

## **PFC CrossFit – Deadlift Coaching Points by Chris O’Neal**

There is something to be said about the importance of picking up heavy objects. We should always strive to lift with balance and focus on technique. Rob Orlando once said, "Strongman movements aren't learned, they are remembered." While the deadlift is embedded into our very fiber, technique is often not given a second thought. Here is a list of helpful tips that can help keep us focus of the safety and importance of proper mechanics.

1. Do not over train. Deadlifts are BEST practiced in the low rep range (1-8) when referring to max weight.
2. When heavy lifting, proper recovery should be given. The Bulgarians were said to only train max dead lifts once every 17 days, showing true respect to the powerlifting movement.
3. Keep it ritualistic; having a mental checklist when preparing for the lift helps to avoid injury. Encourage the development of a ritualistic approach to the bar...the placement of the feet, the big breath, the wiggle of the hips when settling, etc.
4. Stability is a must! You need to be braced and ready to burden the weight of the lift. After your ritualistic approach, focus on having a solid core. Stand upright and carry your stability throughout the lift. If you attempt to engage the midsection late (when you are in a collapsed position), you are already behind the eight ball. A simple way to engage is to exhale all your air. At this point you should feel "shrink wrapped". Maintain this tightness in your midsection while continuing to breathe and move the lift.
5. Head/Shoulder/Hip Position. Keep a neutral head position. If the head is wrenched back, the spine is taken out of alignment resulting in a potential serious injury. Keep your shoulder blades back and down to create a stable position to anchor the weight. Keep the hips high enough to engage the hamstrings, but not so high that the leverage is shifted forward. Ideally, the shoulder blades should be directly over the bar. If titled too far forward, the lower back will try and sustain the weight. Hips and shoulder should rise simultaneously, avoiding "stripper butt".
6. Treat your arms like straps. Do not yank or jerk the bar from the ground. This is a sure way to tear a bicep.
7. Drive through the heels. This movement is not only a pull, but can be thought of as a push. We are actively trying to push the ground away from us to keep it leg and hip driven.

8. Don't crank back when finishing the lift. A small squeeze of the gluteus will signal a safe and completed rep.

9. Recovery. Initiate the return by pushing the hips back. Allow the posterior chain to be your engine with the hips back, keeping the bar path directly on the body.

Finally, be aware of the different types of soreness associated with this lift. You should feel as though you just got a great working, not like something is wrong. A healthy pain is inevitable when training and should not be feared, rather embraced.

If you are witnessed breaking any cardinal rule during the deadlift, it's time to suggest backing off the weight and refocusing on the form. A PR isn't worth being out of service or work for any period of time.