounds. Bob said I should not assume for one minute that at age 31, Ken probably has 15 or so years of weight training experience. This is simply not so for Ken did not being serious weight training before the age of twenty three. So, in fact, he has only 8 years of serious weight training to his credit, but even more astounding is the fact that Ken did not become interested in assaulting bench press records till early in 1988.

There was a long pause and I asked Bob to continue on with more vital information about this man, Ken Lain, and his profile and accomplishments in the world of powerlifting. Bob responded by saying that his information on the person of Ken Lain was limited to these few facts and would I please, for the sake of the readers of MuscleMag International, interview Ken Lain regarding his special training tips for developing Super Human Strength in the bench press. I responded by telling Bob that I would be most happy to scoop an interview with Ken Lain for...



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None of the following 1990 interview is ghost written or made up. It is the pure truth from Ken Lain regarding his training philosophies.

Ken, my name is Dennis B. Weis. I am a contributing consultant for Robert Kennedy's MuscleMag International. Mr. Kennedy has asked me to interview you for a feature article in his magazine.

Thanks for the opportunity of the interview.

Thinking back prior to doing this taped interview, I remember Bob Kennedy telling me that your bodyweight was 295 pounds on the day that you did 708.3 pounds. It's strange how we develop a preconceived idea in our mind about how a person might appear physically from someone else's description. I figured in my mind's eye that at a bodyweight of 295 pounds, you couldn't help but have an ample amount of puppy fat on your body, but how wrong I was. I stand here in amazement looking over the photos you sent me. You look more like a Mr. Olympia contender rather than a powerlifter.

I started out in bodybuilding in 1985. I won the first three contests that I entered. From there, in 1987, I went to the Loan Star Classic, which is a national physique qualifier. I didn't do so well there. I kind of messed up on my diet.

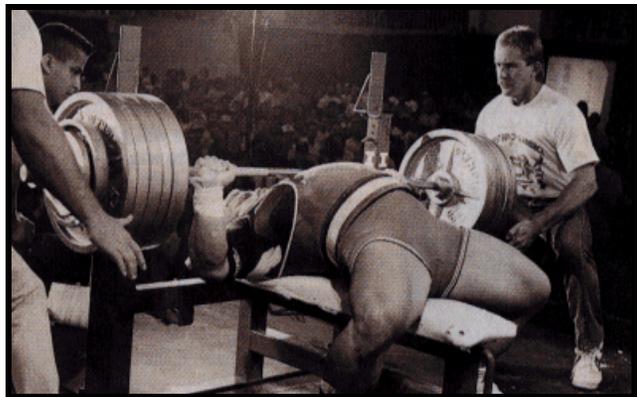
It's an obvious fact that at least two thirds of the men using weights today do so only to look nicer. An admirable reason but one that too often matures into a king size Narcissus complex! This type of bodybuilder spends more time looking at his muscles, feeling them, measuring them or talking about them, than he does in actual exercise. The fact of the matter is that many bodybuilders could be termed "pump up artists" for they really avoid the heavy weights. Its obvious that you have demonstrated Super Human Strength in the bench press as evidenced by your record shattering lift of 708.3 pounds. Some people might agree that while you have a Herculean physique and can bench press world record poundages, it is only because you have favorable anatomical leverages and the bench press is your "pet lift". Some uninformed individuals might even go so far

as to say that more than likely, your overall body strength does not match up with the rest of your rugged physique.

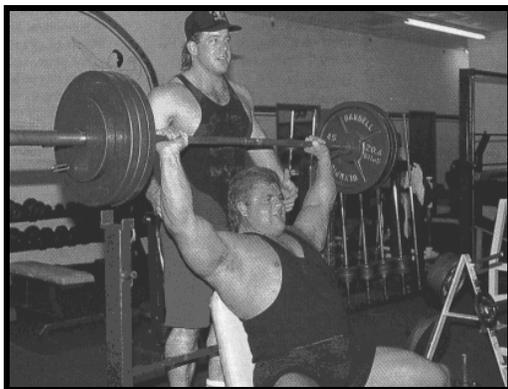
How about giving the readers some details about your training schedule and some of the poundages you use on a regular basis.

I think that heavy training has attributed to most of my overall size along with my strength. I personally always train on a push/pull routine. I have always done this. If I am training the chest, I will train the triceps and shoulders on the same day, simply because both get worked when you are training chest. I will always train biceps with back for the same reason, when you're doing back, the biceps get a lot of work. I think it's the best way to go personally. My normal routine would be:

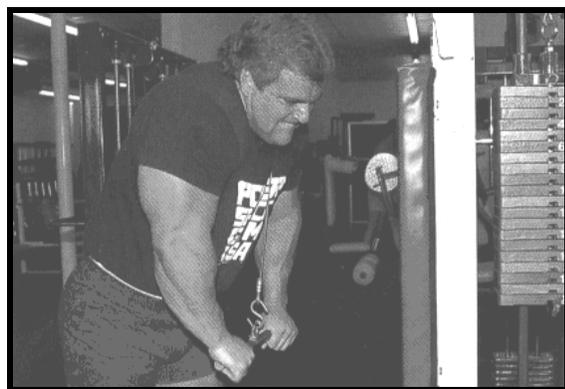
**Mondays (heavy) – Thursdays (light): Push Day
Chest/Shoulders/Triceps**



**Ken benching nearly 750-pounds
at a bench press competition**



**Ken locking out one of a few reps in the
Barbell press behind the neck.**



**Ken doing a 200-pound stack in the Triceps
pushdowns and with ease.**

Author's Note: The following bench press program (see next page) that Ken uses is followed for 10 weeks. His one-rep max at the beginning of the 10 week cycle was 645 pounds. His goal was to increase his one-rep max by 10% ($645 \times .10 = 64.50$ -pounds) over the next 10 weeks.

For the sake of efficiency Ken always takes odd poundages to the NEAREST five-pound interval. 64.50-pounds rounds off nicely to 65-pounds .
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He calculated his weekly poundages by basing them on a projected single maximum lift of 710 pounds ($645 + 65 = 710$ lbs) at the end of 10 weeks.

Ken Lain's Revolutionary Program Matrix For Increasing Bench Pressing Power

WEEK 1:	<u>Monday</u> (Heavy Day) 55% of Projected Max. Do 2-3 light warmup sets; then 3 sets, 10 reps, 390 lbs. <u>Thursday</u> (Light Day) 80% of heavy day. 315 lbs.
WEEK 2:	<u>Monday</u> (Heavy Day) 60% of Projected Max. Do 2-3 light warmup sets; then 3 sets, 9 reps, 425 lbs. <u>Thursday</u> (Light Day) 80% of heavy day. 340 lbs.
WEEK 3:	<u>Monday</u> (Heavy Day) 65% of Projected Max. Do 2-3 light warmup sets; then 3 sets, 8 reps, 462 lbs. <u>Thursday</u> (Light Day) 80% of heavy day. 370 lbs.
WEEK 4:	<u>Monday</u> (Heavy Day) 70% of Projected Max. Do 2-3 light warmup sets; then 3 sets, 7 reps, 500 lbs. <u>Thursday</u> (Light Day) 80% of heavy day. 400 lbs.
WEEK 5:	<u>Monday</u> (Heavy Day) 75% of Projected Max. Do 2-3 light warmup sets; then 3 sets, 6 reps, 535 lbs. <u>Thursday</u> (Light Day) 80% of heavy day. 430 lbs.
WEEK 6:	<u>Monday</u> (Heavy Day) 80% of Projected Max. Do 2-3 light warmup sets; then 3 sets, 5 reps, 570 lbs. <u>Thursday</u> (Light Day) 80% of heavy day. 455 lbs.
WEEK 7:	<u>Monday</u> (Heavy Day) 85% of Projected Max. Do 2-3 light warmup sets; then 2 sets, 4 reps, 605 lbs. <u>Thursday</u> (Light Day) 80% of heavy day. 485 lbs.
WEEK 8:	<u>Monday</u> (Heavy Day) 90% of Projected Max. Do 2-3 light warmup sets; then 2 sets, 3 reps, 640 lbs. <u>Thursday</u> (Light Day) 80% of heavy day. 515 lbs.
WEEK 9:	<u>Monday</u> (Heavy Day) 95% of Projected Max. Do 2-3 light warmup sets; then 1 set, 2 reps 675 lbs. <u>Thursday</u> (Light Day) 80% of heavy day. 540 lbs.
WEEK 10:	<u>Monday</u> (Meet Day) 100% of Projected Max. Do 2-3 light warmup sets; then <u>First</u> attempt 88-92 ½%M, <u>Second</u> attempt 95-97 ½%M, <u>Third</u> attempt 100-102%M/

This then is the Revolutionary Program Matrix, which Ken Lain published in book form (and later had produced into a DVD), is guaranteed to add 50 to 75 pounds of Bench Press Power for at least 80% of the bodybuilders who will try it. I will give you details on where to order Ken's DVD at the end of this interview.)

My assistance work consisted of Flat Dumbbell Flyes for 4 sets of 10 reps with 120 pound dumbbells, Weighted Dips (on the Parallel Bars) for 4 sets of 8-10 reps with 120 lbs. Very seldom, but every once in awhile, I will do seated Behind the Neck Presses and/or standing Military Presses for 4 sets of 8-10 reps. It's really important to do high repetitions in your routine because it pumps the blood into the muscle and it's just good for the joints and ligaments.

Thursday is my light day. I take 80% of the weight I used on Monday (my heavy day) on my assistance exercises and I move pretty fast by keeping my rest between sets down to 30 to 60 seconds. I want to maintain some kind of muscular physique and I attribute this to working a little faster than probably most powerlifters.

Before we continue on outlining your day to day push/pull system of training, you mentioned the importance of doing higher repetitions and I am curious, as to what you can do in the bench press for high reps.

I have bench pressed 315 pounds for 50 reps and 405 pounds for 20 plus reps.

That's astonishing and is a comforting argument that you are certainly as strong as you look. Let's continue on with your training routine.

Wednesday: Leg Day Quads/Hams/Calfs

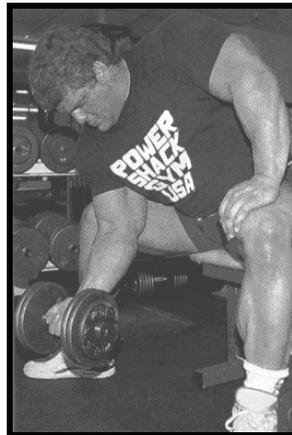
Wednesday is devoted entirely to heavy leg work. I will begin with Squats by doing some warmup sets, then I will do 3 heavy sets between 5 and 8 reps with around 500 pounds, increasing the poundages from week to week. I have squatted 800 pounds in the past. I'll then do some heavy Leg Press movements and finish off with Leg Extensions, Leg Curls and Seated Calf Raises. These last three exercises are done for 4-5 sets of 10-12 reps.

It's easy to see that you place a great deal of emphasis on leg work and your legs show the results of attention and detail you have given them.

Heavy squats make you strong all over. Believe it or not, to have a good bench press, you've got to be able to drive with the legs when you explode the weight off the chest in the bench press, so you've got to have strong legs. There is no way that you can get this kind of power without doing

heavy squats. They expand the rib cage, they get you used to handling heavy weights and they increase your cardio/respiratory endurance. I can think of no exercise, swimming or jumping rope that will take the wind out of you faster than doing high rep squats with a heavy weight. It's a lift that I do regularly whether I'm peaking for a contest or just training in the off season.

Tuesdays (heavy) – Fridays (light): Pull Day Back/Biceps



Tuesday is my heavy back day. I will begin by doing High Lat Pull Downs for 4 sets of 10 reps with 300 pounds. Then I go on and do Seated Cable Rows for 4 sets of 8-10 reps with 300 pounds. Next, I go to Dumbbell Pullovers and normally, I would do 4 sets of 8-10 reps but my dumbbells only go up to 120 pounds so I usually end up doing 15 reps per set. With the completion of this exercise, it's time to finish off my routine with some bicep work. I will begin with Barbell Curls for 4 sets of 8-10 reps with 175-200 pounds. I finish off my bicep work with one Dumbbell concentration curls for 4 sets of 8-10 reps with 100 pounds (see photo above). Friday is my light training day and, as I mentioned earlier, I use only 80% of the weight I used on Tuesday.

Looking over your complete push/pull routine, I notice that you only train each muscle group heavy one day per week and on one other day per week, the same body part is trained with no more than 80% of the poundage used on the heavy training day. Before we begin the actual audio recording of this interview, you made some very unusual comments about the Deadlift exercise. Would you please repeat what you told me earlier about this exercise?

If I have experienced some area of weakness in one of the three powerlifts that would be the deadlift. Rather than working the deadlift harder which is something I would have to do if I was after a three lift total. I just don't do it. This is not something to do for the three lift powerlifter. I know that.

You'll notice that your really good bench pressers are very seldom good at the deadlift and vice versa. Your good deadlifters usually have a lot stronger arms and your really good bench pressers have medium to short arms. Heavy deadlifts, I think, personally hurts the bench press. Your great bench pressers are more square shouldered to where the shoulders are more straight across. They do have large traps, but they won't be as large as a great deadlifter's. This is my personal opinion, and it's one reason why I don't do deadlifts. Another reason is I'm not good at it. The reason I'm not good at it is I very seldom ever trained it. In my life, I've probably pulled no more than 25 deadlifts total. I am definitely proud of my bench press & I feel like if I was putting a lot of energy into deadlifting, it would hurt my bench press.

What was your primary motivation for becoming a champion bench presser? I do not use the term "champion bench presser" with reckless abandon because, as I look over the stat sheet you have sent me, I marvel at the fact that in 1988, you competed in 7 contests, and in 1989, you entered 5 contests, winning every contest you have entered, breaking 7 world records and 6 American records as well, and all in a time span of only two short years.

The bench press is the prestigious lift whether you're a bodybuilder or powerlifter. Something that I would like to add here. People would come up and want to know how big my arms were and how much I could bench press. They had little interest that I had a shoulder circumference of 63-64", a chest measuring 57-58 1/2" or calves of 20". They didn't relate to that.

As I mentioned earlier, I have squatted 800 pounds. They never cared about that; 800 pounds, "Is that heavy?" That was their attitude. Many people that went through high school and played in sports have all wanted to be good at the bench press. It's a lift I became competitive with my friends. We all wanted to have the heaviest bench. It's the most prestigious lift out there. It's a lift the general public can relate to. That's why we get asked that question so often: "How big are you're arms?" "What can you bench press?"

Just for the record, Ken, how big are your arms?

21 ½-22 inches in circumference.

What are some of the precision techniques you use in the bench press?

I do all of my movements in the bench press slow and with a continuous tension throughout the entire range of the movement. I do have an explosive drive off the chest when I am bench pressing, but the weight really doesn't move that fast because it is so heavy to begin with. I will lower the weight down to my chest and pause the barbell on my chest on every rep, even in the 10 rep range. You cheat the pecs out of a lot of the work if you're bouncing the bar or touch and go method. I see a lot of lifters trying to get away with heaving the bar a little bit or maybe bouncing the bar off the chest. The chances of injury are a lot higher when a person benches this way. I believe that with just using good form through the whole movement, you will get a lot better workout, the muscles get a lot more out of it and there is a lot less chance of injury.

Most bodybuilders and powerlifters that I have observed have a major problem exploding the bar off the chest. It's obvious that to push those herculean 700 plus pound bench presses off the chest to a successful lock-out, you must have some insights into the mastering of the powerful explosive drive off the chest. Would you kindly share these insights with the MuscleMag readers?

The explosive drive off the chest on a bench press is the lats. You have to have a strong back to have a good bench press. That's definitely a factor and I do really heavy High Lat Pull Downs, as I mentioned earlier on in the interview. I think this exercise is what has helped my bench press explosion more than anything. The lats is pretty much what moves, especially the way that I bench. I take an extremely wide grip, but I keep my arms in close at the bottom when the bar touches the chest. By spreading the lats, you'll get a 2-inch extension or push on your arms. When I explode the bar off the chest, my feet, my legs and lats are probably the first muscles that really come into play hard. My sticking point is 6-inches off the chest and partial reps off the chest are the best way for me to get past this sticking point.

Obviously, your training procedures for breaking records in the bench press must be somewhat different than the push/pull system you outlined earlier in the interview. How does it change?

I do taper off my training, but that doesn't usually happen until two weeks before the actual contest. During week 8 of the ten week training cycle mentioned earlier, I cease all assistance work totally and continue on with the final phase of the Bench Press Matrix program.

How do you adjust your mental attitude so that a world record attempt is virtually guaranteed in your mind regardless of whether you actually complete the lift physically?

Mental attitude is the whole thing, regardless of whether you have a powerful physique or not. I really believe that if you don't have the right mental approach, you're chances of failing the actual lift are doubled. What I try to do is draw on those situations which have irritated me in the past. I really try to get my adrenalin up. I really try to get irritated and I take whatever this irritation might be out on the weights before I lift. I think this is something that is a little extra that gives me a little extra drive.

Ken, I am going to have to bring this interview to a close, but I am very curious as to what the future holds for you from your perspective.

My future goals in powerlifting would be to break the record in the bench press at 242 with a 645-650 pound lift. In the Super Heavyweight class, I would like to move the lift up to around 725-730 pounds, which I may do pretty soon. I really haven't made up my mind about that yet. I will be competitive in the 275 pound class in the future and I personally feel I can hit a 700 pound bench press in this weight class.

Ken's assault on the Bench Press Record in the Super Heavy Weight class has come under fire recently. Regardless of who you talk to about this situation, the proper paperwork has been completed (Powerlifting Record Application, Toledo Scale Certificate of Inspection, USPF Meet Sanction, Weight of Each Plate and Bar and Collars for World Records only, World Bench Press Congress and USPF Certificates) to make Ken's 708.3 pound bench press an official record.

In closing, I am really excited to tell you about Ken Lain's book titled: ADD 50 TO 75 LBS TO YOUR BENCH PRESS GUARANTEED. This book explains, in explicit detail, many of the topics that Ken and I only briefly touched on in this interview. The chapters include: The Program Matrix, Assistance Work, Nutrition,

Techniques To Better Your Bench Press, Training Aids and The Psychological Factor.

This book teaches you to set up some kind of training goal in mind, some kind of purpose for training, not just going into training the same way, using the same amount of weight, the same reps and never really getting anywhere. Success is virtually guaranteed if you will implement the principles, shock training methods and techniques that Ken Lain teaches you in this book.

To order a copy of Ken's book **ADD 50 TO 75 LBS TO YOUR BENCH PRESS GUARANTEED and/or the DVD of the same title, call Crain's Muscle World at: 1.800.272.0051 or simple log onto:
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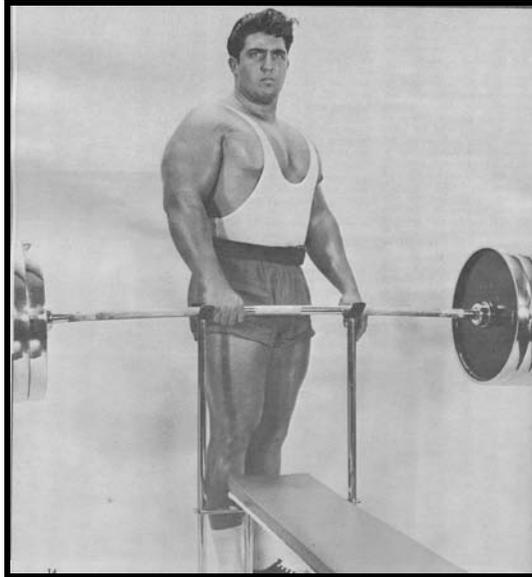
Bonus Report!
Bonus Report!
Bonus Report!



BENCH PRESSING 600 POUNDS IN 1967

The Superhuman Strength of Pat Casey

By: Dennis B. Weis “The Yukon Hercules”



Looking back over the past couple of decades, some giant strides have been made in the war on the bench press. Seven hundred pounds-plus became an official reality for the first time when Ted Arcidi did 705 pounds in 1985. Since then, power giants like Ken Lain, Anthony Clark, Jamie Harris, Chris Comfessore and others have as well closed the gap on the magic 700-pound barrier.

Another magic bench press number that comes to mind is 600 pounds, and well it should, because my late friend, the former IFBB physique superstar Chuck Sipes was closing the gap on it around 1966. However, in June of 1967, a 300-pound-plus giant of a man named Pat Casey bench pressed a ponderous 617 pounds to officially break the 600-pound barrier. He did this in grand style without any ergogenic work-producing aids—mechanical aids, substances, or techniques which many of today’s powerlifters use to achieve peak athletic performance in the powerlift movements such as the bench press.

For example, it is generally acknowledged that a custom bench shirt can add as much as ten percent to a powerlifter’s best single bench press effort. It had been 30 years since the time that Pat broke ground with his 617-pound bench. During this span of 30 years, powerlifters have been able to raise the standard of bench pressing excellence an average of slightly over 4 pounds each year. This makes Pat’s achievement even more spectacular than I realized. I just had to find out more about this gentle

giant of powerlifting and his special way of powering up record-shattering bench presses time and time again. Here is what I found out.

Pat would begin his training week on Mondays where he would do partial bench lockouts in the power cage from two positions, 4 inches and 7 inches off the chest. Incline dumbbell presses would be next, followed by vertical dips on the parallel bars. After these were finished, he would do some chins and biceps work. On Fridays, he would do some bench presses for singles followed by the seated military press, and this was followed up with the barbell triceps extensions.

As you can see, Pat would only bench press once a week. He has used other training schedules where his frequency in the bench press was more often, but he found that the above schedule worked best for him.

Regarding cycled workouts, he had never even heard of that when he was training. He trained all year around and very seldom took a layoff. If he had problems completing his five or six single reps on Friday's workout, he would begin employing the forced reps principle. Naturally, he would have an able workout partner who could help him with the forced reps. If this didn't help his five to six single attempts after a couple of weeks, he would then go on a binge and do nothing but vertical dips on the parallel bars for 7 to 8 hours a whack. He would work up to 200 reps over this 7 to 8 hour time frame with a 250-pound dumbbell attached around his waist. He would start with sets of five reps and decreased the reps as he got weaker. The 250 pounds of extra resistance plus his 300 pounds of bodyweight times 200 reps comes out to lifting about 110,000 pounds in a workout.

I don't know if Pat knew it or not, but this adding up the tonnage (lbs.) and the reps (volume) and then dividing the tonnage by the reps to find the mean intensity (the average weight used during the workout for this exercise) is the famous tonnage system of training.

Needless to say, Pat would be sore for a week or so, but he felt that these vertical dips on the parallel bars did help him toward his goal of a 600-plus pound bench press. Backtracking for a moment, Pat said that, after he finished his 5 to 6 singles, he would then come down to where he could do a weight for a triple. Here he would maybe add 5 pounds and attempt 3 sets of 3 reps. If he had trouble with this, he would also use the forced reps principle. Pat's main concern, however, was to get those 5 to 6 singles, and he never worried that much about the 3 sets of 3 reps. As far as the other assistance work went, he would add weight when he felt strong and keep the weight the same if he didn't feel that strong.

He readily admits that he didn't use any real theory on his assistance exercises. Pat was kind enough to share his world record bench pressing

schedule, which is included here. He stayed on this exact training schedule for approximately two years before his retirement from competition. He said that, if he had it to do all over again, he would cycle his training. He thinks that cycling would have helped him prevent injuries and maybe stay in the iron game longer as a competitor.

He credits the genius of the single rep training principle to the late Douglas Ivan Hepburn (former world champion and world's strongest man) from Canada. Pat says that Doug Hepburn originated the single rep system but has never been given the credit he deserves for this contribution to the iron game.

It is said that the journey to becoming a champion of super strength begins with obtaining the right knowledge. Going at our current rate of a 4-pound gain per year on the bench press, then perhaps we will see a 900-pound bench press over the next 20-year period.

Next up is....

Pat Casey's
1967-World Record Bench Press Workout

Monday

Supine (flat) bench press	Warm-up	1 set 10 reps
Partial single rep bench lockout	Begin 4" off chest	6 sets 5 reps
	Begin 7" off chest	3 sets 1 rep
Supine (flat) bench press	Pump-out set	1 set 20 reps



Pat performs Incline dumbbell presses with 200+ pounders

Incline dumbbell press	1 set 12 reps
	5 sets 4 reps
	1 set 20 reps



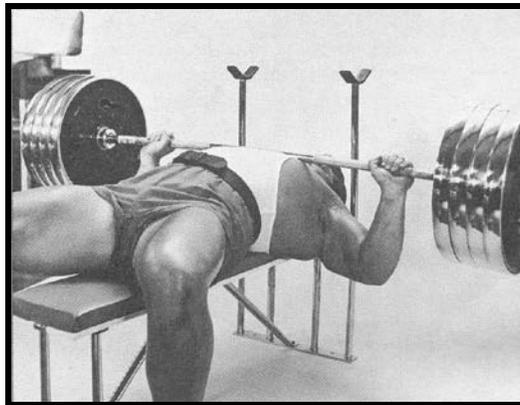
Pat doing bodyweight only Parallel bar dips

Parallel bar dips

Warm-up

1 set 10 reps
8 sets 3 reps
1 set 10 reps

Friday



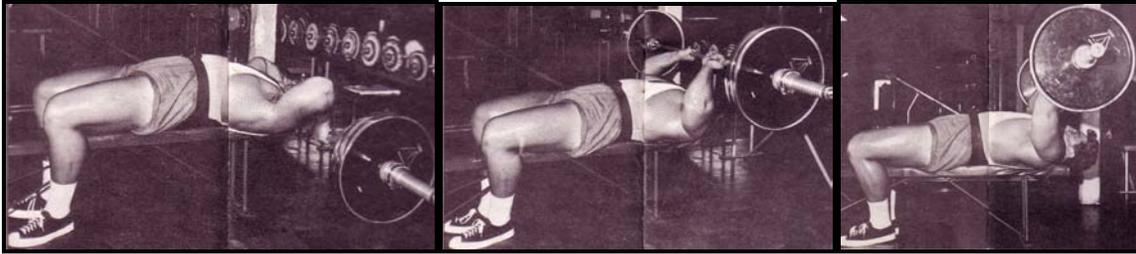
Pat doing easy reps with 405-pounds, and look, no bench shirt.

Supine (flat) bench press

Warm-up

1 set 10 reps
1 set 5 reps
1 set 3 reps
6 sets 1 rep
1 set 5 reps
1 set 20 reps

Pump-out set



Start position

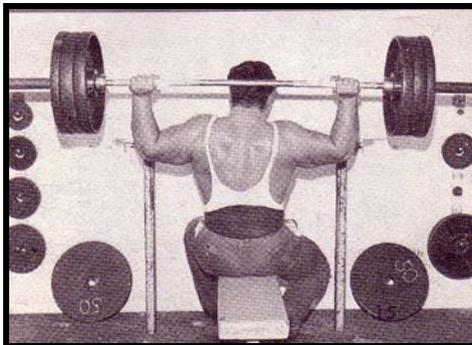
Mid-Position

Lockout-Position

Supine (flat) barbell triceps press

1 set 10 reps
5 sets 5 reps

Saturday



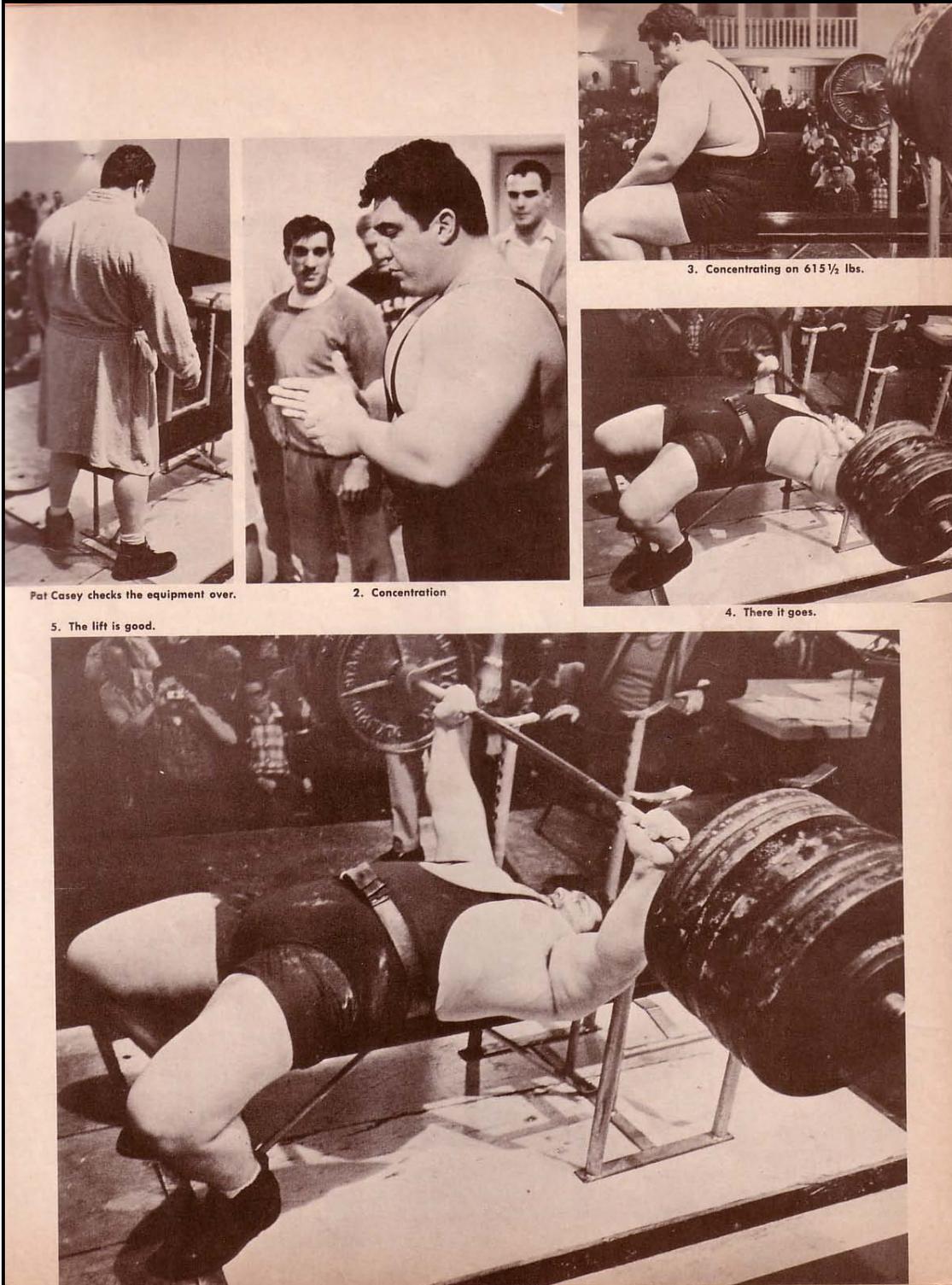
Pat presses 315 pounds overhead with ease

Seated military press
behind the neck

Warm-up

Pump-out set

1 set 10 reps
5 sets 3-5 reps
1 set 20 reps



Pat Casey checks the equipment over.

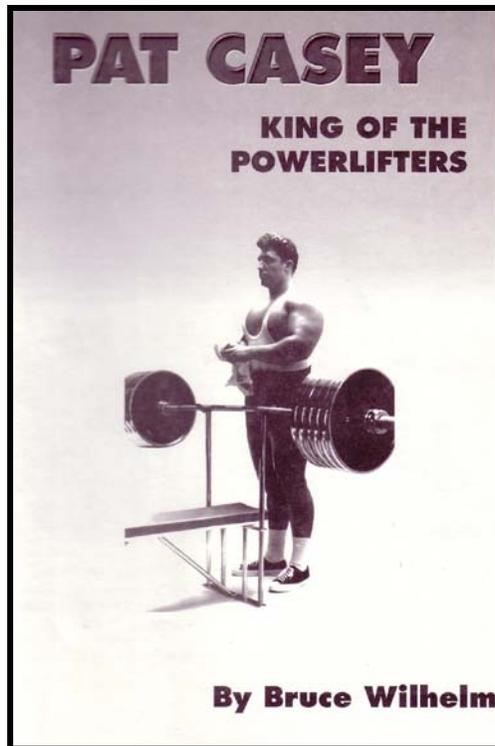
2. Concentration

3. Concentrating on 615½ lbs.

4. There it goes.

5. The lift is good.

Pat Casey crashed the 600-lb bench press barrier in San Diego, California on May 19, 1967 – 1st. Attempt, 575. 2nd Attempt, 600. 3rd Attempt, 615. The bar weighed out at 615-1/2 pounds and was a New National Record. Pat's bodyweight on that historic day was 329-1/2 pounds.



The first two-time winner of the Worlds Strongest Man (1977-78), Bruce Wilhelm, wrote a book recently titled-Pat Casey: King of Powerlifters. You can order it by logging onto:

http://www.crainsmuscleworld.com/powerlifting_books.html

Thanks Pat for sharing with us your knowledge and expertise on the bench press.