

*Teaching the Deadlift*

Have the trainee approach the bar. It should be loaded to a light weight relative to the trainee. A light weight for a novice 55 year-old woman will be different than that for an 18 year-old 205 lb. athlete. The room should be equipped to load weights as light as 55 lbs., making it necessary to obtain 5 lb. plastic training plates that space the bar off the floor to the same height as a standard plate (figure 8). Judgement must be exercised here; the starting weight must be light enough so that a trainee with bad form cannot hurt himself, just in case your instructions are not followed closely enough. So for some trainees 55 lbs. will be the starting weight, 40 kg. (88 lbs.) will work for most everyone else, and there is seldom a reason to start anyone heavier than 135.



**Figure 8.** Correct bar height at the start of the deadlift is important. Do not use small plates to teach the lift. Use standard height Olympic style plates for teaching. A number of vendors sell training plates and lighter plates that will suffice. Above, from left to right, note that the 135lb, 89lb, and the 55lb barbells all have the same height from the floor.

The stance for the deadlift is about the same as the stance for a flat-footed vertical jump, about 12”-15” between the heels with the toes pointed slightly out (figure 9). Bigger, taller trainees with wider hips will use a proportionately wider stance. This stance is narrower, and thus more toes-forward, than the squat, because of the difference between the two movements. The squat is done from the top down, the hips lowered and driven up; the deadlift starts at the bottom, the feet pushing the floor, the back locked in place and the legs driving the bar up. The difference in stance is due to this difference in mechanics. (It might also be noted here that this is a natural stance angle for this stance width. The wider the stance, the more the toes will angle out, to match the femoral/tibial external rotation inherent in their angle at the hip, and vice versa.)