

# BARBARIC RITES

BY PAUL WAGGENER



**A STRENGTH PROGRAM FOR  
CAVEMEN, KNUCKLEDRAGGERS,  
AND BARBELL PRIMITIVES**



# BARBARIC RITES

Paul Waggener



This program is specifically designed for those individuals, who, like myself, appreciate simplicity and pure, cave-man barbarism in their workouts.

It dispenses with the frills and trends of current gym culture, and uses plain English and old school methodology to achieve its aim: To get stronger and grow dense, gnarly muscles through a minimalist yet intelligent approach, combined with maximal effort, discipline and consistency.

Whether you started lifting to lose fat, or to get thick, tight and solid, one thing remains constant: Aggressive, intelligent lifting of heavy weight over time will lead to results.

Modern programming seems to be more an exercise in mathematics than exercise at all.

Terminologies are seemingly invented every day to sell you some perfect, "Fibonacci-Sequence inspired linear program of time under tension combined with intermittent fasting, coupled with RPT over the fiscal year."

I've always found with training of any kind that simple is best, and when things start getting too complex, they often fall by the wayside.

What follows is a program of barbell only training (plus a chain belt for "bodyweight" movements like pull-up and dip) that uses principles similar to Wendler's 5/3/1, combined with a "powerbuilding" approach to ensure not only sheer power, but a solid amount of hypertrophy as well.

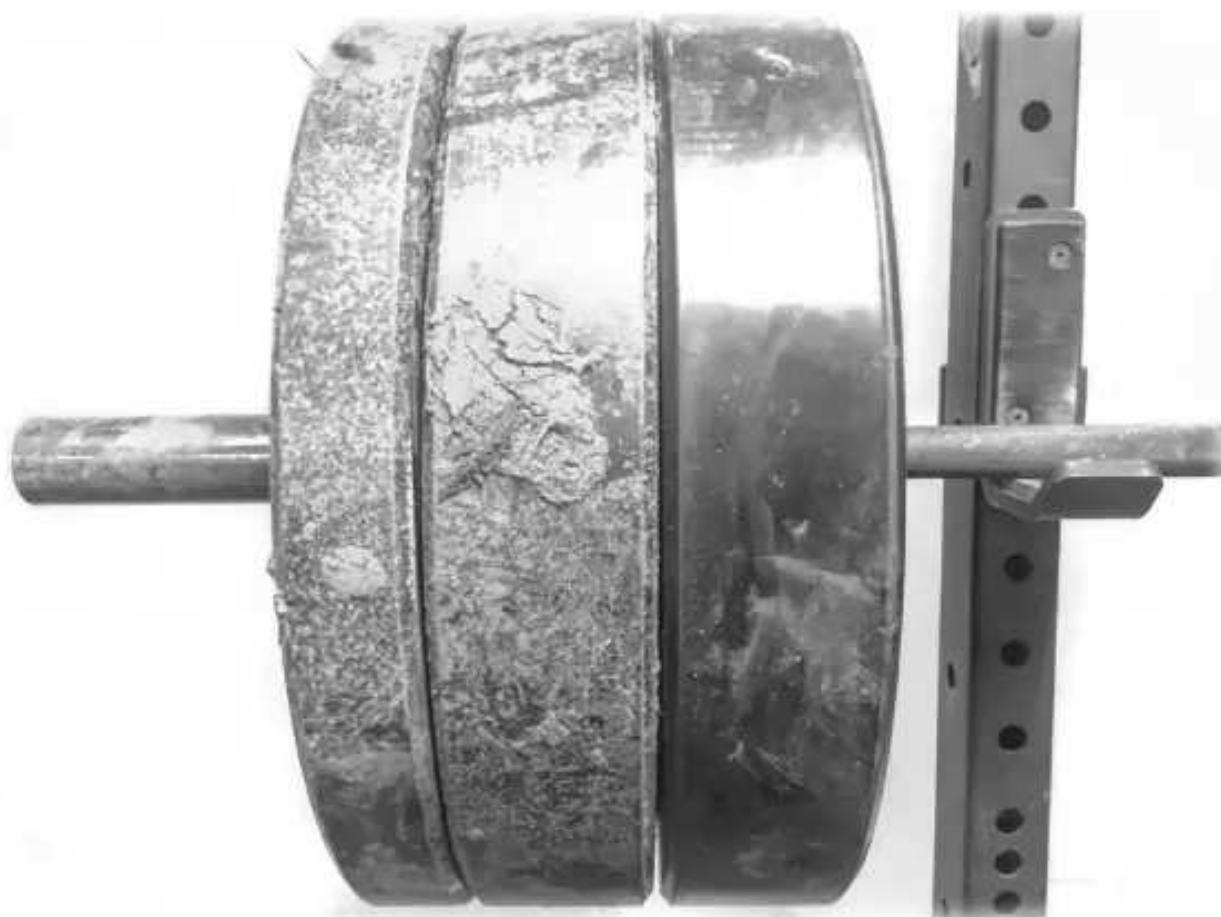
If you're a beginner, intermediate, or have been lifting for years, I believe this program will still work for you, because some things never change. Being strong and aesthetic will always be good, and always achievable by big weights, big meals, and big dedication.

Is this the perfect program?

The answer is, there is no perfect program but the one you will stick with. This is the perfect program for me, and has given me consistent results for years (never competed, but achieved and maintained a 200 strict overhead press, 365x2 bench, 415 squat, 505 deadlift at between 178 and 188 pounds), and I've always come back to this 1970's knuckle-dragger style of lifting for a few reasons:

It's fun. It works. It's simple.

Let's get started.



## A WORD ON NUTRITION

No matter what your goals are, or how much of a “savage” you are in the gym, if you don’t have some kind of plan for your nutrition, you’re pissing in the wind.

Essentially, there are three kinds of nutrition plans:

Fat Loss

Mass Gain

Maintenance

### FAT LOSS

Contrary to popular opinion, I believe that an individual can absolutely maintain, and in some cases actually increase his strength during any of these dietary phases- what matters is the “how.”

During a fat loss phase, an individual doesn’t have to become an ultra-runner, or go into some kind of death-camp diet, during which he lives on sawdust soup and eats only during his twenty minute “window.”

The “cutting phase” often takes on a ridiculous amount of flak because of how extreme some people get with it, but simply making relatively small alterations to the way you eat, combined with a reasonable time frame can make a huge difference.

Here’s the way I cut weight. For reference, I went from 198 to 174 for a Jiu Jitsu competition earlier this year. It took me 3 months to cut the weight, and all I did was make a few adjustments to my diet- I won’t deny that my strength took a bit of a hit during this time, but there was a combination of factors there, which included the amount of grappling I was doing.

A slow loss of fat doesn’t mean your muscles will all fall off, and if you’re primarily lifting weights as your main form of training, you can definitely maintain and sometimes gain strength while losing the excess fat, simply because fat doesn’t move weight- muscle does. There is an obvious correlation to overall mass and the ability to move poundage, but I’m simplifying, here.

Here's what a fat loss nutrition plan looks like for me:

I create a caloric deficit mainly by eating, but you can also add in some conditioning work (weight vest walking, sled drag or push, or simply even just...walking) to help the process along.

If you're not in caloric deficit, you're not losing weight.

During a fat loss phase, your total calorie intake should be about 10-12 calories per pound you weigh. This is the "fast and easy" calculation- see how it goes for a few weeks, then adjust in small increments- think in terms of 100 calories at a time, not 500.

The general rule of thumb for strength training is that 1.5 grams of protein per pound of bodyweight should make up the first calculation for what macronutrients make up this total calorie number.

Figure out 20-25% of your total, and assign this to your fat allotment.

Finally, fill in the rest with carbs. There's a ton of hype right now, and for the last couple years about carbs. I won't get into it here, but as someone who eats carbs and stays pretty lean and strong all year round, I can tell you they are not the devil they're made out to be.

So, to use where I am at the time of this writing, about 175 pounds, if I was trying to follow a fat loss diet, my totals would look like this:

Total Calories:  $11 \times 175 = 1,925$ kcal/day

Protein:  $1.5 \times 175 = 262$ g/day

Fat:  $.20 \times 1,925 = 42$ g/day

Carbs: about 125g/day

**THIS IS NOT AN EXACT SCIENCE.**

Calorie totals can be figured for the week, in order to fluctuate and add flexibility throughout the week.

Likewise, carbs and fats can be manipulated in order to allow more of one or the other. Just remember: a gram of protein or a gram of carbs is 4 calories. A gram of fat is 9 calories. Sort your totals accordingly.





## MASS GAIN

Usually, when people are massing, they use it as an excuse to go hog-wild and basically eat like an asshole. They turn themselves into a human dumpster, and justify it by saying they're massing up. Cool, you might be massing up, but you are also more than likely gaining a large amount of fat in doing so, leading to an inevitable vicious cycle of "dirty bulking/extreme cutting" which is a pretty masturbatory process.

You can mass and still not be a fat piece of shit.

My general rule of thumb for bulking is to keep the ability to see at least my top set of abdominals, and to always be no more than a few weeks away from reasonably visible abs.

Just like we need a caloric deficit to lose weight/fat, we need a caloric surplus to gain mass.

Gonna take a second here to stop the "hardgainers" in their tracks. There's always people who claim to eat a ton of food and not gain size- ok, we hear you. What you must do if you're having difficulty adding size is follow the general rules I'm going to lay down here, and then adjust based on your individual needs and metabolic rate.

This means, do what's prescribed here for 2-3 weeks. If you're not putting on weight, bump the calories up by 200 or so a day, and continue. Repeat until you're putting on weight at a reasonable rate. What's "reasonable" depends completely on whether or not you're putting on a lot of fat at the same time etc, but it's definitely within the realm of reason, steroids and other factors notwithstanding, for a healthy guy to put on between 3-5 pounds a month and not get too fat.

If this doesn't sound fast enough, remember this is a marathon not a sprint, and also that 1-2 pounds of actual muscle a month (because not all that weight gain will be muscle), equates to 12-24 pounds of solid muscle in a year. Not exactly nothing- but only achievable with iron consistency.

To gain mass, the following is a good base:

16-18 calories per pound of bodyweight.

1.5 g protein/pound bodyweight

20-25% calorie intake in fat  
Fill in the rest with carbs

Using myself as an example again, this would look something like this:

Calories:  $17 \times 175 = 2,975$

Protein:  $1.4 \times 175 = 245\text{g/day}$

Fat:  $.20 \times 2,975 = 66\text{g/day}$

Carbs: 350g/day

## **MAINTAINING**

To maintain, use the same calculations for macro totals as before, but get between 13-15 calories per pound of body weight a day.

Keep it simple, stupid.



## THE PROGRAM

Barbaric rites is a 4 day split. You can train more if you want by adding in some accessory work days, but I recommend using the days in between weight training to get some light conditioning in, like heavy bag, sled drags, weighted vest walking, or hill runs.

If you're using this program while training another demanding sport, like football or jiu-jitsu, or boxing, you can adjust the program by dropping 5-10% off of your training max. (We'll get to what that means in a minute.)

It's main focus, like any good program, is meat and potato lifts, which obviously include the so-called "Big 4," that being squat, deadlift, bench, and overhead press, but Barbaric Rites considers the list to be incomplete. Ours list is the "Supreme Six."

Deadlift. Bench. Squat. Press. Row. Pull-up.

The addition of a vertical and horizontal rowing motion into the main portion of the program will ensure that there are less imbalances in the training. A good rule of thumb is to make sure that you are doing twice as much volume for the posterior side of the body (hamstrings, back, rear deltoid, etc) as your are for the front. Most don't.

For human beings not being paid to lift weights, a good goal to shoot for on Pendlay Row 1RM should be as close to your max bench as possible. When the program calls for rows, it assumes Pendlay Rows, but you can sub in any row desired- Yates Rows, Snatch Grip Rows, whatever. Just row.

For pullups, a good goal is to be able to perform at least 1 rep with 1/2 of your body weight added on a chain, i.e. a 180 pound individual should look to be able to perform at least one solid rep with 90 pounds added weight. There is of course something to be said here about relative strength and so on, but these are only general guidelines.

## TRAINING MAX

Determine your training max by taking your 1 rep maximum (hereafter referred to as 1RM), and multiplying it by .90

This will be your training max (TM), and will be how you figure out all your weights for the training week. As mentioned, those working with another major physical demand on their week should figure their max by multiplying by .8 instead.

Ditto for the pull-up. Determine what your total weight maximum is by adding poundage to the chain belt until you can no longer perform a clean, eyes forward, non-leaping, no seizure at the top, smooth pull-up

Once you've determined your training maxes and sorted your nutrition out, you're ready to perform Barbaric Rites.



Barbaric Rites is based around an "A" week, during which time the focus will be on heavy squats, rows, and overhead press, and a "B" week, where the focus will be on heavy bench, deadlift and pullups.

All movements will be performed each week, but in order to keep the effort intelligent, "light" days will focus on speed and hypertrophy, rather than weight- in this way, they are "light" only in poundage, but the increases in rep performance keeps the volume totals high. This is a classic "powerbuilding" style, where the dynamic movement breakdown insulates against injury, fried nervous system, and being tired all the time.

**HEAVY MEANS:** Warmup sets, then 5x5x5 @70/80/90% of TM. This can be followed up by single reps at 100/105/110% of TM, depending on power and performance.

**LIGHT MEANS:** Warmup sets, then 3x10, 1xAMRAP @55/60/65/70% of TM. These should be clean reps, explosive on the positive and slow and controlled on the negatives. If it feels too easy, you're going too fast. For advanced practitioners of the barbaric rituals, add pauses, remove any time spent at "lockout," or try adding one or more rep to each set.

The AMRAP set should be recorded, and each time you hit an AMRAP set at a certain weight, try to beat the number scored before.

**Pull-ups** use the following scheme:

Heavy: Calculate as normal "Heavy," using total added weight 1RM to figure.

Light: 4 sets of AMRAP

**Secondary movements** are not figured out with percentages- they are done as heavy as possible while maintaining form and composure. Like my friend Greg Walsh says, "perform each rep as though it was costing you money." Push hard, and don't think of them as "less important" than the rest of the workout.

There's no need to be rigid on every single rep when it comes to doing more- if you can tap into that well of power and push for an extra rep or three on your last set, especially on the hypertrophy days, do so. Be intelligent on the heavy days. It should go without saying that proper form is a must, and you should never push through warnings from your body- only weak-speak from your mind.

There is no abdominal or calf work programmed in- if you want to go old school, do like Arnold and the Muscle Beach guys and throw them in on alternating days before you do the rest of your workout.



## WEEK 1, DAY 1

*Main Movement:*

**SQUAT, HEAVY**

*Secondary movements:*

**Stiff Leg Deadlift 30-50 total reps**

**Barbell Lunge 30-50 total reps**

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## WEEK 1, DAY 2

*Main Movement:*

**BENCH, LIGHT**

**ROW, HEAVY**

*Secondary Movements:*

**Dips 30-50 total reps (add weight if possible)**

**Upright Row or Landmine Press 30-50 total reps**

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## WEEK 1, DAY 3

*Main Movement:*

**DEADLIFT, LIGHT**

*Secondary Movements:*

**Front Squat 30-50 total reps**

**Good Mornings 30-50 total reps**

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## WEEK 1, DAY 4

*Main Movement:*

**PRESS, HEAVY**

**PULL-UP, LIGHT**

*Secondary Movements:*

**Close Grip Bench 30-50 total reps**

**Bicep Curl 30-50 total reps**

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## WEEK 2, DAY 1

*Main Movement:*

**SQUAT, LIGHT**

*Secondary Movements:*

**Stiff Leg Deadlift** 30-50 total reps

**Barbell Lunge** 30-50 total reps

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## WEEK 2, DAY 2

*Main Movement:*

**BENCH, HEAVY**

**ROW, LIGHT**

*Secondary Movements:*

**Dips** 30-50 total reps

**Upright Row, Landmine Press or Shrugs** 30-50 total reps

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## WEEK 2, DAY 3

*Main Movement:*

**DEADLIFT, HEAVY**

*Secondary Movements:*

**Front Squat** 30-50 total reps

**Good Morning** 30-50 total reps

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## WEEK 2, DAY 4

*Main Movement:*

**PRESS, LIGHT**

**PULLUP, HEAVY**

*Secondary Movements:*

**Close Grip Bench** 30-50 total reps

**Barbell Curl** 30-50 total reps

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## PROGRESSION

Exactly how you progress matters less to me than that you are progressing.

The simple way is to add 5 pounds to upper body TM, and 10 to your lower, and re-figure your training weights at the end of each 2 week cycle. When you can no longer perform the RX reps at that weight, knock 10% off of your current total weight, and use this new, lower number as your new TM.

This will create natural “deload” weeks, that will create a kind of “wave” style training, where each time you reach the weight that defeated you before, you will continue a ways past it before having to “re-set.”

Your progress will also show on your heavy singles, as well as your “light” day AMRAP sets. When you do a weight re-set, you will invariably come up against a weight equal to or similar to one you’ve hit an AMRAP set on before. If you are consistently out-performing yourself on these, you’re making progress.

There’s more than one kind of PR, and an AMRAP PR is just as good in many ways for determining how your strength is progressing as a 1RM.

Remember, you got into strength training because it was enjoyable, brutal, and barbaric.

Keep it that way.

