

50 Questions Answered About Bodybuilding

Before You Ask...

A Collection of Frequently Asked Questions



By Robert DiMaggio
of IronMagazine.com

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question@ironmagazine.com

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Contributions Made By

Robert DiMaggio of IronMagazine.com, Marc David of Freedomfly.net and Eric Broser

eBook Notes

This copy is Edition 1.0, completed March 17, 2004

Medical Disclaimer

This guide is for educational and informative purposes only and is not intended as medical or professional advice. Always consult your doctor before making any changes to your diet or nutrition program. The use of diet and nutrition to control metabolic disorders and disease is a very complicated science, and is not the purpose of this eBook. The purpose of this guide is to help healthy people reach their cosmetic fitness goals by educating them on certain frequently asked questions about fitness and bodybuilding.

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If you have diabetes, chronic hypertension, high blood cholesterol, cardiovascular disease, or any other medical condition or metabolic disorder requiring special nutritional considerations, we suggest you consult a health care professional with a clinical nutrition background (MD, RD, or CCN) for your special nutrition program.

Your nutrition plan will not be effective by itself. You must combine a good diet with an appropriate exercise program for optimal results. If you have been sedentary and are unaccustomed to vigorous exercise, you should obtain your physician's clearance before beginning an exercise program.

The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) recommends those apparently healthy individuals who are male and over 40 or female and over 50 to have both a physical exam and a diagnostic exercise test prior to starting a vigorous exercise program. A diagnostic exercise test and physical examination is also recommended in individuals of any age who exhibit two or more of the major coronary risk factors (smoking, family history of heart disease, elevated blood cholesterol, elevated blood pressure, and diabetes). Any individual with a known history of heart disease or other heart problems should be required to have a medical evaluation including a graded exercise test before engaging in strenuous physical activity.

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About the Author

Robert DiMaggio is first and foremost the founder and editor of IronMagazine.com, an online bodybuilding and fitness magazine that



has been dedicated to helping people achieve their bodybuilding and fitness goals. IronMagazine.com has been online for almost 2 1/2 years publishing new content every month, along with our growing online community IronMagazineForums.com which has over 6,000 members.

Robert has written several great articles ([published here](#)) and will certainly continue to do so. He also writes the [expert Q & A column](#) answering new bodybuilding and fitness questions every month. His credentials and experience consists of being a Medical Specialist in the US Army, an instructor and personal trainer at Bally Fitness. He is also an [ISSA Certified Fitness Trainer](#), and currently working towards his ISSA Specialist in Performance Nutrition certification.

He was a bodybuilding competitor in the late 80's and has trained others for competitions as well, and plans to compete again this year! (see details below) His wide range of education includes having a Bachelor's degree from Colorado State University which included course work in Anatomy & Physiology, Biology, Diet & Nutrition, Kinesiology and Drugs. The last 16 years of his life can be summarized as having a passion for bodybuilding & fitness and always furthering his mind through education.

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Why dieting can cause serious damage to your metabolism and actually make you fatter
Why eating certain "good" fats can actually speed up fat loss and increase energy levels
How to eat 50% more calories without storing an ounce as fat
Zone and Atkins...why most people fail on both of these diets in the long run
What the supplement companies hope you never find out about meal replacements drinks
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Question:

Whenever I do any type of curls I find that my forearms get way more of a pump than my biceps. What can I do?

Answer:

This is actually a common problem as most people initiate the curling

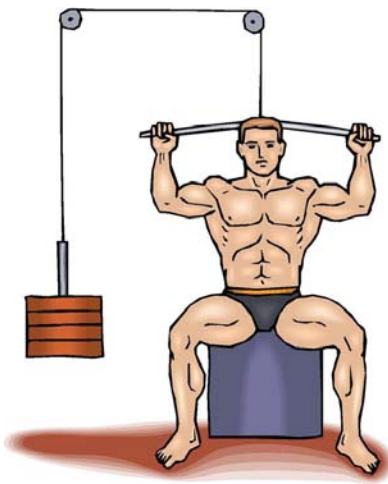


action by curling the wrists in, especially when nearing fatigue. This will improve leverage by engaging the forearm flexors, but reduce the work of the biceps muscle. What you need to do

is cock your wrists backward while curling to increase the work of the biceps and effectively eliminate the forearm flexors by putting them in a weak position. You may need to reduce your curling poundage's initially, however, in time; you should be able to return to your normal weights. You will also have bigger biceps to show for it!

Question:

Which are more effective for building the lats, pull-ups or pull-downs?



Answer:

Any movement where you are moving your body through space is more effective than those where you remain stationary and pull or push an object. Why? Because more motor units will be activated when moving your body through space. Therefore, pull-ups

are more effective than pull-downs. In addition, in a pull-up, you cannot engage the help of the lower back as you can during a pull down. Does this mean you should never do pull downs? No, but make sure not to ignore pull-ups. And remember, those who are good at pull-ups will be great at pull-downs, but not vice-versa.

Question:

During my heavy leg and back workouts I often experience dizziness, nausea and sometimes I even throw up. How can this be prevented?

Answer:



Feeling sick during a workout can be a good thing and a bad thing. It's good because it probably means you are pushing yourself when you train. It's bad because, well, who wants to feel dizzy and nauseous?

The symptoms you have described can be caused by a couple of things...first, you may not have adequate blood glucose available, which can be easily remedied by sipping a carbohydrate drink during your workout.

More likely, however, your body is not neutralizing acid in the muscle and blood that is produced while you are training hard. This acid buildup is a result of anaerobic metabolism, and if it is not cleared, can cause a "toxic" reaction that can lead to nausea and light-headedness.

There are several things you can do to help avoid this problem: 1) Take a little longer rest between sets to allow your body to better cope with the acid buildup 2) Take a buffering compound such as baking soda mixed in water or juice about 20 minutes before training 3) Take a few antacid tablets, like Tums, about 20 minutes prior to training.

Question:

What do you think are the best supplements for increasing muscle mass?

Answer:



Whenever I get a question like this I always begin my answer the same way: Before worrying about supplements, make sure that your training, nutritional, and recovery strategies are in place, because if they are not, no supplement on earth will be worth taking. That said, I feel the following supplements are valuable in the pursuit of increased muscle hypertrophy:

1. Protein Powders- whey protein at your post workout meal and a protein blend containing micellar casein before bed. Protein powders in

general are quite useful at helping you to meet your daily protein needs of 1-2 g per lb of bodyweight.

2. Creatine- after an initial loading phase of 20-25 g for 5-7 days, take 5 grams with your post workout shake on training days or 5 g first thing in the morning on off days.

3. Glutamine- 10-20 g per day, taken on an empty stomach, in 5 g divided doses. The best times to take glutamine are first thing in the morning, pre-workout, post-workout, and before bed.

4. Dextrose/Maltodextrin- include 50-100 g in your post workout shake.

5. Essential Fatty Acids (EFAs)- diets too low in fat will bring the output of natural testosterone to a crawl. Add 2-4 tablespoons of flax or some other EFA rich oil into your diet each day.

6. Prohormones/Prosteroids- there are many out there, but the most effective are 1-Test, 1-AD, and 4-AD. These must be taken with caution as they CAN have side effects. Also, if you are a natural bodybuilding competitor you need to know that these products may be banned for use by your federation. Follow label directions for optimal dose and usage patterns.

Question:

How is it that so many professional bodybuilders can be so "ripped," but at the same time have a huge belly?

Answer:



Sad isn't it...a bodybuilder with 3% body fat and the stomach of a pregnant woman! Yes, pro bodybuilding is in a sorry state. As the years have gone by, pro bodybuilders continue to use more and different types of drugs in order to become bigger, freakier, and more shredded. Two of these drugs-growth hormone and insulin-have been the main culprits in the "pregnant" look of many top pros. GH can actually cause growth of the internal organs which has the affect of "pushing out" the abdominal wall. Insulin can cause the accumulation of visceral (interorgan) fat, which again can cause the abdominal wall to protrude. Since these two drugs are usually used together, the effect is doubled.



Question:

When I do bench presses is it better to keep my head up, or on the bench?

Answer:

Most definitely keep your head on the bench! In fact, in order to be at your strongest in this lift, make an effort to actually press the back of your head into the bench. Performing the exercise in this manner

creates a neural response which facilitates the pushing muscles involved in the bench press.

Question:

Are squats bad for the knees?

Answer:



This long argued debate is nothing more than pure myth probably put forth by those too lazy to do this grueling, but very productive exercise. In fact, not only are squats not bad for the knees, but dozens of studies have proven that squats IMPROVE knee function and stability, therefore REDUCING the risk of injury! The key when squatting is to always use proper form and technique, and to never bounce or relax when in the bottom position. When you relax, by not keeping the muscles of the upper thighs tense, the knee joint will open and be subjected to very high stress. Over time this can cause damage and injury. So, keep your thighs contracted in the bottom position, especially if you pause, and your knees will not only remain safe, but they will get stronger!

Question:

What can I do to build my upper chest?

Answer:

When most people start bodybuilding they tend to work very hard at



building up their flat bench press. While this is a great mass builder for the lower and mid portion of the chest, it does not do much to thicken the upper or clavicular portion of pectoralis major. Over time this can develop into what I call "droopy pec syndrome." Although it has

been hotly debated in the field of exercise as to whether the clavicular pectoralis can be selectively targeted, it is my experience that various forms of the incline press will indeed help fill in this portion of the chest. Even though the answer is still unclear as to which angle will have the greatest effect, I believe that for the best overall development, you should VARY the angle. By doing this you will be tapping into different motor unit pools giving you the best chance at complete development. This change in angles can be done from set to set within the same workout, or, you can simply vary the angle each time you train chest. I suggest that you use dumbbells and an adjustable incline bench. Use angles from 30-60 degrees for best effect.

Question:

I read your article on IronMagazine regarding the different muscle fiber types, and enjoyed it very much! How would you suggest I go about setting up my training so that I work all of my fibers?

Answer:

I'm glad you liked my article. The most effective way I have found to set up a training program that hits all of the muscle fiber types is to arrange 3 week "mini-cycles" for each body part. Using quads as an example, this is how the routine might look:

week 1

Squats 4 x 2-4 reps

Leg Press 3 x 4-6 reps

Leg Extension 3 x 6-8 reps

week 2

Leg Extensions 3 x 8-10 reps

Hack Squats 3 x 8-10 reps

Single Legged Leg Press 2 x 10-12 reps

week 3

DROP SET : Leg Press 1 x 4-6 reps, drop weight for 3-4 reps, and again for 3-4 reps

SUPERSET : Leg Extension/Squats 1 x 6-8 reps each

SUPERSET : Leg Extension/Hack Squat 1 x 8-10 reps each

DROP SET : Leg Extensions 1 x 8-10, drop weight for 6-8 reps, and

again for 6-8 reps

In this routine, the first day is a "power" day, primarily building strength by hitting the high threshold motor units. The second day is the "hypertrophy" day, working in a rep range most effective for generating muscle growth. The third day is a "blitz" day, wherein you fully tax every type of muscle fiber, affect positive metabolic changes within the muscle cells, and test your endurance, stamina, and your ability TO HOLD DOWN YOUR LUNCH!

Question:

I have a bodybuilding competition coming up. Can I use swimming as my cardio activity?

Answer:

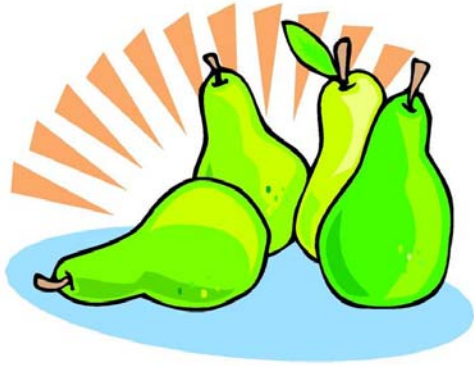


Actually, you shouldn't. It has been suggested by exercise physiologists that swimmers carry a heavier layer of subcutaneous body fat than non-swimmers because of the need to trap in body heat. Since it is a fact that the body loses heat much faster in water than in air, and the body looks to trap body heat, a thicker layer of fat will inevitably develop under the skin. This will only serve to blur muscle definition, which of course is the exact opposite of what you're after.

Question:

I am trying to get ripped for summer and was told to avoid fruit. Fruit is so healthy, so why is it not good on a diet?

Answer:



It does seem strange that when trying to lose body fat it is best to avoid fruit, doesn't it? However, while it is true that fruit is quite healthful, virtually fat free, and loaded with vitamins, minerals, and phytonutrients, it also contains a natural sugar known as fructose. The molecular structure of fructose is such that it is very easily converted into triglycerides (fats) when passing through the liver. Because fructose is basically metabolized like a fat, it can greatly hinder your efforts toward a ripped physique. Fructose is also a poor choice for post workout nutrition, as it does little to refill muscle glycogen. Further, diets high in this sugar have also been shown to lead to insulin resistance, which can, in and of itself, lead to higher blood fats and body fat levels.

Question:

If you could only choose 3 exercises for your entire body what would they be?

Answer:

That is an interesting question, and one that I have thought about

before. After years of performing every exercise in existence I certainly developed a "pool" of favorites...exercises that seem to be the most effective for me. **However, given the choice of only 3, I would probably choose dead lifts, bent over rows, and incline presses.** The dead lifts would hit the major muscles of the thighs, the hip structure, and the lumbar. The bent rows would tax the lats, mid back musculature, posterior deltoid, and the biceps. The inclines would target my pecs, anterior delts, and triceps. Using these 3 movements I would utilize a variety of grips, angles, and ranges of motion in order to get the most from each one. Although you may not be able to build a "perfectly balanced" body using only 3 exercises, you still can certainly build an impressive physique!

Question:

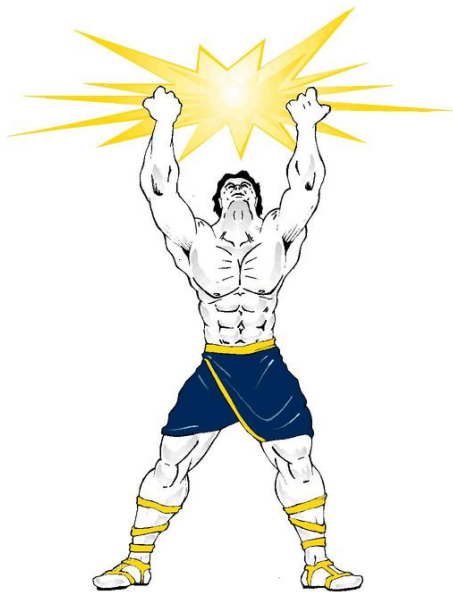
I like to do crunches for my abs, but every time I do them I hurt my neck! Is there any way to eliminate this problem?

Answer:



This is a common complaint. In fact, in my many years as a personal trainer I have heard this dozens of times. There are a few things you can do to make your neck more comfortable while performing crunches. I know this will sound strange, but the first thing you may want to try is placing your tongue on the roof of your mouth while crunching. This is the anatomical resting position of the tongue, and it

will help to recruit the muscles near the surface of the neck that best support your head. When your tongue is in any other position the much weaker muscles near the cervical vertebrae must support the head. These muscles are easily strained and/or injured when overtaxed. Another thing you might try is resting your head on the floor briefly between reps. This will lessen the stress on your neck by allowing these muscles to relax momentarily. Just don't rest too long or you will compromise the training effect on your abs. Finally, do not interlock your fingers and place them behind your head during crunching movements. This is probably the number one reason for neck strain during ab work, for as you begin to fatigue you will most likely begin to pull on your neck and head in order to do more reps. This can overstretch connective tissue and injure the delicate neck muscles.



Question:

I am training about 2 hours per day, 4 days per week, but not growing. My diet is solid, I use the proper supplements, and I train hard! Am I just genetically screwed?

Answer:

While not all of us have the genetics to become bodybuilding giants, everyone is capable of getting significantly bigger and stronger through weight training. If I take you

at your word that you are dieting and supplementing correctly, and that you are training intensely, than my opinion is that you are in the gym for too long! Two hour, 30 set workouts are for pros on juice and with all day to train. For most trainees 10-12 total work sets is all that should be performed during each workout. You should not be in the gym for more than an hour at a time or you are at risk of over training. More is not always better when it comes to training. After 60 minutes or so of hard training, several negative things begin to happen within your body. Testosterone begins to drop, cortisol begins to rise, brain neurotransmitters begin to fizzle out, and ATP-CP stores dwindle away.

Question:

My training partner is thinking of taking steroids. I told him not to because there are too many side effects. Can you give me a list of what they are?

Answer:

Before I answer your question I need to say a few things...First, let me congratulate you for being concerned for your partner's well being,



and, trying to become more informed for his sake and/or yours. Second, understand that the harmful effects of steroids are often overblown and exaggerated by the media. Yes, steroids can be quite harmful, but a lot of it also depends on

which steroids are used, how often, and in what amounts. In addition, one's genetic predisposition to side effects will also play a big role. Some people can take large amounts of anabolics with little to no ill effects, while others will have problems with the smallest of dosages. That being said, you should also know that as a natural bodybuilder myself, I do not use or condone the use of steroids by anyone. However, I also believe in the right to do what you wish with your own body...as long as you do not harm anyone else in the process. Also, as a contest prep coach to bodybuilders and fitness athletes, I work with competitors that choose to use steroids and other drugs. I do not turn them away. In these situations I do everything I can to help them, while keeping them as safe as possible. The only times that I will openly and fervently show my disgust for someone using steroids are: A) when they are used in preparation for a NATURAL contest, B) when they are used by someone that has not trained for at least 3 solid years, and C) when they are used by someone that has not fully educated himself on the subject first. The obvious should also be pointed out that steroids are illegal to use and even possess!

Now to the list of POSSIBLE side effects...

- hairloss
- gynecomastia (aka "bitch tits")
- testicular atrophy
- prostate enlargement
- sexual dysfunction
- stunted growth...in teens
- liver damage
- kidney damage
- hypertension

- hypertension
 - immune system changes
 - headaches
 - acne
 - aggression
 - blood clotting changes
 - birth defects...for children of pregnant women
 - cancer
 - cardiovascular disease
 - depression
-

Question:

What exactly is plyometric training?

Answer:



Plyometrics is a form of training where a fast eccentric (negative) contraction is followed by an explosive concentric (positive) contraction. The goal is to enhance the force development of a concentric contraction that immediately follows a rapid eccentric contraction.

Plyometrics crosses the line between simple strength training into "speed-strength" training. Its aim is to produce increases in the explosive-reactive movements required in certain sports. It is wonderful for increasing throwing, sprinting, and jumping ability, and includes such activities as bounding, depth jumping, and specific forms of medicine ball work.

Question:

A friend of mine told me he read that there are many types of strength, but he could not explain their differences. Can you clarify?

Answer:



Your friend is correct. There ARE many types of strength. Let's take a quick look at each...

Limit Strength: this is defined as the maximum amount of force your muscles can produce. This type of strength is not likely to be seen except under the most extreme of circumstances, such as life-threatening situations or under the influence of certain drugs...PCP for example.

Maximal Strength: this is defined as the most force your muscles can produce voluntarily. Maximal strength includes concentric, isometric, and eccentric muscular contractions. The human body can voluntarily produce the greatest force during an eccentric (negative) contraction.

Absolute Strength: this is defined as the maximum force an athlete can generate, irrespective of bodyweight and time of force development. Absolute strength is important to lineman in the sport of football, for example.

Relative Strength: this is defined as the maximum force an athlete can generate per unit of bodyweight, irrespective of time of force

development. This type of strength is important to jumpers and gymnasts, as well as wrestlers and boxers.

Optimal Strength: this is defined as the ideal level of strength needed so that any further development would not improve performance. A distance runner only needs to have a certain amount of upper body strength to maintain proper running form. A 400 lb bench press is not necessary for him.

Strength Endurance: this is defined as the capacity of a muscle to maintain consistent force output with repeated contractions over time at a percentage of maximal strength superior to 30%. This type of strength is important for sports such as swimming and cross-country skiing.

Speed Strength: this is defined as the ability of the neuromuscular system to produce the greatest possible force in the shortest possible time frame. Speed strength is further broken down into 3 types...

1- **Starting Strength:** the ability to produce a high level of force at the beginning of a muscular contraction.

2- **Explosive Strength:** the ability of the neuromuscular system to continue developing the already initiated force as quickly as possible.

3- **Reactive Strength:** the ability to switch rapidly from an eccentric to a concentric contraction.

So as you can see, the word strength is far more complex than you might have thought. Perhaps now you have a little better understanding of their differences and uses in the athletic world.

Question:

I just started bodybuilding and I really want to compete. How long will it take me to get to the necessary level of development?

Answer:



Ok, **let me get out my crystal ball...**Unfortunately I cannot give you a definite answer to your question. This will depend on several factors.

First you need to develop an effective and efficient training program. Second you must match your nutritional regimen to your training goal. Third you have to create a lifestyle that will be conducive to your bodybuilding goals. This will mean getting the proper amount of sleep, making time to prepare and consume all of your meals, and fitting in your training each and every week. Finally you need to "pick the right parents!" This is something that of course you can't control, and is more commonly referred to as your GENETICS. This will play a key role in how fast you can develop your body. On one end there are people that can be ready for the stage within a year, and on the other, those that may never achieve that kind of muscularity.

That being said put aside what you can't control and focus on what

you can! Train hard and consistently, eat right, sleep well, and most of all, keep a positive mindset. If you do, chances are you will one day be ready to step on stage. It may not be "tomorrow," but it WILL BE!

Question:

Should I wear a weight belt during my workouts?

Answer:



Personally, I feel that wearing a belt provides more of a psychological advantage than a physical one. Let's face it, having a weight belt tightly cinched around your waist makes your physique look better by giving you the appearance of an enhanced V-taper, and makes you feel more "serious" about what

you are doing. A belt also provides a feeling of "tightness" around your waist, which would seem to protect your lower back while weight training, but does it? Here are some reasons that wearing a weight belt may not always be the best thing...

1. Weight belts can weaken the muscles of the trunk by causing too

much intra-abdominal pressure. In an effort to try to prevent this, the body may force the abdominal and lumbar muscles to relax while lifting, which over time can weaken these muscles and cause back problems.

2. Weight belts can accelerate degenerative disk disease by restricting the natural motion of the lumbar spine.

3. Weight belts can cause poor posture by compressing the lower abdominal region. This will force you to restrict your breathing to the upper chest area which can throw off posture, as well as cause tension headaches and upper disk problems.

4. Weight belts alter the natural biomechanics of the spine, especially during rotational movements. This can weaken the smaller, stabilizing muscles of the spine, which can result in back pain and possibly osteoarthritis. With this information in mind, my advice to you would be to avoid the use of a weight belt, except during your heaviest sets of compound movements like squats, bent rows, dead lifts, military presses, etc. At other times, allow your body to stabilize itself.



Question:

What do you think is the number one reason people fail to make good progress in their physique goals?

Answer:

Without a doubt, most people fail to make the progress they desire because of their dietary habits. Many trainees believe that as long as they go to the gym and lift weights

they will magically grow larger muscles. What they fail to realize is that lifting weights simply serves as a stimulus for hypertrophy, and that it is food that acts as the BUILDING BLOCKS. Without proper nutrition not only will you fail to get bigger and stronger, you may even go in the opposite direction! I tell people all the time, "If you want to grow, you better get just as intense about your eating as you are about your training!" Remember, the bodybuilding pyramid has 3 points: training, nutrition, and rest. Each is of EQUAL IMPORTANCE!

Question:

I'm looking for a new and unique way to train my pecs. My gym has tons of equipment available, but I feel like I've done them all to death!" Any ideas?

Answer:



There is nothing worse than being bored at the gym (except perhaps being bored in the bedroom)! So you say you've used every piece of equipment in your gym? I bet there is one thing you haven't tried...the SWISS BALL! Try an entire chest workout using basic exercises, but all done on a swiss ball. This will challenge your mind, muscles, and nervous system with a completely unique stimulus. Be prepared, however, as swiss ball training can be quite exhausting! It will tax not only your chest, but also your lower back, hips, butt, and abdominals as well. If you have no experience with a swiss ball you may want to buy a book or video on their proper use. Or, you can ask someone who has experience to teach you correct technique. Here is your routine:

- 1- swiss ball dumbbell press...2 x 6-8
 - 2- swiss ball incline flye (hips low to make incline angle)...2 x 8-10
 - 3- swiss ball dumbbell pullover...2 x 10-12
 - 4- swiss ball pushup (feet on ball)...2 x failure
-

Question:

I have a natural bodybuilding contest in a few weeks and I have a carb-up question. When I carb loaded for my last show I started on Wednesday, but by Friday I completely spilled over. How can I prevent this from happening again?

Answer:

This is quite common among competitors and can be extremely upsetting. I know, I've been there. As a natural competitor you do not have the luxury of popping a diuretic to make up for a carb "spillover." The best way I have found to prevent this problem is to start your carb load up high and then taper down. After you carb deplete your body will be most receptive to storing carbs/water inside your muscle cells on the FIRST carb up day. After that chances increase that you will begin to hold water subcutaneously. Here is a general example of how I recommend a final week depletion/loading process should look (normal carb intake 200 g per day):

- Saturday...200 g carbs/normal water
- Sunday...100 g carbs/normal water

- Monday...50 g carbs/normal water
 - Tuesday...50 g carbs/normal water
 - Wednesday...400 g carbs/normal water
 - Thursday...300 g carbs/cut water by 1/3
 - Friday...200 g carbs/cut water by another 1/3
 - Saturday (day of show)...adjust carbs according to appearance/sip water
-

Question:

How can I build an "X" frame?

Answer:



When one refers to an X frame in the world of fitness, he/she is describing a physique that highlights wide, rounded deltoids...flaring, V shaped lats...a small, tight waist...and, sweeping outer quads and calves. In professional bodybuilding I would say that Flex

Wheeler, Chris Cormier, and Dexter Jackson best represent this type of build.

Unfortunately, displaying the characteristics of an X frame has much to do with genetics. Those that have this type of body are often born with the bone structure, muscle shapes, muscle attachments, and tiny joints that are required to achieve this look.

However, there ARE some exercises that can help in your endeavor to build the X frame. Keep in mind though that you still need to utilize a wide variety of exercises in order to create a proportionate and symmetrical physique. An X frame will do you no good unless all of your muscles are in balance and harmony with one another. Here are some "X" frame exercises:

-side deltoids...side laterals using dumbbells and cables; wide grip upright rows

-V shaped lats...dumbbell pullover; stiff arm pull-down; various chins and pull-downs

-sweeping quads..."toes in" leg extensions; close stance squats, hack squats, and leg presses

-sweeping calves..."toes in" calf raises; seated calf raise

-small, tight waist...(this really requires low body fat levels, achieved through proper diet and cardio training).

Also, do not do weighted side bends or any heavily weighted abdominal or oblique exercises. Emphasize higher reps with low resistance.

Question:

How long should I rest between sets?

Answer:

The amount of time that you rest between sets is determined largely by your training goal and its requirements. When strength is the primary goal, it is generally best to lift weights in the area of 90 % of

your 1 RM (1 rep max). In this case, rest intervals of 3-5 minutes are best.

When muscular hypertrophy is the primary goal, it is generally best to lift weights in the area of 70-85 % of your 1 RM. In this case, rest intervals of 2-3 minutes are best.

When looking to affect muscular endurance it is generally best to lift weights in the area of 50-60 % of your 1RM. In this case, rest intervals of 45-90 seconds are best.

When looking to affect changes in the nervous system, longer rest periods (4-5 minutes) are required for complete recovery of the ATP/Creatine Phosphate energy system.

When looking to affect metabolic changes, short rest periods of 1 minute or less are required. This will involve anaerobic glycolysis as the major energy source.

So you see, although the question of rest intervals seems like a simple one, it requires you to take a close look at what you are trying to accomplish. Rest between sets is an important, and often underestimated loading parameter.

Question:

I am a relative newbie to bodybuilding and would like some

clarification about the following terms that I always hear about in the gym: forced reps, supersets and drop sets. Can you please explain?

Answer:

Interestingly enough, as a newbie you will not need to use any of the methods you asked about for quite some time. Forced reps, supersets,



and drop sets are all intermediate-advanced techniques that should not be employed until you have at least 1-2 solid years of training behind you. Still, I'd be happy to clarify each for you so that when you are ready you will be able to begin adding these techniques to your workouts.

* forced reps: this is when a training partner or spotter applies just enough pressure to a bar or dumbbell (cable or machine) to allow you to complete a repetition that you would have been unable to perform on your own due to muscular failure.

* superset: this is when 2 exercises are performed back to back with no rest in between. A rest is only taken upon completion of the 2 exercises. Supersets can be performed for antagonistic body parts...chest/back (bench press/lat pull-down) or, for the same body part...two tricep exercises in a row (pushdowns/skull crushers).

* drop set: this is when you perform an exercise to muscular failure,

then, immediately take some weight off the bar or machine (or grab lighter dumbbells) and continue with the exercise. For example, if you are bench pressing with 185 lbs and reach failure, you may drop the weight immediately to 135 lbs and get as many more reps as you can.

Question:

I've been training for 3 years and have made nice progress. However, I notice that some weeks I prefer to be in the gym more days and in other weeks, less. Is this strange? Can I still be a successful bodybuilder?

Answer:

This is not strange at all. In fact, it is quite common. Due to work pressures, school pressures, relationship pressures, sleep patterns, diet, natural body rhythms, etc., all of us feel more energetic and motivated during some weeks than others. If you are serious about your training, then going to the gym can be very hard work. Unless you make your living as a bodybuilder or athlete it can sometimes be difficult to get to the gym after a particularly stressful day at work.

My suggestion to you is something I call "split-cycling." this simply means that week to week you change your body part split in accordance with the amount of days you will go to the gym that week. Here is how it would work:

week 1: 3 day split

- monday...chest/delts/calves
- tuesday...off
- wednesday...lats/hams/abs
- thursday...off
- friday...quads/bis/tris
- sat/sun...off

week 2: 4 day split

- monday...chest/delts/calves
- tuesday...lats/traps/abs
- wednesday...off
- thursday...quads/hams/calves
- friday...bis/tris/abs
- sat/sun...off

week 3: 5 day split

- monday...chest/calves
- tuesday...delts/traps/abs
- wednesday...lats/low back/calves
- thursday...off
- friday...quads/hams/abs
- saturday...bis/tris/forearms
- sunday...off

Using the split-cycling method will allow you to keep your mind and body fresh, as well as motivation high, as you can go to the gym around your "life schedule." it will also allow you to specialize on

certain bodyparts some weeks and back off on others. Give it a try.
Good luck!

Question:

I am just about ready to begin preparing for my next competition and I have decided on using the following supplements for the next 12 weeks: creatine, l-glutamine, whey, ephedrine, caffeine, vitamin c, vanadyl sulfate, phosphatidylserine (ps), flax oil, and 6-oxo. Can you please tell me how to best incorporate each on a daily basis?

Answer:



Well, I must say that this sounds like a pretty comprehensive list. You are really covering all of your bases here. I just hope that your diet and training regimen are equally as well thought out! Here are my general recommendations for each of these supplements:

-creatine: 5 grams per day added to your post workout shake on training days. On off days, 5 grams on an empty stomach first thing in the morning.

-l-glutamine: on workout days take 5 grams on an empty stomach 1st thing in the morning, 30 minutes before your workout, immediately following your workout, and before bed. On off days take it in the morning and before bed.

-whey: take 1/2 a serving shortly before training and a full serving immediately after training.

-ephedrine/caffeine: 20 mg of ephedrine and 200 mg of caffeine 3 x per day on an empty stomach, spaced at least 4 hours apart. Don't take too close to bedtime or it may keep you awake. Also, try to schedule 1 dose before training or cardio.

-vitamin c: 500 mg at each meal

-vanadyl sulfate: 7.5 mg at each carb containing meal (15 mg at post workout meal when carbs should be highest).

-ps: 800 mg on an empty stomach about an hour before training. On off days take 400 mg in the morning and another 400mg before bed.

-flax oil: 1 tbsp with breakfast, with pre workout whey, and with final meal. -6-oxo: 4 caps with final meal.

Best of luck with your competition!!

Question:

Is there any difference between designing a workout program for a man or a woman? I am a female and my trainer says that men and women should be trained the same.

Answer:

Well your trainer is wrong! This is a very complicated topic...one that goes far beyond the scope of this column. However, here is a general list of considerations that must be made for a female client:

- joint instability differences
- orthopedic concerns
- structural differences
- postural differences
- hormonal differences
- metabolic differences
- the menstrual cycle
- psychological differences
- aesthetic goals
- lack of participation in sports (generally)

Like I said, this is a general list. Each of these concerns breaks off into its own topic. Some of these differences are genetic, some are social/environmental, and some are due to differences in footwear (high heels) and hair length. So, although men and women are very much "equal," we are not the same!

Question:

I'm getting ready for a competition this summer and I really want to set myself apart. Aside from the basics, are there any muscles I can focus on that will add an extra "dimension" to

my physique?

Answer:

That is an excellent question. When I prepare for a competition myself I am always thinking in terms of trying to bring out details in my physique that nobody else has. Most guys are only concerned with the "showy" muscles like the chest, biceps, and abs. Now of course, while these muscles are the most important, there are other, less though about muscles that when fully developed, can transform a great physique into an outstanding one.



The following is a list of these muscles and some exercises that will target them:

- brachialis: hammer curls, reverse curls
- forearm extensors: reverse wrist curls, reverse curls
- serratus: pullovers, stiff arm pull-downs
- intercostals: twisting crunches, side crunches, side cable crunches
- soleus: seated calf raise
- gluteus/hamstring tie in: butt blaster machine, lower cable straight leg kickback
- rectus femoris: sissy squat, leaning back leg extension, straight leg lift
- tibialis: reverse calf raise/calf press
- erectors: hyperextension, good mornings

-upper back tie-ins: behind the neck pull-downs, seated row to chin

Add some of these exercises to your program and watch your physique take on a more complete look!

Question:

I am really trying to get cut up for the summer. Someone told me I should use a supplement called cytomel to burn fat. What do you think?

Answer:



I think that you need to know that cytomel is not a supplement but a prescription drug! Cytomel is a brand name for the drug Liothyronine sodium. It is a pharmaceutical preparation of the natural thyroid hormone Triiodothyronine, also known simply as T-3. When this drug is used it will speed up the metabolism and cause a more rapid utilization of the macronutrients. Most important to bodybuilders is its ability to burn stored body fat without greatly restricting calories. This of course will lead to a more "ripped" appearance. However, like I said, cytomel is a drug, and it can have negative side effects. You will be better off focusing on your diet and cardio regimen than worrying about dangerous short cuts like thyroid drugs.

Question:

When using supersets, what is better...an isolation exercise followed by a compound exercise, or vice-versa?

Answer:



Supersets are a great intensity technique and are excellent for both building mass while bulking and quality while cutting. The question of which is better, pre-exhaust (an isolation exercise followed by a compound exercise), or post-activation (a compound exercise followed by an isolation exercise) is difficult to answer. Both methods have merit. Pre-exhaust allows you to pre-fatigue the target muscle first, and then when it fails, continue the bombardment with a compound

movement that utilizes assisting muscles. Post-activation, by starting with a heavy compound exercise (usually 4-5 reps are used), stimulates the nervous system, which allows the isolation exercise that follows to activate more muscle fibers than it usually would. Since both of these methods have their own unique advantages I suggest that you use both techniques for a period of time. Utilize pre-exhaust for 4-

6 weeks, and then post-activation for 4-6 weeks. Follow that with 8-12 weeks where no supersets are used. This will give you the best of both worlds while preventing boredom, stagnation, and burnout.

Question:

I am the coach of a serious teen football team. What type of abdominal exercises are best for my players?

Answer:



I believe the best abdominal exercises for athletes are those performed on a swiss ball. This is vastly superior to flat surface abdominal training as the rounded surface of a swiss ball allows for a much greater range of motion, as well as an "unstable environment" to train in. This "unstable environment" will improve the balance of each player and work the stabilizer muscles, which in turn will lead to greater agility

during games. Balance is an essential part of all sports and weak/tired stabilizer muscles can cause poor performance on the field. Swiss ball crunches and reverse crunches are two basic and easy to master exercises, and they will improve core strength tremendously. Also remember, almost all basic weight lifting exercises can be adapted for use on a swiss ball, and the unique training stimulus they provide have a direct "crossover" to sports activities.

Question:

Why do some bodybuilders use insulin as a supplement?

Answer:



First, I'd hardly call synthetic insulin a "supplement." **it is really a serious drug, not meant to be used by bodybuilders but those inflicted with insulin-dependent diabetes.** Insulin is only available by prescription, but that has never stood in the way of muscle hungry bodybuilders that want a specific drug.

The reason that bodybuilders are interested in insulin lies in its ability to cause the storage of greater amounts of carbohydrates and amino acids inside muscle cells. Insulin is both anabolic and anti-catabolic in nature, and can produce dramatic and rapid increases in the size and fullness of the muscles when used "correctly."

Insulin also has a synergistic effect with other bodybuilding drugs like growth hormone and steroids, each helping the other drug to work more efficiently.

I should also mention that because insulin is not detected by standard urinalysis testing, it is also a favorite among "natural" bodybuilders as well. Insulin, along with HGH, which is also undetectable, is used by many that compete in drug tested events. This is cheating at its worst of course.

Bottom line, synthetic insulin is a powerful and dangerous drug. When

used "correctly" it can certainly enhance hypertrophy to astounding levels. Used incorrectly on the other hand, it can make you fat, or far worse, kill you.

Question:

I love to squat, but find that my outer thigh is growing far better than my tear drop. How can I get to that muscle right above the knee?

Answer:

The tear-drop shaped muscle you are referring to is the vastus medialis (vm). This muscle develops quite easily for some, but is tough



to develop for others. For those that have trouble with this particular muscle, all hope is not lost! There are ways to enhance the recruitment of the vm by using foot position, body alignment, and training technique to your advantage. Since you love to squat and you feel you get a lot out of this movement, let's discuss how you can use it to more effectively target the

vm.

First, you need to make your stance more narrow (less than shoulder width) while also elevating your heels (use a block of wood or two 25 lb plates). Doing these two things will move your body's center of gravity forward and set your thighs up to utilize more vm fibers than

wide stance, flat footed squatting does.

Second, try doing your squats (this can be done with leg presses as well) in the one and a quarter style. To use this technique you will lower yourself slowly to the bottom squat position, but then, instead of coming all the way up you will only rise one quarter of the way. Next, slowly descend back to the bottom position and then push quickly to just before lockout. This will force greater recruitment of the vm as this muscle, along with the hamstrings is most responsible for getting out of the bottom squat position. 2-3 sets of 6-8 reps of this exercise and you'll not only have big teardrops on your thighs, but also streaming down your face from the pain!

Question:

I have been bodybuilding for 10 years now and I still get sore from almost every workout with one exception...legs! I work hard and heavy on all the basics. What am I doing wrong?

Answer:

Although muscular soreness is not a definitive marker for hypertrophy, our mentality as bodybuilders drives us to seek out pain and correlate it with a successful workout. Of course I am not speaking of the type of pain associated with injury, but the type of burning, searing pain that indicates to us that our muscles are being stressed. Even more uplifting to the serious trainee is awakening in the morning to stiffness and soreness in the muscle(s) that we targeted the day before. This provides a psychological boost and a

feeling of accomplishment.

Since you say that your leg workouts are no longer making you sore I am going to assume that you have been performing more or less the same routine for too long a period of time. Although by simply changing your rep range, your exercise order, your rep tempo, etc, you can reintroduce soreness to your leg workout, I am going to take it a step further and suggest you change your entire leg program for the next 8 weeks. We are going to shock your mind and body with some unusual exercises, and make getting up and down the stairs the following day quite a chore!

Here is the routine:

-1 and a 1/4 leg extensions...3 x 8 (squeeze the weight to the top then bring it down only one quarter of the way before squeezing it right back to the top. Then bring it all the way down and repeat)

-hack sissy squat...3 x 12 (get in the hack machine and perform sissy squats by descending and bringing your butt off the pad, rising on the balls of the feet, and stretching your quads down and forward until the knees are in front of your toes and the quads are fully stretched. Push back to the top and repeat)

-bench step ups...2 x 15 (while holding a barbell on your back, put the working leg up on a flat bench and then step up onto the bench using only the strength of the working thigh. Complete all the reps with one leg before switching)

-single lying leg curl...2 x 8-10 (performed one leg at a time this simple exercise becomes quite intense)

-high stance leg press...2 x 10-12 (sit in a leg press machine and place your feet high enough on the platform so that your toes are off the top. Push through the heels and focus on using your hams)

-toes pointed hyperextension...2 x 15 (unlike standard hyperextensions, which work the lower back we will be targeting the hams. This is accomplished by pointing rather than flexing the foot and beginning each rep by consciously flexing your hamstrings. Only bring your torso to the parallel position and at the top further squeeze both the hams and lower glutes)



Question:

What is the difference between the 2 types of cholesterols?

Answer:

LDL or low-density lipoproteins transport cholesterol from the liver to the tissues. HDL or high-density lipoproteins transport cholesterol from the

tissues, including from the lining of the arteries, back to the liver. Put simply, LDL is known as "bad" cholesterol and HDL as "good" cholesterol. When cholesterol levels are checked, the ratio of HDL to LDL is far more important in determining your potential for health

problems than the total cholesterol count. In other words, even if your total count is a little "high," as long as your ratio is in the proper range, you can still remain healthy.

Question:

If all things are equal will I get faster results from free weights or from machines?

Answer:



Unless you have an injury free weights should always be your choice of exercise for several reasons.

Here are a few advantages of free weights:

- Using barbells & dumbbells are much more effective in strengthen/developing synergistic muscles, e.g. rotator cuff.
- Biomechanically free weights match the natural movements of the body.
- Overall you will develop greater strength & size using free weights.
- Overall power is achieved much more efficiently.

Here are a few disadvantages of machines:

- Machines force the body to maintain a pre-determined & often

unnatural path.

- Machines are not very effective in strengthen/developing synergistic muscles.
- Machines are built to accommodate the "average" person's body, so if you're larger or smaller than average you may not fit very well.
- Difficult to achieve maximum velocity due to the inherent constraints of a machine.

Now do not get me wrong here, I am not stating that machines should never be used. Machines do have their uses, but the majority of your exercises should be done with free weights. Machines do have some advantages as well.

Advantages of machines:

- Some machines can be more efficient in muscle isolation.
- In some respects, especially for a beginner machines can be safer.
- A quicker work-out can be done utilizing machines, no plate changing, etc.

Question:

For the past 4+ months I've been using Creatine capsules 3 before and 3 after a work out. However I've recently started to take muscle & weight gainer powder. Is it ok to take both supplements, is it safe to do so, or could it have a negative effect?

Answer:

You may want to consider switching to a powdered creatine; it's much more cost effective. Yes, taking both supplements is fine, and no there will be no negative effects in doing so.



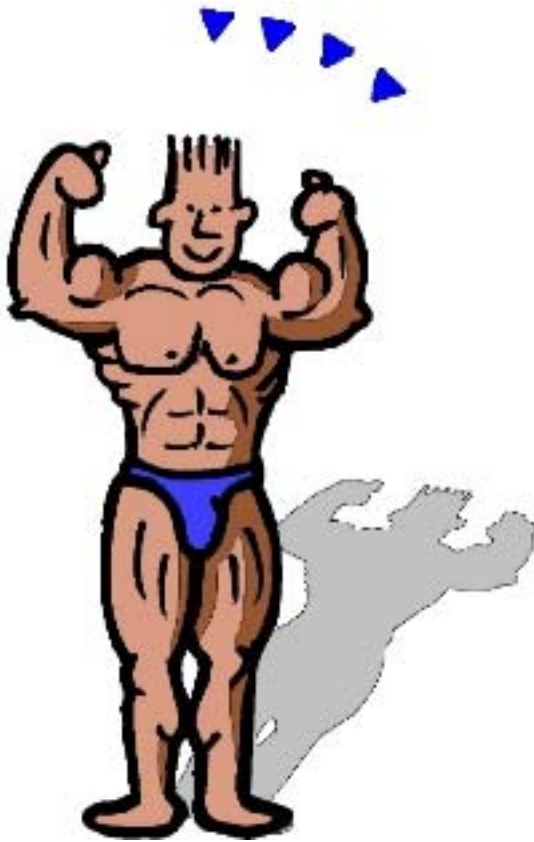
Remember that creatine is a naturally occurring substance (an amino acid) in our bodies, and is necessary for ATP.

In fact there was a study done on this a couple of years ago and the findings were greater gains in size & strength by the group of subjects that used protein and creatine supplementation together!

Here is the reference for the study:

Burke, D.G., et al. (2001). The effect of whey protein supplementation with and without creatine monohydrate combined with resistance training on lean muscle mass and muscle strength. *Int J Sports Nutr Metab.* 11: 349-64.

Question:



Is it true that if you lift heavy weights you will get bigger, and if you lift lighter weights you will get cut?

Answer:

Well, it is true that heavier weights and lower reps will be more effective in building size and strength. However it is not true that lighter weights get you cut. This is a myth in the fitness world that has been perpetuated for many years, and is still alive and strong today!

Getting cut or lean requires proper diet and nutrition, and while you are on a "cutting" cycle you should still train with heavy weights to maintain your muscle mass. There is a principle referred to as "use it or lose it", it basically implies that if you do not utilize your muscle mass your body will see no reason to maintain it. So, even during a cutting cycle you still want to train as heavy as possible, it's inevitable (especially if you're natural) that you will sacrifice some size while cutting. But if you train with light weights you will most likely lose twice the amount of muscle mass than if you continue to train heavy while cutting body fat.

Now, this does not mean that you should never go through "light cycles" of training; I truly believe that you should. Using short meso

cycles in 4-6 week periods is extremely important if you want to continue to make progress. So, training heavy year around is not a good idea either, it will lead to over training and ultimately injury.

Question:

What exactly is "over training", is it caused by training too long?

Answer:



Over training is basically the result of accumulative micro trauma and it can take several weeks before you're in a true state of over training. It is not necessarily from training too long, however that can be a factor. Usually there are several factors involved, such as not enough rest between work-outs, improper nutrition, failing to take time off from training (complete breaks), etc.

Here are some guidelines to follow that will help you avoid over training:

- 1.) Use a planned training system employing cycles of training, e.g. 4 week Heavy cycle, 4 week Light cycle, 4 week Medium cycle.
- 2.) Utilize therapeutic modalities such as massage, whirlpool, etc.
- 3.) Use proper lifting techniques avoiding excessive use of ballistic (uncontrolled) movements and excessive eccentric contractions

(negative work).

4.) Give yourself sufficient rest between work-outs, such as two on, one off, one on, one off. Also, every 2-3 months take a full week or even two weeks off from training to allow your body to fully recuperate.

5.) Take advantage of sports supplements to "complement" your diet, e.g. protein powders, and multiple vitamins & minerals.

6.) Use techniques like super sets, giant sets, etc., sparingly.

Excessive use of these shocking techniques can lead to overt raining.

7.) Do not go to positive failure on every set, every workout!

Question:

What is the optimal amount of protein to take a day if you want to build muscle?

Answer:

As a rule of thumb I recommend 1-2 grams of protein per pound of bodyweight. You should not go below 1 gram, and there is no real need to go above 2 grams (unless you're not a natural lifter). It's equally important that you consume your protein over the course of 5-6 meals per day.

Example: If you weighed 200lbs your total protein intake per day would be between 200-400 grams, spread out across 6 meals your protein intake would be 33-66 grams of protein per meal.

The reason for this is you want to supply your body with adequate protein through out the day, and it should come from a variety of sources including beef, chicken, fish, milk, etc., which will ensure that your body has the necessary amino acids available at all times to support anabolism (building).

Another important time for protein that should be taken advantage of is post work-out, often referred to as the "anabolic window". The first 30-60 minutes after training your body is in a catabolic state and to help reverse this process and promote anabolism it's critical that you consume a high BV (biological value) protein within 30 minutes of training. The optimal protein at this time is whey because it is digested extremely quickly and the body can utilize the amino acids for growth and repair.



Question:

My problem is that I store all my fat around my belly and chest. What exercises can I do to burn this fat?

Answer:

None! There is no such thing as "spot reduction"; the body loses fat systemically, not locally.

This is a myth that is still perpetuated today, and it is just that a myth.

Training your abs will not reduce the amount of fat that covers them, or any other body part for that matter. Losing body fat or getting lean is done by proper diet, nutrition and exercise. Also, the safe amount of fat one can lose is approximately 1-2 pounds per week, any more than that will be a loss of water weight and muscle.

Please check out the diet & nutrition articles on this site for more info on proper diet & nutrition.

Question:

My doctor wants me to go on a diet consisting of several meal replacement shakes per day, is this a good idea?

Answer:



Absolutely not, in fact it's probably one of the worst ways to "diet". Not to mention your doctor is the last person that you should be going to for diet & nutrition advice.

First of all the human body is built to digest food, in order for a person to be healthy and have a normal metabolism they must eat wholesome, solid foods, not shakes. The word "diet" is a big problem in society today, the whole notion of going on a diet should be dismissed all together. People that go on diets to lose weight will never experience permanent weight loss, it's physically impossible. Instead it results in a yo-yo dieting syndrome where you lose weight, then regain it within the

year, and end up in a viscous cycle of losing and gaining weight. Ultimately you end up with more fat than when you started.

Let me explain briefly, when you starve your body yes you will lose weight, however most of it will be muscle and water weight with only a small percentage being actual fat. In this process your body will go into "starvation mode" in which all bodily functions are slowed down. So, with the loss of muscle (which burns calories 24/7) and the body in starvation mode your metabolism is slowed to a minimum to support the body. Eventually you will start eating normal again because a person can only starve themselves for so long, and your body will store every calorie it can to ensure that the next time it's restricted from food it will have energy reserves. Within a few months you will have regained all fat, you will have less muscle, your metabolism will be slower and you will feel defeated.

What needs to be done is a permanent change in one's eating habits. A sound diet of real food preferably 5-6 small meals per day low in saturated fats and refined sugars, with quality protein and carbohydrates. Along with a work-out program consisting of weight training and cardio. You will increase your metabolism, increase muscle mass, lose body fat and have all of the energy you need for training.

That is the recipe for ultimate fat loss success!

That was just a short overview of why a "doctor recommended" diet of shakes is an extremely bad choice. For more information please read thru our diet & nutrition article section and visit our forums:

[IronMagazine Forums](#)

We also highly recommend this ebook [Burn the Fat, Feed the Muscle](#)

Question:

I want to build up my upper and inner chest, should I do incline presses and cable crossovers for this?

Answer:



YES! As well as flat barbell presses, decline barbell presses & dumbbell flyes.

I do not say this because any of those exercises will actually target any specific region of your pectorial, because they will not. I say this because to obtain "complete" chest development to your maximum genetic potential you will need

a variety of exercises.

A common mistake people make is the "I feel it" syndrome. They think because an exercise makes a certain part of a muscle sore it must target that area of the muscle. This is true in some cases such as the deltoids where there are more than one head with different tendon attachments. The pectorial major is a single muscle with one tendon attachment to the humerus (arm) that fans across the rib cage. However, it is still a single muscle and muscles grow as a whole, not in parts. Think about it this way, if you could cause growth in one area of

a single muscle that would imply that it's possible to shape a muscle, right? Well, we all know (at least I hope we do) that you cannot shape a muscle. The shape of your muscles are genetically predetermined.

Now, it's still important to use multiple angles to hit the pectorial muscles (and any muscle for that matter), not because it will cause growth in one area, but because using different angles to hit a muscle is necessary for maximum stimulation and to continue progress and development.

Question:

How can I build the peak on my biceps like Arnolds? I was told that preacher curls build a peak, is this true?

Answer:



You will need to clone yourself and mix in a copy of Arnold's anatomical DNA! Just kidding.

Unfortunately, a peak on your biceps is genetic, meaning you either have it or you do not. If you build your biceps just as you would any other muscle group, and a peak never forms, then it probably never will.

There are no "special" exercises that build a peak, or shape a muscle. You train a muscle and it grows, whatever genetic shape it has that is how it will grow. It really is that simple.

So continue to train your biceps, utilizing many different exercises, e.g. preacher curls, barbell curls, & dumbbell curls, hopefully you are one of the few lucky ones that is gifted with "peaked" biceps.

Question:

I want to get cut, how do I go about doing this? Do I just drop my calories and do a lot of cardio? Or, is there a supplement that I can take to get lean?

Answer:

First of all let me begin by saying that the answer to your question is not simple, nor short; in fact there are entire books on this very one subject. So, let me recommend two ebooks that we promote here at IM:

[Burn the Fat, Feed the Muscle](#)

[Muscle Building Nutrition](#)

Okay, first and foremost you need to get your diet in order. I am not talking about going on a "diet", I mean a solid nutrition program that you can maintain, **not** a fad or starvation type diet. This will entail

some additional research on your behalf; the two aforementioned ebooks would have all of this information laid out for you. Let me give you an example of my current 'cutting diet':

Meal 1: 1/2 Cup Oatmeal & 1.5 Scoops Whey Isolate Protein Powder

Meal 2: Optimum Pro Complex Protein Bar

Meal 3: Deli Cut Chicken Breast and 1/2 Whole Wheat Pita, 1 Small Apple & Cucumber slices.

Meal 4: Optimum Pro Complex Protein Bar

Meal 5: (Post Work-Out) 1.5 Scoops Whey Isolate Protein Powder & 1 Scoop CytoMax Recovery Drink.

Meal 6: Lean Steak or Chicken Breast, Green Veggie or a Green Salad.

Meal 7: 1 Scoop Whey Isolate Protein Powder & 1tbsp Natural PB.

* I also use Fish Oil caps, Dressing and Almonds for EFA's.

(This is only an example; I am not recommending this diet)

As you can see I eat every three hours, these are relatively small meals that are high in protein. There are a couple reasons that you want to eat small, frequent meals: 1. It keeps your metabolism running efficiently, my analogy to this is a fire. To keep a fire burning you continue to put small pieces of wood on it frequently, if you put a bunch of wood on your fire all at once you will smother it, and if you do not put any wood on your fire it will burn out. Your metabolism is the same way in this respect, if you continue to feed it small amounts of food frequently it will run very efficiently, if you eat 3 big meals per day you will smother your metabolism, and of course if you starve yourself your metabolism will come to a halt. 2. It's important to keep

your body in a state of positive nitrogen balance, by eating 6-8 small meals per day with each one containing quality protein you will accomplish this, and you will help prevent any muscle breakdown or catabolism.

Personally, I utilize a low carb diet, not an "Atkins diet", but I do limit my carbohydrates to around 150grams per day. However, every 7 days I will "carb-up" to replenish glycogen stores (stored sugars). I am not recommending any type of diet or macro breakdown here (protein/carbs/fats), I am just explaining briefly what I do. There are literally dozens of methods that be used and that is where you will need to do further research as well as some self experimentation to find out what works best for you.

One important aspect of getting lean in regards to your diet and nutrition is what we call "eating clean"; this means not adding unnecessary garnishments to food and eating quality food sources. An example would be you could eat a chicken breast and a salad; however a chicken breast smothered in cheese sauce and a salad with cheese, croutons, ranch dressing and other garbage is not eating clean. That sounds pretty bland; however you could add a small amount of salsa to your chicken breast and a light oil dressing to your salad for added flavor.

Let me address dropping calories, when I go on a cutting diet I drop my calories a little bit, but not much. I stop eating starchy carbs at 1pm everyday and overall my calories are reduced a small amount due to less carbs, but not that much. The first thing that many people do when they want to lose weight is they stop eating, or they eat very



little, this is the worst thing that you can do! Ultimately what happens is you lose as much muscle as you do fat and your body will go into a "starvation mode". This is where your metabolism shuts down to deal with the lack of food. After a month or two of this type of dieting you end up with about a 50% loss of muscle, which in turn slows your metabolism even more because muscle tissue is an active tissue that burns

calories 24/7. As soon as you start eating again your body will store every last calorie you give it as a defense mechanism in case it ever gets starved again. So, you end up gaining all your weight back very rapidly, a slower metabolism due to the muscle loss, and more body fat than when you started. So, simply dropping calories is not an effective means for getting lean or cut, in fact it will not even work, you will lose weight, but you will not end being lean.

Fat loss supplements are effective, and they can be an aid to losing body fat, but they are not a solution by themselves. Once you have a solid diet & nutrition plan in place, a training regimen incorporating both weight training and cardio, and you have followed this for at least a month, then you can add a fat loss supplement. To rely on just a fat loss supplement is not only ridiculous but you're setting yourself up for

failure because by itself the effects will be very minimal, if any at all.

As I mentioned above these are very basic answers to your questions and you really need to do further reading on your own, please consider one of the following ebooks:

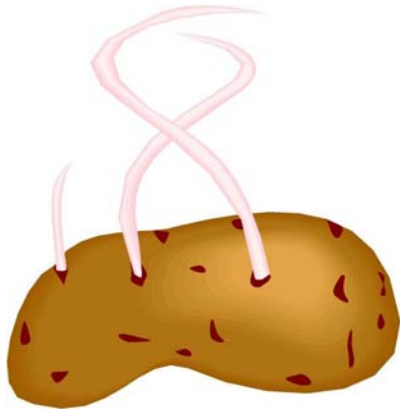
[Burn the Fat, Feed the Muscle](#)

[Muscle Building Nutrition](#)

Question:

What is the glycemic index and why do people care about it in regards to losing weight?

Answer:



The glycemic index ranks foods on how they affect our blood sugar levels. This index measures how much your blood sugar increases in the two or three hours after eating. The glycemic index is about foods high in carbohydrates, and rates them by how quickly they're converted into glucose, which is the form of sugar that is found in your blood.

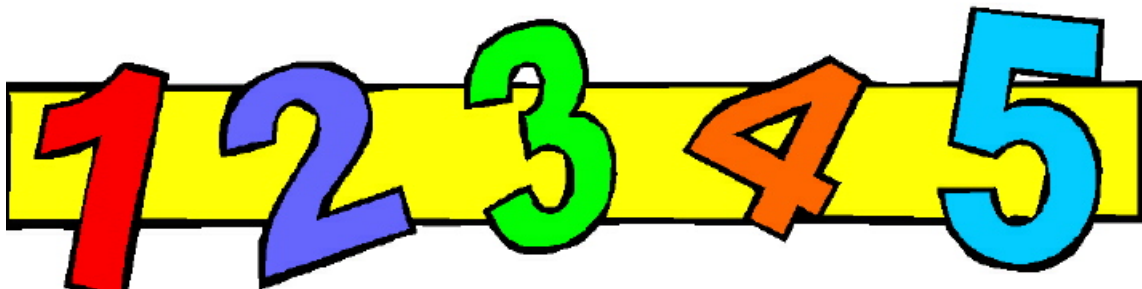
Foods high in fat or protein don't cause your blood sugar level to rise much. A lot of people still think that it is plain table sugar that people need to avoid. The experts used to say that, but the glycemic index shows that even complex carbohydrates, like baked potatoes, can be

even worse. When you make use of the glycemic index to prepare healthy meals, it helps to keep your blood sugar levels under control. This is especially important for athletes and people who are overweight also stand to benefit from knowing about this relatively new concept in good nutrition.

Question:

How many set and reps should I use to gain muscle mass?

Answer:



Unfortunately there is no magic number; it will vary from individual to individual. An “ectomorph” who is predominantly red fiber will respond better to higher repetition training, whereas a “mesomorph” who is predominantly white fiber will respond better to lower repetitions and heavier weights. However, no one is any single somatotype; most of us are a combination of all three, so there is no canned program that will yield the best results. For overall size gains, the goal of a bodybuilder, using a multitude of rep ranges, poundage’s and varying intensity will be most beneficial as well as staying in your 55-85 percent maximum range. If your max on bench press were 200lbs, using varying weights of 110lbs up to 170lbs would be your “training zone”. That does not mean you should never go above or below those

poundage's, it just means that the majority of training you do should be within that range. Typically, for hypertrophy to take place your reps should be in the 4-8 range. There is no need to ever use a weight that you cannot perform at least 4 reps with, unless your goal is pure strength. There are a few reasons that I say this, one is that when you train at 90 percent or higher of your maximum weight Type IIb muscle fibers are doing the majority of the work, and this will not do much for hypertrophy. In fact, even power lifters and Olympic lifters do the majority of their training at around 85% of their max.

Question:

What do you think about the "Atkins Diet" and other "Low Carb" diets?

Answer:



First of all diets are always temporary, so I do not even believe in "diets" per se. Dieting puts people into a viscous cycle of yo-yoing their weight, in which they gradually get fatter every year. If your goal is to change your body composition permanently, i.e. lose fat, you need to make a lifestyle change. Meaning, you need to get your diet and nutrition in order in a way that you can manage forever. Essentially, a lifestyle change is what needs to take place, one in which you make a commitment to eat a healthy diet year around, not one in which you lose weight, then gain in back, etc.

Now, back to the question. It is true that a low carb diet will shed off body fat, and it will work faster than other forms of dieting, that has been scientifically proven. So, for a short term diet, a low carb or "Atkins Diet" is effective. The problem is our bodies need carbohydrates for energy, this is even more important if you are involved in weight training, or other strenuous physical activity. So, for an "athlete" to restrict their bodies from carbs is not the best approach. Our muscles have stored energy reserves called glycogen, when you restrict carb intake your body will deplete these stores. And if you are not feeding your body carbs very little glycogen will be replenished in the muscles. In fact, this is why "dieters" see such a large initial weight loss when they start their low carb diets. They deplete their glycogen stores, and lose water weight, so it's common to see a 10 pound weight loss the first week. Unfortunately, very little of this weight loss will be actual body fat. If you weight train, this will bring your work-outs to a grinding halt due to the lack of energy reserves. Soon enough you will be in a catabolic state where your body is actually feeding on muscle tissue for energy and your metabolism will shut down.

So, even if a low carb diet is effective, how long will the average person stay on this diet? I would say 6-12 months maximum and that is being optimistic. Forget all forms of dieting, in fact drop the word from your vocabulary right now!

Here is what I do believe in. I like to call it "carb tapering", meaning you adjust your carb intake based on the time of day and activity level. Typically, carb intake is highest in the first few meals of the day (especially breakfast), and then tapered off as the day progresses until

the last two meal have very little carbs if any at all. This is a much healthier approach that a person can live with. My carb tapering method keeps your body fueled though out the day, keeps glycogen stores in tact and replenished, and will not hinder your work-outs and training. I use this method pre-contest, as well as through out the year. Another very important aspect of eating carbs in eating "good carbs", slow burning carbs that are low to medium on the glycemic index. Basically, stay away from anything white, i.e. white flour products, white potatoes, white rice, etc. Also, be careful of your sugars, certain fruits have different sugars in them, i.e. apples have fructose and are about in the middle of the glycemic index, whereas a banana is primarily glucose and very high on the glycemic index. If you plan to eat a banana I would highly suggest it be with your first meal of the day (breakfast). The types of carbs that you want to eat are ones that are slower burning and have less effect on blood sugar levels., this keeps insulin in check.

Here are some examples of the types of carbs that you want to eat:

Complex Carbs:

Sweet Potatoes

Red Potatoes

Yams

Long Grain Brown Rice

Old Fashioned Oats

Fresh or Frozen berries

Fruit (be careful, check the GI)

Whole Grain Bread

All Bran w/ Extra Fiber

Whole Wheat Pasta

Lentils

Legumes

Pumpkin

Squash

Turnip

I will say one thing though, I like this new low carb craze for one reason, most restaurants are offering dishes that are healthier and higher in protein, low in "bad carbs" which makes eating out much easier for bodybuilders and fitness minded people!

For more in depth reading on diet & nutrition I highly recommend Tom Venuto's ebook: [Burn the Fat, Feed the Muscle \(BFFM\)](#)

Question:

I have heard that there are different types of muscle tissue, is this true and what are they?

Answer:

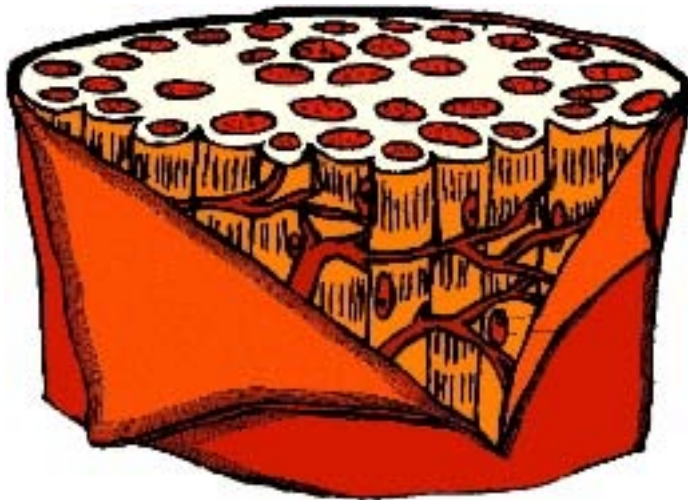
Yes, within skeletal muscle there are three types of muscle fibers:

Type I, Type IIa and Type IIb. Everyone has their own unique distribution of these fibers, some people are predominately Type I, and some Type IIa,

however the “average person” has an even amount of red and white fiber.

Type I muscle fiber often referred to as slow-twitch or red fiber and is highly resistant to fatigue and has a high oxidative capacity, This muscle fiber is responsible for aerobic exercises and activities, such as running.

Type IIa muscle fiber often referred to as fast-twitch or white fiber is an intermediate fiber and they're larger in size and much stronger than



Type I fibers.

Type IIb muscle fiber, which are also fast twitch & white fiber, are capable of producing more force than Type

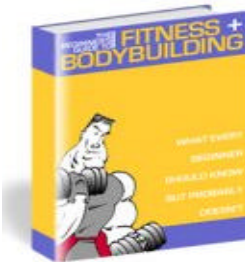
IIa, but they're low in oxidative capacity, and fatigue very quickly. Fast twitch fibers have thicker nerves that give them an increased contractile impulse, which is measured by the number of twitches per second, hence the name fast twitch fiber. Slow twitch fibers have smaller nerves, thereby twitch much slower, however they have a higher number of mitochondria, which increases their oxidative capacity. Mitochondria are the cells in a muscle that synthesize ATP (Adenosine Triphosphate), often referred to as the cell's “powerhouse”.

[Bodybuilding & Fitness eBooks](#)



[Burn the Fat, Feed the Muscle by Tom Venuto](#) - You're about to discover what might be the most powerful fat loss system ever developed. It's the same system fitness models and bodybuilders use to reach single digit body fat levels and achieve rock-hard muscle definition that makes them look like walking anatomy charts. Tom has developed a system for losing body fat based on the little-known nutrition secrets of competitive natural bodybuilders and fitness models.

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[Beginner's Guide to Fitness & Bodybuilding](#) - If you're new to fitness or bodybuilding and confused as to where to begin or maybe you just want to know the fundamentals, information overload or lack of any decent information about how to start your fitness journey or you simply cannot afford to buy hundreds of dollars of products a month than this will be the most important letter you have ever read. "The Beginner's Guide to Fitness and Bodybuilding: It's the 80% basic fundamentals we are all told we should know, but we don't.

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[All Stars Trainer's Secrets Revealed](#) - It Doesn't Take 12 Weeks (Or Longer) To See An Amazing Change In Your Body And Your Life! How to burn more fat and build more muscle in the next 30 days than most people do in 90 days or even 6 months! 10 of the world's most knowledgeable, most respected, most sought-after personal trainers finally reveal their "private-client" short-cut secrets to stunning 30 day body transformations. Let me PROVE - with hard science - that you

REALLY CAN make incredible progress in one short month.

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[The Ultimate Diet 2.0 by Lyle McDonald](#) - represents both a very old and very new approach to the problems of dieting to low bodyfat percentages. It is old in that it builds upon an approach originally developed in the early 80's by bodybuilding guru Dan Duchaine and researcher Michael Zumpano. It is new in that it applies the most cutting edge research to that plan, optimizing it to the greatest degree possible. The strategies are effective at increasing your metabolism, speeding up fat loss, and adding more muscle.

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[Muscle Building Nutrition by Will Brink](#) - Teaches you the correct ratios of foods to eat to optimize anabolic hormones and maximize your anabolic environment so that you are in "constant anabolic state" - exactly what you need to fast muscle growth. Shows you exactly, and in simple terms, how to plan your food intake like a pro, so you will never again have to wonder if what you are eating will help you build lean muscle. You will know!

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[Diet Supplements Revealed by Will Brink](#) - Thanks to this insider information some 15,000 people like YOU have won the fight against false advertising claims, and ineffective diets & weight loss supplements, saving thousands of wasted dollars & shedding thousands of pounds of unwanted fat each year. Learn which diet & weight loss supplements burn fat fast and which are no more than pure marketing hype... and discover a scientifically proven, totally personalized fat loss diet all within the next 10 minutes.

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