

## **4-Check Points of Proper Lifting**

by Ben Bethea

Minor League Director of Conditioning, San Diego Padres

While performing any exercise, which a resistance is raised and lowered, one should observe the four checkpoints of a properly performed exercise:

1. Full range exercise
2. Eliminate fast or jerky movements while raising the weight
3. Emphasize the lowering of the weight
4. Allow approximately four seconds to lower the weight

### **Full Range of Motion**

Full range exercise implies that the resistance should be raised and lowered through the fullest range of movement that each exercise provides, allowing the muscles to be maximally developed through the full range of motion, maintaining and improving flexibility.

### **Slow and Controlled Movement**

Eliminating fast and jerky movements allows the muscles and only the muscles to raise the weight. If one raises a weight too fast, momentum becomes involved. If momentum is used, the muscles have not raised the weight completely. Using momentum to raise the weight will literally allow one to move more weight. However, it will be at the risk of injury and at the expense of not letting the muscles do all of the work.

### **Emphasize Lowering the Weight**

Another guideline that should be used is to pause momentarily in the contracted position when performing an exercise. There should be no bouncing or recoil of the weight at the transition point of the raising phase to the lowering phase. One should be able to stop and hold the resistance at the transition phase for a count of one second.

One should also emphasize the lowering of the weight because in any exercise, the same muscles are used to raise and lower the weight and gravity affects the weight. At a minimum, the same amount of emphasis should be placed on the lowering phase because it is one half of the exercise. Because of gravity it is much easier to lower a weight.

It is possible, unfortunately, to gain little or nothing from the lowering phase of an exercise. Once the weight is raised, one can merely allow it to fall to the resting position. If the lowering phase of the exercise is to be as intense and productive as the raising phase, one or two things must occur:

1. Take longer to lower the weight
2. Add more weight during the lowering phase.
3. Allow 4 Seconds to Lower the Weight

The final checkpoint implies one should allow approximately four seconds to lower the weight. Why four seconds? One must remember that these are only guidelines. The athlete should be primarily concerned with the overall amount of time spent performing each exercise. Allowing four seconds to lower the weight provides an adequate amount of time to effectively over the muscles. Anything less than four seconds will diminish the benefit that can be obtained.