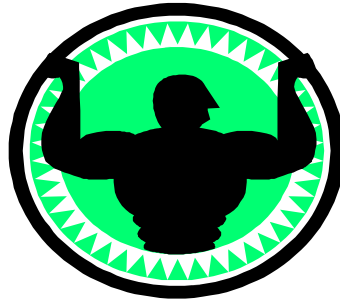


7 Things You “Must Do”



to
**Add Muscle,
Gain Weight,
and
Increase Strength!**

Written by Shawn C. Lebrun
Certified Personal Trainer
<http://www.shawnlebrunfitness.com>
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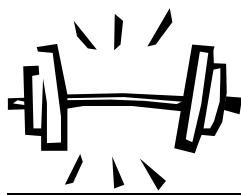
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7 Things You Must Do to Add Muscle, Gain Weight, and Increase Strength

Step 1: Know what you want in the end before you even begin.

Step 2: Figure out your daily calorie needs and increase them.

Step 3: Nutrition

Step 4: Reps, Sets, and Length of Workout.

Step 5: How Many Muscle Groups, Days to Train, and Rest.

Step 6: Cardio: How Much and When.

Step 7: Supplements

INTRODUCTION

I want you to do me a favor before you even start this program.

I want you to accept everything in this program as proven to work.

I want you to be able to have complete confidence and 100% faith that everything you read in this program will work for you.

I do not say this to sound conceited or to talk like my methods of training are the only way.

I say it because there is something powerful in knowing that what you are doing, or getting ready to do, will work for you 100% of the time.

Think about it for a moment. If you were not really sure that something you were about to do would work, would you really want to give it your best effort?

So please, just have faith that this program WILL do everything you want it to do.

That way as you work really hard on using the stuff I've written here, you can feel confident that I have your best interests at heart and that this program and these tips WILL work.

I've already done all of the steps in this program myself and with numerous clients and I can assure you that the only variable in this whole thing is your effort you put in.

You see, building muscle and losing fat is pretty simple, if you know what to do and the best way to do it.

As soon as you realize that there are no "shortcuts" to building muscle, gaining weight and increasing strength, you can begin to concentrate on those things that really matter.

The great thing is, there really are only a few things you have to focus on and do well if you want to get great results.

That's why I feel most people do not get the results they really want.

They either have no clue what to do or they are so confused with all the Bull floating around, they just start trying anything and everything.

They go from one program to another, one routine to the next, before really giving them time to work.

Does this sound a little bit like you?

I know it sounds like how I used to train.

I'd try one thing and before giving it a chance to see if that worked, I'd skip onto something else.

And I never got good results for that. I didn't know the word "persistence."

I wanted things "Yesterday."

But soon I realized that's not how the world works.

You see, there are certain truths in the world, certain "laws."

Both building muscle and losing fat are based upon these "laws" like the law of gravity.

I don't care how much you DON'T want that rock to fall off the rooftop you just dropped it from---it's going to fall.

It's the law of gravity--it happens whether you want it to or not.

Well, the same can be said for building muscle and gaining weight.

If you take certain steps, you'll get certain results.

They will work for you, for your cousin, or any one else that puts them to use.

The determining factor, once again, is your effort--how much you're willing to work at it.

If I was to name the single most important factor that will determine how much muscle you build and how much good quality weight you gain, it's this.

Your effort and intensity of that effort.

If you fail to do any of the recommended steps in this program, you'll see little to no results.

But if you take the steps in this program with very little effort and intensity, you'll still see little to no results.

Even though you've taken some of the steps and have done something, that's not enough.

The world is FULL of people that only give a half-hearted attempt.

If you never become one of those people, you will go very far.

If your effort and intensity are the biggest reasons for success or failure, than your attitude is not far behind those.

Your attitude is how you view things in life and most people go through life with a bad attitude, or view.

You cannot do that with bodybuilding. A positive attitude will get you to and keep you in the gym when it would be easier to be home, watching TV.

A bad attitude will often times keep you out of the gym altogether.

With a negative attitude, you think, "What's the use working out, I'm not getting anywhere."

This negative mindset begins to affect everything you do and instead of looking forward to your workouts, you begin to dread them.

On the other hand, with a positive attitude, nothing will keep you from the gym and more importantly, from getting what you want.

So always keep a cool head on your shoulders and feel positive about what you're doing.

If you allow negativity to creep into your lifestyle, it will affect everything you do in the course of the day and not in a good way.

If you're wondering why I've talked about effort and attitude more than bench presses and dumbbells so far, it's because the most important piece of your body you can exercise on a daily basis is that tool between your ears.

Your brain is the single most important piece of equipment you have for building muscle, increasing strength, gaining weight, or any other goal you have.

Your thinking will either get you ahead of everyone else or your thinking will keep you back---it's your choice.

Building muscle, gaining weight, and increasing your strength goes SO far beyond just exercising.

Look around the gym. You see many people exercising.

More often times than not, they do not have the ideal physique. They are not as muscular or as ripped as they'd like to be.

If just plain exercising and lifting weights were all it took to get an awesome body, wouldn't more people have one by now?

The last time I was in the gym, there were maybe 2 people out of 25 that had any sort of "muscular" physique.

I don't say this to be mean, but to rather prove a point.

Getting a great, muscular body has more to do with how you think than it does about how you exercise.

That may sound like a totally ridiculous statement, but it's 100% true.

If it weren't, then a lot more people would already have their ideal physiques.

I'm sure you've heard of the saying "Train smarter, not harder."

Well, there is some truth to that statement, but I prefer "Train Harder AND Smarter."

If you do this, you will take your body to levels you never thought possible.

When I began to train "harder AND smarter" I changed more in 10 weeks than I had in 10 years.

But I had to put my ego aside and realize that I didn't know everything I needed to know to get a great muscular body.

I still don't know everything, but I am now open to learning what I need to know to get what I want.

But the important thing is, I know what works.

After years of trial and error, going through program after program and training routine after routine, I've finally perfected something that works.

Yes, it will work for you as well, since you are human and humans tend to gain weight and muscle the same way.

In this program, I am going to give you exactly what you need to focus on and think about to get your most muscular body ever.

If you're ready to learn the 7 most important things you MUST do to gain muscle weight and increase your strength, I'm ready to give it to you.

There is nothing magical about what you are going to read.

The magic will occur when you begin to use this stuff to the best of your ability.

If you are not going to put this stuff to good use, don't bother reading it.

You're just wasting your time.

I can honestly tell you that anything you want to achieve with your body can be done with the steps in this program.

Again, have 100% faith this will work and you'll never, ever look back.

Let's begin the journey together.

One more thing before we begin.

Again, its important to eliminate any doubt right off the bat, so that way you can absolutely focus very hard on the few things you have to focus on.

Do yourself a favor---don't quit this program, at all.

I'm not saying you can't switch the exercises around or the days you work out around.

What I am saying is give this program some time to work.

Allow yourself a good 6 to 8 weeks at least of hard, intense work.

If you invest that amount of time, you will begin to see returns on your investment.

If you quit too soon, you will likely see nothing.

Ever.

In all that you do, whether its weight lifting, school, work, anything...be persistent in going after what you want.

The world is full of quitters; please do not become one of them.

Just realize that with your determination and hard work, you'll get what you want.

And if you do not get it right off, just put your nose down and keep going after it. Sooner or later, it will come to you.

But only if you keep at it.

You never, ever know when the thing you want will be right around the next corner.

If you quit and do not go around that corner, you will never know its there.

So, in your muscle building and weight gain goals; realize that what you seek may be just around the corner.

Don't quit before you go around it.

Step 1: Setting your ultimate goals.

What is it you want to achieve?

Why do you even bother working out?

I'm sure it's not just for the pleasure of lifting some metal bars or iron dumbbells.

There is a reason for doing it, a method to your madness.

What is that reason? Do you even know?

What one thing do you want to accomplish more than any other?

Have you given any thought to it?

I'm sure you didn't pay money to sit here and read me blabbing about goals.

But let me assure you this.

Setting muscle building and weight gain goals will be the single most important thing you can do for yourself. Period.

If you want any type of great body, you must first set goals and then go after them.

Goals are the starting point for anything worthwhile.

But goals sound so “formal”, so “wishy.”

Simply put, what do you want?

What do you want your body to look like, to weigh, what do you want your strength to be like?

If you do not know the answers to these questions, how do you know what you’re working towards and going after, or if you will even get it?

Let me give you a personal example.

In February 2002, I was in pretty good shape, around 220 pounds at 20% body fat.

I was pretty muscular but had a little more fat than I really wanted.

I had been at that shape and weight for quite some time because...

I had no goals and no deadlines to achieve anything else.

So I just “was.”

I was just “being” and not “doing.”

Are you simply “being” or are you “doing.”

If you are not in the second category, I suggest you begin doing something about it.

What is the first step to “doing”?

The first step in this muscle building and weight-gaining program is to know specifically what you want to get.

Know your end before you even begin.

Is it to gain 50 pounds of weight?

Do you want to increase your lifts on all exercises?

Or would you rather just get big enough to have a chance at starting linebacker for the football team?

We’re all different so if you ask 100 different people, you’ll probably get 100 different answers.

But the important thing is this---what do **you** want?

What is **your** perfect body like 1 year, or 5 years from now?

When I say know your end before you begin, just realize what it is you want to achieve.

Take out a piece of paper and begin writing down what it is you want.

Start setting goals.

When you set goals, you put momentum in your corner.

You give meaning to your wishes and you set a timeline for completing your wishes.

If you do not achieve your goal within that deadline, you set a new one.

Goals should be a part of your life from now until the day you die.

Unless you don't want anything.

I'm not going to spend a whole lot of time on goals because I'm sure you're tired of hearing about goals.

But if you're hearing about goals all the time from people all over the place, shouldn't that tell you the importance of goals?

If goals weren't very important, you'd never hear anything of them!

Now, back to the story about me in February 2002.

When I set a goal to enter and compete in a natural bodybuilding show 10 weeks from the day I decided to enter it, I changed more in that 10-week span than I did MY ENTIRE LIFE!

I went from 220 pounds to 175 on contest day with a body fat reading of 5%.

All from setting a goal.

10 weeks is not a lot of time.

It's only 70 days.

But if I had failed to set that goal, I'd probably still be at 21% body fat.

After my competition, I set another goal to go back up to 220 pounds in body weight, but this time at a much lower body fat percentage.

I wanted to gain more weight but I wanted it to be quality weight, not all fat.

In 4 weeks I was able to accomplish my goal of weighing 220 pounds and it was at 15% body fat this time.

I had set a goal and went after it. I knew my outcome before I even began.

So please realize how important it is to have goals in building muscle, strength, and any other area of fitness.

Proper goals can often motivate and propel you enough to accomplish more in 8 to 10 weeks than you normally would in an entire year!

To finish on the importance of goals, try this for an experiment.

Go in your car, turn the ignition, and start the car.

Now, pull the car out of the lot and start driving.

Anywhere. No destination. Just drive around and around with nowhere to go, no particular place to head.

Now, how long could you do this without getting bored?

Well, I know I can do it for hours without getting tired. I love a nice peaceful drive.

But how about a whole day, 24 hours, could you drive nowhere for a full 24 hours.

But go even longer, what if you were to drive around in your car with nowhere to go for a full week.

Are you calling me crazy yet?

But sadly, people “drive” around their whole lives with nowhere to go, no goals set to give them a sense of accomplishment.

Going through life without goals is like driving your car around with no destination.

You get nowhere.

Step 1 in this program is to decide exactly what it is you want to achieve.

Know what you want to end up with before you even step one foot in the gym.

How can you ever get what you want if you have no idea what it is?

When you set a goal you begin to bring that goal into your life, into all that you do.

You stop missing workouts, you stop missing post workout shakes, and you stop missing cardio sessions.

You start shopping for groceries with your goals in mind. Since you know what you want, you know what it will take to get there.

Everything you do revolves around your goals.

You now have purpose and that's a powerful thing

I'm not going to take you through some long, drawn out process of how to set goals, there's a thousand books on that subject.

Just realize that it's important, really important to set them.

That's why I've put it #1. Everything else comes after setting your goals.

All the other steps in this program have to do with you reaching your goals.

When it comes to a simple plan on setting goals, here's what I do.

I take out a blank piece of paper; write down a certain area of my fitness that I want to tackle.

For example, I'll write **Losing Fat** or **Building Muscle** at the top of the page and then I'll list what I want to accomplish under those headings.

Under **Losing Fat** I may say that I want to lose 10 pounds of fat in a month, or that I want to have washboard abs by the summer time.

Under **Building Muscle**, I may write that I want 21-inch biceps or I want to look more vascular (that "vein" look).

When you've identified what it is you want, give it a deadline to achieve it.

If you want six pack abs, set a deadline of 10 weeks or 90 days, whatever you feel is reasonable.

Set a deadline you feel that you have a 50-50 chance of reaching.

Don't make your goals too easy. If goals you have set are too easy to reach, they are probably not worthwhile goals to go after.

Do not make them too hard either. What's the point of setting a goal that is too difficult to reach? All you do is set yourself up for frustration.

So write down what you want to achieve and then give it a reasonable deadline.

When I made the decision to do my first bodybuilding show, I gave myself 10 weeks to prepare.

That was a time frame that was both demanding to meet as well as possible to meet.

There's nothing worse for your confidence than setting a bunch of goals that you have no shot in achieving.

The flipside to that is this.

There is nothing else quite like the satisfaction of reaching a goal that you have worked hard to complete.

A worthwhile goal that you achieve will make all of those difficult times seem worth it.

After you've written what it is you want to achieve and have given it a deadline, start writing down the steps you need to get what it is you want.

That's where this program comes in handy; I'm going to give you the steps.

You just have to put them to use with effort and intensity.

So, if under the heading of **Losing Fat** you wrote “six pack abs” as one of your goals and have set a deadline of 10 weeks (beach season), start writing all the things you have to do to get six pack abs.

For example, you know that you have to clean up your diet and that you have to make sure you are doing your intense cardio sessions.

Hold yourself accountable for each and every step along the way.

That way, you have no one to blame but yourself for not reaching your goals.

If you’d like a goal checklist I devised over the years, here’s one you can use to keep you on track.

.....

Goal work sheet

Here is a checklist you can use to accomplish any of your fitness (or life) goals, one by one!

Step 1: Determine your fitness goal;

My fitness goal is

Step 2: Here's what is necessary to achieve my goal:

****Desire--** desire is the force that drives you towards your fitness goals. It is what motivates you to endure those intense, physical workouts. You have to want your goal badly. If you don't want it, believe me, nobody else wants it for you!

****Belief--** You must believe, without a doubt, that you can achieve your fitness goals. Belief is the foundation of success.

****They're written--** your goals need to be written, or they are merely

wishes. If a goal is worth setting, then it is worth writing. Write it in as much detail as possible.

****Determine the benefits--** why do you want this goal so badly? If you cannot think of a good enough reason, is it worth going after. Make a list of all the benefits you will receive from achieving your fitness goal. Do you want more energy, more confidence, to feel sexier?

****Where are you at now--** where are you currently in your fitness endeavor? Until you know where you are, you will never know where you need to be. The most detailed map in the world is useless if you do not know your current location.

****Set a realistic deadline--** when do you want to achieve your goal? On most goals, you need a deadline, or you will not strive to achieve it in a timely manner. Deadlines create a sense of urgency.

Make it realistic. Chances are you will not lose 10 pounds of fat a week but 1 to 2 pounds is very realistic.

****Identify hurdles--** be prepared to face hurdles along the way. But if you are prepared to handle the worse, everything else that comes your way is a walk in the park.

****Identify the knowledge you'll need--** we often must learn new things to completely accomplish our goals. Whether it is a new weight loss program or a fitness book you are reading, identify the knowledge you will need to know in order to reach your goals.

**** Devise a step-by-step plan--** put down, on paper, and in detail, how you are going to achieve your goal. Put down the activities you will need to get involved in so that you reach your goal. Most people do not have a fitness plan devised, they just wander from machine to machine, exercise to exercise. Develop a plan to get to where you want to be.

****Create a mental picture--** Imagine your goal already attained. Create a crystal clear picture of you enjoying your fitness goal (less weight, more energy, fitting into clothes better).

The more you think about enjoying your goal, the more your subconscious begins to work and move you closer to the attainment of your goal.

****Resolve never to quit-- finally, resolve to never, ever quit. You must determine the price you have to pay to achieve your fitness goals, and then simply strive to pay that price. Be persistent and determined to reach that finish line. You'll be a much stronger person for it in the end.**

THE MORE BOXES YOU CHECK, THE CLOSER YOU GET TO YOUR GOALS

To wrap up this section on goals, please remember this saying I read recently.

Those people without goals will always work for those people with goals.

That's the importance of setting goals in bodybuilding and fitness.

Those with goals will always get further ahead than those without goals.

Success in life is simply a series of setting and achieving worthwhile goals.

One of the books I have read recently that talk about success in all areas of life is called "The Science of Success" written by Gary Varnum.

It amazes me how many people I know who will spend 20 bucks on a music CD or 20 bucks on a pizza, but will not spend 20 bucks to ensure that their life is as successful as can be.

It boggles me that more people are not motivated enough to want to make sure they are the best they can be in ANYTHING they do.

“The Science of Success” is a book that breaks down success in life into bite-sized, understandable pieces.

I’ve written more about this book on my site:

<http://www.shawnlebrunfitness.com/takingaction.html>

When is your life not worth studying success?

To recap this Step in 7 words:

Know what you want before you begin!

Step 2. Figure out your daily calorie number to maintain where you are---and start raising that number.

Your body needs a certain amount of energy, or “calories” just to maintain it.

Right now, at your weight, you need a specific number of calories just to keep what body weight you have.

Figuring out your daily calorie maintenance amount is very, very important when it comes to gaining weight and muscle mass.

In order to gain muscle weight, you **MUST** take in more calories than you burn off each day.

You have to create a **calorie surplus**.

This excess in calories, as long as its quality calories like high quality protein, is used as the raw materials in the muscle growth process.

If you figure your daily calorie maintenance amount to be 3000 calories, that’s just the number you need to maintain where you are.

You don't want to do that, you want to gain. So you must start taking in more than 3000.

I'd suggest adding 150-200 calories a day for the first few weeks to see how that works. You'd be up to 3150- 3200 calories a day for the first few weeks.

If you do not see much in the way of positive weight gain, add another 150-200 calories, putting your daily number to 3300-3400.

Keep adding until you start seeing the results you're after.

Of course, you do not want to go up too high or you run the risk of adding unwanted body fat.

Remember that in order to gain any quality muscle weight, you have to consume more calories in a day than you use (burn off).

This extra amount of calories will either be used in the growth and repair process of muscle tissue or this excess of calories will be stored as body fat for future energy needs.

Remember this---you will NOT gain the weight you want to if you do not take in the calories you need to.

It's vital to figure your daily calorie needs so that you know how many calories it is you should be taking in.

Calculating your daily calorie amounts

Everyone has their own unique metabolism, meaning everyone burns through calories at a different pace.

It is difficult to establish a guideline that will fit everyone. AST Sports Science, a supplement company based in Colorado, has created a guideline based upon the latest research that will assist you in determining your daily caloric requirements.

Our bodies require calories just to exist, just to live and breath. You burn calories at rest and at play. While sleeping, our bodies burn between 70-100 calories per hour.

This is called our Basal Metabolic Rate, or BMR. Many variables will affect an individuals BMR, like sex, age, body size, body weight, and their metabolic uniqueness.

For men using the BMR variable .42 multiplied by your bodyweight, you can find the calories needed per pound of bodyweight per hour.

Women should use the variable .35.

What this means is, if you are a man and you weigh 200 pounds, your BMR would be $200 \times .42 \times 24 = 2016$. This means that you need 2016 calories per day just to maintain your current bodyweight with no activity at all.

For a moderately active person, research has used the number .65 as the BMR variable. If you weigh 200 pounds, your daily caloric level would be $200 \times .65 \times 24 = 3120$ calories per day, or 390 every 3 hours.

The formula to figure your daily caloric amount is
 $\text{Bodyweight} \times \text{BMR variable} \times 24 \text{ hours} = \text{Daily caloric amount}$

Example: $150 \text{ pounds} \times .65 \times 24 = 2340 \text{ calories}$

From this number, we can now break down the amount of protein, carbs, and fats needed.

Calories= 2340
 $(150 \times .65 \times 24)$

Protein= 292.50 grams, or 1170 calories
 $(2340 \times .50 / 4)$

Carbohydrates= 234 grams, or 936 calories
 $(2340 \times .40 / 4)$

Fats= 26 grams, or 234 calories

(2340-x .10/9)

Above is the break down of grams and calories of protein, carbohydrates, and fat.

Like I mentioned above, begin adding 150-200 calories per day to this number.

To show you that adding extra calories and creating a surplus is what's needed to gain weight, perhaps showing you how people lose weight will help further explain this.

Losing body fat requires you to create a calorie deficit, meaning burning off more calories than you take in.

You can speed up the fat-burning process by decreasing your daily caloric amount by 150-200 per day until you start seeing some results.

If after a couple weeks of reducing 150-200 calories a day you still do not see results, start to take away another 150-200 per day. Do not reduce more than this number because too big of a reduction will have a counterproductive effect on your metabolism.

That's how weight loss occurs, you have to create a calorie shortage and your body gets the energy it needs by burning off stored body fat.

In order to gain weight, specifically muscle weight, you must take in more calories than you burn off.

Increase your calories by 150-200 per day until you begin to see the desired effect.

Calculate your Caloric Requirement

First decide: are you inactive?

If so, use

MEN: Body weight _____ x BMR variable .42 x 24 hours = daily caloric requirement.

WOMEN: Body weight _____ x BMR variable .35 x 24 hours = daily caloric requirement.

If you are active, substitute BMR variable .42 with .65.

When you get this number, you can calculate your protein, carbohydrate, and fat intake:

Protein

Daily caloric requirement (from above) x .50/4 = grams of protein needed
_____ x .50/4 = _____ grams

Daily caloric requirement _____ x .50 = Calories from protein

Carbohydrates

Daily caloric requirement x .40/4 = grams of carbs needed
_____ x .40/4 = _____ grams

Daily caloric requirement _____ x .40 = Calories from carbohydrates

Fats

Daily caloric requirement x .10/9 = grams of fat needed
_____ x .10/9 = _____ grams

Daily caloric requirement _____ x .10 = Calories from fats

The whole low down on this chapter is this:

You will never gain weight unless you are taking in enough calories to support weight gain.

If you are always trying to gain weight and are always eating fewer calories than you should be for your daily amount, you will not gain weight.

So when you figure your daily number in this chapter, begin to add 150-200 calories per day to that number until you begin to see the desired results.

For example, if your number that you calculate above comes out to 2000 calories is your daily maintenance, start consuming 2200 calories for a week or two.

If after that time you still do not see the desired effects starting to show, up it another 200 calories. Now you are at 2400 calories a day for the week.

Keep upping a little at a time and you will soon find your spot.

I get asked my opinion of those weight gainers that are on the market, whether they are worth taking or not.

I'm going to go into further detail later about which supplements I feel are worth taking to gain some quality weight.

But I'll hint on weight gainers now.

First, I would say that taking one of those "Weight Gainer Mega Mass" shakes are probably better than taking nothing to add calories to gain weight.

But not much better.

Those weight gainers are pretty much nothing more than cheap protein mixed in with a ton of cheap, simple sugars.

The protein amount in them is pretty minimal and the quality of that protein is not very high.

Then, to add the calories to the mix, they dump in a boatload of cheap simple sugars that leave you bloated and feeling nauseous.

Again, taking one is probably going to be better than not taking any steps at all nutritionally to add calories.

But you are better off getting extra calories from whole food sources like chicken, steak, eggs, milk, rice, veggies, potatoes, oatmeal, fish, and other quality whole food sources.

If your looking for a “liquid” alternative to whole food sources, use quality meal replacements or high quality protein powders instead.

Meal replacements like Met-RX, NyTro-Pro 40, and Perfect Rx or protein drinks like AST Sports Science VP2, Optimum Nutrition’s 100% Whey, Nature’s Best IsoPure, or Syntrax IsoMatrix are good alternatives to the old school weight gainers.

Hey, if you’re a sucker for a bloated stomach and don’t mind paying a lot of money for just a few servings of product, then use the older style weight gainers.

But I feel your money is better spent with whole food, meal replacements, or whey protein drinks instead.

If you are very thin and are not worried about how many calories you are taking in, I am going to summarize this Step #2 in 5 words:

Eat often and eat a lot.

Step 3: Nutrition

We know that in order to get big, we have to eat big.

Well, in case you don’t know that, I just gave you the key to gaining weight and size.

The key to muscular size is you simply have to eat more.

Combined with eating more food, training heavy is the only other area that has as much of an effect on your size and the weight you gain.

So if you get nothing else out of this program, please get this:

If your goal is to gain weight--you have to eat big and train heavy.

That is as hard and as easy as it gets.

Like I mentioned earlier in the section on calories, you must take in more calories than you burn off if you want to gain any size at all.

What you are creating is a positive energy balance that increases your muscular bulk.

Eating large amounts of food alone can add lean muscle mass to your frame without any exercise at all.

When you consume large amounts of food, your body compensates for this by increasing the levels of anabolic hormones that leads to the increase in muscle.

Also, increasing calories can help blunt cortisol release. Cortisol is a hormone that breaks down muscle tissue and often is released during times of stress (like a low calorie situation).

Okay, if increasing your calories is the key to gaining weight, what should you be taking in for food?

After years of studying many different natural bodybuilders and other top athletes, the number that seemed to be floating around often for the Protein-Carb-Fat Ratio were 50% protein, 40% carbs, and 10% fat.

I've used that ratio with great success, whether I was training in the off-season or getting ready for a show.

Understand the importance of each of these nutrients and you'll likely see why these numbers were given in this ratio.

Protein

We know that protein is the #1 required nutrient for muscle growth (other than water)

In fact, protein is the building block of muscle.

We will discuss a little more later, but the most important times to consume protein are:

If you fail to take in enough protein, your body does not have enough of the raw material to build muscle mass.

Nutritionally speaking, protein consumption is the only way to increase muscle mass. Protein provides the much needed amino acids to maintain an anabolic (muscle building) state.

So half of what you eat in a day should come from protein sources.

The two most important times of the day to eat protein?

1. Immediately upon waking--you have just gone a lengthy time during sleep without protein, you need to get protein to your muscles ASAP.
2. Immediately after working out--your muscles are like sponges and will use the protein to replenish what was lost during a workout.

Drinking a post-workout recovery shake IMMEDIATELY after training gives you a prime opportunity to speed up muscle recuperation and stimulate new muscle growth.

Don't wait until you get home, start sipping immediately after your last set.

I actually begin sipping my post-workout drink during the last few sets.

The fact is, what you eat (or fail to eat) before and immediately after your intense training plays a huge role in how much muscle you build and how strong you get.

If you provide your muscles with a pool of amino acids (protein) about 30 to 45 minutes before a workout, you can reduce the effects of muscle tissue breakdown.

Since training depletes nutrients and energy stored in your muscle cells, you can help replenish these nutrients faster by introducing a carb and protein rich meal directly after training.

If I had to pick a third most important time, it would be late at night, right before bed.

During sleep you are going to be without protein for 6 to 8 hours or however long you sleep.

Consuming a protein source right before bed can help lessen the effects on muscle breakdown during sleep.

Another time to consider taking protein would be an hour before working out to provide amino acids to enhance exercise performance.

Okay, we know we have to take protein often.

How much protein is needed?

One simple method that's been around for years that I feel still holds true is to shoot for 1 gram of protein for every pound of body weight.

If you weigh 200 pounds, you eat 200 grams.

Larger or more experienced bodybuilders could possibly benefit from 2 grams per pound of bodyweight, but for the most part, 1 gram per pound is sufficient.

But as long as you strive to eat some good quality lean protein during each meal and snack, you shouldn't have any problem getting enough protein in your diet.



PROTEIN SOURCES (50% of Calories)

FISH (TUNA, SALMON, HADDOCK, COD, PERCH, ORANGE ROUGHY), TURKEY, CHICKEN, LEAN RED MEATS (TOP ROUND, FLANK STEAK, LEAN GROUND BEEF), DAIRY PRODUCTS (LOW-FAT/NON-FAT COTTAGE CHEESE, SKIM MILK, LOW-FAT/NON-FAT YOGURT), EGGS, LIVER, SOYBEANS, NUTS, LEGUMES, LEAN HAM, LEAN PORK, SHELLFISH, SCALLOPS, LAMB, TOFU, PROTEIN SUPPLEMENTS (WHEY, EGG, MILK, SOY PROTEIN SUPPLEMENTS)

Carbohydrates play a vitally important role in the body. Carbs are the body's main fuel source (actually, the glucose that carbs are broken down into)

Carbs can be broken down into 2 groups--simple and complex.

Simple carbs include sugars, syrups, honey, and fruit.

Complex carbs are grains, vegetables, rice, and legumes.

It is important to eat complex carbs throughout the day leading up to your workout to keep a nice and steady flow of energy to the body.

Immediately after a workout is the most important time to consume simple carbs like grape juice or Gatorade.

When you eat a carbohydrate source, your body breaks it down into blood sugar, which it uses for energy.

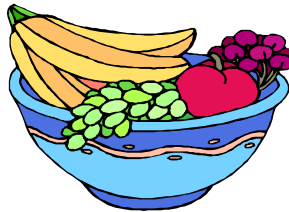
If you fail to give your body enough carbohydrates, your body has to look elsewhere for energy stores and will likely target muscle tissue as a source.

The most important time of day for a bodybuilder or person looking to gain weight to consume carbohydrates is immediately after a workout.

Your muscle stores of glycogen are extremely low after training and need to be replenished.

I've had great luck consuming a protein source mixed in with a carbohydrate drink like apple or grape juice or Gatorade right after a workout.

I usually then take another or a meal replacement shake a half hour to an hour after that.



CARBOHYDRATE SOURCES (40% of Calories)

BROWN RICE, WHOLE GRAIN BREADS & CEREALS, BAGELS, OATMEAL, PASTA, POTATOES, YAMS, VEGETABLES (CARROTS, BROCCOLI, GREEN BEANS, CORN,), LEGUMES (CHICK PEAS, LIMA, KIDNEY, AND SOYBEANS), CREAM-OF-WHEAT, PRETZELS,

Finally fats should account for 10% of your daily calories (in all reality, unless you are very strict at counting calories, will be a bit more)

If you are pretty lean or have a fast and active metabolism, you may want to shoot for 20% of your calories coming from fat sources.

But believe me, even when I suggest the 10% number, more often than not, the number ends up being higher anyways.

So anywhere between 10% and 20% is fine.

Some fats are essential for optimum health.

Fats are found in cell and body structures, serve as a protective substance and also are essential for metabolic processes.

Fats play a very important role in the body's health, but most people simply get too many.

Too much fat will make you fat.

I may be going out on a limb here, but I'm going to assume you want to gain quality muscle weight and not just a bunch of fat weight.

Pizza and beer every night will definitely help you gain weight, but is it the kind of weight you want to gain?

I know of several bodybuilders that get good results using Flax Seed Oil, CLA, or Borage Oil in their diets.



FAT SOURCES (10% of Calories)

OLIVE OIL, PEANUTS, PEANUT BUTTER, ALMONDS, SAFFLOWER OIL, SUNFLOWER OIL, WALNUTS, FLAX SEED OIL, BORAGE OIL, AVACADOES, FISH OILS (SALMON), CLA (CONJUGATED LINOLEIC ACID)

Nutrition is the one area that will have a lot of influence on how much muscle and quality weight you add to your frame.

In fact, nutrition is probably even a little more important than weight training when it comes to packing on quality weight.

Your nutrition is the raw material, the building blocks of what your body will become.

Eat well and supply your body with adequate amounts of quality nutrients and you will soon be gaining as much weight as you want to.

We've already discussed your daily calorie amount, so we will focus more on types of food to consume when trying to add muscle and size.

When you have figured out your daily calorie total from above, take that number and divide it by 6.

Why 6?

Because that's the number of times you should be eating a day.

You can make it 5 or 7 times instead, but the big thing is, you want to be eating often and well.

The more times you supply your body with quality nutrients, the more your body can use these nutrients for muscle growth and repair.

Become what is known as a “grazer” meaning you eat small meals throughout the day.

Frequent meals help regulate blood sugar and also keep a constant supply of amino acids available for muscle growth.

Another key area to consider in the area of nutrition is getting enough water.



Try to consume one to two gallons of clean water a day.

Your body must remain hydrated to maximize your nutrition and training program.

Water flushes toxins from the body and helps in the utilization of certain vitamins.

Step 4: The Low Down on Reps, Sets, and Length of Workouts



I want to touch base about something very important about training.

Every single training program or routine is completely worthless if you don't give it enough time to work.

You know how many young guys I talk to that tell me a certain routine they read about did nothing for them.

Then I find out they were doing the routine for two weeks and then went onto something else.

Let me give it to you straight. All routines are worthless if you do not stick with them for at least 8 weeks.

Stop jumping around from program to program, saying that nothing seems to work for you.

You must stick with a weight-training program for at least 8 weeks before you'll see any great results.

What do you do after that 8 weeks?

Well, if it worked well for you, keep doing it.

Against what many people may lead you to believe, you DO NOT need to change up your routine often to get weight gain and muscle gain results.

Your body does not stop responding to exercise just because you are performing the same routine and the same exercises often.

The key to muscle growth is overload, which we will talk more about in just a moment.

So do not feel like you have to switch things around all the time.

I actually made my best strength and weight gains when I did the same 3 chest exercises, the same 3 bicep exercises, 3 tricep exercises, and the same 3 shoulder exercises.

What must change is the amount of overload that's being used.

This step, we talk specifically about how many reps and sets you should be doing.

I know at first glance, the amount of reps and sets I suggest to you are not going to seem like enough.

If that's the case, please go back to the very beginning of this program and read the part about having 100% faith in this program.

Again, every single word written in this program, I have used myself and can recommend it works.

I would not suggest something to you if I didn't think it held your best interests.

Here is the scoop on reps and sets:

I swear everyone and their cousins have an opinion on how many reps and sets you should do.

The last time I checked, that cousin was fat and not muscular, so be careful who you listen to.

I used to do a ton of sets and a ton of reps.

What did I have to show for it?

Not much in the way of muscle growth, that's for sure.

But when I learned from some of the top natural pros about the rep and set range I'll discuss with you, my muscle gains and strength increase soon blew past anything I had ever experienced.

The best thing though, I've used this rep range and set scheme with hundreds of clients.

And it works.

Is this program the only way to train? Of course not, that's like saying there is only one food you should eat, or only one car you should drive.

The point I'm trying to make it this--if it isn't broken, don't fix it.

If this program has worked wonders for many others, and me why look for anything else.

I can honestly say I've spent hundreds of dollars and have tried hundreds of different programs in my life and the pages you are reading and are about to read are the past 15 years of my weightlifting life condensed into 100 pages.

I've been weight training since the age of 16. I started in high school to get ready for football season.

I have hundreds of old Flex magazines and muscle building books sitting in milk crates with an inch of dust on them.

So believe me, I've tried as many different programs, rep schemes, sets, exercises, and supplements as the rest.

What I write here is saving you 15 years and hundreds of dollars.

With that said, this step will be one of the most important ones you make to your routine.

It's probably the one change I made in my routine that allowed me to gain more strength and more muscle in a shorter time than I have ever gained.

In late 2000, I was working out regularly and thought I was in pretty good shape.

Here are some of the lifts I was doing.

Flat bench press--285 pounds
Incline bench press 215 pounds
Squats 385 pounds
Alternate dumbbell curls--50 pounds each arm
Straight bar bicep curls--100 pounds
Seated dumbbell shoulder presses--50 pound dumbbells
1 arm dumbbell rows--60 pounds

Now, after I really searched for the most successful training principles available to man, I started using some of these principles in my own routine and soon the changes were staggering.

Early 2001, about 12 weeks after making some of the changes you're about to make in your own routine, my lifts were:

Flat bench press--365 pounds
Incline bench press 265 pounds
Squats 525 pounds
Alternate dumbbell curls--80 pounds each arm
Straight bar bicep curls--145 pounds
Seated dumbbell shoulder presses--90 pound dumbbells
1 arm dumbbell rows--120 pounds

Do I mention any of this to impress you? Of course not, there are guys out there that can blow me away in lifts that are much bigger than these.

You may be one of them.

I've learned in my time here on earth that there is always someone bigger and stronger right around the corner, so by dropping the whole ego thing, you get further.

What I want to illustrate is the percentage of weight I was able to go up in such a short time using the following changes we are going to make.

Just think, if you are benching 300 pounds now, what you'll be able to move in 8 to 12 weeks.

Now, these lifts of mine were also accompanied by a large increase in lean muscle mass.

That's not a coincidence.

Muscle growth occurs from lifting heavy.

If you're waiting for me to follow up on that statement, it isn't coming.

That's as hard and as easy as it gets.

Lifting heavier weight for lower reps over time will add more muscle and strength than anything else you do.

The only "If" I'm going to throw in there is "if" you eat supportively and healthy.

You can't implement these training tips I give you and then go out and eat Ring Dings and Doritos and then curse the ground I walk on.

But let me assure you, the changes you make here will blow you away if you give them your all and stick to them long enough to work.

Now, I'm going to simplify this for you because, well, its pretty simple stuff.

Don't make things harder than they have to be.

Here it goes...

To get big, you must lift big.



In order to cause muscle growth and strength increase to occur, you must force your body to adapt to heavier demands (more weight).

If you continued to lift the same old weight over time and time again, your body has no need to create new muscle growth and strength.

It can already handle what it's doing with what you have.

So, to get bigger and stronger, you must force your body to do so, it doesn't happen by itself.

For example, when you stop lifting for a month or more (like I'm sure we all have done for one reason or another) what happens?

You got it; we get smaller and less muscular.

It's because we haven't been "forcing" our body to adapt and get bigger/stronger.

When you go through a "layoff" where you stop lifting weights, your muscles do not have to handle any additional workload and stress caused by lifting.

So your muscles get smaller as a result.

To keep muscle size going up and to keep strength increasing, you absolutely must keep stressing and overloading those muscles.

You MUST lift progressively heavier weights over time.

But what is an instant way you can lift more weight, without having to wait weeks or months.

Well, let me give you a hint.

If you can lift 100 pounds 10 times, shouldn't you be able to lift more weight, say 150 pounds, if you only have to do it 5 times.

By cutting the reps in half, you immediately raise the amount of weight you lift.

Sounds simple, but this is one of the most effective steps you can ever take in your muscle building and strength routine.

The days of lifting 3 sets of 10 reps are over--at least they should be.

When you begin to lower your reps and begin to lift more weight, good things happen (more muscle and strength).

So how many reps?

Between 4 reps and 6 reps is your rep range for heavy sets.

Let me repeat that because its one of the most important things you'll read in this entire program.

On all of your heavy sets, you will do between 4 and 6 reps.

If you cannot handle and get 4 reps, the weight is too heavy and you need to drop down a little.

If you can handle more than 6 reps, the weight is too light and you need to increase the weight you are lifting in order to force muscle growth and strength increase to occur.

This rep range will never, ever change if you want to keep gaining size.

And it should be done for every single exercise (maybe the exception being abs, dips, and chin-ups, you can use 10-15 reps for abs)

Squats: 4-6 reps
Bicep curls 4-6 reps
Shoulder presses 4-6 reps
1 arm dumbbell rows 4-6 reps

How many reps for bench press?

Yup, you guessed it, 4 to 6 reps.

Here's what you do, for all exercises.

You start with a nice light set of 10 reps.

****Side note****

If it's your first set of your second exercise for the same muscle group, you do not have to start at 10 reps again--you're already warmed up.

For example, say you just competed your last heavy set of flat bench press and you're getting ready to do incline dumbbell presses.

You should not warm up with a light set of 10 reps again, you're already warmed up and you are wasting precious energy needlessly.

Start your incline dumbbell presses with a moderately heavy set of 6-8 reps.

We'll cover warm-ups more later.

*****End side note*****

Okay, we started our exercise with a set of 10 reps.

Rest 2 minutes and it's time for the next set.

Put a little more weight on and do a set of 8 reps.

Wait 2 minutes.

Put a little more weight on and do 6 reps.

Do not go to failure on any of these warm ups sets, they are just that, to warm up.

You should only go to failure on your heavy sets, never on warm-ups.

You should be pretty well warmed up by now.

Now it's time for your 2 (3 tops) heavy sets.

These 2 (or 3) heavy sets should be done with enough weight where you hit failure between 4 and 6 reps.

Again, if you cannot get 4 reps, go down in weight and work your way up.

If you can get 6 or more easily, go up in weight a bit for the next set if there is one of make a note to go up the next workout.

*****Side note*****

Always, always, always keep a written journal or log for your workouts.

If you are at all serious about building muscle and increasing strength--this is a must.

It's the only way you can keep track of your lifts and know when its time to go up in weight.

Just use a small pocket notebook and write all your lifts and weights used in it.

Please do this--it's that important.

Let's say you didn't use a notebook and decided to go by memory.

Say that you had a great bench day and ended up going up 5 pounds in weight.

But you fail to write it down and think, “I’ll remember that I went up.”

Now, a week goes by and you’ve totally forgotten the weight you used last bench day, so bench time comes around again and you’re scratching your head, wondering what it is you last did for weight.

Chances are you’re going to put on your old weight, not the new weight (that you added 5 pounds to).

When that happens, you went backwards and have lost the progress you made.

Believe me, forgetting your weights happen.

You have 30 or so exercises to keep track of, it’s easy to forget one or two of your weights.

And if you forget a weight and do the same weight again when you should have went up, you just wasted your time and energy. You just did something you were already capable of doing and have missed the chance to increase the overload you were using (and in turn, the muscle and strength that would have come with the new overload).

Please use a journal for your workouts.

*****End side note*****

So, if you get nothing else from this report, please get this.

Stop doing 10 reps for your heavy sets and begin increasing the weight and decreasing the reps.

If muscle growth and strength increase occurs from lifting more weight, what will work better for that?

Set 1: 100 pounds for 10 reps

Set 2: 120 pounds for 10 reps

Set 3: 130 pounds for 10 reps

Set 4: 140 pounds for 10 reps

Or:

Set 1: 100 pounds for 10 reps

Set 2: 140 pounds for 8 reps

Set 3: 160 pounds for 6 reps

Set 4: 180 pounds for 4-6 reps

What will create more overload and hence more muscle growth and strength increase: 140 pounds or 180 pounds.

Exactly, the 180 pounds.

So please keep this simple.

The only thing that causes muscle growth and strength increase is overload to the muscles.

Overload occurs by lifting more weight over time.

This is achieved by cutting down the number of reps you lift from 10 reps on your heavy sets to the range of 4-6 reps on your heavy sets.

Take this to heart and you will achieve great things with your body.

One last word about the whole “high reps burn fat and help you tone” nonsense.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

If you are using high reps to “tone the body”, please stop now.

High reps with lighter weight do not overload the muscles sufficiently.

If you are failing to overload the muscles, you are failing to stimulate new muscle growth and strength increase.

High reps and low weight for toning is one of those “gym lies” that have just spread like a bad virus.

The only true way to tone the body is to keep lifting heavy weights to stimulate as much muscle growth as possible.

It's the diet and cardio that has to change in order to tone up.

You have to clean up the diet and begin reducing your calories.

You also have to do your intense cardio sessions to help burn off excess body fat.

Diet and cardio has more to do with the “toning” process than does the weight training.

Now, on to sets.

Muscle building is not an endurance contest.

You're not out to see who can do the most sets.

In fact, if you do too many sets, you will not gain muscle and strength like you should.

Doing too many sets can lead to over training, which is the death of all your muscle and strength gains.

What leads to over training?

Doing more reps and sets than you need to in order to get the wanted results.

Building muscle is a funny thing.

See, we've been brought up to think, “more is better.”

This may be true in some parts of life, but it is certainly not the case in weight lifting and muscle building.

You want quality over quantity any day.

You do not want to do any more than 3 heavy sets MAX on any given exercise.

I actually feel that 2 are all you really need to do.

But those 2 sets must be high quality, intense, bust your butt like there's no tomorrow sets.

If you do a set without effort and intensity, it doesn't matter if you do 2 sets or a 100 sets, your results will be limited.

But do 2 sets like the world is on fire and you'll get really good results.

Please do away with the thought that more is better. **Better is better.**

The biggest and strongest natural bodybuilders all do between 2 and 3 heavy sets on their exercises.

Pick up a muscle mag in the bookstore and you see many of the "top bodybuilders" often doing 5 or 6 heavy sets.

Well, there is an extra variable to this equation that they use that allows them to handle more work and not worry about the effects of over training.

The main benefit of steroids and other performance enhancing drugs is the fact that they allow you to recover from workouts much quicker, therefore you can handle more sets and more work without having to worry about over training.

But for natural athletes, the risk of over training runs quite high when you start doing more than 2 to 3 heavy sets.

It's not the number of sets you do that makes a difference in building muscle size and strength; it's the quality of those sets.

So, with what we've talked about so far, here is an example chest routine for building the pecs.

Exercise #1 Flat bench press:

Set 1: 10 reps with a fairly light weight (135 pounds)

Set 2: 8 reps with a little more weight (155 pounds)

Set 3: 6 reps with a fairly moderate weight (185 pounds)

If you feel ready and warmed-up to tackle your heavy's go at it.

If you feel you could still use another warm-up, put a little more weight on and do a set for just a couple reps.

Alright, now its time for our heavy sets

Set 4: 4-6 reps with your heaviest (225 pounds)

Set 5: 4-6 reps with your heaviest (235 pounds)

You should be resting 2 minutes or so in between each of these sets, especially on your last 2 heavy sets.

Now, after you have completed your 2 heavy bench presses, you shouldn't feel completely wiped out, but you should also feel like you couldn't do another set as well as you just did those 2.

If you honestly feel as though you could do another heavy set as well or better than you just did those 2, you didn't work hard enough on those.

You see, the point of only doing 2 sets is to ensure you are giving those 2 sets your 100% all, your max intensity. That will get you farther than doing 100 sets of less intensity.

Okay, we've rested at least 2 minutes after our last heavy bench press.

Now its time for our next chest exercise---incline dumbbell bench presses.

Remember, you've already warmed up the chest by doing flat bench presses; you do not need to start back at square 1 and warm up again.

Instead, you grab a moderately heavy weight and perform 6 fairly easy reps.

2 minutes later, add a little weight and do another set.

After just those 2 sets, you're ready for your 2 heavy sets.

Warming up any more would be a waste of energy and time.

So, here's what we've done:

Exercise #2 Incline Dumbbell bench presses

Set 1: 6 reps with moderately heavy weight (65 pounds)

Set 2: 6 reps with a little more weight (75 pounds)

Set 3: 4-6 reps with heaviest weight (85 pounds)

Set 4: 4-6 reps with heaviest weight (90 pounds)

To be honest with you, if you did all of these sets with max intensity and gave it your 100% all, you can stop here--your chest routine is done.

In fact, I only used 2 chest exercises during my prep work for my bodybuilding contest.

But I always used the best chest exercises I could:

Flat bench press with bar or dumbbells

Incline bench press with bar or dumbbells.

If you wanted to add another chest exercise to do in this group, I would make it weighted dips.

These are very effective at building the chest and also offer a great range of motion.

But I'd stick with the flat and incline bench presses with bar or dumbbells as your primary exercises for the chest.

I get asked a lot for my opinion on dumbbell flies and the pec deck machine.



Honestly, I don't like doing them because they do not offer max weight and max overload to my chest.

For example, I can lift more weight when doing dumbbell chest presses than when I do dumbbell flyes.

*****Side Note*****

Strength coach Lee Hayward has written a cool book on increasing your bench press.

It's called "Blast Your Bench" and is a routine that focuses on increasing, well, your bench press.

For a little more of a review on this book, check out my site:

<http://www.shawnlebrunfitness.com/tips-and-tools.html>

*****End Side Note*****

More weight= more overload = more muscle.

Plain and simple.

Put all your effort and intensity into those exercises that allow you to lift the most weight each and every time.

Don't fall for the "shaping exercises" lie.

You CAN'T shape a muscle. It's been done for you at birth.

You can only make it larger or smaller.

If you want to “shape” it, then begin using the best exercises that allow you to lift the most weight possible each and every time.

This will “shape” your muscles the best way possible.

Here are some comparison exercises and which I feel are better.

Dumbbell chest presses are better than dumbbell flies.

Standing alternate dumbbell curls are better than seated incline dumbbell curls.

Standing straight bar curls are better than preacher curls.

Bench press is better than the pec deck.

All of the exercises on the left will allow you to use more weight and therefore more overload to the muscles than the exercise on the right.

The more weight lifted means the more overload to the muscle. The more overload to the muscle, the more muscle growth is stimulated.

The entire weight training process and Step 3 can be simplified this way:

Lift heavy (4 to 6 reps with max weight) and do 2 to 3 heavy sets per exercise.

Please do not let the simplicity of this fool you.

By doing only 4 to 6 reps and 2 to 3 sets, you are harnessing the most important variable in all of weight lifting---INTENSITY.

When you do 4 to 6 reps of an exercise, you can be extremely intense for that short time.

Same thing with 2 to 3 heavy sets.

It's much easier to be intense for 2 or 3 sets than it is for 4 or 5.

INTENSITY is factor #1 in this program.



Lift like there's no tomorrow.

30 to 40 minutes in the gym is not too long of a time where you can't lift with extreme intensity.

If you have any doubt what exactly intensity is, just think of it this way.

When doing an exercise, do it to the very best of your ability. If you finished and after feel it wasn't as good as you could have done, you didn't lift with max intensity.

When you do an exercise, realize that's the last time EVER you will get a chance to do that specific exercise at that specific time.

Treat every single rep and every single set like it's the last one you'll ever do.

Only then are you harnessing the absolutely incredible power of intensity.

Remember that old saying from your high school English teacher...

K-I-S-S.

The same should be done with your weight training.

Lifting heavier for low reps is the ONLY way for muscle to grow.

Light weight for high reps WILL NOT.

It can't.

Think of what causes a muscle to grow.

It must be forced to grow and adapt to heavier weight.

This is only accomplished with high weight, low reps.

Why low reps? Because that ensures higher weight.

If you can handle a lot of reps, the weight is too light and you are not forcing your muscles to grow, they can already handle light weight.

So, low reps and high weight is a must.

Step 5: How Many Muscle Groups--How Many Days to Train--How Much Rest

Let's point out a very important part of this program right here:

The more exercise you do in the gym has NOTHING to do with getting better results.



You WILL NOT gain more weight, muscle, and strength from just working out more.

The more you begin to workout, the less results you will start to see.

It's almost like the Law of Diminishing Returns.

Basically, what that law says is this:

Anything more than what is absolutely required to build muscle and gain strength will start having negative returns on what you are trying to accomplish.

To get muscle and strength gains, you have to work out to a certain point.

What I am trying to say and what the Law of Diminishing Returns says is anything past that point will not give you back anything worthwhile, in fact, could have negative results.

Think of it as getting a sunburn.

When you get a sunburn, you do not want to go right back out into the sun, do you?

Of course not, you'll get burned even worse if you go out into the sun with a sunburn.

Let me give you this chapter in these words:

Do only what you have to do---and no more.

The thing is, you have to do those things to the absolute best of your ability.

You have to give 110% intensity and effort for those few things to work.

If not, it doesn't matter if you do 8 reps and 3 sets or 50 reps and 100 sets, the results will be limited if you do not train with your absolute best.

Now, let's specifically talk about the number of muscle groups and the number of days to train.

I'm a firm believer in doing only one or two muscle groups per workout.

Why only one or two?

Mainly because of focus and intensity.

You see, great results come from intense focus and burning desire.

When you start doing too many muscle groups and too many exercises, you will have difficulty staying as intense and focused as you need to be all the way through your workouts.

It's much easier to focus and work hard on just biceps and triceps than it is doing bi's, tri's, chest, and back all together.

The muscle groups at the end of that workout may suffer from not getting worked heavy enough because of the dwindling energy towards the end.

It makes perfect sense that as you progress in a workout, you will become more and more tired, more wiped out.

What happens if you are training many muscle groups when this happens?

Like I mentioned before, the ones trained at the end begin to suffer.

I myself used to get the best results from training just one muscle group a day.

I'd go in and hammer my chest into oblivion and then leave in 30 minutes.

This short workout allowed me to focus 100% with absolute intensity on just the chest workout---nothing else.

This intensity becomes watered down when you throw in a lot of extra muscle groups and sets.

Now, I understand that not everyone has the time and schedule to train only one muscle group per day.

But I would not go any more than 2 muscle groups a day.

A good routine to follow would be:

Monday: Chest and Biceps (opposing muscles)

Tuesday: Cardio

Wednesday: Back and Triceps

Thursday: Cardio

Friday: Legs and Shoulders.

Saturday and Sunday: Rest

You can place abs in there are couple times a week as well.

You can see, we're able to accomplish the entire body in one week and still get two days of quality rest.

People underestimate the importance of rest.

On a priority scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being important, rest is a 10.5.

All of your gains, or lack of gains, can be traced back to the amount of rest you are getting---or not getting.

Before you go to train a muscle group again, make sure that its 100% rested up from the last workout or else you will not be as strong as you should.

If you're not as strong as you should be, you will not lift as heavy and as intense and will not get the benefits that each of those brings.

Rest can be broken down into several sections and I am going to go over each one.

Rest between sets: You want to rest at least 1 minute between your warm up sets and at least 2 minutes between heavy sets.

Any less than that and you run the risk of not lifting with your strongest effort.

Rest between workouts: I believe that resting a full 24 hours before working out again is the most beneficial.

This allows your body to recover from the last workout.

Now, if you only train one muscle group during a workout and train for just a brief time, say 20 minutes, than you could probably get away with training a different muscle group later that evening.

This is called a split training routine.

For example, at 6:00 in the morning you train chest for 20 minutes and rest for 8 hours and than train biceps later in the evening.

I know several people who train this way and it seems to work for them.

That brings me to another important point.

Test and see what works for YOU, not for your cousin or training partner.

You should be willing to try different styles and approaches, but learn from trial and error. Test, test, and test some more.

If something seems to be working, stick with it.

If it doesn't, drop it and try something else.

You must be willing to learn from your feedback and make changes when necessary.

Back to split routines.

I personally got better results from resting a full day before working out again.

When I tried split training, the night workout was always a little sluggish.

Who knows if it was physical or a little more mental?

All I know is that it didn't work for me so I didn't do it.

On the other hand, there were days where I knew I had to get my cardio in, so I would do a short cardio session at night when I had already trained with weights in the morning.

But for the most part, I think it's wise to wait 24 hours before working out again. But as always, see what works for you.

If you are sore the next day from a particular workout, do not be afraid to take another day off for rest.

So many people I speak with underestimate the importance and power of rest.

All of your gains count on enough rest.

Please give it the importance it needs.

If you are extremely sore the next day from a workout, that is your body's way of telling you that it's still not ready to train again.

If it's not ready but you force it anyways, you are not going to make much progress.

Training with very sore muscles will limit the amount of intensity you use and the amount of weight you handle.

When this happens, you are going backwards, not forwards.

It's like trying to dig yourself out of a hole. You just keep getting deeper.

To summarize rest between 2 workouts---please make sure you are fully recovered from your last workout before doing another one.

What about rest between 2 same muscle groups?

For instance, what if you trained chest on Monday? When should you train chest again?

Many people I speak with get this wrong, they believe that the more they train a certain body part, the better results they will see.

This is absolutely 100% not the case.

Like I've mentioned already a lot through this program, adequate rest is Importance #1--without enough recovery--you will not see good results and more often than not, you'll go backwards.

You should wait a full 5 to 7 days before working that same muscle group again. Preferably 7 days.

If you trained heavy and intense enough, you should feel that you need the full 7 days to recover.

If you're still a bit sore from your last chest workout, that's a sign you're not fully recovered.

Do not train just to get sore. Soreness is not an indicator of a good workout.

Overload and overload only is the indicator of a good workout.

If you went up 5 pounds in all of your lifts, **THAT'S A GOOD WORKOUT.**

Soreness is just that--soreness.

I get a lot of emails from people asking me why they are not getting sore after their workouts---they want to know what's wrong.

I tell them I don't know if anything is wrong and that soreness has nothing to do with a successful workout.

Overload and going up in weight lifted is the sign of a successful workout.

Back to resting between working the same muscle group again.

A full 7 days of rest often times ensures that you will be fully recovered from the last workout.

And what if, after 7 days, you still feel really sore and tired, not up to your absolute best?

Take another day off to rest.

Building muscle and gaining strength is not so cut in stone where you MUST work out to the same schedule forever.

It's not black and white--if you feel like you need some more time to recover, then take that time. There is probably a reason for you feeling that way.

I am not talking about feeling lazy; I'm talking about feeling sorer than normal, or run down.

Learn to trust how you feel; you'll be much better off for it.

Let me give you a personal example.

After competing in a recent bodybuilding contest, I was completely wiped out, both physically and mentally drained.

So I took a vacation and didn't work out for a full two weeks.

You're guessing that I came back and all of my weights went down as a result of the lay off?

Nope, two days after getting back into it, I beat most all of my personal bests on all of my exercises.

The rest allowed me to fully recover and I came back stronger because of it.

So before you train a particular muscle group again, make sure you're recovered fully from the last time you trained that muscle group.

Getting 5 to 7 days rest between working that muscle group again should ensure that for you.

If you train chest on a Monday, wait until the following Monday before you train it again.

Here is an example of what I am talking about:

Week 1

Monday: Chest and Biceps
Tuesday: Cardio
Wednesday: Legs and Shoulders
Thursday: Cardio
Friday: Back and Triceps
Saturday and Sunday--Off

Week 2

Monday: Chest and Biceps
Tuesday: Cardio
Wednesday: Legs and Shoulders
Thursday: Cardio
Friday: Back and Triceps
Saturday and Sunday--Off

Week 3

Monday: Chest and Biceps
Tuesday: Cardio
Wednesday: Legs and Shoulders
Thursday: Cardio
Friday: Back and Triceps
Saturday and Sunday--Off

Get the picture? Nothing fancy, no changing every week.

Just plain and simple routine with adequate rest.

******Side note******

Nothing in this program you are reading is groundbreaking.

You will not read about some fancy new supplement or some exciting new split routine.

This stuff is simple. That's where the power lies.

Simple will win out any and every time.

Ask the pros.

They will tell you that keeping things simple is the best thing you can do.

I know its true for my own journey.

I used to try routine after routine and rep change after rep change.

I'd go from one training routine one week to a totally different one.

Believe me, I didn't have much to show for it as a result.

I think Flex and Muscle and Fitness magazines did though.

Most of my hard earned money.

But one day I smartened up and started seeking out the best natural bodybuilders I could find and I started noticing certain patterns.

Most were doing the same things, over and over again.

They were using low reps, heavy weight, training each muscle group once a week, getting 2 or more days rest, doing basic compound exercises (squats, bench press, deadlifts) and other simple but effective things.

When I started doing the same things, I totally blew myself away.

I was finally starting to see great results and I became more motivated than ever.

But it was all right there, waiting for me all along.

I just was so busy training everything and anything, looking for the magic solution, that I kept missing it.

So please do not let simplicity fool you.

*******End Side Note*******

The last part of rest I want to talk about is when to rest after weeks of intense training.

Years ago, before I knew any better, I used to train 5 to 7 days a week, just about year round.

And although I was pretty strong and muscular most of the year, I didn't see any great results and my strength was pretty much the same year round.

I don't know about you, but I don't do this lifting stuff to stay the same year round.

I want more muscle and strength and I want it yesterday.

Well, I learned that some of the other natural pro bodybuilders were taking some time off after every 8 to 10 weeks of intense training.

In fact, like clockwork, after 8 to 10 weeks of hardcore training, they took a full week off and didn't lift or do cardio at all.

When I first read that, I thought to myself that these people will forever be playing catch up.

I thought that by taking a week off every 8 to 10 weeks, they'd lose all they worked so hard for.

Boy, was I wrong. In fact, why did I even doubt the natural pros?

******Side note******

I find it so funny today that I used to question the natural pros on what they were doing.

Now I wonder how I could have ever been so dumb.

Look, they've already achieved a certain level of success.
In other words, they know what they are talking about.

So why not do some of the things they are doing?

Who knows, maybe we'll get similar good results.

Today, after learning from many of these natural pros, I can tell you that
YOU WILL get good results from following what they are doing.

Doesn't it make sense to learn from their own trial and error so that you can
shave off years of your own?

But this also works in any area of your life that you want to become better at.

Seek out those that have already achieved what you want and begin copying
them.

If you want to learn about stocks, read books on the experts in investing like
Peter Lynch or Warren Buffet.

If you want to learn anything, there are plenty of books out there written by
people that can save you years of trial and error time.

So please be open to learning more each and every day.

As weird as it sounds, the best thing you can ever do to gain muscle and
strength is to learn more.

To get better, you have to know better.

And you've done that, by picking up this program.

*******End Side Note*******

Where were we? Oh yeah, taking a week off after 8 to 10 weeks of heavy
training.

I tried taking a full week off after 8 straight weeks of training and was it tough.

I mentally felt like I should be doing something, ANYTHING.

But I made it through the week without working out (I think I may have driven my girlfriend at the time nuts).

I went back to the gym after the week off and totally blew all of my lifts away.

It was chest and biceps day.

I added 10 pounds to my bench, 5 pounds to my incline dumbbell presses, 10 pounds to my straight bar curls, and 5 pounds to my alternate dumbbell curls.

In just one-week time, NOT WORKING OUT AT ALL, I WENT UP IN ALL WEIGHTS.

But I also made a crucial mistake. Can you guess what it was by reading that above?

I was so sore for the next few days afterwards; I had to take more time off.

I made the mistake of not easing back into training. I went all out---“Gung-Ho” and paid the price for it.

So now I take the week back to just go fairly easy on my exercises, picking weights that I can handle for 6 to 8 reps easily and I use this week to acclimate back into it.

So, I once was a doubting Thomas about taking a full week off from training every 8 to 10 weeks, but will never be again.

Trust me; take a full week off from any training after 8 to 10 weeks of hard intense workouts.

But it should make sense to you why you are doing this.

Think about it for a moment, you're busting your butt for 8 straight weeks, putting your muscles and body through some pretty intense, grueling workouts.

The cumulative effect of these demanding workouts soon takes effect. Like a snowball rolling down the hill gets bigger, soon you become a little more worn down, a little more tired, with a few more aches and pains.

Working out puts a lot of stress on muscle tissue and breaks it down.

If you don't give it a chance to recover, it will not adapt to that stress and will not have a chance to grow.

A full week off is often a cure for what ails you.

***Studies have shown that muscle atrophy (muscles getting smaller) DOES NOT OCCUR until approximately 2 weeks off from working out.

Meaning, those that were in the study did not lose size or strength when taking up to a full 2 weeks off.

Sure, a week may be all you need to rest up, but even if it extends a bit longer, do not be fearful you are going to "lose what you gained."

It doesn't happen that fast. Like the studies have shown, you can still be fine up to 2 full weeks staying out of the gym.

Don't underestimate the power of rest.

This is one of those times that I mentioned in the beginning of this program to trust me. This is a proven and effective way to ensure your strength gains and muscle gains continue.

Take it on "faith" value that this is so and you will never "not" take another full week off after 8 to 10 weeks of training.

The deal with over training is this:

It WILL stop all of your gains, dead in its tracks.

Over training is the result of subjecting your body to more stress than it can handle.

It can not recover and keep up with the demands you are placing on it, so your body sort of “gives out” on you and forces you to stop and take notice.

You become less energetic, more tired, and sorer more often.

You do not look forward to your workouts like you used to and when you are working out, your strength, intensity, and drive are just not as high as normal.

If your weights you lift are staying the same and you feel you’ve hit a plateau, you could be over training.

Again, feeling tired more than usual is a sign of possible over training.

If you feel sorer than normal or just feel “sick”, that’s another sign.

So what’s the solution to over training?

Reversing what caused it in the first place.

Instead of overdoing it, you have to rest.

In fact, I would immediately take a week off from training.

Consume a few more quality protein calories to help maintain proper nutrition during this recovery phase.

Like you have to stay out of the sun with sunburn, you have to stay out of the gym if you’ve over trained.

When you return to the gym, you must change what caused and led up to the over training in the first place---which was too many reps, sets, and time spent working out.

Keep reps at 4 to 6 for heavy sets, and do no more than 2 or 3 heavy sets per workout.

Keep workouts between 30-40 minutes max and fully recover before stepping into the gym again to train that same muscle group.

Also, that week off we discussed after a full 8 to 10 weeks of heavy training will help prevent another bout of over training to occur.

Become familiar with knowing the signs of over training and be willing to make a change when you need to.

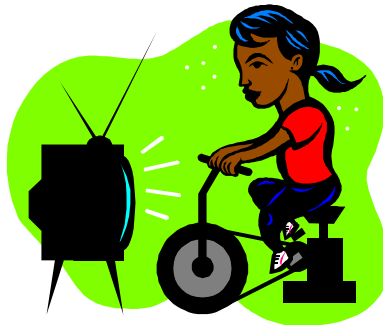
It really is a fine line between training heavy and with intensity and overdoing it.

You need to know how to walk that line.

Since only you know what works best for your body, learn to make changes if something isn't working. Learn to listen to your body.

To summarize Step #4 in just a few words: Train only 1 to 2 muscle groups each workout, train no more than 5 to 6 days a week, getting enough rest during the week to recover, and when you are ever in doubt about whether you are over training, take some time off.

Step 6: Cardio--How, what, and when



I get many emails each week from people that ask me whether or not they should be doing cardio when they are already having trouble gaining weight.

I give them all the same answer.

Cardio is important for more reasons than simply burning calories and body fat.

Cardio is important to keep the cardiovascular system healthy and operating efficiently.

Even though you may not want to lose any more weight, you still want to keep the heart and lungs healthy.

So absolutely you should do cardio, even if you want to gain weight.

If done right, cardio can actually help you increase muscle tissue.

However, the amount and duration of your cardio will be different than someone who wants to lose fat.

If you want to gain weight or you're having trouble gaining weight, you should still do cardio two times a week.

Any less than that and I'm afraid you're not going to get the cardiovascular health benefits and any more than that and you are going to have difficulty putting weight on.

Again, this is only for those who are looking to add some size.

Now, it is possible to do more cardio than 2 days a week and still add some quality size, but you will have to ensure you are getting extra quality calories from your nutrition.

If we're going to do cardio twice a week, this is what I suggest.

First, your cardio sessions **MUST** be done on non-weight training days.

This is a must, because if you do cardio on the same day as weights, you are going to run into problems.

If you do cardio before your weight training, you are going to expend too much precious energy and you will not be as strong as you should be for your weight training.

If you're not as strong as you should be, it's not even worth working out with weights.

Now, if you do cardio after weight training, you hamper your recovery time from weight training and also interfere with the very important post-workout nutrition window.

If you absolutely must do cardio and weights together on the same day due to time constraints, do your cardio and weights 6 to 8 hours apart.

That should give you enough rest time to adequately recover.

You could do cardio on Tuesday and Thursday and hit the weights Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

When you do your cardio, treat each session just like you would a weight-training workout. Meaning:

Give it your most intense 100% all.

Do not fluff on cardio, put in a great effort and you can shorten the amount of time you have to do it.

Intensity of cardio matters--You can either walk lazily for an hour or run hard for 20 minutes--I know which one I'll pick.

There is proof now that shorter, more intense cardio sessions have less negative impact on muscle breakdown.

This means that by keeping your cardio sessions short (15-20 minutes) and intense, you keep more of your hard earned muscle.

Personally, I've been having great results with 20-minute cardio sessions. In fact, the results are as good if not better than when I was spending 30 minutes or more.

Even though the focus on this program is on gaining muscle and weight, not on losing weight, it's still important to do cardio for health reasons.

Just put in your two sessions a week and do them well and you won't have to spend much time worrying about cardio.

Again, test to see what works for you.

If you begin doing 2 intense sessions a week and continue to have troubles gaining weight, try adding some extra calories from a meal replacement or protein shake during your day.

If that fails, then you probably could drop a day of cardio and just do 1 day for a while.

But I think 2 days is better, one just doesn't give you the health benefits.

What if you begin gaining too much weight or are concerned you are packing on a few more fat pounds than you want?

Start adding an extra cardio session during the week (now up to 3 sessions).

Or you can begin dropping a few calories from your diet.

Manipulate the cardio and the calorie amounts and test to see what works best for you.

To summarize this Step #5:

If you want to gain weight, do just 2 cardio sessions a week and keep them short and intense. If you still feel 2 sessions will stop you from gaining weight, start adding an extra protein drink/meal replacement or two during your day.

This extra boost in calories will help negate any calories you may have lost during cardio.

Step 7: Supplements

If I got a dollar for every supplement question I was asked, I'd be a millionaire.

And that is not how it should be.

Supplements are just that---they are supposed to go with your good training and nutrition, not take the place of it.

Too many young guys put supplements FIRST and training SECOND.

If you do this, you will never get good results.

No supplement takes the place of good hard work in the gym--none.

If there was a great supplement on the market that really worked super well to gain muscle and strength, don't you think more people would use it and that you'd here of it.

Also, if there was a great supplement on the market, the pros would use that instead of risking their health and the law by taking steroids.

I get asked all the time by people that see me in the gym how I was able to get so strong.

My answer is always the same.

Time and commitment to hard work and training.

That's it.

Now, there are some supplements that I feel are definitely worth taking.

I think creatine is one of the best supplements on the market.

In fact, its probably #1 for size and strength increase.

But in order of importance, I put it behind protein.

Protein is needed to build muscle, in fact, that's what muscle tissue is---protein.

So your #1 concern is to get enough.

So, as far as supplements go, protein is #1 in my book, creatine #2, and then glutamine, and a multi-vitamin.

Besides those, it just isn't worth the money.

There is a reason supplements are listed as Step 7.

That's because if you are not doing the first 6 steps correctly, this Step doesn't matter at all.

In fact, if you mess up Steps 1 through 6, supplements are a big waste of money.

Supplements are an area that completely amazes me.

The reason supplements amaze me is because of the power that people give them.

Just look at the word. To supplement means to add, in addition to.

It doesn't mean, "stand alone" or "without anything else"

But that's what I see people do all the time, they expect to simply take some supplement and pack on slabs of muscle with little to no work.

Seriously, if supplements really were the magic that some people make them out to be, do you really think the pros would even bother to risk their health by taking steroids?

Supplements cannot and should not take the place of hard work and intense training.

Those people that rely SOLELY on supplements to help them build muscle are either:

1. Lazy

2. Confused or misinformed

People that have been training for some time and have gotten good results know that supplements are just a tool to help you get where you want to get.

But training should be priority #1. When it does, you will see great, great results.

So, am I against supplements? Of course not.

I use supplements just like anyone else.

I also sell them on my website:

<http://www.cheap-bodybuilding-supplements.com/>

I know that the right supplements WILL get you to your muscle building goals a little faster than by not taking.

How do I know? From personal experience.

But I also know they are just that--supplements.

I use them to aid me in my intense training and in my nutrition.

There are only a handful of supplements I feel are worth the money.

Most are not. Most are over hyped and exist to only make the manufacturer a lot of money.

I will give you the ones I feel hold great value in building muscle and increasing strength.

I have tried just about every single supplement that is on the market, or that has been on the market, and I honestly keep using the same proven ones.

A supplement manufacturer can sell a lot of product with nice, convincing ads.

They often times will sell enough of it in such a short time that by the time someone calls them on their bogus product, they've made off like bandits.

They usually disappear for a while and plan their next scam.

For example, liquid creatine serum sold like hotcakes a few years ago.

Until everyone found out that creatine cannot remain stable for long in a liquid.

So did the manufacturer disappear?

Nope, they simply reformulated their formula and made it a Gel.

Hey, you have to give them an A for persistence but it really peeves me that so many of these companies are making a killing on these bogus products.

So, the supplements that are listed below are probably not mind-boggling to you. I'm sure you've heard of them all and may have tried them as well.

I'm not going to write about supplements that have not been proven to work yet. The supplements below have been around for 10+ years with a very safe track record.

Do yourself a favor, instead of always hunting for the next best supplement, make sure your training is top notch and get yourself some of the top supplements listed below.

The less time you spend on hunting for magic pills, the more time you can spend on the stuff that works.

Protein powders

Protein builds muscle. The harder you train, the more protein your body needs to repair, rebuild, and nourish muscle tissue.

The rest of the supplements on this list come after protein for a reason. Protein is supplement #1 if you want to ensure muscle gains.

If you are not getting enough protein from your whole food sources, protein supplements are a must.

In fact, without enough protein, all other supplements are a complete waste of money.

The best protein sources are egg, milk, and whey.

Some say that whey is the best protein source because it is fast absorbing and your body tends to utilize more of it versus egg or milk.

I think it's probably best to take a combination of egg, milk, and whey (meal replacements) so that you have a different absorption rate for each and a steady supply of protein being introduced in the bloodstream.

If protein is the major nutrient for muscle growth, it reasons you should be getting enough in your diet.

With protein powders, this is possible, even when you are not able to get a whole food meal.

If you are having trouble getting all of your daily calorie amounts in, consider adding a protein shake or two spread throughout the day.

Not only are you increasing calories, you are increasing quality calories in the form of muscle-building protein.

Bottom line on protein--make sure you are getting enough of it, either through whole food sources and/or supplements.

Use the calorie worksheet above to figure your protein needs or use the old standard of 1 gram of protein per pound of body weight.

Stop looking for the magic supplement and start focusing on protein.

Creatine

My number 1 power and size building supplement.

Nothing else I've tried gives you the quick and noticeable gains as creatine does.

Creatine increases creatine phosphate storage in muscle tissue and attracts more water into each muscle cell, resulting in cell volumizing (swells up bigger).

The bigger your muscle cells, the bigger your muscles!

I personally like micronized creatine because of the quicker digestion and faster absorption.

It mixes better in liquid and does not leave the grit like regular creatine. I've also noticed the micronized stuff doesn't upset my stomach like regular creatine.

Use the recommended loading phase suggestions on the creatine container and you will wonder where this stuff has been all your life.

Meal replacement powders

I'll repeat the necessities of gaining mass and weight---eat often and train heavy.

In fact, it's best to be eating every 3 hours or right around there.

Eating often and well can be a problem, especially for those often busy and pressed for time, or for students that possibly can't be eating every 3 hours.

Meal replacements make eating every 3 hours a snap.

Not only that, it makes eating healthy a snap.

Cramming pizza and chips every three hours may help you gain weight, but it won't be the kind of weight you're looking for.

Meal replacements allow you to take in extra quality calories each time you slam one down.

Not to mention, mix it with whole milk and you have the best weight gainer you can buy.

Meal replacements allow you to get the nutrient benefits of whole food meals without the simple sugars and fats you'd normally get.

Most contain 40 or more grams of protein, 20 or so grams of carbs, and only 2 to 4 grams of fat.

Not to mention, a heaping amount of vitamins and minerals.

Meal replacements are a no-brainer---use them often for gaining weight.

Glutamine

Glutamine is the most abundant amino acid in muscle tissue.

It helps shuttle muscle-building nitrogen into muscle cells where it is used for muscle growth.

Glutamine also plays a major role in elevating growth hormone.

Studies have shown that a 2-gram oral dose of glutamine elevated circulating growth hormone levels by over 400%.

Keeping a high level of circulating growth hormone helps keep the body in an anabolic, muscle building state more often.

Another huge benefit of glutamine supplementation is the positive effects it has on the immune system.

A weak and feeble immune system will mean the death of great muscular gains.

A weak immune system will leave you open to more colds and viruses.

When your body requires L-glutamine to fight off infections or viruses, it will get it from muscle tissue, resulting in potential muscle loss.

When you supplement with glutamine, it can help protect the glutamine stores within the muscle tissue.

Honestly, if you are going to shell out your hard earned money for supplements, you're best off choosing a couple from the list above.

I've put them in my order of importance, but they are all pretty important.

These are the cream of the crop, the ones that will bring you the best results possible.

If you have money to spare and are looking for a few other "honorable mentions", here are a few more that may be worth a look at.

Again, I would stick with the ones above for your base supplements and possibly experiment with the ones below.

19-Nor-3-Andro

I can tell you from experience that 19-Nor-3-Andro from AST Sports Science gave me quite a strength boost when I used it.

But I had to take quite a large dose for any positive effects to take place.

19-Nor-3-Andro contains 3 prohormones that are supposed to be one step away from converting to testosterone, the muscle-building hormone.

19-Nor-3-Andro contains 19-Norandrostenedione, Androstenedione, and Androstendiol.

Testosterone is manufactured from Androstenedione, and Androstendiol.

Nothing else in the body supposedly converts to test other than these 2 substances.

Again, in order for me to recognize any strength gains using this product, I was taking 15 to 20 capsules a day, which can get quite costly.

But it did give me quite a noticeable surge in strength.

Androstenedione

The body converts androstenedione into testosterone. Testosterone supports muscle recovery and protein synthesis.

I took andro before I took 19-Nor-3-Andro and didn't feel as though it gave me the strength and muscle hardness as 19-Nor-3.

Protein Bars

These are great for when you're on the go and cannot make a whole food meal and cannot get a regular meal replacement.

Just be careful, many of the protein bars on the market are loaded with fat and sugar so that they taste half way decent.

Keep a bunch of high quality meal replacement/protein bars with you somewhere at all times.

This way, if you can't make a meal, you can rip open a bar and get your much needed calorie boost.

Let me sum up supplements with this:

There are hundreds of more supplements on the market than what I listed above.

Most of them plain do not work and are a waste of money.

Are there good supplements out there that I've not listed that will help you gain strength and muscle?

Probably, but the ones above have stood the test of time and have been proven beneficial.

Also, the ones above are the best ones at gaining quality weight.

There may be many more pro-hormones that are on the market that I didn't list above, but their effects on positive weight gain have not been proven.

When I finished my recent bodybuilding show, I set a goal to gain 20 pounds or so of mass in a little over 4 weeks.

I went from 175 to 220. I gained 45 pounds of mass weight in 4 weeks.

It was from training heavy and taking protein, creatine, and meal replacements, nothing more.

Don't bother looking for the magic supplement, it don't exist.

If it does, it's probably illegal.

If you want a more in-depth look at supplements, visit my supplement site:

<http://www.cheap-bodybuilding-supplements.com/>

On that site, I give you my 2 cents on the supplements I feel are worth taking and also I show you where you can get the biggest names in bodybuilding supplements for 40-50% off what you'd pay in the stores.

Here is this entire course, summed up in these sentences

In order to gain more muscle and strength than you currently have, you will need to make sure each and every single workout is as intense as you can possibly make it.

Your reps must be meaningful and performed with extreme concentration. Mind-muscle concentration must be at its best.

Make the basic, compounds movements like squats, bench press, military shoulder presses, deadlifts, straight bar curls, and barbell rows the mainstay in your workout routines.

For your heavy sets, make sure you are hitting failure between 4 and 6 reps to ensure the most overload to the muscles.

Nothing takes the place of hard work--nothing. Pure simple, basic workouts are what hard work is all about.

In order to build muscle mass, you must take in more calories than you need each day.

Be persistent in your workouts and training and all that you want will come to you.

Use the K.I.S.S. principle in all your workouts (Keep it Simple Stupid--from high school English class)

Choose free weights over machines in most cases (most, not all) Free weights require the use of more muscles.

Muscle grows when you break it down. Once it has repaired itself from that intense, heavy workout, do it again. Do not change your workouts just for the sake of changing them. If you always lift your heaviest and most intense, and then rest up before doing it again, you will always keep getting bigger.

You have to lift big weights to get big.

There are no such things as shaping exercises. You CANNOT change the shape of a muscle. You can only make it bigger or smaller.

You can't get big, thick muscles by using light weights and you also can't get big, thick muscles by eating like a bird.

When it comes to training, more is not better---better is better.

Nothing is more important to your success than focus...on training, on proper nutrition, on intense cardio, on supplementation, on setting goals. Focus is the fuel of accomplishments.

Drink plenty of water. Your muscles are made of 70% water. Give your muscles what they are.

Get enough protein each day. Protein builds muscle. Supply enough of it for your body to be in an "anabolic state."

Challenge yourself each and every day. Make a game out of it; see how hard you can challenge yourself.

Strive for excellence, not perfection.

Take supplements on off days as well as your training days. It's your off days that you are actually recuperating and repairing muscle tissue. This is when your body needs it the most.

The following outline for a mass building workout routine is simplistic in its approach, which is also why it is very effective. The key to proper weight training is to establish a good foundation in which to build upon, much like building a solid foundation for a house.

If you cut corners and build a weak foundation for a house, as time goes on, the house will become weaker and less sturdy.

Same thing with weight training. Keep it simple. It is more productive to focus effectively on a few tasks (exercises) than it is to work out with less intensity on many different ones.

You can revise and edit the program every 8 to 10 weeks to include different exercises or a different pairing of muscle groups.

Keep your routine simple, follow the suggested exercises (most are simple, well-known basic exercises) and I guarantee you will see more results.

Step 1. From the following muscle groups, pick two that you will be working out on Day 1 of weight training.

Chest
Back
Shoulders
Legs
Biceps
Triceps

Day 1 (Monday) of weight training _____ and _____

Then for day 2, pick two different muscle groups.

Day 2 (Wednesday) of weight training _____ and _____

Finally, day 3 will include the last two muscle groups.

Day 3 (Friday) _____ and _____

Here is your three-day weight training routine. Monday, Wednesday, Friday is good or maybe Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. The key is to give yourself a day in between weight training sessions so that you may include a cardiovascular session on your non-weight training days.

Include at least 1-2 days off each week for rest and recovery purposes.

Here is a sample week:

Monday: back & chest
Tuesday: cardio
Wednesday: legs & shoulders
Thursday: cardio
Friday: biceps & triceps
Saturday & Sunday Off

Step 2. Depending on which muscle groups you are training, pick 2-3 exercises for each muscle group from among the following list.

Here are the best exercises for building mass and gaining muscle:

Chest

Flat bench press with bar
Flat bench press with dumbbells
Incline bench press with bar
Incline bench press with dumbbells
Decline Bench press with bar
Weighted Dips

Back

Dumbbell one arm row
Cable lat pull downs to front
Seated back row on machine
Deadlifts
Bent over back rows w/ bar
Lower back extension
Chin-ups (Pull-ups)
Shrugs for Traps (Dumbbells or barbell)
T-Bar Rows

Shoulders

Seated military press with bar
Seated dumbbell shoulder presses
Dumbbell side lateral raises
Bent-over dumbbell raises
Front dumbbell raises
Upright rows (also works traps)

Legs

Squats
Leg press
Hack Squats
Leg curls
Leg extension
Stiff-leg deadlifts
Lunges with bar or dumbbells
Calf-raises/presses

Biceps

Standing Alternate dumbbell curls
Standing straight bar curls
Standing E-Z curl bar curls
Standing Cable curls
Hammer curls (forearms and biceps)

Triceps

Lying Triceps extension (Skullcrushers)
Close-grip bench press
Cable triceps pushdowns
Heavy Dumbbell kickbacks
Weighted dips

Abdominals

Lying crunches
Leg raises
Cable crunches

Stability ball crunches
Crunches on incline bench

Now plug each exercise into the appropriate spot on the following page to give you the whole week's routine. You only need to do 2-3 exercises per muscle group, but do them well, with intensity.

Doing two exercises with intensity and focus is better than doing 3-4 with little or no intensity. Again, in order to properly track progress, stay with a certain routine for at least 8 to 10 weeks before changing.

Monday: muscle groups _____ & _____

1st muscle group _____
1st exercise _____ x 3 sets
2nd exercise _____ x 3 sets
3rd exercise (if applicable) _____ x 3 sets

2nd muscle group _____
1st exercise _____ x 3 sets
2nd exercise _____ x 3 sets
3rd exercise (if applicable) _____ x 3 sets

*Include 3 sets of 2 separate abdominal exercises

Wednesday: muscle groups _____ & _____

1st muscle group _____
1st exercise _____ x 3 sets
2nd exercise _____ x 3 sets
3rd exercise (if applicable) _____ x 3 sets

2nd muscle group _____
1st exercise _____ x 3 sets
2nd exercise _____ x 3 sets

3rd exercise (if applicable) _____ x 3 sets

Friday: muscle groups _____ & _____

1st muscle group _____

1st exercise _____ x 3 sets

2nd exercise _____ x 3 sets

3rd exercise (if applicable) _____ x 3 sets

2nd muscle group _____

1st exercise _____ x 3 sets

2nd exercise _____ x 3 sets

3rd exercise (if applicable) _____ x 3 sets

Do no more than 3 weight training workouts per week if you combine 2 muscle groups in each workout (biceps & triceps). If you decide to work only one muscle group per workout (just chest or just back) than a shorter workout will occur and you will have to workout 5-6 times during the week.

Only 1 or 2 muscle groups per workout (ex. Biceps & triceps).

Do only two to three exercises per muscle group.
(ex. Flat bench w/ bar, incline bench w/ dumbbells)

Do only 2-3 heavy sets per exercise. You can do as many “warm-ups” as you feel necessary.

1st set-10 reps (warm-up)

2nd set-8 reps (warm-up)

3rd set-6 reps (weight acclimation)

4th and 5th sets (heavy sets)

On each set, try to progressively add a little more weight each time.

Keep records of your weight lifts so you can try to outdo (progress) each and every workout!

SAMPLE MASS BUILDING WORKOUT

You can use this sample workout routine for 8 to 10 weeks before changing it.

Day 1 Chest & Biceps

Weight Lifted

Flat Bench Press w/ Straight Bar

1 easy warm-up set for 10 reps _____
1 slightly heavier set for 6 reps _____
1 even heavier set for 3 reps _____
2 heavy sets for 4-6 reps (want to reach failure in this range) _____

Dumbbell Incline Chest Press

1 moderately heavy set of 6 reps _____
(No need to go light and warm-up again)
2 heavy sets of 4-6 reps _____

Weight Dips on the Dip Machine

1st set warm-up with body weight _____
2nd and 3rd sets add weight if you can _____

Standing Alternate Dumbbell Curls

1 warm-up set of 8-10 reps _____
1 moderately heavier set of 6-8 reps _____
2 heavy sets of 4-6 reps _____

Standing Straight Bar Curls

1 moderately heavier set of 6-8 reps _____
2 heavy sets of 4-6 reps _____

Hammer Curls

1 moderately heavier set of 6-8 reps _____
2 heavy sets of 4-6 reps _____

Day 2- Cardio

Choose one of the following:

Stairmaster, Treadmill, jogging outside, bicycle, aerobics class (one that moves constantly for 20 minutes)

20 minutes TOTAL

2-minute warm-up

16 minute EXTREME intense cardio (make sure you are WORKING HARD)
2-minute cool-down DISTANCE TRAVELLED _____

Day 3 Legs, Shoulders & Abs

Squats with bar or on Smith Machine

1 warm-up of 10 reps _____
1 moderately heavier set of 6 reps _____
1 weight acclimation set of 3-4 reps _____
2 heavy sets of 4-6 reps _____

Lunges with Straight Bar

1 moderately heavy set of 6-8 reps _____
2 heavy sets of 4-6 reps _____

Stiff Leg Deadlifts

1 warm-up of 10 reps _____
1 moderately heavy set of 6-8 reps _____
2 heavy sets of 4-6 reps _____

Calf Presses on Calf Machine

1 warm-up set of 8 reps _____
1 moderately heavy set of 6-8 reps _____
2 heavy sets of 4-6 reps _____

Seated Dumbbell Shoulder Presses

1 warm-up set of 10 reps _____
1 moderately heavy set of 6-8 reps _____
2 heavy sets of 4-6 reps _____

Dumbbell lateral raises to the side

1 moderately heavy set of 6-8 reps _____
2 heavy sets of 4-6 reps _____

Weighted cable Crunches

1 warm-up set of 10 reps _____
2 heavy sets of 10-15 reps _____

Day 4-Cardio

Choose running/jogging, Stairmaster, Elliptical, Recumbent Bike

20 minutes

2-minute warm-up
16 minute EXTREME intense cardio
2 minutes cool-down DISTANCE TRAVELLED _____

Day 5- Back & triceps

Deadlifts

- 1 warm-up set of 8-10 reps _____
- 1 moderately heavy set of 6-8 reps _____
- 2 heavy sets of 4-6 reps _____

Cable Pull Downs to the Front

- 1 moderately heavy set for 6-8 reps _____
- 2 heavy sets of 4-6 reps _____

1 Arm Dumbbell Rows

- 1 moderately heavy set for 6-8 reps _____
- 2 heavy sets of 4-6 reps _____

Dumbbell Shrugs

- 1 moderately heavy set of 6-8 reps _____
- 2 heavy sets of 4-6 reps _____

Lying Tricep Extensions

- 1 warm-up set of 8-10 reps _____
- 1 moderately heavier set of 6-8 reps _____
- 2 heavy sets of 4-6 reps _____

Standing Tricep Pushdowns on Cable Machine

- 1 moderately heavy set of 6-8 reps _____
- 2 heavy sets of 4-6 reps _____

*****RECENT ARTICLES*****

The #1 Factor in Bodybuilding Success
by Shawn LeBrun
Personal Trainer/Bodybuilder

Just the other day, someone asked me what I thought was the #1 "Most Important Factor" in determining how fit and muscular you became.

They wanted to know if it was Cardio, Weight Training, or Proper Nutrition.

I think my answer may have puzzled him a bit because I said it was none of those.

After I thought about the question for a few minutes, I told him that there was a more important factor that preceded any of those he mentioned.

I told him it was your attitude that determined your fitness levels and what type of condition you'll achieve.

You see, proper nutrition, supplements, cardio exercise, and weight training are all important factors, but it is your attitude that determines how hard you focus on each of those areas.

Generally speaking, your attitude is simply how you view things in life, how you see something to be.

More specifically, you either have a positive view, or slant on things, or a negative view.

This attitude shines through in all that you do, including working out and dieting.

If you generally have a good, positive attitude towards fitness, then you are going to approach working out with more intensity and more meaning.

You realize that in order to achieve and maintain a certain level of conditioning, you have to “pay the price” and put in some hard work.

But working out does not seem to be a “chore” with a positive attitude.

You look forward to it and feel positive knowing that the steps you take in and out of the gym are going to bring you closer to the body that you want.

On the other hand, if you approach working out and dieting with more of a "negative attitude" you are either going to:

1. Do nothing at all as far as working out and eating healthy because it all seems like so much hard work to get in great shape.

Since working out seems like a chore, you find it much easier just to sit back and complain about your current situation, doing nothing to fix it.

With a negative view, you label “working out” as too much hard work and do not take the necessary steps to get the body you want. That’s why it’s important to view working out in a positive light and not a negative one.

Focus more on what you want rather than what you don’t want.

Or, with a negative attitude:

2. You are going to do the bare minimum when it comes to working out and watching what you eat.

With a negative mindset, you’re maybe going to go to the gym once in a while, but once there, not give it your 100% all.

When it comes time to maintain a healthy eating regimen, you are not going to be quite as strict as you should be and you are going to give in to “instant pleasure” when the long term rewards seem so distant and far away.

So be more aware of your mindset and attitude when it comes to working out and getting fit.

Like Zig Ziglar says, “Do a check-up from the neck up.”

If you approach bodybuilding with a positive attitude, you ARE going to take the necessary steps to get in shape, even when it would be so much easier to stay in and watch TV.

You realize that persistence will pay off and that all of these workouts and times skipping the pizza WILL get you where you want to be.

Conversely, approach your workouts and nutrition with a negative mindset and you are setting yourself up for failure.

If you view working out and healthy eating with a negative viewpoint, you are not going to give your best when doing them.

As I am sure you're aware, you only get in return what you give, harvest what you plant.

Be more positive in all areas of your fitness approach and you will get the body you want much, much faster.

My Take on Supplements--Some of the Best

by Shawn LeBrun

Personal Trainer/Bodybuilder

Many people ask me time and time again which supplements they should be taking to help them reach their bodybuilding goals.

After speaking with them, I realize often times that all the supplements in the world wouldn't help this person because they are under the assumption that just by taking supplements, they will totally transform their bodies into huge, ripped, muscular ones.

Supplements are exactly that, they are supposed to supplement your well-balanced diet and your hard work in the gym.

They are not a substitute for them.

In fact, if you do not train correctly or eat a well-balanced diet, supplements are a total waste of money.

Supplements must be used correctly to be effective. You cannot be haphazard in your approach to taking them, missing days here and there or cutting down the amount taken to make it last longer.

Supplements must be taken on your off days from training just as well as when you are working out. It is on your off days that your body is recovering from strenuous workouts and needs the proper nutrition to support muscle growth.

There is a place for supplements in just about everyone's routines. The

correct supplements will assist you if you are unable to take in the nutrients that are required by your body that you normally get from ingesting whole food sources.

Undoubtedly using the correct supplement will give you an edge in your fat loss and muscle building efforts.

I say correct because there are literally more supplements on the market that do not work than those that do.

If I sound skeptical, it's because I am. I have just seen too many examples of products that are hyped as the next best thing but just fail to deliver any results.

Undoubtedly there are supplements that offer an array of benefits and value.

Buying a supplement because you saw an ad in a magazine that offered amazing results is kind of like buying into one of these get-rich quick schemes. If it were that great of a product, wouldn't everyone be taking it?

Wouldn't the effective word-of-mouth advertising by people drastically reduce the need for these companies to spend \$10,000 per ad in a magazine? Ads are produced to do one thing and one thing only. To sell a product. You can literally sell anything if you advertise it enough. Just watch the current slew of infomercial on TV. Its ridiculous that these companies are padding their wallets at the expense of vulnerable people who are misled and misinformed and are looking for the right direction.

Again, supplements are not magic. They are not truly needed to get into fabulous shape. However, the right ones can help you get there and stay in better shape if taken correctly. I have benefited from a few specific supplements that I have listed below.

All-in-one supplements that contain the latest and greatest ingredients are not worth their weight either. They usually contain such trace amounts of the key ingredients that any effect is doubtful.

Also, try not to take too many supplements at one time. Many compete for absorption against each other. Also, if you take many supplements at the

same time, you will not know which ones work and which ones do not.

If you take 5 supplements are only 1 or 2 is truly giving you any gains, how are you supposed to know which ones to stick with and which ones to can?

Stick with reputable, well-known brands that have been around for a while. The scam companies usually get chased out by consumers, reputable competing companies, or sometimes by the FDA (AB belts for example).

Twinlab, AST Sports Science, Nature's Best, Met-Rx, Sportpharma, Lee Labrada, EAS, Balance, NOW Foods, Syntrax, Beverly International and Optimum Nutrition are just a few of the brands that have been around for a while and do not have overwhelmingly bad publicity.

Believe me, I have purchased and used supplements as much as the next guy, but to make good and steady gains you must pay more attention to your training routine than your supplement budget.

If you are training correctly and want to add some valuable supplements to the list, I think you would be well off sticking with protein (whey, milk, egg, or some combination of those) meal replacements, creatine, glutamine, and a quality multi-vitamin and mineral.

I am sure that many of the andros and testosterone boosters offer some value, I just have not used them enough to give an educated opinion on them.

It's unfortunate that the majority of people I talk to are under the assumption that their choice of supplements are the most important thing to focus on in their bodybuilding efforts.

Supplements should be exactly that, something to supplement your hard and consistent work in the gym.

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How to Get in the "Lift Heavy" Zone

By Shawn LeBrun

Certified Personal Trainer

Have you ever had one of those workouts where everything seemed to just "click" and all of your lifts were great?

Where you just felt an extreme energy coursing through your body as you go from one lift to the next, ready to kick it up an even "higher notch."

Let me ask you, are these workouts few and far between for you?

Do you wish you could have an awesome workout every single time you wrap your hands around the steel bar?

I'm telling you that you can.

What's the alternative, betting that you can't?

Every single time you step into a gym to lift or do cardio, you must approach that workout like it's the very last one you'll ever do.

Truth be told, you really never know if it really will be, but without sounding too morbid, that's the mindset you must have.

I just gave you the key as to what it takes to have a killer workout each and every time you step into the gym.

Your mindset.

It's as simple as this....

Before you can create anything, you have to think it.

I challenge anyone to dispute that statement.

Before you have, do, get, build...anything...you have to think what it is your trying to get.

Architects do not start building houses until they have thought of every last little detail.

Then they just construct what they thought about.

Approach your workouts and your body the very same way.

You cannot and should not just walk into the gym without thinking of what you want to accomplish and just start throwing some weights around.

It took me years to figure that out and it was years that I was puny and had nothing to show for it.

Before even stepping into the gym, know what you're after.

If not, you're spinning your wheels.

So what does that have to do with having a killer workout every single time?

Well, if you know what you want to achieve (muscle growth, strength increase, fat loss) you then just have to do those things that will bring those results.

It's funny how many times I've heard the following in the gym while training people:

****I want to lose some body fat but I hate doing cardio.**

****I want to add some size or strength to my frame, but I don't have time to eat very much during the day.**

****I want to increase my bench but I've just been doing higher reps with lower weight.**

Look, I can tell you that you'll almost never achieve your muscle building or fat loss goals if you haven't taken the time to think about how you exactly plan on going about getting them.

Having awesome, muscle blasting workouts are at your disposal any time you want them.

It starts with thinking about what you want to achieve.

More muscle, more strength, less body fat...

And then it begins with following through on the plan to get those things.

If you know exactly what you want and know the exact steps to get it, how can you NOT have awesome workouts each and every time?

I mean, imagine yourself in the gym, right now, doing only those things that you KNOW are going to boost muscle and strength for you.

Wouldn't you feel more pumped knowing that the stuff you are doing is going to lead you to where you want to be?

That's exactly how you can have awesome workouts every single time you step into the gym....it comes from realizing that you are well on your way to getting what you want.

And that the only thing stopping you is you.

So the next time you step into the gym, approach it with an attitude that says "There is no possible way I can fail."

If I go in there, do every single thing I know I have to do and do it well, success is guaranteed 100% of the time.

What's the alternative, dreading going to the gym and when there, wishing you were somewhere else, so you speed through your workouts just to get them done.

Good luck, for if you do this, chances of you seeing any success is slim to

none.

I now challenge you to challenge yourself.

Every time you go to workout, make it the single best workout you've ever had.

I can PROMISE you, if you do this every time, not only will you have great workouts every time, but you will also guarantee yourself muscle growth, fat loss, strength, or any other goal you want.



How You Live Determines If You Get Bigger and Stronger
by Shawn LeBrun
Personal trainer

Did you know that how you live, day to day, determines the level of strength and muscularity you'll achieve?

It's true, if you have a lifestyle that supports fat loss, muscle gain, and strength increase, those things will occur naturally.

It's when you expect one thing and do something totally opposite trying to get it that it becomes a problem.

If you drop a rock from a tall building, it's going to fall to the ground, whether you like it or not. It just happens.

If you train heavy, consistent, intensely, and support yourself nutritionally, you will get stronger and more muscular.

It happens. Certain steps lead to certain destinations.

But doing things repeatedly that do not support your goals will ensure you do not reach them.

For example, you want to gain lean muscle and increase your strength, but you consistently fail to eat the right types of food, at the right times , or the right amounts.

Or you want to shed some body fat yet you continue to take days off from cardio because you're not motivated enough to do it.

If you want to skyrocket your strength, if you continue doing light weight and high reps, how is that ever going to get you there?

If your lifestyle is not supportive of gaining muscle and strength, then it really doesn't matter what you do in the gym, your results will be limited.

So what's the key?

Replace those things that will hinder or sabotage muscle growth with newer, more productive habits that continually support muscle growth and strength.

Here's an example.

It's the new year and you decide one of your resolutions is to gain muscle, specifically 5 pounds of lean muscle in the next month.

You give up your old, unproductive habit of just hanging out at the gym after a workout, not eating or drinking a post workout meal.

Instead, now you have a protein and carb drink ready to shake and slam after the workout.

You changed a very minor thing but it will make a huge difference in your gains.

Say that you want to lose 10 pounds of body fat to see your abs, but for

dinner each night you continue to eat pizza or cheeseburgers and fries.

A couple months later, after doing all those crunches, you still do not see your abs so you figure it probably just wasn't meant to be.

A new, improved lifestyle change could involve eating a salad and chicken breast instead of your burger and fries a couple nights a week.

So, as plain as day, how you decide to live your life each day impacts what you will achieve in terms of muscularity and strength.

The key is to make small, improved lifestyle changes that support fat loss and muscle gain, and continue them until they become habit.

Then move on to another small change that benefits your goals, replacing an older, less productive one.

By changing habits in moderation, you do not overwhelm yourself with a sense of displeasure from restrictive eating or too much training.

In fact, by making your lifestyle changes in moderation, you increase the likelihood that these changes will be long lasting and permanent.

Just start replacing old, nonproductive habits with newer, more supportive ones that contribute to muscle and strength gain and soon your concerns with your physique will be a thing of the past.

There are some times in the gym, while I'm working out, that some younger guy will approach me and ask me how I'm able to lift some of the weights I use.

They expect me to tell them that I'm able to straight bar curl 150 pounds or bench press 375 because of some supplement I take.

They often look at me dumbfounded as I tell them that one of the biggest reasons for my strength gains are because I've been lifting for a while and have just grown accustomed to handling heavier weights.

It's no secret that the longer you do something, usually the better you get.

This holds true with lifting as well. The longer you are able to keep lifting heavy and intensely, you are going to get stronger and more muscular as a result.

So, the reason why there are many bodybuilders stronger than a lot of people is that they've just been doing it longer than most and the experience has been one of increased strength.

So, the key to becoming stronger and more muscular lies in your ability to keep at it, keep training, and make sure your daily habits support your goals of building muscle, losing fat, or gaining strength.

This is one of many training tips from "**Simple Steps to Get Huge and Shredded.**" This program is guaranteed to add more muscle, help shed more body fat, and increase your strength immediately. Period. For more on this training program, visit ["Simple Steps to Get Huge and Shredded!"](#)



How to Add Weight To Your Lifts Immediately!
by Shawn LeBrun
Personal trainer

Want to learn a method that will **guarantee** you will be able to instantly add weight to all of your lifts?

Learn how to warm up correctly.

I do not mean just warming up before you start a workout, but warming up all the way right up to your heavy sets.

In my opinion, most people do not know how to warm up correctly before their weight training routine. This could have a significant and negative impact on their ability to lift maximum weight and overload the muscles sufficiently.

If you do not achieve proper overload, there will be **no new muscle fiber stimulation and no new muscle growth.**

Many people warm up either way too much before a weight workout or way too little. You must fall between these two. Not only will a proper warm-up lessen our chances of becoming injured. It will increase our strength the very first day we put this principle into practice.

Physiologically speaking, there are very few reasons to lift weights. The biggest two are to increase muscle size and to increase strength. Who does not want more lean, toned muscles and also to be stronger?

Most people, even though there are exceptions, do not lift weights because they find it an extremely fun and enjoyable experience.

Therefore, if there are physiologically only a few reasons to lift weights, then every single time we put our hands on those weights, shouldn't the purpose be to either get stronger or more muscular. Not just for the act of bringing a weight up from a rack and to your chest?

Lifting weights do not have a direct impact on fat burning. It does have an indirect effect, for the more lean muscle you have, the more calories you will burn.

So if we want to build muscle, shouldn't we be lifting progressively heavier weight to force new muscle stimulation? So doesn't that rule out lifting light weights for high reps to try and tone up? Weight training is anaerobic, not aerobic; so do not try to perform an aerobic workout by lifting weights. So, how does this relate to warming up correctly?

Simple. Most people spend way too much time and energy warming up to the point that when it is time to perform their heavy, muscle-building sets, they are too wiped out from their warm-ups. This has defeated the purpose of weight training. Lighter weights lifted, less muscle stimulation. This means less muscle growth as a result.

The **single biggest mistake** I see people do time and time again is that they warm up with too many sets and too many reps before attempting their heavy, results-producing sets.

Take the bench press for example. Just the other day, I witnessed someone performing the following routine.

This person started with the bar, which in most gyms is 45 pounds. They busted out a quick, easy set of 10 reps. They then put on 45-pound plates and did another set of 10.

Then they went up to 155 pounds and did another 10 reps. Here is where we are starting to go wrong. They are beginning to use way too much energy on these warm-ups.

They then did another set with 175 pounds for 10 more reps, then 200 for a set of 8 reps. So far, 5 sets and this person hasn't even started their **"heavy and intense"** sets yet! They have wasted time, energy, and intensity all before it really even counted.

On the 6th set, they notice they were starting to tire quickly and could only handle 210 for 5 reps. So this is where they stop the bench press portion of their workout figuring that since they are fatigued, they have worked the muscles sufficiently.

After talking briefly with this person, I realized they had been at this weight and unable to break past this plateau for months. They just assumed it's where

they were meant to be, that they couldn't get any stronger.

People often come up with many excuses instead of stepping back from the picture and learning what it may be they are not doing correctly. If you are not progressing forward, something may be wrong.

If the only way a muscle will grow is through increased overload (weight) why expend so much needed energy on warm-up sets? We need to save it for the productive sets, the last one or two of the set where the weight being used is the most you can handle for four to six repetitions.

Now I will show you how I added over 20 pound to a person's bench press,
THE FIRST DAY I WORKED WITH HIM!

Warming-up correctly means you should acclimate your muscles to be able to handle additionally heavier weights while progressing through your sets. This means doing just enough reps on a warm-up set without tiring yourself to the point where you have no juice left to finish your heavier sets.

You are allowing the muscle group being trained to acclimate to a heavier resistance and more overload without unduly fatiguing.

Any repetition that you perform has one of three purposes.

It is a warm-up set. It is an acclimation set. It is your heavy, muscle-building sets.

If you cannot categorize a set you are about to do into one of these three, you should not do the set. It is wasting your time and energy.

Back to how I added **20 pounds to a person's bench press the first day**. After this person warmed up on the bike for 5 minutes, I met him at the bench press (it seems everyone uses the bench press as a gauge for how things are going). I had this gentleman place 135 pounds on the bar and had him perform ten smooth, easy reps.

After resting for a couple minutes, we placed just 20 pounds more on and he did an easy set of eight reps. Then we bumped it up to 175 pounds and he did six reps. He was starting to work harder, but he was not tiring because he was

starting to decrease the number of reps he was doing. This is very important.

As you go heavier, **decrease the warm up reps.**

After a couple minutes rest, we placed 200 pounds on the bar and he only did three reps. Then we went to 210, his previous best, and I had him only do two reps.

"Gasp", I hear you going.

Why only two reps, I thought you were going to help him lift more? After resting a couple minutes, we placed 230 pounds on the bar and he proceeded to get six good, strict reps. Last week he was only able to push up 210 for four repetitions. In one week, by lessening his warm-up reps and sets, he **added 20 pounds and two reps.** Not a bad week's work?

This illustrates the important points of this topic. Do not overdo your light warm-up sets. They are just that, to warm up, not to fatigue. As we place additional weight on the bar, decrease the reps performed so that you are not tiring out too much on your warm-ups.

If staggered correctly, you will have reserved more strength and energy for those last heavy sets and you should notice an increase **THE FIRST DAY YOU PUT THIS INTO PRACTICE.**

Stop doing too many reps and sets before getting to the heavy ones. Involve acclimation sets on all of your exercises to get your muscles, ligaments, tendons, and joints ready for the progressive overload that's about to come.

Think quality of sets over quantity of sets. Its not the number of reps and sets that count, it is how you perform them.

For a more in-depth review on this **Chapter of Increasing Weights on ALL of your Lifts**, check out **"Simple Steps to Get Huge and Shredded"** below.

This is one of many training tips from **"Simple Steps to Get Huge and Shredded."** This program is guaranteed to add more muscle, help shed more

body fat, and increase your strength immediately. Period. For more on this training program, visit ["Simple Steps to Get Huge and Shredded!"](#)

Are You Taking Action Towards Bodybuilding Success?

by Shawn LeBrun

Personal trainer

So, you want quads the **size of tree trunks** or biceps that **bust out of the sleeves of your shirt**?

Well, let me ask, are you taking a step forward, each and every day, going after what you want to achieve?

Or are you a member of the **"I want it now but don't want to work for it"** club, simply sitting back waiting for things to come to you?

It's no secret that life rewards action.

If you sit back and wait for things to come to you, I hope you have a lot of time to wait.

In fact, the true power to reach your bodybuilding goals is your ability to consistently take action each and every day.

In fact, can you imagine how much closer to your muscle building goals you'd be if you simply resolved to do **ONE** thing each and every day that would bring you closer to that goal.

Good things would start adding up quickly, and like the snowball that keeps getting bigger while rolling down the snowy hill, you too would find your muscles getting bigger.

Successful people are not necessarily those that make the right decisions all of the time.

But they do make decisions and better yet, **act upon them.**

If what they do doesn't work the first time, they simply try something else until they get their desired result.

What amazes me is the number of people I see and talk to that are not happy with their current physique or muscularity, yet they keep doing the same things over and over again, expecting different results!

Thomas Jefferson once wrote "I'm a firm believer in luck, and I've found the harder I work, the luckier I get."

Well, the same is true in bodybuilding.

How hard do you work for the things you seek?

Do you take some form of action each day and go after them?

Do you get in the car and drive to the gym in the snow when you could just grab some cocoa and sit in and watch a movie?

Do you slam a protein shake when you're done your muscle-blasting workout or do you just wait a few hours for dinner?

Do you do an intense cardio session when it would be far easier to sit on the couch?

The great thing about taking action each and every day towards a specific bodybuilding goal is, sooner or later, the momentum you build is overwhelming and you find yourself closer to your goal than ever expected.

It was once said that "Good things come to those who wait, but it's the leftovers from those who hustle."

I would like to challenge you for two weeks.

Each and every day for two straight weeks, do something, anything, that brings you closer to whatever fitness goal you may have.

Take some form of action every single day.

Whether you are beginning an exercise program or consider yourself advanced, sit down, go over what you are looking to achieve, and then plot out specific steps you need to take to accomplish these goals.

Then get acting on them.

You will find that the more you act on things, the more good things happen.

The great thing about taking action towards a specific goal each and every day is that the Law of Momentum will start to take hold.

Meaning, a body in motion tends to remain in motion unless acted upon by some outside force.

The flip side, of course, is a body at rest tends to remain at rest unless acted upon by some outside force.

Accept the challenge, do one or more things every day for the next two weeks that will move you closer to a specific goal you have and see how the Law of Momentum starts to take effect in your life.

One of the best books I've read that has helped me personally with setting goals and achieving success is called ["The Science of Success"](#) written by Gary Vurnum.

Whether you realize it or not...you have chosen to be where you are. "The Science of Success" is an ebook that outlines the secrets of success. It contains 142 clear steps that will make you look at your life like you have never done before.

Achieving success isn't difficult...far from it. Success is easy - if you know how to get there.

Imagine that you found the hidden key that will finally unlock the door to a successful life. I can tell you now that you will never approach a new challenge again in the same way after reading it.

This is a great reference for anyone serious about finding and maintaining a positive attitude and building a whole and happy life.

