

*FREE GUIDE TO*  
**OLYMPIC  
LIFTING**



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This publication is presented for information purposes, to increase the public knowledge of developments in the field of strength and conditioning. The program outlined herein should not be adopted without a consultation with your health professional.

Use of the information provided is at the sole choice and risk of the reader. You must get your physician's approval before beginning this or any other exercise program.

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## WHAT IS OLYMPIC LIFTING?

Not 100% sure? Don't worry, athletes from all sports as well as life-long weight lifters sometimes aren't even sure how to fully answer this question.

To answer this question simply, Olympic Lifting is an athletic discipline in which an athlete competes in or practices two main lifts, the Clean & Jerk and the Snatch. Using a loaded barbell, they will train for and attempt a maximum-weight single lift.

This can also be referred to as Olympic weightlifting, Olympic-style weightlifting or just weightlifting.

In recent years, with the emergence of CrossFit, Olympic Lifts have become extremely popular in gyms and workout facilities all across the country.

Instead of training for a single repetition lift, Crossfitters will incorporate the Olympic Lifts in high rep circuits and complexes for overall total body strength and conditioning.

Of course, there are several variations of the two main lifts mentioned above and that's where some of the confusion comes from.

Just about all of the variations used in training are parts of the larger lifts. And because the Clean & Jerk and the Snatch are considered complex lifts, it only makes sense to segment them. By breaking them up into smaller movements, it allows lifters to get good at all aspects of the lifts.

That being said, when the term 'Olympic Lifts' is discussed, these are some of

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the other lifts or terms that will also be recognized as important in the overall programming:

- The Power Clean
- The Jerk
- The Push Press
- The Strict Press
- The Hang Clean
- The Split-Leg Clean & Press
- The Squat Clean & Press
- The Front Squat
- The Squat Snatch
- The Split Snatch
- The Power Snatch

There may even be other lifts not mentioned that could added to this list. All of the exercises listed above have value and are used in training routines to help develop the Olympic Lifts.

**The important thing to know is that the Clean & Jerk and Snatch are the foundation to Olympic Lifting programs and workouts.**

Just like the squat, deadlift and bench press are the root movements in powerlifting, so too are the clean & jerk and snatch in Olympic Lifting.

There are MANY variations for the three main power lifts but when those 3 particular exercises are referred to in muscle building programs and training methods, unless specified, it is assumed that the traditional or root movement is being performed.



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## Definition of the Clean & Jerk



Front view



Side view

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One of the two Olympic Lifts, the clean and jerk is made up of two weightlifting movements. This exercise can be performed with free weights such as dumbbells, kettlebells and sandbags but most often it is executed with barbells and plate weight.

The objective of the lift is to get the weight from the floor to a controlled racked position finishing with the weight overhead.

During the clean portion of the lift, the lifter grips the bar approximately shoulder width and moves the weight/bar from the floor up to a racked position. This is done by dropping down into a squat position and moving explosively with a foot stomp or slight jump off the floor to generate power.

The rack position is where the weight rests upon the shoulders, namely the anterior deltoids, with elbows pointing forward while being supported with the hands as you lower down into a front squat and then stand erect. Foot placement can be adjusted at this point in preparation for the jerk.

During the jerk phase of the lift, the lifter will bend at the knees while raising the weight/bar to a static position above the head, finishing either with the feet in squat position (shoulder width apart) or a split leg/lunge position (one foot forward and one foot back). The feet will come back together in the same plane as the weight is lowered and the movement is repeated.

## **Clean & Jerk - Step by Step Instructions**

1. Feet should be approximately shoulder width apart
2. Head up, butt down, long strong spine
3. Grip is a bit wider than shoulder width
4. Keep the bar close to the body the entire time

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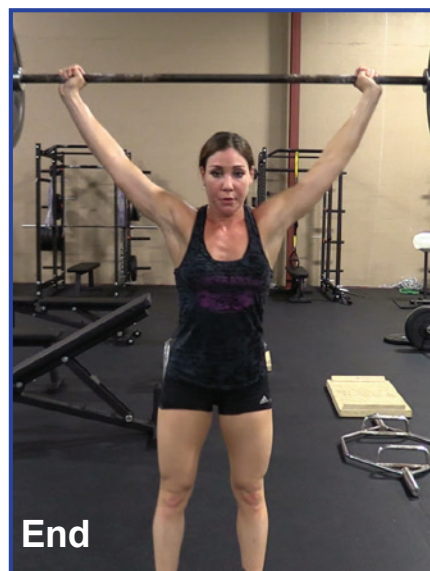
5. Jump and catch the bar with elbows pointing forward and bar resting on the front of the shoulders and not the clavicle
6. As you catch the bar, drop down into a front squat keeping the bar in the rack position
7. Once out of the hole, reset grip if necessary
8. Bend at the knees and explode, stomping the ground as one foot goes forward and the other extended behind you while you press the weight overhead
9. Same steps apply with traditional foot position only feet stomp into shoulder width position
10. The knees should bend or flex again once the bar is overhead as you then completely straighten out underneath the weight
11. Hold the weight overhead standing tall with legs and arms straight and then lower under control before repeating



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## Definition of the Snatch



Front view



Side view

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One of the two Olympic Lifts, the snatch is a continuous motion bringing the weight from the floor to an overhead position explosively. This exercise can also be performed with several free weight options such as dumbbells, kettlebells, sandbags and barbells.

The objective is to move the weight from the floor to a locked out overhead position in one fluid movement.

During the snatch, one of the most important elements is to keep the bar close to the body at all times to maintain efficiency and safety. Another key feature of this lift is the grip.

The grip on the bar is much wider than the clean and jerk. With only the bar, it is quite simple to figure out where to grip the bar which will be slightly different for everyone depending on arm length and height. The bar should be at the crease of the hips when standing up so that the lifter can bend over the bar comfortably.

Even though the lift is extremely fast, explosive and continuous, it can be broken down into phases.

**Phase 1** - Down in squat position with thighs parallel to the floor with a straight back and shoulders over the bar or slightly forward, the lifter will begin exerting force on the bar and lifting the bar from the platform.

**Phase 2** - The knees begin to extend as the lifter accelerates the weight upward still keeping the back from rounding, the bar close and weight shifting slightly to the heel of the foot. The body will begin to stand more vertically during this phase.

**Phase 3** - Much of the explosive force has been exerted on the bar and this is when the lifter can adjust under the weight by again bending the knees as the torso becomes even more vertical and preparing for the final explosive motion.

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**Phase 4** - This phase is where the lifter performs the final thrust on the bar while extending the hips, knees and ankles and a shrug of the shoulders or elevation. The feet will then lift off the ground and move out wider during this phase creating a more stable base of support. The lifter will nearly bend backward as the bar accelerates overhead.

**Phase 5** - During this phase the lifter is done extending the hips, knees and ankles and begins to drop down into a squat position with the bar overhead.

**Phase 6** - Both feet are now in position with the weight overhead and fully supported by the body in squat position. The arms are now completely straight and the lifter then moves into a fully erect position with the bar in a controlled static position overhead completing the lift.

Keep in mind that all of that happens in approximately 3-4 seconds.

## Snatch - Step by Step Instructions

1. Feet should be approximately shoulder width apart
2. Head up, butt down, long strong spine
3. Grip is much wider and there is a very simple method to figure this out
4. Bar should be in the crease of the hips when standing with no weight on the bar...when you bend forward over the bar, it should fit perfectly into that area you are bending over

**NOTE: too narrow or too wide and the lift is compromised**

5. Keep the bar close to the body the entire time

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6. Jump and catch the bar overhead with arms fully extended
7. As you stomp the ground the bar should reach the top of the movement as you drop into a full squat position
8. The foot placement may change to a wider stance during this jump and stomp
9. From the hole, continue to hold the weight overhead keeping the body locked as you rise up underneath the bar
10. Let the weight down in front of you and repeat



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