

In previous installments of my series on off-season football workouts, I have discussed building stability, strength and increasing lean body mass. (Read [Part 1](#), [Part 2](#) and [Part 3](#) to get caught up.) If you've completed the first three phases, you have prepared your body to handle Part 4, the most intense lifting in this program.

Here, the purpose is simply to develop as much muscular strength as possible to increase overall performance. Football is a game of strength, and you must be able to outmuscle and outmatch your opponent.

The maximum strength phase of your off-season football strength training program will use the same full-body routine. You'll perform two to three exercises for each major body part, focusing on maximal intensity—i.e., 90 to 100 percent of your max. Sets increase, but due to the high intensity, you'll perform fewer reps. Since strength gain is the goal of this phase, one to three reps at max weight loads will be commonly used. Having a spotter present will be essential. Also, **never sacrifice technique to make maximum gains**. This will help you stay injury-free.

Phase 4: Football Strength Training Program

- **Reps:** 1-5 (Decrease by two reps per week)
- **Sets:** 4-6
- **Percent of Max:** 85-100 percent (increase by three to five percent per week on each exercise)
- **Frequency:** 3 to 4 times per week
- **Duration:** 3 to 4 weeks
- **Exercise Selection:** 2 to 3 exercises per muscle group

Day 1

- Chest
 - Barbell or Dumbbell Bench
 - Single-Arm Physioball Dumbbell Incline Bench
- Leg
 - Barbell Parallel Squat
 - Bulgarian Split-Squat
- Shoulders
 - Dumbbell Push Press
 - Dumbbell Reverse Deltoid Fly
- Back
 - Barbell Bent-Over Row
 - Weighted Chin-Ups
- Explosive
 - Single-Arm Dumbbell Snatch
 - Plate Cork Screws
 - Plate Bear Crawls
 - Single-Leg Hurdle To Low Box Jump

Day 2

- Chest
 - Single-Arm Dumbbell Close-Grip Bench
 - Weighted Tempo (Plyo) Push-Up
- Legs
 - Deadlift
 - Goblet Lunge
- Shoulders

- Barbell Split Press
- Dumbbell Upright Row
- Back
 - Single-Arm Bent-Over Alternating Dumbbell Row
 - Single-Arm Lat Pulldown
- Explosive
 - Hand Clean
- Core and Reactive
 - Standing Med Ball Circles
 - Med Ball Russian Twist
 - Depth Jump to High Box Jump

Day 3

- Chest
 - Dumbbell or Barbell Incline Bench
 - Dumbbell Single-Arm Reverse-Grip Bench
- Legs
 - Barbell Front Squat
 - Single-Leg Back Extension
- Shoulders
 - Side-to-Side Jackknife Push-Ups
 - Dumbbells Scaption to Shrug
- Back
 - Standing Cable Row to Neck
 - Single-Arm Inverted Row
- Explosive
 - Tire Flips
- Core and Reactive
 - Standing Med Ball Russian Twists
 - Weighted Windshield Wipers
 - Short Hurdler Later Jump to Linear High Box Jump

Source: Michael Clark and Scott Lucett. *NASM Essentials of Sports Performance Training*. National Academy of Sports Medicine, 2007.

Photo: natchezdemocrat.com

Photo Credit: Getty Images // Thinkstock

Updated: May 25, 2012