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weightlifting is the original strength sport. Before powerlifting and bodybuilding were typically recognized, Olympic lifting was a popular activity. There are two official Olympic weightlifting disciplines, the clean and jerk, and the snatch. Both of these moves involve lifting a weight from the floor to overhead, albeit with very different techniques. There used to be a third Olympic lift the clean and press, but this was dropped in the 1960s because of safety concerns. The press was done strictly, with no extra leg drive. To lift more weight, athletes would often lean back and do a sort of freestanding bench press. Injuries and difficulties in judging meant this lift was dropped from competition and never replaced. In modern Olympic lifting competitions, athletes get three attempts at each of the two movements. The winner is the weightlifter with the highest total from their best snatch and clean and jerk. The snatch is always done first. The Benefits of Olympic Lifting While Olympic lifting is a stand-alone sport, a lot of athletes use the Olympic lifts in their training, even if they don't lift competitively. These because both the clean and jerk and the snatch offer so many benefits. These benefits are: Increased Muscle Power Power is force generated at speed. In other words, its your ability to move heavy weights quickly. Its the difference between a slow, heavy squat and a high-speed squat jump. The two movements are performed explosively, and that will increase muscle power. Power is an integral part of most sports, which is why a large proportion of athletes include Olympic weightlifting exercises in their workouts. More muscle power will help you run faster, jump higher, and throw, kick, and punch harder. Increased Flexibility and Coordination Olympic lifting involves a lot of stretching and body control. The clean and jerk and the snatch require a lot of flexibility and coordination. The Olympic lifts involve large ranges of motion, especially at the knees, hips, and shoulders. Successful Olympic lifters are very flexible, and simply doing these exercises will increase your flexibility and mobility. However, if you are very tight, you may find aspects of the Olympic lifts hard to master until you improve your flexibility. Full Body Workout Both Olympic lifts are full-body movements. They start with a powerful knee and hip extension and also involve the lower back and core, shoulders, and arms. The only muscle group that doesn't do a lot of work in the Olympic lifts is the chest. If you are short of time but still want to train most of your major muscles, an Olympic weightlifting workout could be the solution. Muscle Building Because the Olympic lifts are explosive, they target your type 2b fast-twitch muscle fibers. These are the muscle fibers responsible for size and growth. Olympic weightlifters are usually as big as bodybuilders, but they aren't too far behind, and that's in spite of the fact that they don't typically do any traditional bodybuilding exercises. What are The Drawbacks? While the Olympic lifts can definitely be beneficial, there are a few drawbacks to consider too. The main ones are: Difficult to Learn The snatch and clean and jerk can be hard to learn. You'll need to develop a decent technique before you think about lifting heavy weights. That means, initially, at least, you'll have to settle for easy workouts because lifting too much weight too soon could result in injury. Olympic Lifting The good news is that there are simplified versions of the Olympic lifts that are easier to master, such as the power clean. If you are serious about learning the Olympic lifts, you should read up on them. You want to do them right. No Specializing in One Lift While the Olympic lifts are full-body movements, they are also specialized. If you're only doing the clean and jerk, you're not doing the snatch, and vice versa. If you're only doing the snatch, you're not doing the clean. This means you'll have to do a lot of other exercises to make up for the lack of a full-body workout. Because this equipment is specialized (and expensive), you probably won't find it anywhere apart from proper Olympic lifting gyms. CrossFit and other fitness programs also need weightlifting shoes. While weightlifting shoes have a raised, solid heel that allows you to squat deeper. They won't distort under heavy loads, so you should also find it easier to maintain your balance. Most also have metatarsal straps to keep your feet stable and locked in position. Injury Risk While Olympic lifting is not the most dangerous sport, lifting and balancing heavy weights overhead can cause injury. If you lose your balance while squatting or standing under a heavy bar, you could be seriously hurt. Unlike powerlifters, Olympic lifters do not use power gears, so a missed lift could be catastrophic. Most established lifters are very good at dumping the bar if they are unable to complete a lift. This means dropping the bar as they jump out from beneath it. Such a maneuver requires a lot of mobility, good timing, speed, and even bravely! Learning the Olympic lifts Well beyond the scope of this article to teach you how to snatch and clean and jerk with perfect form, well provide you with the basics to get you started. Entire books have been written about these movements, so we can't do justice to them within the confines of an article. That said, if you are serious about learning and mastering the Olympic lifts, you should seek out an International Weightlifting Federation coach or join a weightlifting club. The Snatch The snatch is arguably the hardest of the two lifts to learn. It involves lifting the bar from the floor to overhead in one movement, often catching the weight overhead while in a deep squat. Its such an athletic movement that the snatch is sometimes referred to as gymnastics with weights. How to do the Snatch Stand with your feet hip-width apart, toes under the bar. If you are tall, you may need to move your feet slightly outward. Squat down and grab the bar with a wide, overhand grip. Your arms should be straight, and your hands should be under the bar. Grip the bar with your fingers, not your palms. As you squat, keep your back straight and your head up. When you are in a deep squat, drive your feet into the floor and stand up explosively. Imagine you are jumping straight up. Shrug your shoulders and rise up onto your toes. As the bar travels the front of your body, drop into a deep squat beneath it. Catch the bar with your arms length over your head. Stand up and then pause the lift only counts if your feet are stationary. Drop the bar down in front of you. Thats why you need a lifting platform and bumper plates. Reset your shoulder and reset at Snatching Thats to remember that will improve your snatch include: Keep your torso upright Dont bend your arms until late in the lift Keep the bar close to your body throughout Dont just drop under the bar pull yourself under it to get down faster Practice overhead squats to get used to holding a weight above your head Work on your flexibility to squat deeper Clean and Jerk The clean and jerk is a two-part lift. The clean involves lifting the weight from the floor to shoulder-height, while the jerk is a sort of push press during which the bar goes from shoulder-height to overhead. Its a little easier to learn than the snatch, but still a challenging lift to master. How to Clean and Jerk Stand with your feet about hip-width apart, toes under the bar. Squat down and grip the bar with an overhand, shoulder-width grip. Use a hook grip if you wish. Make sure your shoulders are over or slightly in front of the bar. Straighten your arms, lift your chest, drop your hips, arch your lower back, and brace your core. Put some tension in the bar without actually lifting it off the floor. This is your starting position. Stand up explosively and jump upward. Shrug your shoulders and rise up onto your toes. As the barbell reaches its apex, pull yourself down into a squat, drive your elbows under the bar, and catch it across the fronts of your shoulders. Stand up and, if you wish, move your feet in a little narrower. Dip your knees slightly, and then drive your feet into the floor. As the bar leaves your shoulders, jump one foot back and one foot forward to land in a deep squat. Drive your feet into the floor and stand up explosively. Treat the movements as two separate phases. Only link them together when you feel you can do them both together. Dont pause too long between the clean and the jerk. Youll waste energy if you do and are more likely to miss the jerk if you are tired. The jerk should come from a wide split stance almost like a lunge but with your back leg mostly straight. Move your feet quickly to get into this position. Make sure you initiate the jerk with a powerful leg drive. Work on your front squats, as they are an integral part of this lift. Beginners Olympic Weightlifting Program The best way to get better at the Olympic lifts is to a) practice those lifts, and b) do accessory exercises that will positively impact your strength/technique. With those factors in mind, here are two Olympic lifting programs designed for beginners, one for snatches and one for clean and jerks. They both include the specific Olympic lift as well as more common strength training exercises to boost your performance. A lot of Olympic lifting programs specify how much weight you should lift based on your current one repetition maximum or 1RM for short. Thats fine for experienced lifters who know their 1RM, but impractical for novices who don't know how much they can lift. For this program, with the Olympic lifts, increase weight set by set until you notice your speed starting to slow down as you near the specified number of reps. If you feel like you are grinding out the reps, the weight is too heavy. Its better to lift a lightweight quickly than a heavyweight slowly. Initially, at least, you should focus more on your technique than the amount of weight you are lifting. You're only going to do sets of three reps in the Olympic lifts, but six sets in total. This means you won't have to worry about fatigue affecting your technique, but will still get plenty of practice at each lift. Repetition is the best way to master a new exercise something a lot of coaches call greasing the groove. Olympic lifting is a very technical sport, and it can take a long time to get it right. The benefit of doing it a lot is that you can actually feel the benefits of the lift. You can feel the flexibility and mobility gains, and you can feel the strength gains. The more you do it, the better you will get. The program is designed to be done 3 times a week, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Clean and Jerk Workout Wednesday Snatch Workout Friday Clean and Jerk Workout Etc. Before each workout, spend a few minutes warming up. Do some light cardio, followed by dynamic stretches and mobility exercises for all your major muscles and joints. Also, practice the Olympic lift day using an empty barbell or just a wooden pole. Snatch Workout Clean and Jerk Workout *AMRAP = As Many Rounds As Possible Olympic Weightlifting Wrapping Up Whether you are looking to improve your performance for sport, build muscle in a new way, or take up and compete in weightlifting, this article should help. The Olympic lifts arent easy to master, but they are very rewarding. Like heavy deadlifts and squats, they'll help build a body you can be proud of. Including them in your workouts will add a lot to your overall development and athleticism. As with any new lift, the Olympic weightlifting exercises take time to learn. In fact, the snatch, and clean and jerk could be two of the most technically challenging exercises you can do. But, with practice and perseverance, you should be able to do them with at least passable form and impressive weights. But, when learning these lifts, light and fast is always better than heavy and slow. Leave the grinders for big squats and bench presses. If you can't lift the bar explosively, its too heavy for you. Build your speed and power first like the heavyweights come later! Facebook Twitter Reddit Flipboard LinkedIn Pinterest Olympic lifting is a great sport for improving strength, power and all-round athleticism. But if you've got the flexibility of a arthritic old tin man you'll soon find it gets the best of you. Whether its because of CrossFit or purely that people love lifting heavy shit (amen), only lifting as its become known as, is as popular as its ever been in the US. And as avid lifters ourselves we think its great to see you bros moving away from biceps curls and diving head first into a good, deep snatch. Or for those who don't get any good snatch a strong jerk each night. Giggly. But if you're currently not getting the most out of your lifts, you may want to consider the Olympic lifts. They're a great way to improve your strength, power and all-round athleticism. They're also a great way to improve your flexibility and mobility. They're also a great way to improve your technique. They're also a great way to improve your speed and power. They're also a great way to improve your endurance. They're also a great way to improve your coordination. They're also a great way to improve your balance. They're also a great way to improve your focus. They're also a great way to improve your discipline. They're also a great way to improve your patience. They're also a great way to improve your perseverance. They're also a great way to improve your determination. They're also a great way to improve your resilience. They're also a great way to improve your courage. They're also a great way to improve your confidence. They're also a great way to improve your self-esteem. They're also a great way to improve your self-worth. They're also a great way to improve your self-respect. They're also a great way to improve your self-love. They're also a great way to improve your self-care. They're also a great way to improve your self-compassion. They're also a great way to improve your self-acceptance. They're also a great way to improve your self-awareness. They're also a great way to improve your self-knowledge. They're also a great way to improve your self-understanding. They're also a great way to improve your self-realization. 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for the workout ahead. This page will go over our Olympic Weightlifting Warm-Up Exercises. Get our complete How To Warm-Up Properly for Strength Training Guide today! And learn why you should NOT do cardio to warm-up before a weight training workout! How To Warm-Up for Weightlifting First, do a complete full body dynamic warm-up routine before you start these Olympic Weightlifting Warm-Up exercises and stretches. Then, the next part of the Mathias Method Strength Systems warm-up includes these workout specific warm-up exercises. These are done after your full body dynamic warm-up stretches but before your dumbbell shoulder warm-up. This Olympic Weightlifting Warm-Up Routine will include a few specific mobility stretches for the calf-hamstring complex, hip flexors, ankles, chest, and shoulders. These will help prevent injury and increase strength as you teach your body how to move properly for strength. When you are done with these Olympic weightlifting warm-up exercises, begin your technique work. For all of our specific workout based warm-up routines, you can check out our How To Warm-Up Properly Guide. More Warm-Up Exercises See all of our Mobility Stretches or Strength Training Exercises. Olympic Weightlifting Warm-Up Stretches Calf-Hamstring Stretch Reps: 30-120 seconds each side Purpose: Improve Knee Extension, Ankle Dorsi-flexion, Calf, and Hamstring Function. With your knee fully extended, place the ball of your foot on a slightly raised surface and allow for your ankle to fully dorsiflex (pull your toes up towards your face). Keep weight on the ball of your foot and your knee fully extended as you lean your torso forward. Maintain a neutral spine and lean until you feel a stretch behind your knee. Be active in the stretch by coming in and out of tension under control, contract-relax techniques and by flexing the opposing muscles (Quadriceps, Anterior Tibialis) to deepen the stretch. Exaggerated Lunge Reps: 30-60 seconds each side Purpose: Improve Hip Extension, Hip Flexor Function, and Hip Mobility. While keeping your hips square, place one foot on a raised surface (12-20 inches high) in front of you and the other behind you. Keep your front foot pointed forward and slightly internally rotate your back foot as you extend your leg behind you. Keep your torso vertical, core braced and tension on your rear glute as you bend your front knee to initiate the stretch. When you feel the tension in your hip flexor, hold that position. To increase the stretch you can flex your glute to further press your hips forward or flex and extend your posterior knee slightly to find other tense positions to hold. Single Leg Calf Stretch Reps: 1-2 minutes each side Purpose: Improve Ankle Dorsi-flexion and Calf Function. With your knee fully extended, place the ball of your foot on a raised surface, high enough to feel a stretch in your calf. Allow your heel to sink down as you put your weight on your foot. Actively move around in this position by flexing in and out of it, forcing your knee into further extension, or pulling your toes towards your face. Weighted Deep Squat Calf Stretch Reps: 2-3 minutes Purpose: Improve Ankle Dorsi-flexion and Calf Function. While holding a barbell, place it just above your knee caps and go into a full depth squat. Ensure that your heels are down in this position, and only rise slightly as you push the weight and your knees forward. Move around in this position to create change, by flexing the opposing muscles and moving under control. You may put more stress on one side by leaning the barbell to that side or placing all the weight on one side at a time. Use this stretch sparingly as it is more intense than non-weighted mobility techniques. Shoulder Dislocations Reps: 10 total Purpose: Improve Shoulder Function and Mobility. Grasp a band, strap or light pole with a much wider than shoulder width grip. Flex your glutes, brace your core and pull your shoulder blades back and down throughout the motion. Starting in the front, keep your arms fully extended as you raise them in front of you, over your head and all the way around to your glutes. Reverse the motion back around towards your hips. Try to grasp your hands as close as you can while still maintaining the full extension of your arms. Only use a grip that brings a slight stretch to be felt as you rotate about the motion. Note: If you cannot rotate around the through the full motion then only go as far as you can and pause in this position each time. When you finish these Olympic weightlifting warm-up exercises, begin your technique work. All Warm-Up Routines See all of our Mobility Stretches or Strength Training Exercises. For all of our specific workout based warm-up routines, you can check out our How To Warm-Up Properly Guide.

Olympic weightlifting stretching program. Stretching for olympic weightlifting.