HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

IMPROVING THE PHYSICAL CONDITIONING OF WEIGHTLIFTERS

U'senbaeva Dina Timur qizi
Second-year student at Ajiniyoz Nukus State Pedagogical Institute

Abstract. This article examines the main approaches to improving the physical conditioning of weightlifters through systematic training, appropriate exercise selection, recovery management, and nutritional support. Weightlifting requires a combination of maximal strength, explosive power, speed, mobility, coordination, muscular endurance, and psychological readiness. The effectiveness of training depends not only on increasing the intensity and volume of exercises but also on their proper periodization and individualization according to the athlete's age, training experience, body weight category, and competitive level. The study analyzes contemporary approaches to developing strength and power in weightlifters, with particular attention to resistance training, Olympic lifting movements, plyometric exercises, mobility training, recovery strategies, and monitoring of training loads.

Keywords: weightlifting, physical conditioning, strength, explosive power, muscular endurance, speed, flexibility, training load, periodization, recovery, athletic performance, sports nutrition.

Introduction. Weightlifting is a strength-power sport in which athletes perform highly technical movements requiring the rapid generation of large amounts of force. The two primary competitive exercises, the snatch and the clean and jerk, demand a high level of maximal strength, explosive power, coordination, mobility, balance, and technical precision.

Successful performance in weightlifting depends on the interaction of several physical qualities. Although maximal strength is fundamental, an athlete must also be able to generate force rapidly and coordinate movements efficiently. Therefore, physical conditioning should not be limited to traditional strength training. It should involve a comprehensive program designed to develop the athlete's strength-power characteristics while maintaining mobility, technical efficiency, and recovery capacity.

The physical preparation of weightlifters is influenced by numerous factors, including training age, competition schedule, body composition, individual physiological characteristics, nutritional status, sleep, psychological condition, and previous injury history. Excessive training loads without adequate recovery may result in fatigue, reduced performance, and increased injury risk.

Modern sports science emphasizes the principles of progressive overload, specificity, individualization, variation, and periodization. The systematic application of these principles allows coaches to organize training loads and achieve progressive adaptations without unnecessary fatigue.

Therefore, improving the physical conditioning of weightlifters requires an integrated approach that combines strength and power development with technical training, mobility exercises, recovery strategies, and appropriate nutrition.

The aim of this study is to analyze effective methods for improving the physical conditioning of weightlifters and to identify training approaches that can contribute to increased strength, explosive power, functional capacity, and competitive performance.

Analysis of literature. The development of strength and power has traditionally been considered one of the central components of weightlifting preparation. Bompa and Buzzichelli emphasize the importance of systematic periodization in organizing training loads and achieving optimal athletic adaptation. Periodization allows training volume and intensity to be systematically modified throughout different phases of preparation.

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Haff and Triplett note that resistance training can produce significant improvements in muscular strength, power, and physical performance when training variables such as intensity, volume, frequency, exercise selection, and rest intervals are appropriately organized.

Kraemer and Ratamess emphasize that adaptations to resistance training depend on the interaction between training intensity, volume, exercise specificity, and recovery. For strength-power athletes, exercises performed with relatively high loads and explosive intent are particularly important.

Stone, Stone, and Sands consider strength and power development to be closely related but distinct components of athletic preparation. An athlete may possess high maximal strength but still require specific training to transform that strength into explosive movement.

Such research is particularly relevant to weightlifting because competitive movements require the athlete to produce force rapidly. Consequently, training programs should include both maximal-strength exercises and movements designed to improve the rate of force development.

Cormie, McGuigan, and Newton demonstrated the importance of power training and showed that the development of maximal strength can contribute to improvements in muscular power when combined with appropriate explosive exercises. Research in sports nutrition also indicates that adequate energy and protein intake are important for supporting training adaptations and recovery. Athletes involved in high-intensity strength training require appropriate nutritional strategies to maintain performance and facilitate muscle repair.

The literature therefore supports a multidimensional approach to weightlifters' physical conditioning in which maximal strength, explosive power, technical skill, mobility, recovery, and nutrition are developed simultaneously.

Research methodology. The study used a theoretical and analytical research methodology based on the analysis and synthesis of scientific literature concerning strength training, power development, sports physiology, periodization, recovery, and athletic performance.

The following research methods were used:

- analysis of scientific and methodological literature;
- comparison of different strength-training approaches;
- generalization of findings from sports science research;
- analysis of principles of periodized training;
- comparative assessment of physical conditioning methods;
- theoretical modeling of an integrated conditioning program.

The main physical qualities considered in the study were:

1. maximal muscular strength;
2. explosive power;
3. speed;
4. muscular endurance;
5. flexibility and mobility;
6. coordination;
7. recovery capacity.

Research results and discussion. Maximal strength is one of the fundamental physical qualities of weightlifters. It provides the force foundation necessary for successful execution of the snatch and clean and jerk.

Strength development should include multi-joint exercises involving the major muscle groups responsible for lifting performance. Squats, pulls, presses, and variations of the competition lifts can be incorporated according to the athlete's training phase.

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Progressive overload is particularly important. Training loads should increase gradually rather than abruptly in order to promote adaptation while limiting excessive fatigue.

However, maximal-strength training should not dominate the entire training cycle. Excessive emphasis on heavy loads may increase fatigue and interfere with technical and explosive training.

Development of explosive power. Explosive power represents the ability to produce high levels of force rapidly. It is especially important during the second pull, turnover, catch, and drive phases of weightlifting movements.

Power can be developed through:

- Olympic lifting variations;
- pulls performed with explosive intent;
- jump squats;
- loaded jumps;
- medicine-ball exercises;
- plyometric exercises;
- other high-velocity movements.

The key principle is that the athlete should produce force rapidly while maintaining correct technique.

Weightlifting performance requires rapid execution of individual movement phases. Therefore, physical conditioning should include exercises that improve the rate of force development.

Explosive movements performed with appropriate resistance can help athletes develop the ability to generate force quickly. The combination of heavy strength exercises and lighter high-velocity movements can be useful within a properly structured program.

Mobility and flexibility. Adequate mobility is essential for achieving technically correct positions during the snatch and clean and jerk.

Particular attention should be given to:

- ankle mobility;
- hip mobility;
- thoracic spine mobility;
- shoulder mobility;
- wrist flexibility.

Mobility exercises can be incorporated into warm-up and recovery sessions. Improved mobility may help athletes achieve more efficient lifting positions and reduce unnecessary technical compensations.

A strong and stable trunk is essential for transferring force between the lower and upper body. Core training should therefore be included in the conditioning program.

Appropriate exercises may include:

- planks;
- side planks;
- controlled trunk rotations;
- loaded carries;
- anti-extension exercises;
- anti-rotation exercises.

The purpose of core training is not simply to increase abdominal strength but to improve the athlete's ability to maintain stable body positions under load. One of the most important principles for improving physical conditioning is periodization.

A general annual training structure can include:

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Training phase	Main objective	Typical emphasis
General preparation	Development of basic physical qualities	Strength, mobility, endurance
Strength phase	Increase maximal strength	Heavy resistance training
Power phase	Increase explosive performance	High-velocity movements
Pre-competition phase	Integration of strength and technique	Competition-specific exercises
Competition phase	Peak performance	High specificity, controlled volume
Recovery phase	Restoration	Low-intensity activity and mobility

The exact structure should be individualized according to the athlete's competition calendar and level of preparation.

Recovery is an essential component of physical conditioning. Adaptation occurs not simply because of training but because the body has sufficient opportunity to recover from training stress.

Important recovery factors include:

- adequate sleep;
- balanced nutrition;
- hydration;
- active recovery;
- mobility work;
- appropriate rest intervals;
- management of psychological stress.

Insufficient recovery can reduce performance and increase the likelihood of overreaching, overtraining, and injury.

Nutrition should support both performance and recovery. Weightlifters must balance energy intake with the requirements of intense training while maintaining an appropriate body weight for their competitive category.

Adequate protein supports muscle repair and adaptation, while carbohydrates contribute to the maintenance of training intensity and glycogen availability. Dietary fats are also important for overall health and physiological function.

Nutrition should therefore be individualized rather than based on a universal dietary prescription. An integrated approach based on the principles of specificity, progressive overload, individualization, variation, and recovery allows coaches to optimize training adaptations while reducing the risk of excessive fatigue and injury.

Therefore, the most effective strategy for improving weightlifters' physical conditioning is not simply increasing training intensity but creating a balanced system in which strength, power, technique, mobility, recovery, and nutrition are systematically coordinated.

Future research should focus on individualized training models, the use of wearable technologies for monitoring training loads, velocity-based training, recovery monitoring, and evidence-based nutritional strategies for weightlifters of different ages, body-weight categories, and competitive levels.

Conclusion. Improving the physical conditioning of weightlifters requires a comprehensive and individualized training approach. Maximal strength remains a fundamental component of performance, but it must be combined with explosive power, speed, mobility, coordination, core stability, and technical proficiency.

The analysis indicates that progressive resistance training, Olympic lifting variations, explosive exercises, mobility training, and properly organized periodization can contribute to improvements in the physical qualities required for competitive weightlifting. At the same time, training alone is

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insufficient to achieve optimal performance. Adequate recovery, nutrition, sleep, psychological preparation, and systematic monitoring of training loads are essential components of the preparation process.

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