

# RPE - Strength Training

**RPE (Rate of Perceived Exertion)** in strength training measures how close a set feels to muscular failure - or how many reps you can do **WITH GOOD FORM**.

Often linked to **“Reps in Reserve” (RIR)** - the number of repetitions you could have completed before reaching failure in a set.

10

## MAX EFFORT (RIR-0)

failed or very near failure last 1-2 reps for most exercises, breathing very heavy, lots of ugly lifting faces/grunting to get out last reps



9

## VERY HARD (RIR-1)

near failure last 1-2 reps for most exercises - could perform one more rep with good form, breathing heavy but feel ready to do next set after rest, lots of ugly lifting faces/grunting to get out last reps



8

## HARD (RIR-2)

last 1-2 reps hard but could perform 2 more quality reps. Feel ready to do next set after rest, some ugly lifting faces and shaking/slower movements during last reps



7

## MODERATE (RIR-3)

could have done 2-3 more reps - good indication you can go up in weight or reps next time!

5-6

## LIGHT-MODERATE (RIR-4+)

could have done 4+ more reps - good indication you can go up in weight or reps next time!

Deload RPE or where to start if you were sick and getting back into training

Good place to start if you are NEW to strength training - build from here



**Target for most lifting sessions should be 7-9 out of 10**

-if you are at a 7 this is a good indication you can increase load next time!

-Deloads or people starting a new lifting program can aim for 5-6 range and build.

**HARD TRUTH** - most people THINK they are at a 7-9/10 but they are actually much LOWER - use the above guidelines to assess where you truly are - be honest with yourself because this is how we build muscle, improve body composition and fitness, and promote metabolic health

# Signs You're NOT Training Hard Enough...



## #1 LAST FEW REPS AREN'T SLOWER

- As you get close to muscular failure, your reps should get slower - even if you're trying to move the weight quickly.
- If your final reps look almost identical in speed to your first few reps, you likely still have more reps "left in the tank"
- When you're training with the right level of effort, **those last 1-3 reps should feel noticeably harder and move slower.**

## #2 THE LAST FEW REPS ON THE LAST SET AREN'T SHAKY & YOU AREN'T MAKING AN UGLY FACE WHEN YOU PERFORM THEM

- If you are doing 3 sets of an exercise, the last 2-3 reps should be HARD to the point where you are shaky, making an ugly face, &/or grunting when you are doing them.
- You MAY even fail the last rep - this is NOT a bad thing!
- **\* remember movement SAFETY is priority - we want it to be VERY challenging while keeping movement quality high!**



## #3 USING THE SAME WEIGHT & THE SAME REPS FOR EVERY SET

- Each Set should feel HARDER than the next!
- you need to **add** heavier weight if you're able to do the same reps across all three sets
  - example 30lbs x 8reps x 3 sets >>> add weight
- **\*IF this happens take the LAST set (set 3) to max reps - keep going until you can no longer perform another rep - this will give you an idea of how much you had "left in the tank"**
- A slight rep decrease in later sets is usually a sign you're pushing hard enough.
  - example: 30lbs x 8 reps; 30lbs x 7 reps; 30lbs x 5 reps



## #4 REST PERIOD IS TOO SHORT FOR MAIN COMPOUND LIFTS

- Compound lifts (squats, deadlifts, bench & strict press, rows) are demanding
- If you're training with real effort, you should be resting 2-3min in order to get the correct rest time to go into the next set!
- The goal isn't to leave the gym destroyed, but to challenge your muscles enough to create adaptation.

**\*HERES A VIDEO TO HIGHLIGHT WHAT ADEQUATE TRAINING INTENSITY SHOULD LOOK LIKE!**

[CLICK HERE](#)