

# **POWERLIFTING**

## **for beginners**



**The ultimate guide to training for  
and entering your first few competitions**

by David Penney PhD, DSc

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*Disclaimer:* Because physical exercise can be strenuous and subject to risk of serious injury, the reader should obtain a physical examination from a doctor before embarking on any exercise activity, including those outlined in this book. Always consult a suitably qualified professional before beginning any nutritional or exercise program, or using any unfamiliar training equipment. Never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have read or experienced. The content of this book is for information and educational purposes only and any exercise programs started are done so entirely at your own risk and the author and his affiliates cannot be held responsible for any injuries incurred as a result. It is always advisable to train under the supervision of an experienced coach. The information contained in this book is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment in any manner. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding any medical condition.

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# Foreword

As you enter the venue, the scent of sweat and iron fills your nostrils. The sound of death metal playing and barbells and steel plates clanking against the ground fills the air as you make your way to the seating area for the audience. As you walk by, you see men and women of all shapes and sizes, some with bulging muscles, others not, but all preparing to lift an incredible amount of weight on the platform that takes centre stage. It's an exciting and intimidating sight all at once.

There is a buzz in the air as the MC and the rest of the competition crew put all the final touches in place, and ready the platform to get the competition under way. The judges take their seats and the loaders add the weights to the bar ready for the first lift of the day. You can see a line of lifters waiting, pacing around, looking very focused, all of them 'in the zone'. The one at the front is chalking her hands and chomping at the bit, ready to get on the platform, but is prevented from doing so by a raised arm of one of the officials.

Eventually, the MC whips the crowd up into a frenzy ready to cheer on the first lifter of the day and announces that, "the bar is loaded" and the official lowers her arm to let the lifter access the platform. The crowd cheers her on as she storms up to the bar, steely eyed and sets up under it with power and passion. The platform spotter crew are there beside her but she does not notice them, such is her focus on the bar and the commands of the centre referee, which she follows with precision to execute a perfect opening squat to get the competition under way. "It's three white lights and a good lift", bellows out the MC. Within seconds the weights on the bar have been changed and the next lifter is called up to do the same as the crowd continues to cheer them on.

But what if I told you that at the next competition you could be one of the lifters?

This book will take you on a journey to discover the exciting world of competition powerlifting. Whether you're a complete beginner or someone who's been hitting the gym for a while, you'll learn everything you need to know to compete in this thrilling sport. Even if you are already a year or two in to powerlifting, you will still find plenty of useful information here.



It will cover the basics, including the three main lifts - squat, bench press, and deadlift – and give you tips and tricks to perfect your technique for training in preparation for executing all three lifts to competition standard on meet day.

You'll learn how to create a training program that works for you, and discover the mental toughness needed to push through your limits. You will also get an in-depth look at the world of competitive powerlifting, including what to expect on competition day, how to choose the right meet, and how to mentally and physically prepare yourself for the challenge ahead. A main aim of this book is to prepare you for your first few competitions, such that you avoid the myriad of potential newbie lifter mistakes, that so often result from an inadequate knowledge of what to expect on the day and can easily result in you bombing out (being disqualified) of the competition completely.

With the right mindset, training, and dedication, you'll be well on your way to becoming a powerlifting champion. So, what are you waiting for? Let's get started!

Powerlifting is suitable for most people and you are never too old to get started. Zahida Bibi is a 45-year-old mother of three young children, seen here getting some experience at a non-sanctioned 'club' competition, 2023. Six years ago Zahida visited the gym three times per week but would never have considered lifting weights. When she started she would never have entertained the idea of competing. Now she is a PT and trains other women, with a primary focus on barbell lifts. Image credit FMX.