

The Physical Performance Center



AT GASTON REHAB ASSOCIATES, INC.

PPC TRAINING TIPS – Eccentric Exercises Cory Barsness, CSCS

Eccentric exercises or “negatives” is a method to increase strength. The concentric contraction is the lifting portion of weight training where the force of the muscle is greater than weight. The isometric contraction has equal force of the weight. The eccentric portion is the lowering of the weight, in which, the force of the weight coming down is greater than the muscle’s force. The body is designed to protect itself, so it can withstand more force than it can produce. Imagine the ease of lowering a very heavy object and now imagine the effort of picking that heavy object up. Also, for individuals who may have difficulty performing certain exercises, training with “negatives” will increase their strength to be able to perform those exercises. Finally, these exercises allow for individuals to experience heavier resistance, which will help individuals increase strength. However, using eccentric exercises too often may lead to overtraining and decreases in strength.

Try these eccentric exercises, until you feel your muscles are not producing any force against the resistance of the weight (usually 6 – 12 reps). Your muscles will not benefit from performing more “negatives” after the point of failure.

Negative Pull Ups: Use a chair or bench to reach the top of pull up bar with your chin, grab hold of the bar with the grip of your choice and lower your body as slow as possible. When you have completely lowered yourself, let go and step up to the bar again and repeat until failure.

Negative Bench Press: Be sure to use 3 spotters. A spotter should be on both sides of the barbell and in a traditional spotting technique behind the bench. With the spotters help, the bar is lifted into starting position of the bench press and allows for adequate loading time of 3 seconds. Lower the bar until the barbell is almost touching the lifter at the midline of the chest, then the spotters will lift the barbell back to the starting position and the lifter will repeat until failure.

Negative Squats: Use 3 spotters, like the bench press. Follow the procedure for the bench press, but perform the negative portion of the squat until thighs are parallel with the ground.

With the safety of a spotter you can do “negatives” for most exercises. Typically, stick to large muscle groups or multi-joint exercises because of the amount of force put on your muscles.