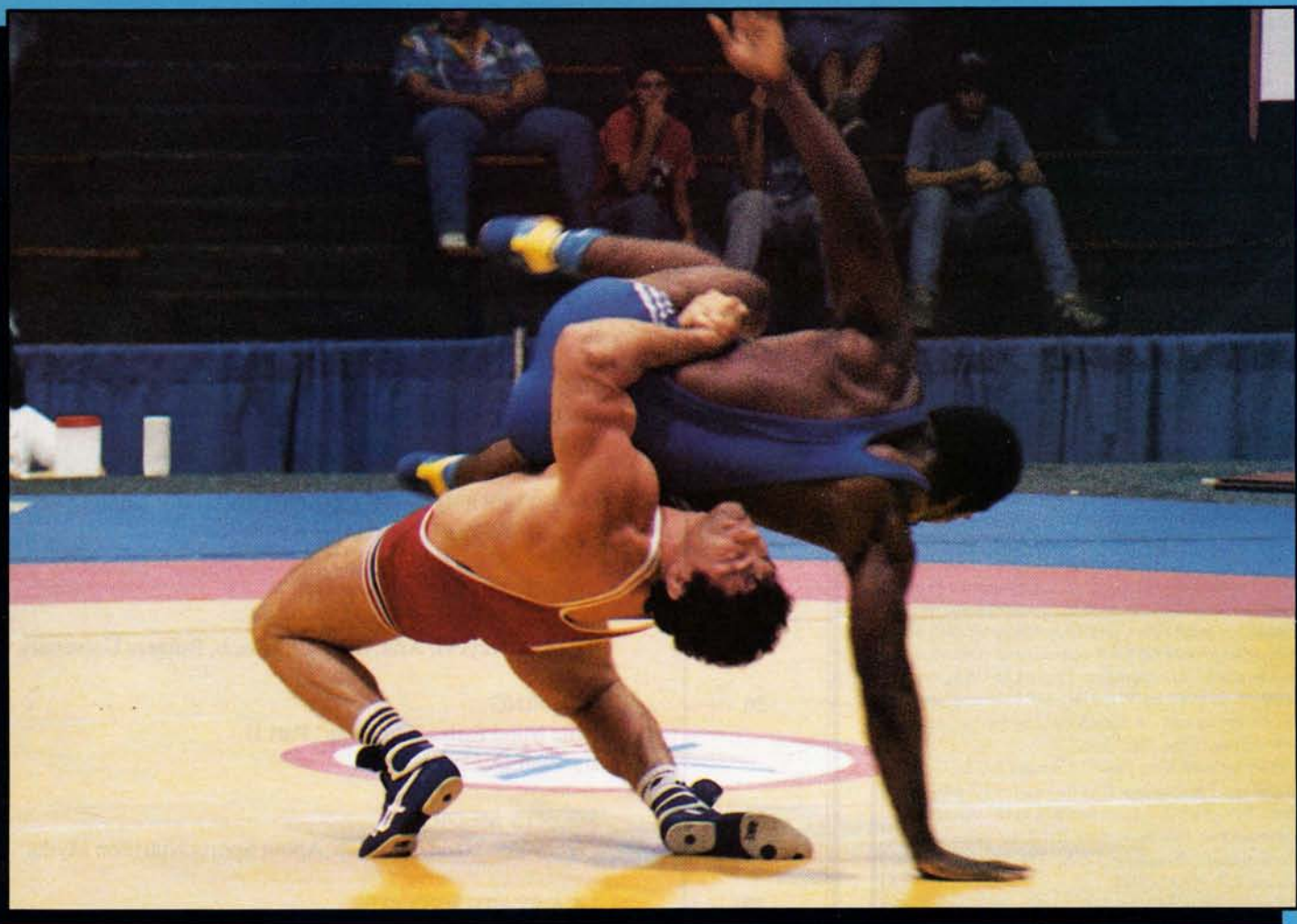


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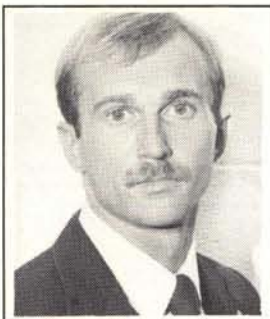
WRESTLING USA



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BY MATT BRZYCKI
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COACHING TIPS

Manual Resistance For Wrestlers

A productive alternative for developing your strength

Quite often, coaches find it difficult (if not impossible) to budget enough time for their wrestlers to strength train during the season. Sometimes, merely gaining access to the weight room is a problem.

Manual resistance (MR) is often referred to as a "productive alternative" for developing strength when equipment isn't available or when time is limited. It is an extremely effective way of strength training in which a partner/spotter supplies the resistance. It was refined and popularized during the late 1970's by Dan Riley who was the strength coach at Penn State. (Dan is currently the strength coach of the Washington Redskins.) MR is used successfully by a number of major universities (most notably Penn State, Michigan, Army and Rutgers) as well as several professional football teams (Los Angeles Raiders, Cincinnati Bengals and Washington Redskins).

Guidelines. Instead of counting repetitions, it is suggested that each prescribed MR exercise for the upper torso be performed for a period of 60 seconds. Research indicates that the optimal time frame for strength training the upper body musculature is between 40-70 seconds. An upper body exercise performed for less than about 40 seconds does little to develop muscular endurance; likewise, an exercise carried out longer than about 70 seconds will gradually reach a point where it becomes an aerobic activity and will not produce significant strength gains.

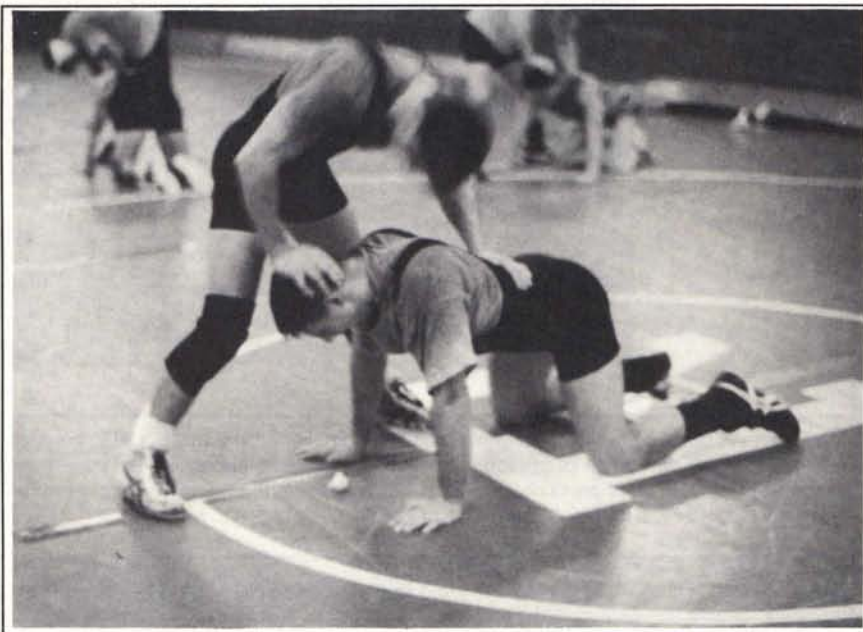
Approximately six to eight different exercises should be performed by each athlete. These exercises should be focused on the major muscle

groups. The major advantage in an MR workout is that it is time efficient half the team exercises while the other half spots. If each exercise is to last 60 seconds and assuming the rest interval between exercises is minimal, a coach can strength train his entire team in 15-20 minutes!

Your athletes should be paired according to size. You should have a stopwatch and a whistle. Have half your wrestlers go through the entire routine (with you keeping time and shouting encouragement!) before switching roles. Only one set of each exercise is necessary provided that your athletes train to the point where further repetitions are impossible.

The Lifter. As in lifting a barbell, the lifter should raise the resistance in a deliberate, controlled manner throughout the greatest possible range of motion that safety allows. The athlete should raise the resistance (as supplied by the spotter) in about 1 or 2 seconds and lower it to the stretched position in about 3 or 4 seconds. The lifter must keep tension on his muscles throughout the entire exercise - he shouldn't relax until the

NECK EXTENSION



movement is finished.

The Spotter. Since everyone is naturally stronger in some positions than in others due to a biomechanical leverage factor, the spotter is responsible for varying the resistance throughout the complete range of motion. For example, everyone is a lot stronger in the lowering phase of each exercise (due to internal muscular friction), so the spotter must apply more resistance on the way down. The spotter must also regulate the resistance in accordance with the lifter's momentary level of strength. In brief, the spotter needs to furnish less resistance as the lifter fatigues during each exercise. Finally, the spotter must regulate the speed of movement (up in 1-2 seconds and down in 3-4 seconds).

Exercises. Space does not permit me to describe more than a few MR exercises in this article. Future articles will discuss additional exercises. Here's a few to get you started:

Neck Flexion. The lifter should sit upright while the spotter sits behind the lifter. The spotter should place one hand on the lifter's chin and his other hand on the lifter's forehead. The lifter should start from a position of full strength (looking towards the ceiling). To begin the movement, the lifter should pull his chin to his chest, while the spotter offers resistance evenly throughout the full range of movement. The lifter should now pause briefly in the contracted position (chin on chest) before returning slowly to the starting/stretched position against the spotter's resistance.

Neck Extension. The lifter should assume a position on all fours. The spotter should stand alongside the lifter, place one hand on the back of the lifter's head and his other hand on the lifter's upper back. (See photo) The lifter should start from a position of full stretch (chin on chest). To begin the movement, the lifter should push his head back while the spotter provides resistance evenly throughout the full range of movement. The lifter should now pause briefly in the contracted position (looking towards the ceiling) before returning slowly to the starting/stretched position against the spotter's resistance.

Pushups. The lifter should assume a pushup position and place his hands slightly wider than shoulder width apart. The spotter should stand over the lifter and place his hands on the lifter's upper back. The lifter should start with his chest on the mat. To begin the movement, the lifter should push his body up while the spotter provides resis-

tance evenly throughout the full range of movement. The lifter should now pause briefly in the contracted position (but should not allow his elbows to lock) before returning slowly to the starting/stretched position against the spotter's resistance. When no further repetitions are possible, the spotters should prolong the exercise by raising the lifter up to the contracted position and pushing him back to the mat until the 60 seconds are over.

As you can see, a lack of equipment is no

longer an obstacle in getting your athletes to strength train. Remember not to do any strength training within 48 hours of the match. Lastly, you can strength train after practice but never before practices.

Editor's Note: If you have specific questions to ask Mr. Brzycki about the above subject matter, write to Matt Brzycki, Rutgers University, Division of Intercollegiate Athletics, PO Box 1149 Piscataway, NJ 08854



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