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### The Deadlift

The deadlift is one of the best all around exercises in a strength and conditioning coaches exercise tool box. You would be hard-pressed to find a single weight-training movement that is more complete than the deadlift.

The deadlift effectively works: overall grip, core strength and the posterior chain (upper back to calves). As great a training lift as the deadlift is, it is also possibly one of the most difficult compound lifts to learn. It is extremely important for both proper results and injury prevention that an athlete be sure they are always using proper technique.

The following will provide a step by step guide to proper deadlifting technique:

#### Step 1:

Step up to the barbell so that the bar covers the second shoe lace up from the tip of your shoe. Always make sure to use full sized training plates when learning the deadlift as full-sized plates will ensure you start in a proper lifting position. If you do not have access to bumper plates of various weights to do this, you can create a starting platform by stacking weight plates under the plates on the bar till the bar is in a proper starting position.

#### Step 2:

Lower yourself to the bar by keeping your chest high while pushing your hips back. Imagine someone is pulling you backward from the waist. Keep the low back naturally rounded, do not curve the spine to get down to the bar. Sitting on your heels will help you push the hips back.

#### Step 3:

As your hips continue back, bend your knees a bit to get you down to the barbell. Make sure to keep the hips high as you bend the knees. Grasp the barbell with a grip that puts your forearms right up against the sides of your thighs. Once you have grasped the bar make sure to keep your eyes up but your head in its neutral position. Do not crane your neck up by lifting your chin, keep your chin down and the chest up, tighten your triceps a bit to ensure that you're locked into position.

#### Step 4:

Make sure to hold a breath of air in your stomach to help stabilize your spine, to initiate the lift, drive the heels into the floor, and push your hips forward as your knees extend. The hips and knees should extend simultaneously, and the shoulders and hips should rise together. If the back rounds it will result in the hips shooting ahead of the shoulders, if the core is kept tight and the shoulders back as the hips drive FORWARD the bar will rise as the hips and leg drive.



## Powering Sport Performance

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# Performance Point

## The Deadlift

### Step 5:

As you reach lockout, imagine pinching a pencil between your butt cheeks (glutes) at the top to lock the weight out. This glute activation helps to prevent you from leaning back to finish the movement and stopping short. At lockout, your shoulder blades (scapulae) should be back and down, do not shrug the weight up by elevating the shoulders.

### Step 6:

Initiate the eccentric portion (lowering) of the lift by pushing the bum back to unlock the hips without losing neutral spine. Keep the bar tight to the thighs, by breaking the hips you will pass the knees without hitting them with the bar.

### Step 7:

As the bar is lowered, only bend the knees once the bar has passed them. Do not try break at the knees and hips simultaneously as this will result in rounding of the back to pass the bar over the knees. Make sure to sit the hips back throughout the lowering and feel the weight to the heels.



### Common Issues with Deadlifting

Poor flexibility in the hips and lower back often leads to improper technique. For athletes with poor flexibility deadlift training can begin with a more restricted range of motion. Partial range deadlifting can be conducted from within a squat cage (rack pulling), from the top of technique boxes or trays, and even from stacks of plates. It is important to remember to never force yourself into a compromised lifting position. If your flexibility will not allow for proper lifting technique make sure to address your mobility issues and work within a technically correct range of motion. Checking your ego at the door of the weight room can save you from spending time on the therapy table.

For more information on strength and conditioning services, please contact [Tyler Goodale](#)

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