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# COPS



## Mourning Mass

# The elevator series

BY MATT BRZYCKI

There's an effective application that can be used in the weight room to increase the strength of your entire torso. It's called the "elevator series" and has been popularized by Dan Riley, the strength and conditioning coach of the Houston Texans. The elevator series is just one of many innovative applications that Coach Riley has developed and tested in his 27 years as a strength coach in the National Football League.



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## WHAT IT IS

Essentially, the elevator series is a sequence of several exercises that are performed at multiple angles. The idea is to reach the point of muscular fatigue within a designated number of repetitions for each exercise while taking as little time as possible between the exercises.

Let's look at an example of how the elevator series can be used to train your chest, shoulders and triceps. In this application, you'll do three exercises with dumbbells on an adjustable bench: the overhead (or shoulder) press, incline press and bench press (in that order).

For the overhead press, adjust the back pad so that it's vertical (perpendicular to the floor). Use a pair of dumbbells that allows you to reach muscular fatigue within about 8 - 10 repetitions. After completing the overhead press, quickly lower the back pad to about a 45-degree angle. Use the same pair of dumbbells and try to reach muscular fatigue within about 8 - 10 repetitions. After completing the incline press, quickly lower the back pad so that it's horizontal (parallel to the floor). Again use the same pair of dumbbells and try to reach muscular fatigue within about 8 - 10 repetitions. (Note: If you cannot do about 8 - 10 repetitions with the same pair of dumbbells, adjust the resistance accordingly.)

Doing those three exercises in rapid succession enables you to thoroughly fatigue your chest/shoulder complex at multiple angles in a highly efficient manner. To be clear, you should take as little recovery time as possible between the exercises but don't race through the repetitions. All repetitions should be performed in a deliberate and controlled manner.

Worth mentioning is that you have the least leverage in the overhead press followed by the incline press and the bench press. So as you go from one exercise to the next, you gain leverage to counter the growing fatigue that you experience. This allows you to use the same resistance – or nearly the same resistance – for all three of the exercises.

How many times should you do the elevator series for your chest/shoulder complex? If you reach muscular fatigue in each exercise and take a minimal amount of recovery between those exercises, one series should be plenty. Sergeant Mick Williams of the Bloomington Police Department in Indiana regularly uses the elevator series. Sergeant Williams says, "It's very intense with short rest and multiple angles of attack on the muscles. If

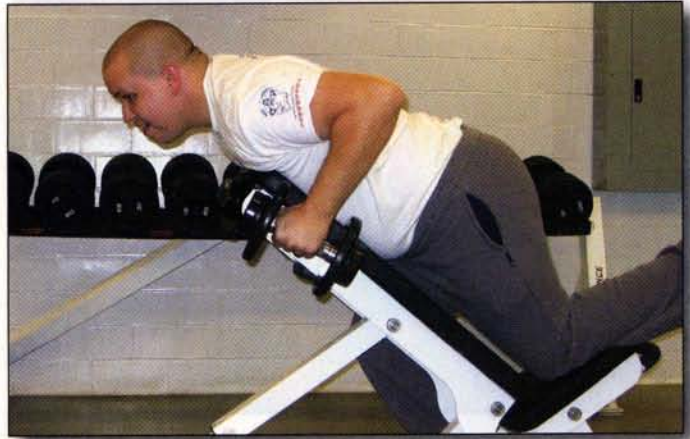


PHOTO BY MATT BRZYCKI

Ptl. Mike Michalski of the Princeton University Police demonstrates the bench row with dumbbells.

"I'm doing a whole-body workout, I often use the elevator series for my chest/shoulder work and nothing more."

You can also do the elevator series for your upper back, trapezius and biceps in a similar manner. If you face the back pad and kneel on the seat pad, you can perform a bench row at different angles.

## OTHER VERSIONS/VARIATIONS

If a decline bench or an adjustable abdominal bench is available, you can add the decline press as a fourth exercise in the elevator series for your chest and shoulders. For added variety, remember that an adjustable bench can be set at different angles. Consider a bench that can be positioned at six levels, ranging from a supine (horizontal) bench to an overhead (vertical) bench. This means, then, that the angle can be changed in 15-degree increments: 0, 15, 30, 60, 75 and 90 degrees.

The elevator series can also be done with other equipment. For example, you can train your chest/shoulder complex with a Smith machine and an adjustable bench in a similar manner as described with dumbbells.

You can even do a semblance of the elevator series with machines. Tom Kelso, an exercise specialist with the St. Louis Metro Police Department in Missouri, has several variations of the elevator series in his extensive repertoire such as the lat pulldown, seated row and upright row for the upper back and trapezius and the incline press, bench press and decline press (or dip) for the chest and shoulders.

## THE BOTTOM LINE

The elevator series is an efficient and effective way to increase your strength at multiple angles and can take your training to a new level. ♥

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