

Common Knowledge, Not Always So Common: Basics For Bodybuilding

Are you satisfied with your current workout and nutritional progress. Do you see progress each and every week? Have you tried various training and nutritional programs and only find yourself tired, over-trained and no further ahead then when you started?

If you answered yes to either of the first two questions or can't relate to the last, then you've either just started training or your part of a very small minority. The fact is most people have grown to accept the fact that growth is either very slow or non-existent, maintenance instead of progress becomes the goal. This just doesn't have to be. Lack a good sound knowledge is the culprit. In the following series, I'll try and address all of the variables that effect progress. I'll discuss training, nutrition, supplementation and other topics. I'll help you develop a blue print for Bodybuilding success for Real people and Real Life Results.

The topic we'll discuss in this first series will be TRAINING. This could quite possibly be the most abused and misunderstood area in all of Bodybuilding. There is more bogus information floating around out there than there are McDonald's. Almost everyone over-trains. In the following paragraphs, I will outline a workout that will seem unrealistic and definitely out of the norm in comparison to mostly all of today's workout programs. However, if you opt to follow it and give it a try, you'll see results like you've never seen before. You'll actually begin making progress immediately and your goal will no longer be just maintenance. So keep an open mind and get ready to absorb some of the best workout information you've ever been given.

Basic Workout Principles & Information

1. All exercises should be performed with perfect form at a slow to moderate complete 'fuel' speed. You should always maintain complete control over the weight or machine.
2. At the fully contracted point of any movement, you should stop the movement dead and hold the weight for a full second. This is called a 'static connection' and it should be performed on every rep of every set of every exercise.
3. All sets are performed to complete failure.
4. Rep Ranges:
Light Sets: 6-8 Reps (For warm up purposes only)
Moderate Sets: 4-6 Reps (For warm up purposes only)
Heavy Sets: 6-10 Reps (There are your complete failure sets)
5. Intensity and Form are the two key factors.
6. Take 1 full days rest in-between workouts, occasionally you may need 2 days rest.
7. Light Aerobics is the only type of Aerobics you should do if you opt to do Aerobics. Light Aerobics would consist of the Life Cycle on level 1, the treadmill at 3 - 3.8 mph or walking at 3 - 3.8 mph. Your Aerobic sessions should be no longer than 25 - 45 minutes long. If you do light Aerobics on a training day, do so after your workout.
8. Switch Around Exercises Regularly: In other words, on chest day, don't always do the same exercise. One week, use a flat bench; another week use the incline bench. Rotate all your exercises for all your body parts on a regular basis. This works best on a two or three week rotation. It will help to keep from hitting sticking points, and it will help to keep your routine from getting boring.
9. Record your workout in a notebook or journal. You will continue to get bigger and stronger everyday. Guaranteed!!!
10. Warm up enough to avoid any injuries prior to the start of your workout, but don't turn your warm up into a workout.
11. Your weight training time should be 20 - 30 minutes per workout or 2 hours max per week.
12. With this training approach, there is no need to hit abdominals separately. They get stimulated each and every workout, and any more would be blatantly over-training them. Plus hitting abdominals directly tends to create a thickness around the waist that isn't aesthetically appealing.

Workout #1: Chest & Triceps

Chest (1 Super Set): Perform two warm up sets of bent arm flies. The first set should be very light and the second should be moderate (approximately 60% of the weight you'll use for your all out set). For the Super Set, choose either Flat Bench Flies, Incline Flies or Seated Fly Machine Flies (whichever one you warmed up with) and work 1 set to absolute failure. Immediately super set to either the Flat Bench Press, Incline Bench Press, or the Decline Bench Press, and with a narrow grip (shoulder width), perform 1 set to failure with your shoulders and elbows flared parallel.

This is the only exercise you'll do for chest. When you've completed this set, your chest will be completely stimulated. Any further movements or exercises would be considered over-training and will eat into your recovery time.

Triceps (1 Drop Set): Choose 1 Triceps exercise. Pick a weight you feel you'll be able to perform 6 - 10 perfect reps, and work 1 set to failure. Immediately drop the weight by 50% and continue to work to complete failure. As with all sets, you should work every set to failure, however when you are able to perform 10 reps or more on any set, you should increase the amount of weight you are using at the next workout. In other words, for all exercises and set, 10 repetitions should be your graduating point. Just remember to always work every set to failure regardless of the rep count.
Now take one full days rest!

Workout #2: Hamstrings & Quads

Hamstrings (1 Drop Set): Choose one hamstring exercise. Perform two warm up sets. The first should be very light and the second should be moderate (approximately 60% of the weight you'll use on your all out set.) Next, pick a weight you'll be able to perform 6 - 10 perfect repetitions and work to failure. Immediately, drop the weight by 50% and continue to work to complete failure. That's all you need to do for hamstrings. Any zip you may have left in your hamstring you'll need for your compound quadriceps set. Just remember to write everything down and follow all the basic principles.

Quads (1 Super Set): For quads, you'll always super set using the leg extension first, followed by one compound exercise (either leg press, squats, hack squats, or smith machine squats). The idea is to pre-exhaust the quads with the leg extension, and then you'll be positive its your quads reaching failure first on your compound exercise, and not your glutes, back or other muscle groups. This is the main principle behind every super set in this entire workout. You should perform one light to moderate set of leg extensions and the compound exercise of your choice before you begin your all out set. Good luck, this one's a killer.

Now take one full days rest!

Workout #3: Calves & Shoulders

Calves (1 Drop Set): Choose one calve exercise. Do two warm up sets. The first warm up set should be very light. The second warm up set should be moderate (approximately 60% of the weight you'll use on your all out set). Next, choose a weight you can perform 6 - 10 repetitions with perfect form and work to failure. Immediately, drop the weight by 50% and work to complete failure. The purpose of drop sets here and throughout the workout is to stimulate every muscle fiber possible without over-training. Believe it or not, your calves are finished.

Shoulders (1 Super set and 1 Set to Failure): For shoulders, your going to train your front and side delts first with a super set, and then you'll do one straight set to failure for your rear delts. Before starting, choose one type of lateral raise and choose one type of compound overhead pressing movement (like the Seated Frontal Barbell, or Dumbbell Presses). Warm up by doing one light to moderate set of each. Choose a weight for lateral raise that you can perform 6 - 10 perfect repetitions and work to failure. Immediately super set to the compound pressing movement and work to complete failure. You've completed front and side delts. Rest about 1 - 2 minutes, then choose a read delt raise, either machine or dumbbell. Perform one straight set to complete failure. Congratulations, you've completed your shoulders. They should be pumped and fried.

Now take one full days rest.

Workout #4: Back & Biceps

Back (3 Straight Sets, Includes Traps): The reasoning behind doing only straight sets for back is simple. The back is a large muscle group and to work it, you must recruit a lot of arm, in particular bicep help. Therefore, you most drop sets and super sets will guarantee bicep failure but won't guarantee total back failure. The answer to attacking the back is carefully thought out straight set pulldown. Perform two warm up sets before beginning your all out set. The first warm up set should be very light. The second warm up set should be moderate (approximately 60% of the weight you'll use on your all out set). Next, perform one straight set to complete failure. You should be able to perform 6 - 10 repetitions.

Your next back exercise will either be a bent over reverse grip row or a machine row. Choose one. Perform one straight set of 6 - 10 repetitions to complete failure. Form is of the utmost importance and you should also be very aware of holding your static contraction for at least one second on every rep.

The final back exercise is the shrug for your traps. Choose either cable, dumbbell, barbell or machine shrugs. One light warm up set is advised on this exercise. Once you've completed your warm up, perform one straight set of 6 - 10 perfect repetitions to complete failure. Your back is finished.

Biceps (1 Drop Set): By this point, your biceps should be somewhat pre-exhausted from your back workout. Choose one bicep exercise and perform one set of 6 - 10 perfect repetitions to complete failure. Immediately drop the weight by 50% and finish the biceps off by working to complete failure. Your biceps are finished, they should feel like they're about to blow through your skin.

Take one to two days off (Judged by how you feel).

Summary

This workout is based on the 'more is not better' philosophy. High intensity, low volume, and increased rest are the principles behind this workout. Any and all who've tried it have experienced success. Bodybuilding doesn't have to be a long and tedious process which yields little and slow gains. With this type of workout, you'll begin making progress as early as day one. Dorian Yates, Mike Mentzer, Arthur Jones and others have all written and talked about similar programs. Give this workout a try. I'm sure you'll see size and strength increases like you've never seen before. Add good nutrition, rest and supplementation (all of which we'll talk about in future issues) to the program, and your progress could be infinite. Until next time, training intense and smart, and drink your **Critical Mass** as soon as your done training.

Glossary of Terms

Feel Speed: A slow and steady speed which enables you to really feel the particular muscle you are working. This is often referred to as the mind / muscle link.

Fully Contracted Point: This is the halfway point in every repetition. At this point, the muscle is fully contracted and about to perform the negative portion or lowering of the weight.

Static Contraction: This occurs at the Fully Contracted Point just after the positive portion or raising of the weight has occurred. A Static Contraction is just simply pausing and squeezing for a full second at the Fully Contracted Point before the negative or lowering of the weight takes place.

Failure (Complete, Absolute, or just Failure): The point at which you are unable to perform another repetition with perfect technique and form. This is the point at which a spotter would usually help you finish your last repetition.

Perfect Technique and Form: The ability to perform an exercise in which the targeted muscles receives all or the majority of the work. Positive and Negative movements are nice and steady, and are 2 - 3 seconds each. Jerky movements, momentum bounces, arching and cheat motions are non-existent. Control over the weight and movement is a necessity.

Intensity: Being able to put forth a concentrated effort and work to Complete Failure so as to generate enough muscle stimulus for growth to occur.

Super Set: Performing an exercise set to complete failure and immediately moving to another exercise with as little rest as possible (5 - 10 seconds) in between.

Drop Set: Performing an exercise set to complete failure and upon completion dropping or cutting the weight of the exercise and continuing on to Complete Failure with as little rest in between as possible.

Compound Movement: An exercise in which to hit the targeted muscle, you'll need to recruit the help of other supporting muscle groups.

Pre-Exhaust: To purposely fatigue a targeted muscle group so as to insure maximum stimulation and Complete Failure of the targeted group in the second portion of the Super Set.