Legendary former UCLA men’s basketball coach John Wooden said it best. “Failing to plan is planning to fail.”

Along those lines, periodization is basically a long, thought out plan. Please understand for the purpose of this article, I will only talk about traditional periodization. The main goal of periodization is to peak before the most important matches through a mapped-out progression.

When it comes to writing the overall workout, one must consider how the effects of Monday’s workout will impact Tuesday’s workout and subsequently Wednesday’s. To understand how workouts affect other workouts, it is important to understand the body’s physiological issues.

The best way to understand physiological responses is to understand Hans Selye’s General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) theory. Hans’ theory has three stages: (1) alarm reaction, (2) resistance phase (super-compensation) and (3) exhaustion phase.

The alarm reaction stage often elicits a “fight or flight” response. This stage can be characterized by a decrease in performance. Symptoms include muscle soreness and fatigue. The resistance phase (super-compensation) is where the body begins to adapt to the resistance training. The exhaustion phase is when the body’s ability to resist or adapt to a stress fails. This is characterized by reaching a plateau in the workout. The athlete does not get any stronger, but remains the same.

Here is a sample workout I use with both Cal Baptist University teams. The reps are high in the beginning, but the sets are low. As we start to progress through the workouts, the reps begin to decrease and the sets increase. Therefore, the weight will increase. As the sets go up, reps go down. It’s an inverse relationship.

In the first few weeks, my athletes are only resting 30-45 seconds, tops. As the weight goes up the next few weeks, the rest period goes to 1 minute. Finally, when we are in the last phase of the cycle, they will rest between 2 and 3 minutes. Here, we want full recovery between reps and sets.
1. **Hang Clean**

- Start by grabbing the bar about shoulder width. Stand with your feet underneath your hips (this is where your power comes from), the bar just above your knees, knees bent and chest popped out. Lean forward by making sure your chest and shoulders are in front of your knees and push your hips slightly back.
- To get the bar in the “racked” position, forcefully jump with your legs. This is the first part of the movement. After you jump, you want to shrug your shoulders. After the bar has reached its peak, pull your elbows around and under the bar. This is the “racked” position.
- After you have “racked” the bar, try and squat as low as you can. This is called a front squat.
- The keys for this exercise are: 1) jump, 2) shrug, 3) front squat.

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### Periodization Quick Hitter

Here’s a look at Trevor’s Cal Baptist workout that he uses with the men’s and women’s teams. Also keep in mind the General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) chart below the workout. This brings into clearer focus the various stages of a long-range workout plan.

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<tr>
<th>Exercise</th>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner MB Twist Toss</td>
<td>2x10 each side</td>
<td>3x10 each side</td>
<td>3x10 each side</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partner MB Sit-Up Toss</td>
<td>2x10</td>
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<td>3x15</td>
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### The General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS)

- **Alarm phase** (reaction)
- **Resistance phase**
- **Exhaustion phase**

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2. **Back Squat**
- Start by getting underneath the bar with the chest popped out, hips back and the knees in the bent position. You want to make sure the bar is resting on top of your upper back and shoulders.
- To start, think about first sitting back and not bending the knees. A lot of athletes suffer knee pain from squatting because they are using the wrong technique. I make sure our athlete's knees never go out in front of their toes. Think about sitting in a chair.
- The goal is to get to at least 90 degrees. If they can get lower, great. Just make sure the chest is up and the hips are back.

3. **Romantic Dead Lift (RDL)**
- Start by grabbing the bar at shoulder width apart. Next, place the feet in the same position as the hang clean exercise. Set your chest and back by popping out the chest.
- Keeping the back flat and keeping the bar as close to the body as possible, throw the hips straight behind and descend down the front of your legs as low as you can until you feel your back start to round.
- The key here is the back remains flat. You should feel this exercise in the hamstrings. If you feel this exercise more in your lower back, you are performing it wrong. When the bar is at its lowest position, your weight should be on your heels. If you can wiggle your toes, the exercise is being performed with the correct technique.
4. Bench Press

- Lay on your back with both feet kept flat on the ground and your eyes directly underneath the bar. Grab the bar just outside of shoulder width. Most of the sport of volleyball happens within this area of the body (blocking, setting). You don't want to go too wide with this exercise. A good measure is a thumb's distance from the first rung.
- Lift the bar off the rack and lower the bar with control to your chest line. Try to touch your chest and make sure not to bounce the bar off your chest. A lot of athletes have been taught to not go all the way down to their chest. If you don't develop those muscles through the full range of motion, then you will never reap the full benefits of the bench press.
- When the weight is heavier, inhale as the bar travels down and exhale on the way up. This will help you through that sticking point.

5. Chin-Ups/Pull-Ups

**Note: Chin-ups (palms facing you); Pull-ups (palms facing away from you)**

- Reach up and grab the pull-up bar with both palms facing you. I have my athletes start out performing chin-ups for a couple of weeks just because they can perform more chin-ups than pull-ups. Then I have them go to pull-ups (which are harder to perform). The hardest progression we do is a mixed grip where one palm is facing you and the other is facing away from you. Pull yourself up so your chin is over the bar.
- I have my girls use a super-band to assist them with this exercise. Tie the band around the bar and place one knee in it. I have seen tremendous growth in most of my girls using these bands.
- Make sure you come all the way down to get the full range of motion.
- If you can't perform one chin-up or pull-up, then perform eccentric chin-ups. Grab a chair or a bench and place it underneath the bar. Grab the bar and jump up so the chin is above the bar. Lower yourself as slowly as you can by counting backward from 10. Perform 2-3 reps for 3 sets. The slow motion is working on the eccentric (muscle lengthening) contraction of your lats. The longer the muscle is under tension, the stronger the muscle will become.
6. Partner Medicine Ball Overhead Toss

- If you don’t have access to a mat, find some grass outside.
- One partner sits down on the mat and faces the other partner standing up. The other partner stands 4-5 feet away.
- The partner that is standing starts with the medicine ball. This partner throws the ball over the head of the partner that is on the mat. The partner on the mat catches the ball overhead and goes all the way back to the ground.
- The partner on the ground contracts their abs and immediately throws the ball back to the partner. The key is to throw the ball right away off the ground. Think about throwing the ball back to your partner’s chest while trying to knock them over. They shouldn’t sit up and then throw the ball back. This defeats the whole exercise.

7. Partner Medicine Ball Twist Toss

- Repeat Step 1 from Exercise No. 6, except the person sitting on the mat will now turn and sit perpendicular to the other partner. The partner sitting down will now lift both feet off the ground without crossing their feet.
- The partner standing up tosses the ball to the partner sitting down. The partner catches the ball and turns to one side. This partner will try and touch the ground and throw it back to the other partner.
- You don’t want to lean back too far—just 45 degrees. Maintain this slight lean-back position the whole set while keeping the feet off the ground. Perform a set on the right side and then perform a set on the left side.
8. Partner Medicine Ball Sit-Up & Toss

- The partner that is standing now moves next to the partner on the mat. The partner on the mat starts with the medicine ball with the arms locked out and the ball in front of the face.
- The partner standing stacks the hands on top of each other, while the arms are locked out at shoulder height. The partner on the ground performs a sit-up and throws the ball as hard as they can into the hands of the partner standing up.
- Stay in the up position of the sit-up until you catch the ball and then go back down. That counts as 1 rep. Perform the specified amount of reps.

In addition to being an assistant coach with the men’s and women’s teams at Cal Baptist University, Trevor Johnson is also a certified strength and conditioning specialist and a certified USAW Level I club coach. Trevor played at Cal Baptist and graduated as the program’s all-time assists leader. He later trained with the U.S. Men’s National Team.