



How do I “warm up” my Main Lifts?

The main compound lift is such a universally useful segment of any resistance program, whether it's with a weight loss journey, powerlifting, crossfit or anything in between.

“Warming” up to it is an art. It's not just about raising your body temperature and getting your blood flowing. So much of “strength” work within muscles is neurological in nature and requires a gradual activation of the “motor units” within us. A combination of targetted warm-ups, such as CARs (controlled articular rotations), can begin priming the system to unlock your muscle's full potential, as well as a gradual progression of intensity towards your “work sets.”

Let's use the example of a barbell military press:

A.) Joint Activation

Before we can execute this motion, some targetted scapula, shoulder, neck, elbow and t-spine CARs will help prime the individual joints, before we begin to utilize the actual movement pattern.

Here are some videos of the joint exercises listed:

- 1.) [FRC Glenohumeral CARs - YouTube](#)
- 2.) [FRC T-Spine CARs - YouTube](#)
- 3.) [FRC Neck CARs - YouTube](#)
- 4.) [FRC Elbow CARs - YouTube](#)
- 5.) [FRC Scapular CARs - YouTube](#)

Now for the movement itself:

[Barbell Military Press - YouTube](#)



We want 3 warm-up sets ideally to lead up to the main lift, all with the rest periods in between relative to the fitness goal you have in mind.

(a) The first set is just the unloaded barbell, performed 8-10 repetitions. Grease the movement pattern and get all the neurons firing at once and in one direction.

(b) The second set is just based at about 50% of your estimated work set, performed at 8-10 repetitions.

(c) The third set is set at about 75% of your work set, performed at the same number of repetitions as your work set.

Let's say you are going for a 4x8 of Barbell Military Press where your work sets are 135 lb.

After performing the dynamic warm-up listed:

(a) 1x Set of 8-10x of 45lb = 45 lb

(b) 1x Set of 8-10x 50% of your first estimated work set = 65-70 lb

(c) 1x Set of 8-10x 75% of your first estimated work set = 100-105 lb

You can then properly proceed with your main lift.

Tables are provided below for reps, reps schemes for goal, and rest periods.

%1RM	# Reps
100	1
95	2
93	3
90	4
87	5
85	6
83	7
80	8
77	9
75	10
70	11
67	12
65	15

Training Goal	Load	Reps	Rest Period
Strength	$\geq 85 \%$	≤ 6	<i>2-5 min</i>
Power	<i>80-90 %</i>	<i>1-2</i>	<i>2-5 min</i>
Hypertrophy	<i>67-85 %</i>	<i>6-12</i>	<i>30 - 90s</i>
Muscular Endurance	$\leq 67 \%$	≥ 12	$\leq 30s$