

The Brookbush Institute Publishes a NEW Article: 'Power Workout Design: Rest, Order, and Why Supersets Fail'

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NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES,
September 3, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/
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Power Workout Design: Rest, Order, and Why Supersets Fail -

<https://brookbushinstitute.com/articles/power-workout-strength-power-supersets>

ABSTRACT

Background: Strength and power exercises are frequently combined within the same training session; however, recommendations regarding exercise order, rest intervals, pairing strategies, and session structure vary considerably. Strength and power supersets, in which an explosive exercise is performed immediately after a heavy resistance exercise for the same muscle group, are commonly recommended based on post-activation

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The best power workout performs strength exercises first, uses a circuit format, and skips back-to-back supersets entirely.”

Dr. Brent Brookbush, CEO of Brookbush Institute

potentiation, despite uncertainty regarding whether this structure optimizes subsequent power performance.

Objective: To systematically review research examining how strength and power exercises should be combined within a training session, with particular emphasis on rest intervals, exercise order, complex and contrast training structures, and circuit versus traditional set configurations.

Methods: Thirty-three relevant studies were reviewed, including 20 studies examining rest intervals between a conditioning strength exercise and subsequent power performance, 10 studies comparing acute or multi-week strength and power session structures, and 3 studies comparing circuit and traditional resistance-training formats. Outcomes included jump height, sprint performance, power output, rate of force development, strength, lean body mass, and training efficiency.

Results: Power exercises performed within approximately 30 seconds of a heavy strength exercise most commonly resulted in decreased performance, with no identified sample demonstrating significant improvement during this interval. Rest intervals of approximately 1 to 4 minutes generally resulted in performance similar to baseline, whereas intervals of approximately 4 to 8 minutes produced the most consistent and largest improvements in subsequent power performance. Responses varied among individuals, with 56% to 80% of participants classified as positive responders in studies reporting individual responses, and improvements occurring more consistently in stronger or highly trained athletes. Combining strength and power exercises within the same session resulted in adaptations generally similar to performing them on separate days. Evidence regarding exercise order was less definitive, although strength exercises performed before power exercises demonstrated a modest advantage for selected jump and sprint outcomes. Circuit structures preserved repetitions, velocity, and power during heavy resistance exercise and produced similar multi-week improvements in strength, power, lean body mass, and conditioning compared with traditional set structures, while substantially reducing session duration.

Conclusions: Strength and power exercises can be effectively combined within the same training session, but performing matched exercises as immediate supersets is not supported by the current evidence. Approximately 4 to 8 minutes of recovery between a heavy strength exercise and a power exercise targeting the same muscle groups appears most likely to preserve or enhance power performance. A practical evidence-based approach is to perform strength exercises before power exercises and organize the session in a circuit format that maintains adequate recovery between matched exercises while minimizing total training time. Individualization of rest intervals may further improve post-activation performance enhancement, particularly in stronger and more highly trained athletes.

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