

Basic Barbell Training

Another variation on the deadlift is to do the exercise while standing on blocks. This increases the amount of work done by adding the height of the block to the range of motion (the same effect can be obtained by using smaller than 17 inch diameter plates). In doing so it also adds more knee extension – and therefore more quadriceps – to the exercise. By making the bar farther away, it requires more knee and hip flexion at the bottom to assume the start position, and the more acute angles require more hamstring extensibility to assume the start position with an extended lumbar spine. This makes it more difficult for inflexible people to get in a correct start position, so not everybody can do them. And the fact that the shin will be in a more inclined position at the bottom also means that the bar will be shoved further forward than mid-foot if the block is very high, or if a decent back angle is maintained. This makes the start awkward, mechanically difficult, and likely to become a SLDL if care is not exercised. It also tends to limit the weights that can be used.

If you can, be aware of the fact that a deadlift on blocks is an even more stressful movement than the full deadlift for obvious reasons, so treat them with respect. No sets across with max weights because they are an assistance exercise; use them at sub-max loads to accumulate work, and to make the deadlift easier off the floor.



Figure 7-33. Deadlifting from blocks (right) increases the range of motion of the movement. Note the more acute hip and knee angles while the back angle is maintained.

The goodmorning is sometimes thought of as a squat variation, since the bar is taken out of the rack like a squat and carried on the traps. But since it functions as a back and hamstring exercise, with no more knee extension than an RDL, and with lots of elements of pulling mechanics in the movement of the bar, a case can be made for considering it a deadlift variation. Goodmornings get their name from the rather tenuous similarity between their appearance and that of a subordinate individual greeting his superiors in the a.m. They are an old weight room exercise, largely unused today, but are worthy of consideration as a way to strengthen your pull.

The bar sits on top of the traps in a goodmorning, like the bar position in a high-bar squat. Basically, a goodmorning is performed by bending over with the bar on your neck until your torso gets to parallel with the ground or lower and then returning to an upright position. The mechanics of the movement are similar to that of the Romanian deadlift in that the whole thing is essentially a hip extension that begins with an eccentric contraction like a squat – an RDL with the bar on your neck. The difference involves the position of the weight relative to the scapulas and