

## **BASIC PERFORMANCE CUES FOR TEACHING THE SNATCH AND CLEAN TO NON-OLYMPIC WEIGHTLIFTING ATHLETES**

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**OVERVIEW:** The intent of this article is to introduce the basic tenets of performing the movements of Olympic Weightlifting. Precise performance of these exercises requires a multitude of physical qualities coordinated at very high rates of speed. Through my experience, many strength and conditioning coaches throughout the world utilize these lifts or their derivatives for enhancing the overall productivity of athletes under their charge. These exercises are traditionally based in the strength and power sports, but these exercises have been used with athletes who participate in endurance activities as well with very good results. Most competitive activities will have some aspect of power which can be enhanced by applying the Snatch and/or Clean in the training regimes.

The movements are very similar in their performance; the main differences being final resultant bar accelerations and velocities, hand spacing and where the bar is fixed in relation to the body at the completion of the movement. The following is a brief synopsis of the main coaching points to teach athletes at the onset of applying these movements into the training sessions.

**Coaching Points:** The Starting Position and pull are the same for each exercise with the exception of hand spacing on the bar and the height at which the bar will “brush” against the upper thigh or lower hip region as it accelerates upward to the receiving position. In the Snatch, the hands will be spaced approximately the width between elbows when extending the humerus laterally to a 90 degree angle in relation to the torso. The Clean will have hand spacing equal to the width of holding the hands just lateral of the hips, similar to the traditional anatomical position.

- All Body Levers Are “Tight”
- Feet Slightly Turned Out and in the “Vertical Jump” Position
- The Back Is “Flat” and Even Concave
- Arms Are Straight and the Elbows Are Out
- The Head Is Up and the Eyes Are Focused Straight Ahead
- The Hips Are Higher Than the Knees
- The Shoulders Are In Advance of the Barbell

### **The Pull**

- The Barbell Moves Back Toward the Athlete
- The Hips and Shoulders Rise at the Same Time
- The Head Stays in a Level Position
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> Pull Must Be Faster Than the 1<sup>st</sup> Pull
- The Athlete Should Try To Stay “Flat-footed” as Long as Possible
- The Arms Bend Only To Pull the Athlete Under the Bar
- The Feet Move From a Pulling Position To a Receiving Position

### Snatch

- The lifter approaches the barbell and sets the feet
- Then adopts the starting position
- Inflate chest; set back
- Shoulders are in advance of the bar
- Arms are straight
- Eyes are focused straight ahead
- Weight is distributed evenly
- It is imperative to push with the feet initially and as the barbell passes the knees acceleration should constantly increase
- The lifter then extends the body upward in a violent motion
- The shoulders shrug, the arms are straight and the weight shifts from the heels to the ball of the feet.
- The lifter will exert so much force that it will continue to rise while jumping underneath the barbell.
- After jumping under the bar, the lifter will receive the barbell at arms' length and proceed into a full squatting position and stabilize the system (bar and body) in the bottom position.
- Upon acquisition of a stable posture, the athlete will rise out of the squat into a standing position.
- In a controlled manner, the bar is then allowed to return to the floor by stepping out from beneath while maintaining hand contact with the bar to ensure its proper and safe return.

### Clean

- The lifter approaches the barbell and sets the feet
- Then adopts the starting position
- Inflate chest; set back
- Shoulders are in advance of the bar
- Arms are straight
- Eyes are focused straight ahead
- Weight is distributed evenly
- It is imperative to push with the feet initially and as the barbell passes the knees acceleration should constantly increase
- The lifter then extends the body upward in a violent motion
- The shoulders shrug, the arms are straight and the weight shifts from the heels to the ball of the feet
- After the lifter finishes the pull, the athlete pulls under the bar and catches it in the receiving position
- The bar should rest across the shoulders and clavicles while keeping the chest and elbows elevated, while moving into a full squatting position.
- When a stable posture is established, the athlete will rise to the standing position and then return the bar to the floor safely.

**PRACTICAL APPLICATION:** These are the basic principles involving performance of the two movements. If applied correctly, the exercises can be included in training regiments of all sports to enhance the various physical qualities needed for a higher level of performance production in the sport. The practical portion of this presentation will demonstrate the principles, techniques and performance of the Olympic lifts.