

Masterclass Three

Welcome to the third in a series of articles specifically written for novice and developing power lifters. The aim of this series is to deliver advice and information as a starting point for new lifters, who are trying to find their feet in the sport.

It is recommended that before you make any major alterations to your technique or start lifting heavy weights competitively you should consult an experienced coach or senior power lifter for more specific advice.

Position

Dead Lifting is all about creating momentum between the floor and the bar, using your body as a human lever. This is the least technical of the three "core" lifts, and requires a much greater degree of brute strength.

There are two ways of Dead Lifting "conventional" (narrow stance) and "Sumo", (wide stance). This Master Class only looks at conventional, because I personally have never lifted sumo style. (Anyone with relevant experience is welcome to contribute an article on this aspect of the sport to the BDFPA website).

The idea is to rip the weight off the floor, pulling the weight up your legs until you have reached a locked position. This should be in one smooth movement and finish with your shoulders erect (Not forward or rounded), legs straight and knees locked.

Lifters in competition use talcum powder to assist the movement and glide on their legs and there's no reason why you shouldn't also. Providing your gym will allow it, and you clean up your mess afterwards!

Your chances of locking out with the weight will be greatly enhanced by keeping your back straight. You should aim to have a straight back before and throughout the movement, if you lose the shape in your back the lift will be made more difficult.

By keeping a straight back your ability to direct more force through your legs, and into the floor will be enhanced. Your ability to keep the tension between floor and bar, will determine how successful you are at Dead lifting heavy weights.

Technical & Signals

You should start with your feet at shoulder width apart, with your toes pointing forwards. When you take the strain of the weight, you lift the weight upwards off the floor.

Some people will find their natural line narrower than shoulder width, and some slightly wider. It's all about the shape and size of your body. People with longer arms generally find a narrower stance more comfortable, than those with shorter limbs.

Your hands should also be about in line with your shoulder width, but making certain that your hands do not drag on your thighs during the lift. This will make your life very difficult, and hamper your ability to finish the lift off.

You will again need to experiment with your optimum position, but you will probably find it will be almost directly in line with the shoulders. You're trying to create a "smooth" pull so this makes sense.

Keeping your hips parallel to the floor is very important and you should fix your hip position before addressing the bar. As with the squat it is important to make sure that the hips do not move out of line before or during the movement.

If the hips remain in their fixed position, you will find it easier to finish your pull at the top of your range of movement. If the hips are fixed in place, you will be able to thrust them forward when you hit your sticking point.

When pulling the weight you should sit back slightly, keep your backside low and your back flat. Some people maintain to keep your back flat you should look upwards and some say you should look forward.

In competition there is no start signal for this lift, but there is a "down" signal from the chief referee once you've reached the top. You will not receive this signal until the centre referee is satisfied you have completed the pull.

Remember, don't try and change everything at once.

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Special thanks to BDFPA Chief Technical Officer Andy Davies and International Referee Mike Leadbetter for consulting on the Masterclass Articles. Lifters can find a list of causes for failure of lifts in the BDFPA handbook. (Pages 69 -72)