

OLYMPIC WEIGHTLIFTING TRAINING GUIDE

VENUS WEIGHTLIFTING CLUB





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Founded in 2015 by Gaby QU as China's first weightlifting club, Venus Weightlifting is driven by the philosophy "Human Before Athlete." Our mission is to make weightlifting safe, enjoyable, and accessible to people of all ages.

Combining Chinese coaching expertise, years of experience, and our unique Body Alignment Training, we aim to build a global community where weightlifting becomes a lifelong, sustainable journey toward health and personal growth.

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WHAT IS OLYMPIC WEIGHTLIFTING?

OLYMPIC WEIGHTLIFTING CONSISTS OF TWO PRIMARY LIFTS:

the snatch and the clean and jerk. These lifts involve raising a heavy barbell from the ground to an overhead position with explosive, precise movements. The sport emphasizes:



STRENGTH

To lift and control the barbell effectively.



EXPLOSIVENESS

To generate power and speed for efficient lifts.



STABILITY

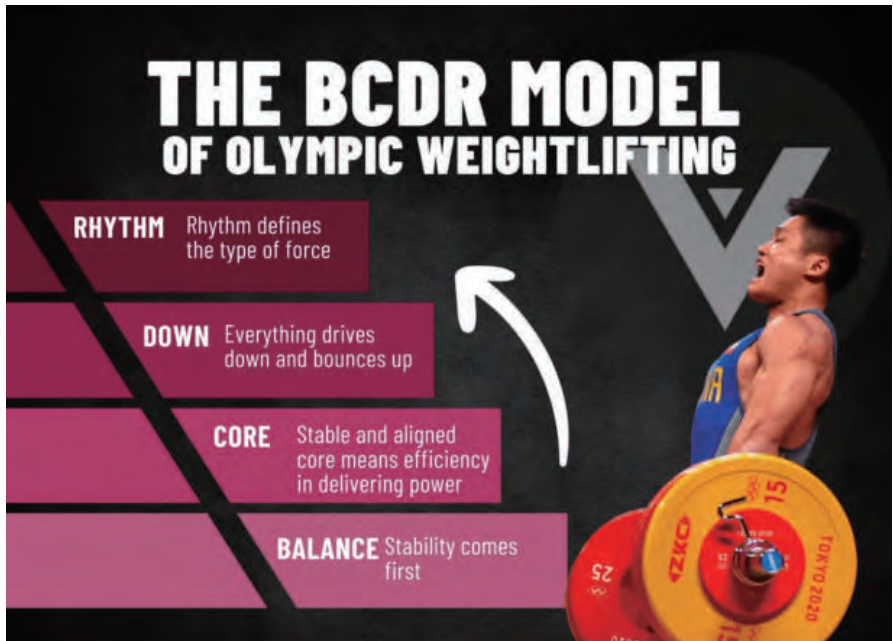
To maintain balance and control, especially in overhead positions.

Olympic weightlifting demands physical power, technical skill, mobility, and mental focus.



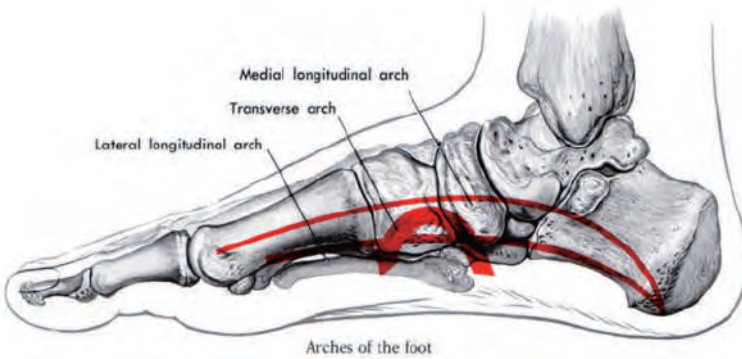
BASIC PRINCIPLES OF WEIGHTLIFTING: THE BCDR MODEL

Learning Olympic Weightlifting can feel overwhelming, with countless technical cues that often leave beginners confused. Many lifters focus too much on external form, like whether they jump backward or forward during a snatch, without realizing this is a natural by-product of proper movement—not the goal itself. Without a solid grasp of technique, this approach can lead to poor habits and long-term issues.



At Venus Weightlifting, we've developed the BCDR model through years of coaching to help lifters build a strong technical foundation. This model focuses on core principles, ensuring athletes understand proper execution. By prioritizing technique, the BCDR model helps lifters improve safely, avoid common pitfalls, and build lasting strength.

B – BALANCE



- Stability begins with the contacting surface, not your core;
- So true stability comes from maintaining your center of gravity over the mid-foot.
- Focus on pressing through the balls of your feet to generate force and stay balanced during lifts.

C – CORE

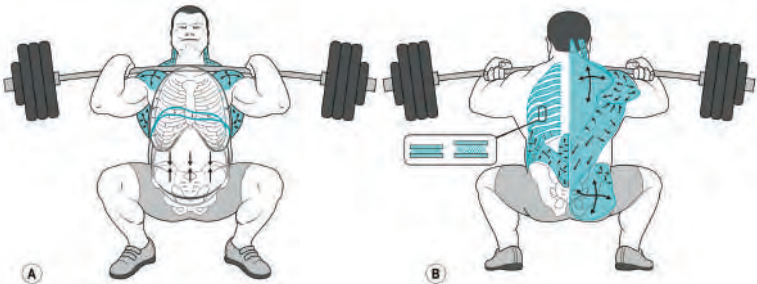


Figure 2.1.7 Eccentric activation of the stabilizers during postural tasks. The timing is important: stabilizing muscles must first activate eccentrically expanding the trunk's volume, and then hold the stabilizing activation isometrically (or even concentrically). Only the diaphragm and the pelvic floor muscles are concentrically activated from the start.

Quote from *Recognizing and Treating Breathing Disorders: A Multidisciplinary Approach* Book by Christopher Gilbert, Dinah Bradley, and Leon Chaitow

THE CORE NEEDS TO BE STABLE TO ENHANCE POWER TRANSMISSION AND PROTECT THE SPINE.

BREATHING AND BRACING:

- Exhale to activate the tension around your belly,
- Inhale deeply through your nose to fill your torso with air, especially to the back and upper thorax(feel the tension beneath your armpit).
- Hold the tension (Valsalva maneuver) to stabilize your core during the lift.
- Exhale only after the lift is complete.

D - (DRIVE) DOWN

- Power starts from the ground. Focus on driving down through your feet rather than pulling up throughout the movement, This maximizes reaction force from the ground. Not your upperbody or lower back pulling. They are not as strong as you think.

R - RHYTHM

OLYMPIC WEIGHTLIFTING IS LIKE CONDUCTING A SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, FOLLOWING ITS OWN RHYTHM:

- the buildup (bar to above the knee), the transition (above the knee to the launch point), the climax (triple extension), and finally the ending (catch and standing up).
- As the conductor, you must orchestrate the rhythm throughout the entire performance. A smooth rhythm ensures optimal power transfer from the triple extension to the barbell, and even the smallest misstep can lead to failure.

Ultimately, you must discover and master your own rhythm.





SNATCH

The SNATCH is the first of two lifts contested in the sport of Olympic weightlifting. The athlete lifts the barbell from the floor to a stable overhead position in a single action.

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Movement library

SNATCH EXECUTION PHASES

The snatch is performed through five (5) distinct phases. In each phase, we have broken down the movement to provide the athlete with clear objectives and cues for each of the different stages of the lift. Each phase can be tackled in training on its own, or in combination with other in-sequence phases to help athletes improve weaknesses.

ESTABLISH YOUR SNATCH GRIP*

CHECKPOINT #1



Ensure that the bar contacts your hip crease in the pull. You can do this by picking up the bar and adjusting your grip such that the bar meets your hip when you're standing up straight. Ensure you have a good grip on the bar at all times!

CHECKPOINT #2



Ensure that the bar clears your head in the overhead position when you complete your snatch. You can do this by holding the bar in the overhead position with the same grip established at Checkpoint #1.

It is important to note that while this is general prescription, every lifter is different and you need to find a grip that helps you optimize your lift!



PHASE 1 - PREPARATORY POSITION

Hands should be snatch-grip width apart;

Feet in a power stance, hip-width apart, toes turned slightly outward;

Balance: heels in full contact with the ground, with 70% of your weight on the balls of your feet;

Shoulders slightly over the bar, arms lengthened, elbows soft, bar hanging on your hands, back in a straight or slightly arched position, spine lengthened & kept rigid. Head up, eyes forward!





PHASE 2 - PUSHING

FLOOR TO MID-THIGH:

Push your legs into the floor to let the bar hang on your body and lift off of the floor to around mid-thigh height, back angle stays almost the same.



PHASE 3 - EXTENSION

MID-THIGH TO END OF PULL:

Legs still pushing hard against the ground, continue to open up the angle of your hips until your hips are fully extended. Arms upward rotated to send the bar up to the highest place to be caught.



PHASE 4 - CATCHING

END OF PULL TO CATCHING BAR AT BOTTOM:

Pull yourself under the bar and drop quickly into a squat, shifting your feet into a squat stance. Catch the bar with fully extended arms in an overhead catching position.



PHASE 5 - STANDING UP

Maintain the bar in a fully locked overhead position and ensure that you maintain control as you stand up. Once you've stood stably to full extension with the bar securely locked out overhead, you can lower the bar in front of you safely, having completed the lift!

WHY SHOULD I TRAIN THE SNATCH?

FOR OLYMPIC WEIGHTLIFTERS

Since the snatch is one of the two competitive lifts in Olympic weightlifting competitions, it is an essential lift to train. Lifters have to train the snatch often for the purpose of improving their snatch numbers.

FOR SPORTS PERFORMANCE

While the Snatch is a very specialised olympic lift, its training has transference to other sports as well. In a sport that trains maximal power and speed, the Snatch can be used in training to develop power output and coordination.

However, the Snatch is not as often adapted into training as the power clean, because the snatch has more prerequisites for one's mobility and flexibility.

SEQUENCE IN TRAINING:

Start on your dynamic lifts (Snatch, Clean and Jerk) right after warming-up, and before additional strength training accessory work such as deadlifts or squats.

WEIGHT/REP/SET:

The general training weight would be prescribed around 70–100% of the best lift depending on the desired adaptation for the training session.

REST:

We recommend anywhere between 90 – 120 seconds of rest. If you are in a heavy training day, up to 5 mins of rest can be considered.

FREQUENCY:

2–3 times / per week.



CLEAN AND JERK TECHNIQUE



The clean and jerk combines two movements: the clean and the jerk.

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Movement library

CLEAN EXECUTION PHASES

The clean is performed through five (5) distinct phases. In each phase, we have broken down the movement to provide the athlete with clear objectives and cues for each of the different stages of the lift. Each phase can be tackled in training on its own, or in combination with other in-sequence phases to help athletes improve weaknesses.

ESTABLISH YOUR CLEAN GRIP*

Firstly, understanding what your clean grip is, is fundamental to getting a successful lift. This will set you up to prepare for the jerk, the second part of the movement which brings the bar from your shoulders into the overhead position. Thus, we must ensure that the width of our grip is optimized to allow the bar to be lifted with the most force that our body can possibly generate.

Most CrossFit or Weightlifting gyms prescribe a “one-thumb from the knurling” measure, but this can be over-generalised for people with differing limb and body proportions, after all, barbells are made a certain size and we are all made different.

1. Ensure the barbell gets in contact with your upper thigh in the standing position or the point of extension
2. Ensure that the barbell is able to clear your head in the overhead position



HOW TO ESTABLISH YOUR CLEAN GRIP

CHECKPOINT #1



Ensure that the bar contacts your upper thigh in the pull. You can do this by picking up the bar and adjusting your grip such that the bar meets your upper thigh when you're standing up straight. Ensure you have a good grip on the bar at all times!

CHECKPOINT #2



Ensure that the bar sits comfortably on your deltoids in the front rack position. You can do this by holding the bar in the front position with the same grip established at Checkpoint #1 and adjusting your hands accordingly.

MUST I HAVE FULL GRIP ON THE BAR WHEN IT IS RACKED ON MY SHOULDERS?

Ideally yes, it can help prevent the bar from “crashing” on your shoulders at the bottom of the clean, BUT this may not be ideal for everyone. If your mobility is poor or you are limited by your limb length, forcing a full grip may result in greater injury.

P.S. We refer to the bar resting on your "shoulders" but in actual fact the weight is fully loaded on your trunk instead of your shoulders or hands.



PHASE 1 - PREPARATORY POSITION

Hands should be clean-grip* width apart

Feet in a power stance, hip-width apart, toes turned slightly outward

Balance: heels in full contact with the ground, with 70% of your weight on the balls of your feet

Shoulders slightly over the bar, arms lengthened, elbows soft, bar hanging on your hands, back in a straight or slightly arched position, spine lengthened & kept rigid. Head up, eyes forward!



PHASE 2 - PUSHING

FLOOR TO MID-THIGH:

Push your legs against the floor to let the bar hang on your body and lift off the floor to around mid-thigh height, maintaining the angle in your back.



PHASE 3 - EXTENSION

MID-THIGH TO END OF PULL:

Legs still pushing hard against the ground, continue to open up the angle of your hips until your hips are fully extended. Keep your elbows rotated forwards and spin your self down with your feet move into a squat stance. As you do this, lower your body, and dive down fast to squat at the bottom.



PHASE 4 - CATCHING

END OF PULL TO CATCHING BAR AT BOTTOM:

Pull yourself under the bar and drop quickly into a squat, shifting your feet into a squat stance. Catch the bar on your shoulders and above your collarbone in an upright squat position.

IMPORTANT NOTE FOR YOUR GRIP:

Be sure to not grip the bar tightly as you finish the turnover—gripping tightly will slow the turnover of the elbows in the front rack position. Start relaxing the tension and slide the thumb out of the hook grip as the elbows are coming around in front to ensure a quick, fluid motion into their final position.

**PHASE 5 - STANDING UP****END OF PULL TO CATCHING BAR AT BOTTOM:**

Maintain the bar in an upright position and ensure that you maintain control as you stand up. Once you've stood to full extension with the bar securely on your shoulders, you can either lower the bar in front of you safely, having completed the lift (if it's just a clean) or regrip the bar to prepare for a jerk (in a full clean and jerk movement).



WHY SHOULD I TRAIN THE CLEAN?

FOR OLYMPIC WEIGHTLIFTERS

Since the clean and jerk is one of the two competitive lifts in Olympic weightlifting competitions, it is an essential lift to train. Lifters have to train the clean often for the purpose of improving their clean and jerk numbers.

FOR SPORTS PERFORMANCE

While the Clean is a very specialised olympic lift, its training has transference to other sports as well.

In a sport that trains maximal power and speed, the Clean can be used in training to develop power output and coordination. This movement is often used to develop power output & coordination for high performance sports, for example: American football. Judo, or rowing etc.

SEQUENCE IN TRAINING:

Start on your dynamic lifts (Snatch, Clean and Jerk) right after warming-up, and before additional strength training accessory work such as deadlifts or squats.

WEIGHT/REP/SET:

The general training weight would be prescribed around 70-100% of the best lift depending on the desired adaptation for the training session.

REST:

We recommend anywhere between 90 - 120 seconds of rest. If you are in a heavy training day, up to 5 mins of rest can be considered.

FREQUENCY:

2-3 times / per week.

THE SPLIT JERK

SPLIT JERK TECHNIQUE

The split jerk is the second movement in the clean and jerk sequence, where the barbell is lifted from the front rack position to a locked-out overhead position using a split stance. This movement allows the lifter to stabilize heavy loads with maximum efficiency.

JERK EXECUTION PHASES

Like the clean and snatch, the split jerk is broken into five distinct phases. Each phase outlines key objectives and cues to ensure optimal execution.

These phases can be practiced separately or in combination to address specific areas of improvement.

ESTABLISH YOUR JERK GRIP

Before starting, it's essential to establish the correct grip, which sets you up for success in the jerk. The grip should allow you to:

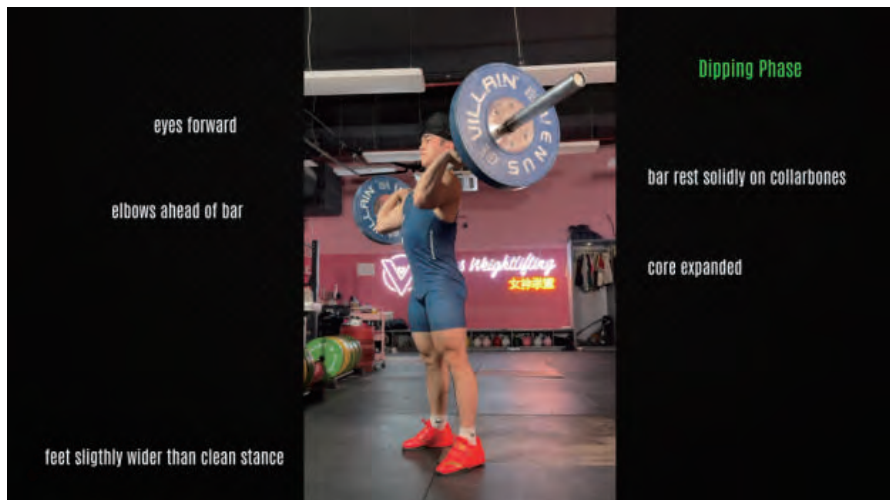
1. Maintain barbell stability in the front rack position.
2. Generate maximum force to propel the bar overhead.



KEY POINTS:

The grip width is slightly wider than your clean grip. Ensure the barbell sits securely on your shoulders (front rack position) with elbows slightly in front of the bar.

Avoid over-gripping; the bar should rest on your thorax, not be held up by your arms. Relax your hands slightly to prepare for the explosive dip and drive.



PHASE 1 – PREPARATORY POSITION

FEET POSITION:

Stand in a power stance slightly wider than feet hip-width apart, toes slightly turned outward for balance.

FRONT RACK SETUP:

Barbell rests on the shoulders, close to the base of the neck.

Elbows are slightly in front of the bar, but not too high (to prevent overloading the wrists).

BODY ALIGNMENT:

Keep your spine neutral, chest up, and core braced to support the load.

WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION:

Ensure your weight is evenly distributed over the mid-foot and heels.



PHASE 2 - DIP

FROM THE PREPARATORY POSITION:

Lower your body by bending your knees and hips slightly while keeping your torso vertical.

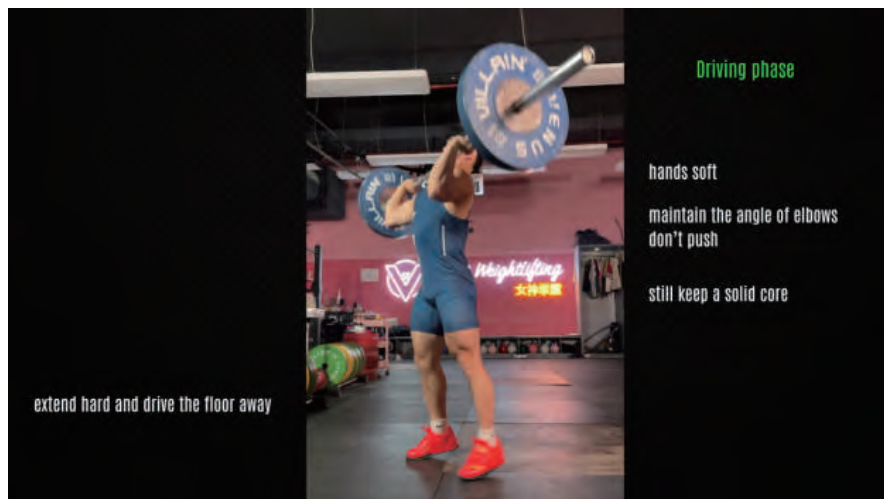
Keep the bar path vertical—avoid forward or backward lean.

The dip should be smooth, controlled, and no deeper than about a quarter squat.

CUES:

Think of compressing a spring to generate upward force.

Keep your heels in contact with the ground.



PHASE 3 - DRIVE

FROM THE PREPARATORY POSITION:

Explosively extend your legs and hips to drive the bar upward.

Transfer the generated force through your torso into the barbell.

Keep your elbows relaxed, driving the bar upward rather than forward.

CUES:

Focus on an aggressive, powerful upward movement.

Maintain a straight bar path as you drive.



PHASE 4 - SPLIT AND LOCKOUT

FROM THE PREPARATORY POSITION:

1. As the bar reaches maximum height, split your legs into the split stance:
 - Front foot steps forward, landing flat.
 - Back foot moves back, landing on the ball of your foot.
2. Simultaneously, punch the bar overhead, fully extending your arms into a locked-out position. Ensure your head is slightly forward under the barbell.
3. The bar should stabilize directly above the center of gravity.

CUES:

- Move your feet quickly—think of “pushing the floor apart.”
- Drive the bar aggressively overhead while splitting.



PHASE 5 - RECOVERY

FROM THE PREPARATORY POSITION:

1. Bring your feet back together to return to a stable standing position:

First, bring the front foot halfway back.

Then, bring the back foot forward to meet the front foot.

2. Keep the bar locked overhead until both feet are in line, and you're fully upright.

3. Once stable, lower the bar safely.

CUES:

Recover your balance before lowering the bar.

Maintain tension in your core and shoulders to stabilize the load.

WHY TRAIN THE SPLIT JERK?

FOR OLYMPIC WEIGHTLIFTERS

As the final component of the clean and jerk, the split jerk is essential for competition. It allows lifters to stabilize maximal loads overhead, making it a critical skill to master.

TRAINING RECOMMENDATIONS

SEQUENCE:

Practice after warm-up and before accessory exercises like presses or pulls.

WEIGHT/REP/SET:

Train at 70-90% of your best lift depending on the goal (technique, strength, or max effort).

REST:

Allow 2-5 minutes of rest between sets to recover fully.

FREQUENCY:

Include 2-3 sessions per week for skill and strength development.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Practice footwork drills to improve speed and accuracy in your split stance.
Ensure your core is engaged to stabilize the bar overhead.

MOBILITY AND FLEXIBILITY TRAINING TIPS

Mobility is essential for safe, effective weightlifting. Focus on these areas:

FEET AND TOES:

Weak toes and arches often limit ankle mobility. Strengthen these areas for better foundation.

CORE STABILITY:

Learn proper bracing techniques to stabilize your core. Avoid over-arching your lower back, which inhibits hip function.

INNER THIGHS AND HAMSTRINGS:

Strengthen these muscles to alleviate knee pain and improve hip function.

SHOULDER MOBILITY:

Balanced hips and strong fingers and relaxed arms improve shoulder mobility.



TRAINING PLAN TIPS FOR BEGINNERS

WARM-UP:

Weak toes and arches often limit ankle mobility. Strengthen these areas for better foundation.

CORE ACTIVATION

Learn proper bracing techniques to stabilize your core. Avoid over-arching your lower back, which inhibits hip function.

EMPTY BAR PRACTICE:

Always warm up your jerk with an empty barbell, especially when switching lifts.

STRENGTH FOUNDATION:

Incorporate squats and deadlifts as they are essential for building power.

ACCESSORY WORK:

Use elastic tempo to strengthen tendons and ligaments, not in the hypertrophy style.

SAFETY TIPS

Prioritize proper form over lifting heavy weights.

Rest adequately between sets and sessions.

Avoid lifting when fatigued or in pain.

COMPETITION TIPS

Familiarize yourself with competition rules.

Strategize your attempts wisely, starting with a weight you're confident lifting.

Once you are on the stage, focus on yourself, not the audience.



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