

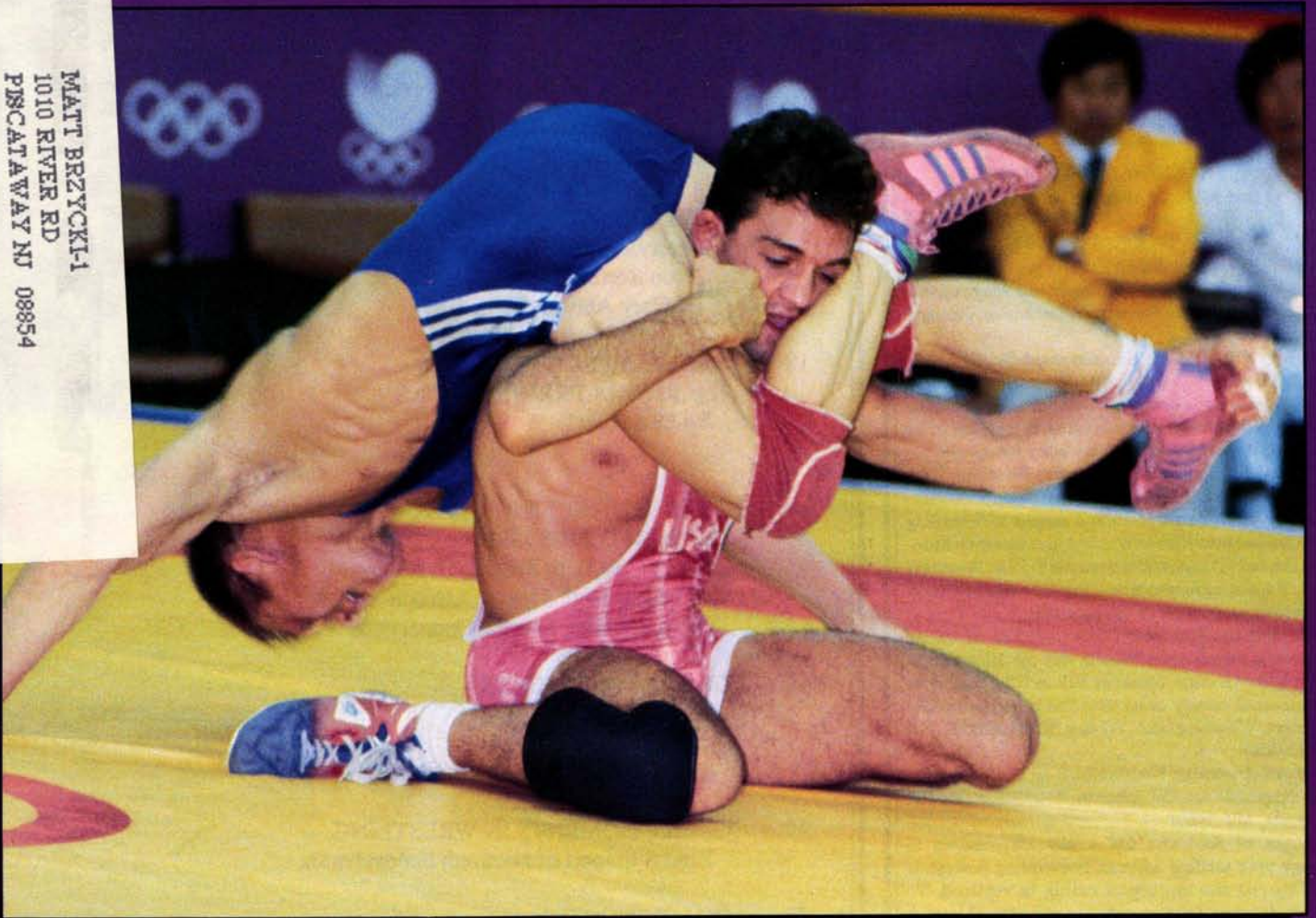
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XXIV Olympiad In Seoul
NAIA College Preview
Can You Overtrain?



COACHING TIPS

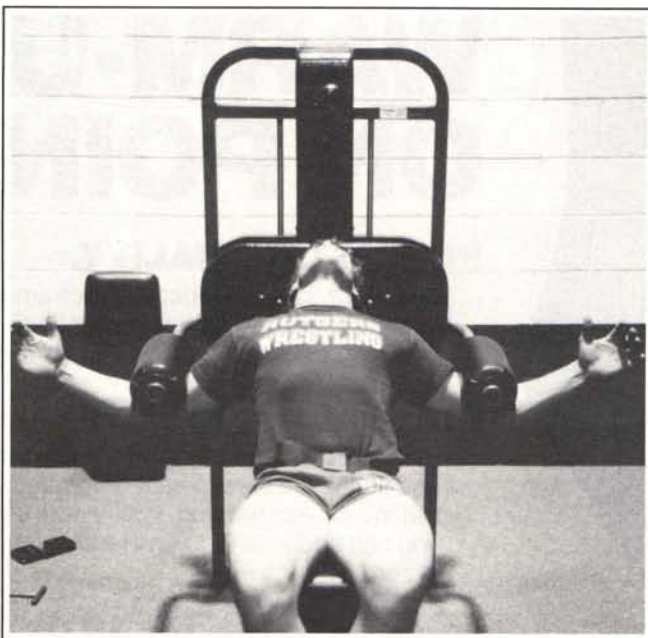
Vary Your Workouts

Can you overtrain?

By Matt Brzycki

The stimulus for muscular growth can be produced quite effectively by a system based on brief exercise of high intensity which incorporates a progressive overload. This means that an athlete should attempt to perform one more repetition than last time and/or use more resistance than during the previous sessions. Assuming adequate recovery and proper nourishment, one set of each prescribed exercise performed to the point of momentary muscular failure (i.e. when no further movement is possible) will promote maximum possible gains in both size and strength.

Sooner or later, an athlete will reach a point in the course of his



training where strength gains have leveled off. Quite often, this is a result of over training - the athlete is performing entirely too much work causing his muscular system to be over stressed. In effect, the demands have exceeded his recovery ability. In this case, an athlete needs to reduce the volume of work being done in the weight room.

Sometimes, however, an athlete's strength will plateau due to performing the same routine each session over long periods of time. The workout becomes a form of unproductive labor which is monotonous and dull.

How can a coach prevent this situation from occurring? Quite simply, the answer is to vary the stimulus. A number of ways exist in which a routine may be modified. In some cases, only one or two parts of the workout need to be changed.

REARRANGE THE ORDER

One of the easiest ways to modify a workout is to rearrange the order in which the exercises for a particular body part are performed. Suppose an athlete's shoulder strength reaches a plateau. If the original prescription called for an upright row followed by a seated press, the athlete can switch these two movements, performing the seated press first and the upright row next.

Remember, when varying the order of exercises, the weights must be readjusted accordingly. Let's say an athlete uses 90 pounds in the upright row followed immediately by a seated press using 100 pounds. If the order is changed (i.e. the seated press first), his shoulder musculature will be relatively fresh for the seated press and, therefore, he will be able to handle more resistance. However, he must use less weight in the upright row since his deltoids will be more fatigued than usual.

An additional possibility is to exercise the muscle groups in a different se-

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quence. Instead of going from chest to back to shoulders, an athlete might do shoulders, chest then back. Again, the weights must be readjusted accordingly.

CHANGE THE MODALITY

Another way to vary an athlete's training is to change the modality or equipment used. If an athlete plateaus on the bench press, he can perform the same movement using different equipment. A bench press may be done with a barbell, dumbbells, manual resistance or any of the various bench press machines available on the market. Remember, your muscles don't have eyes and, therefore, don't know how the resistance is being applied. Obviously, the extent to which this is accomplished depends upon the equipment on hand.

ALTERNATE THE EXERCISES

A third means of varying the stimulus is to alternate the exercises which involve the same muscle group(s). For instance, a bench press, incline press, decline press, dips and manual resistance pushups all work the chest, shoulders and triceps. Therefore, when an athlete peaks in one of the exercises, he can substitute another movement which employs the same musculature. Once again, the availability of equipment will determine how much the exercises may be alternated.

VARY THE STYLE

A final option is to vary the style in which a particular exercise is performed. Leg extension, for example, may be done at least four different ways. The typical way is to do the exercise using both legs at the same time (bilaterally). In addition, the movement may be done unilaterally (one leg at a time). Leg extensions may also be performed in a "negative only" manner by having a training partner raise the weight and allowing the lifter to lower the weight under control in about 6-8 seconds per repetition. A fourth way is to do the exercise in a "negative accentuated" fashion in which the lifter raised the weight with both legs, lowers the weight with one leg, raises the weight with both legs and lowers with the other leg.

SUMMING IT UP

Don't forget, only one set of each prescribed exercise done to the point of muscular failure is necessary to stimulate maximum gains. No more than 14-18 exercises should be performed during any one workout. The routine should take 30-40 minutes to complete. When coupled with adequate rest (48-72 hours between workouts) and proper nourishment, this stimulus will promote the greatest possible gains

within an individual's genetically imposed limitations. Doing any more than the suggested amount of exercises constitutes over training, which will adversely effect the potential results.

Occasionally, your athletes' workouts need to be changed. At least four ways exist to vary workouts: (1) rearrange the

order of exercises; (2) change the modality/equipment; (3) alternate the exercises which involve the same muscle group(s); and (4) vary the style in which an exercise is performed. By providing for variety in training, a coach will enhance his athlete's compliance to the strength program and ensure that their strength gains continue.

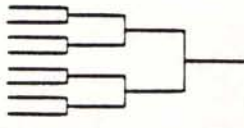
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