

THE INDUSTRIAL ATHLETE DIGEST

Weekly Wellness & Safety Tips from Work Right NW



FEEL THE RHYTHM. IT'S ABOUT TIME!

VOLUME 10 |
ISSUE 05

BY SARA THISTLE, LAT, ATC, CSCS

Building strength is what all the cool kids are talking about these days. And why shouldn't they? It's challenging, it helps us take only **one** trip to bring the groceries in, and it systemically aids in many processes in our day-to-day as industrial athletes. So, what's there to talk about? Let's talk about possible avenues for progression as we work towards building our own strength.



INTRINSIC CONTRACT

Let's think of a basic bicep curl. When we're pumping that iron during a rep, there are two phases of a muscle contraction:

- **The concentric phase** (when the muscle shortens - i.e. bringing your wrist to your shoulder in the bicep curl)
- **The eccentric phase** (when the muscle lengthens - i.e. lowering that wrist/hand back down to your side in the bicep curl)

Now, the eccentric portion surely is the easiest phase of the muscle contraction. Most people probably don't even think about it. It's a way to return to the starting position so you can crush the next rep. But what if we focused a bit more on that lowering phase? It's during the *eccentric* phase that the runway to progression is laid and strength gains take flight.

RECOMMENDED METRIC

If focusing on eccentrics is so beneficial, your next question is probably, "But, Sara, I bet incorporating eccentrics is hard, right?" How about I answer with, "No, it's not!"

The secret is in the RHYTHYM of your workout. Instead of a stereotypical up - down - up - down, just take your time! Less scientifically, think up - downwwn. If you need a more technical version, try this:

Let's reimagine that same bicep curl:
UP: 1 second (to the top)
HOLD: 1 second (at the top)
DOWN: 4 seconds (return to the bottom)
HOLD: 1 second (at the bottom)

This tempo will work for ANY movement - squats, lunges, hamstring curls, or incline sit ups to name a few.



SARA'S CAUTION CORNER

To avoid "too much, too soon" be mindful of load in the beginning, starting conservatively and progressing over time. At it's most minor, this can look like delayed onset muscle soreness (DOMS), and at its most severe, a muscle strain more serious than DOMS. Don't be afraid of DOMS! Take it slow, listen to your body, and stay confident! Remember, challenging the status quo of your muscles is always a bit uncomfortable.