



## The Top 3 Things You Can Do Right Now If You're Experienced In Strength Training

### #1. Compete with yourself - don't be complacent

Sometimes, when you've been working out for a long time, you get into the habit of doing the same things in the same way every workout. You may have a long streak going where you haven't missed a workout, and that kind of discipline is to be commended.

And as we get older, it's especially tempting to just "get through" each workout, and check it off on your to-do list.

**But I want to encourage you NOT to do that.** I don't want you to just *get through* the workout, I want you to *get something from* every workout.

A great way to do that is to think of the workout as a competition - with yourself. **Specifically, trying to do one more rep, or use 1 or 2 more pounds, than you did on that exercise last time.**

Of course, you may not go to go up on every exercise every single workout. But by incorporating this competitive mentality and always shooting for more than you did last time, I'll bet that 1.) you'll surprise yourself with how often you actually are able to do more; and 2.) even if you don't go up, you'll be exerting a maximum effort, and you'll feel a difference in the quality of your workouts.

**If you're really serious about being the best you can be and living the fullest life possible in your older years, strive to get a little better every workout.**

### #2. Use micro-loading to keep your weights going up



Sometimes when you've been working out steadily for many years you hit a plateau, where it seems like you've gotten as strong as you can possibly get on many (if not most) of your exercises.

But in training tons of advanced clients as a personal trainer, as well as in my own training, I've noticed something very interesting - **very often, if you increase the weight by just 1 pound, you can perform the same number of repetitions as you did with the weight you've been stuck at.**

That might not sound like a big deal, but if you were able to do that every 2 weeks on a certain exercise, over the course of a year you'd be using 25 pounds more! So on that exercise where you thought you'd "maxed out" at 250, at this time next year you're using 275.

**But how do you add 1 pound to the exercise?** Isn't 2 1/2 to 5 pounds the smallest jump you can make?

- For machine exercises with a weight stack, you can buy 1 pound magnetic add on weights ([Here's an example](#)).
- For dumbbell exercises, you can wear 1 pound wrist weights while you do the exercise. ([Here's an example](#)).
- And for barbell exercises, where you thought you could only go up 5 pounds at a time, you can go up 2 pounds (1 for each arm or leg) by securing your 1 pound wrist weights around each end of the bar.

**Give it a try and I bet you'll be happily using more weight on that "plateaued" exercise in a few weeks.**

### **#3. Don't let your ego get you in trouble**

Many years ago I was treating physical therapy patients in a sports medicine facility, and I got a new patient who had strained the rotator cuff muscles in his shoulder. When I first met him, I could tell the guy was an experienced weight lifter.



As I was treating his shoulder, I was asking about his strength training routine, and how he thought he had injured himself. He said he first felt the pain in his shoulder while doing barbell squats.

I told him that holding the bar behind his neck puts the shoulders in a very weak position, and it would be a great idea to switch to the leg press to avoid that stress on the shoulder joints in the future.

He refused. He couldn't bear the thought of giving up the barbell squat.

When I asked him why, his response was: **"I like hearing the plates rattle"**.

A couple weeks later his shoulder was healed, and we discharged him from therapy. But within a few weeks, he was back - this time with that same arm in a fancy sling.

He was back because he had surgery to repair a torn rotator cuff, which requires at least 4 months of painful rehab, and wearing a sling around the clock.

**Don't let something like this happen to you.** Once you're over 50, injuries are much harder to recover from, and you want to avoid any unnecessary risk in the gym.

**Remember 2 simple guidelines:**

1. *Strength training is supposed to help you, not hurt you. If something hurts in your joints, don't do it!*
2. *If an exercise looks dangerous, it probably is!*

**Think safety first, and you'll be able to continue training and stay strong and fit for a long, long time.**