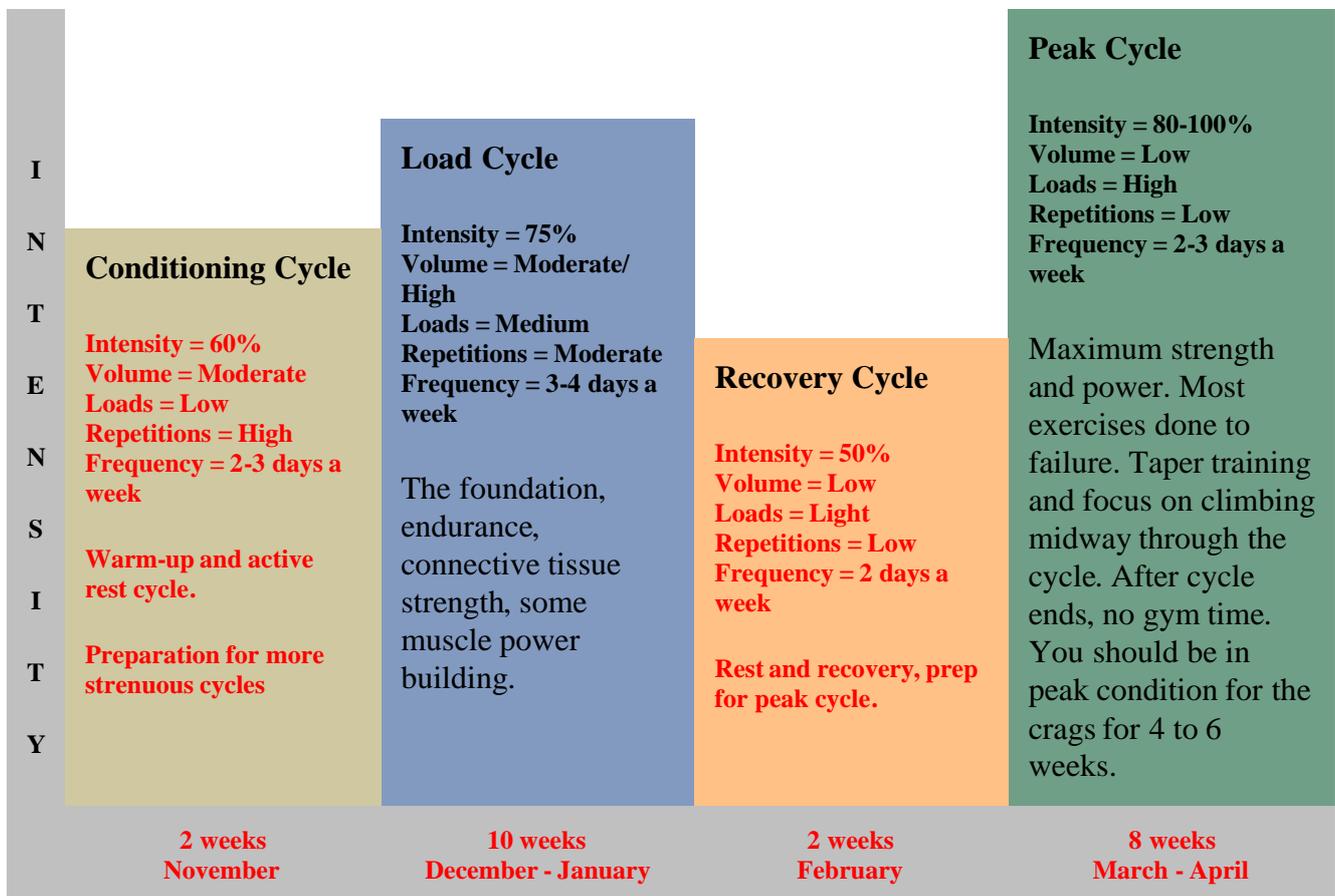


Cyclic Periodization

source: www.metoliusclimbing.com

As an overall strategy, cyclic periodization allows you to be at your peak when you want to be. Whether this corresponds to a big road trip or pushing your limits when the weather is the best is up to you. If properly done chances of injury and mental burnout are minimized and gains in strength and power are optimized.

The concept is simple; build a base of endurance then work toward maximum power. By pushing your body in these cycles you strike a balance between letting yourself be fresh and strong within the cycles and not letting yourself totally adapt to the stresses of the workouts. This keeps you from stalling at different plateaus and makes the gains possible much greater than doing the same sets of workouts month after month. Immediately following the peak cycle you should be ready to climb strongly. The Cycle Shown Below Would Start Again In June.



Definitions

Intensity = A percentage of your maximum effort, as applied to a single set or an overall workout. As an example; when you are fully rested and it is all you can do to hang on a particular hold for one minute, then 65% intensity would be hanging for 40 seconds on the same hold. Picking an easy to measure test such as this and getting to know the level of "pump" that corresponds to that intensity, then allows you to tailor other exercises to your particular goal. This is the crucial element of any workout program, one that determines the other elements and one that needs the most attention and adjustment. Think of intensity as a set point that you need to adjust upward as you get stronger or adjust downward if you are not recovering between workouts.

Volume = The length of your workout or how many sets or exercises. This is one of the easiest elements to adjust according to where you are in your training regime (up as you get stronger, down if you are not recovering). Remember volume is not the same as intensity.

Load = How much weight relative to body weight. This assumes that for many of the exercises with certain holds you will need to add weight (by using a weighted belt) or subtract weight (by having a spotter lift you or by placing a footstool under the board to lightly put one foot on) to hang for a particular time for a set intensity.

Repetitions = How many pull-ups or separate movements in an exercise.

Frequency = How many days per week to train.

Other Elements to Consider

Warm-up: Take plenty of time to stretch and lightly work all the muscles you are going to use in your workout session. Drink plenty of water during and following workouts.

Know the difference between a healthy muscle ache and pain associated with connective tissue damage. There is no quicker way to sabotage your climbing goals than to try to train through injuries.

Rest : figure out what you need for the different cycles and take it! You should go into each workout without muscle pain.

Micro-cycles: These are incorporated into the longer, harder main cycles (load and peak) to keep you from plateauing within the cycle. Usually done in a hard day! easy day! moderate day. This is intended to break up your routines enough that you stay rested, but still are not letting your body settle into one medium mode.

The Exercises

There are good combinations of endurance and power work that can be adapted to training for a specific climb. Keep in mind some general guidelines when thinking about adapting exercises to yourself. Power exercises keep durations of tasks short, with heavier or harder loads. Endurance exercises are longer, less intense; you should feel like you are maintaining a low-level pump. The easiest element of the exercises to change is generally load; be familiar with the various ways to do this.

Warming Up

One of the most important steps in muscular development and injury prevention is a thorough warm up. Generally, the best way to do this is to warm up the large muscles that will be used first, and then move to the smaller. There are various ways to accomplish this; start with low level aerobics, then general calisthenics or weight lifting. You can follow this with a series of one or two pull-ups or a 10 to 20 second hang on each hold on your board, with a 30s rest between each task. Take time to stretch after you are warmed up, once again starting with the large muscles and working your way to your fingers. After you are completely warmed up give yourself a rest of 5 to 10 minutes before starting the workout.

Extra Training Tips

1. Always give yourself enough time for a thorough warm-up. This is undoubtedly the best thing you can do to keep yourself injury free.
2. Chalk your hands and fingers well before each task.
3. Personalize your training regime and then stick to it. If you have a balanced program, with enough variety to keep you motivated you will get stronger. It takes time to see improvements, patience will make the gains come sooner.
4. If you feel stuck on a major plateau, go back over your original expectations and make sure they are realistic. Often, stalling may indicate you need more rest or a break from some part of your routine. Or it may mean take a look at what you can do to improve your motivation. Find a good partner to train with, dream about your next trip, or think about how good you will feel once you're done with your workout. Anything you can do to maintain your positive attitude will pay off big!

Warning All Training Board Users: Training on a hangboard carries risk of injury to fingers, arms, shoulders and the joints connecting them. Take every precaution to avoid damage to yourself; warm-up, stretch, don't overtrain and listen to your body. Remember, even under the best of circumstances, injuries can occur. In addition, however you mount your board, be sure that it cannot move in any direction. There should be no possible way for the board to come down while training.