

that this means they had sloppy form, you don't know Pavel and you don't know about high-tension principles. Keep reading.

By now I'm sure many of you are thinking that this is complete BS. Don't! Its possible to break down those pull-up barriers by using Russian training principles and a few tricks of the trade from those who have been there. Here we go!

The main principle you need to get familiar with is the Principle of Volumization. The Russian have always been more concerned with volume of work and weight than with silly rep/set schemes. In it's most simple form, the principle states that it is better to do more work through out the day than to burn yourself out in one session. The epitome of this can be seen in Eastern European lifters who bench eight times a week! In order to apply this principle you have to do a couple of things.

1. Never train to failure!
2. Do more sets but with less reps.
3. Train more than once or twice a week. Train every day or every other day.
4. Vary the intensity (that's a whole different article).

So, the best example I can give you is Ins and Outs. We all remember those! Where we went wrong with them was the number chosen each week was often at or too close to the failure point. Do a set of pull-ups every time you leave the section, and if you were gone more than an hour, do a set as you come back in. Or you could set the timer on your watch and do a set every hour. As for reps, lets say you can do 15 pull-ups. Do only ten each time.

What if you don't have time for that or you are bad with staying faithful? (To pull-ups!). Try out Pavel's powerful tool called "Ladders". Here you and a partner (or simulated partner) go to the bar. You do one rep and get off. He does one. You do two, he does two. And so on and so forth. When one of you gets close to failure on a set (within a rep or two), stop. Rest for minute or two (or not) and start again at one. This is far more effective than going up and then coming back down as is popular in most gyms today. Go until you can go no more for risk of training to failure or your body tells you you've had enough. As always, bad form does not count. If your form is suffering, stop and start over. Speaking of form, grip and technique, consider this from Pavel and John Allstadt:

"Vary your grip. I know that Pavel believes in overhand pull-ups first and foremost, and I do too. However, if you are not a member of SWAT or the Military, and do not have to climb walls and ledges on a regular basis, go ahead and vary your grip. Doing so will ward off boredom, and train your neural pathways to a wider degree. Grips worth using are: 1) Overhand or underhand, with or without thumbs. 2) Neutral grip--the best way to do these would be to drape a thick towel over the bar for maximum grip work.

Worthless techniques 1) Wide grip pull-ups and 2) Pull-ups behind the neck. For some reason, bodybuilders think that a very wide grip makes for very wide lats! Ha! This is bogus for a few reasons, the first being the greatly reduced range of motion, the second being the greatly reduced leverage, and the third being the extreme stress on your rotator cuffs. Optimal leverage is extremely important in strength training.

Question: would you try to pull a heavy deadlift on your toes with a rounded back? I didn't think so. As for pullups behind the neck, the same reasons apply. Do yourself and your shoulders a favor--keep your grip slightly wider than shoulder width or less, and pull to your chest, not to the back of your neck. And no grip aids please! (Chalk is o.k.)"³

A great technique to build strength, explosiveness, and raw power in the pull-up is to use the "Pink Panther" technique. Get on the bar and start pulling. Your buddy pulls on your legs for resistance. Unannounced, he lets go and you will fly up to the bar! When you train for weighted pulls, and you use this and other techniques, the volume principle is very important. Do lots of sets with low reps, 3-10 sets of 3-5 reps. You can simulate a partner in the Pink Panther by hooking a KB on your feet and letting go. Play with it. Another good way to add weight and realism is to put on your med ruck and do several sets of 3-5 reps.

ENJOY!

³ John Allstadt, 2001, "Pull-ups, a Matter of Function"