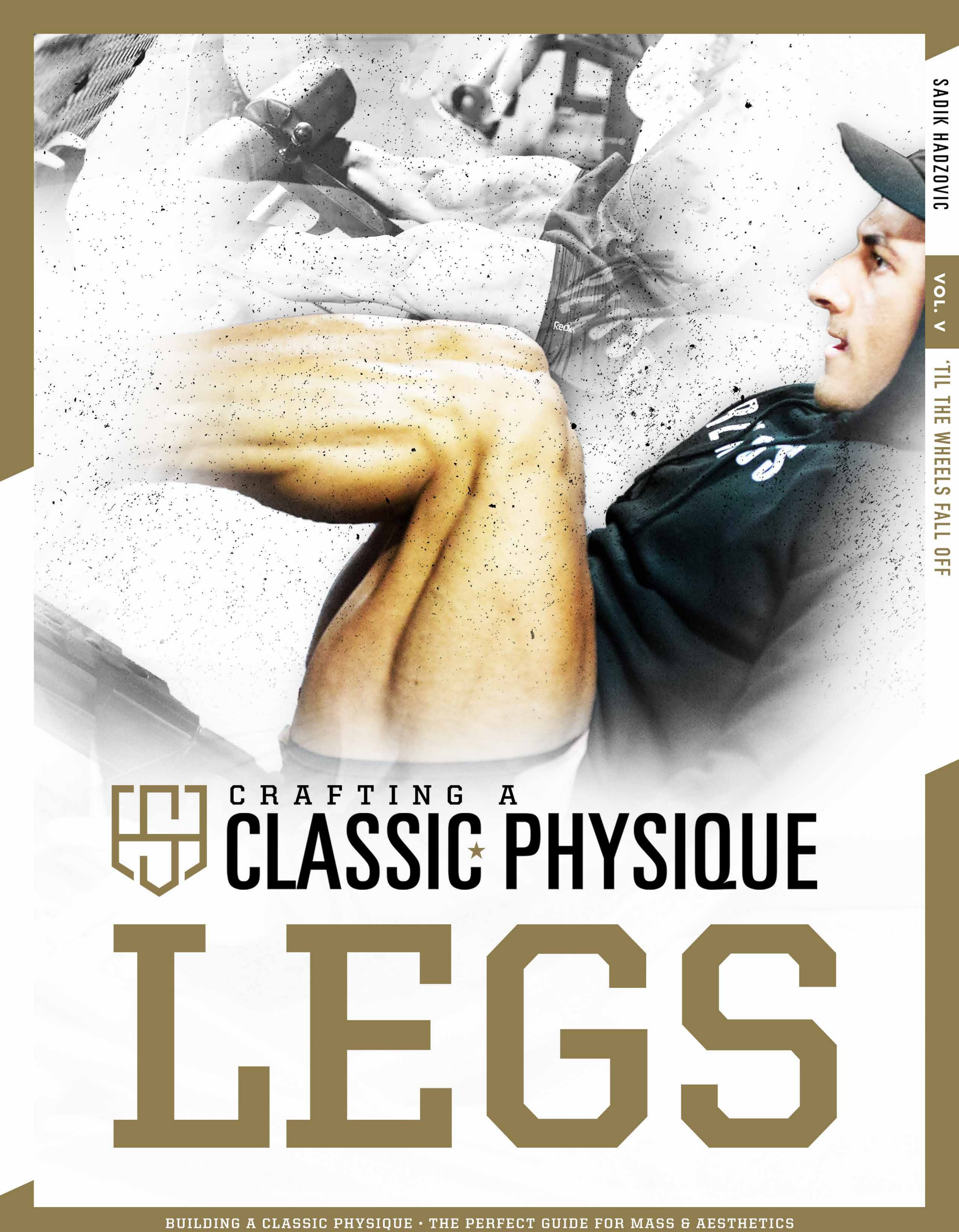

CRAFTING A

CLASSIC PHYSIQUE

LEGS

INTRODUCTION

Let's hit it deep and hard – The only way to train legs! The classic physique is built through a calculated approach to training, precision execution, and a brutal work ethic. Of course we're going to put slabs of muscle onto our frame, but the classic physique should be carefully crafted, so it's important to take your body type, strengths, and weaknesses into consideration when making choices in exercise selection, frequency, and training style.

In this book, we're going to break down some training methods I've used to build mass and detail in my legs, to have a balanced, thick, and symmetrical look that not only stand on their own, but give me an even tighter waist and wider shoulders on stage. You'll put your legs and CNS through a series of modalities that are meant to illicit the most muscle growth in the shortest amount of time, so you'll be banging out some really difficult work and then giving your body an opportunity to recover.

APPLYING THIS GUIDE

My advice to you is to assess your physique objectively before you start. Everyone has a unique look, and it is important that you get to know your body: study it and get to know your strengths and weaknesses so that you understand how to capitalize on the genetic package you've been given. Your natural strengths and weaknesses may force you to adapt your form or training split altogether, not to mention your natural biomechanics, lever points, and muscle insertions. This is not a one-size-fits all sport and you need to understand exercise and anatomy a bit to make decisions in your training. If you need help assessing your body, it's a great idea to use an experienced friend or hire a coach. All the greats have had someone in their corner calling the shots and guiding their athlete to success. This is the reason I offer coaching to people ranging from beginners at the gym to more advanced competitors. Everyone needs that experienced eye.

I've written this trainer with a very specific purpose: to give you granite hard, thick legs. It is simple and effective and allows you to put your full effort into your training without any cheap tricks or distractions from the thing that is really important – smoking the shit out of your legs to make them grow.

We are always going to start with a heavy compound movement and then isolate each specific muscle. It's the basics. Don't look for a shortcut. Just work. Let's get started.

PRECISION LEG TRAINING

ARE YOU QUAD OR POSTERIOR CHAIN DOMINANT?

To build a perfect set of wheels, you need absolute control of how you stimulate them, and you need to address your strengths and weaknesses strategically. The anatomy of the arm is essentially the same as the arm, so it can be helpful to think about the way you train arms when you approach your leg training. Each muscle of the leg helps produce the full range of motion in the squat, and the way you execute your squats can have a big impact on how that movement pattern plays out.

If you are quad dominant, chances are you will need to do direct posterior chain work not only to balance out the look of your legs, but to improve your movement patterns. Likewise, if you have no quads and big hammies, the leg extension and lunges are your best friends.

Here is the easy rule for creating a balanced set of legs and correcting your movement pattern over time:

Dominant quads:

1) Squat with a slightly wider stance
2) Prioritize glute and hamstring exercises

Dominant glutes/hams:

1) Squat with a close stance
2) Prioritize your quads with isolation exercise

Let's take a quick look at the anatomy of the legs so that you can adjust your form to optimize your own body's shape a mechanics.

PRECISION LEG TRAINING

QUADRICEPS

The Quads are the triceps of your legs. They serve to extend the leg using 4 smaller muscles that originate around the hip and connect to the knee. The four muscles are the Vastus lateralis, vastus medialus, vastus intermedius, and the rectus femoris. All of these except the Rectus Femoris attach to the femur and the patella – the Rectus Femoris inserts at the hip bone. Contrary to popular believe, you can't really isolate individual muscles within this muscle group in a literal sense. You can adjust your form so that you get improved activation of your quads overall, though. The key to that is looking at all leg exercises as hip dominant or quad dominant. For instance, performing a low bar squat is a more hip dominant exercise, whereas front squats or a high bar squat with knees more over your toes will result in more quad activation.

PRECISION LEG TRAINING

HAMSTRINGS

The hamstrings are the biceps of the legs. They serve the very important role of stabilizing the squat and helping to hinge the hips. The hamstrings can make or break your leg routine and therefore it is important to learn a bit about them and make sure that you take care of them. It's very common for people to have very shortened, tight hamstrings. This can lead to postural problems and can only compromise your squat and deadlift form, but it can make performing normal life activities like tying your shoes hard. Not even kidding, do some yoga or something. Just make sure that you're both stretching and strengthening the hams.

PRECISION LEG TRAINING

GLUTES

Glutes aren't just for the gram. They are arguably the most important muscle in your body because they create the majority of the power and functionality of the hips. They get you out of the hole in the squat, help you lock out deadlifts, and stabilize your torso by keeping it upright. There are three parts to the glutes. The maximus, medius, and minimus. The maximus makes up the bulk of the glutes and is the strongest and most central part of the muscle. The medius sits on the upper, outer quadrant of your gluteal group and is responsible for hip strength is lateral movements. The minimus is an underlying supporting muscle of the hip that you can't see directly. If any of your lower body lifts are suffering, improving glute and hip strength is a sure-fire way to help.

IDEAL LEG TRAINING SPLIT

This is leg day. If legs are a weakness for you, you should train them twice a week. If there is one particular aspect of your Legs that is especially weak, you should prioritize it every work out and add an additional session sometime during your training split. So for instance, if you train legs Monday and Friday and you have weak hamstrings, add 4 sets of leg curls on Wednesday. Don't be afraid to hit legs a lot – they are constantly in use and typically need a lot of stimulation in order for them to grow.

Before we get into the workout, let's go over what a rep means, and then talk about how we're going to perform each rep for optimal results. Each rep is comprised of three parts: The concentric (positive), an isometric (contracted pause), and the eccentric (negative). For our purposes, we will always perform our reps with an explosive positive, a slight isometric pause when the muscle is fully contracted, and a slow negative, keeping tension on the muscle and feeling it lengthen through the range of motion.

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CLASSIC RESULTS

THE BIOMECHANICS OF POWERFUL LEGS

The Master Movement: The squat is an important movement to master. If you do not take the time to perfect it early on, you will risk serious injury and get only partial results. Everyone's biomechanics are slightly different due to lever lengths and mobility, but most rules of the squat are universal. Since it is arguably the most important lift for the legs, here is a quick checklist of cues you can use to improve your squat out of the gate.

CLASSIC RESULTS

CHECKLIST

CUE 1: Bar placement - Before you place the bar, squeeze your shoulder blades back slightly and squeeze your lats like you're doing a lat-pulldown. Now get under the bar. This will help keep the bar-path over your mid foot.

CUE 2: Abs - Tighten your abs like you're planking. In fact, do a plank right before you squat to remind yourself what that feels like. This is extremely important to remember to protect your spine under heavy weight.

CUE 3: Hinge at the hip - For the most part, you should think about hinging at the hips first and then bending your knees. This should help keep your glutes activated and your hips stable, while maintaining correct bar path.

CUE 4: Crease of the hip under the crease of the knee - No quarter reps. No half reps. Full, deep reps only. This means that the crease of your hips should just sink below the crease of your knee. That's not parallel. It's below parallel. Get used to it.

CUE 5: Thrust Hips Forward - Although the squat is a great quad movement, and you can do variations on the squat to emphasize the quads, you should be conscious of the way your hips are involved in all lower body movements. When you're half-way up, you should be thinking about pushing your hips forward by activating your glutes to complete the rep. It's a good idea to start cuing yourself pretty early on this one, because most people activate their glutes too late. This will result in a balanced squat that hits your quads, hams, and glutes the way it is supposed to.

CLASSIC LEG TRAINING

You train legs twice a week. Here are the workouts. The first day is about heavy weights, gaining strength, and CNS stimulation. Make sure you recover well for the second day. It's super high volume, excruciating lactic acid pain, and a crippling pump. That's the right combination for huge, powerful wheels.

LEG DAY I:

Exercise	Sets	Reps	Rest	Notes
Squat	5	8	45 Sec.	Pause at the bottom
Hip thrusts	5	8	45 Sec.	
Leg Extensions	3	8	45 Sec.	
Romanian deadlift	3	8	45 Sec.	
Leg Curl	3	15	30 Sec.	2 second holds
Seated Calf Raise	3	15	30 Sec.	
Standing Calf Raise	3	15	30 Sec.	

TOUCH UP DAY:

Exercise	Sets	Reps	Rest	Notes
Select an exercise for the weakest part of your Legs.	4	12	30 Sec.	

CLASSIC LEG TRAINING

LEG DAY II:

Exercise	Sets	Reps	Rest	Notes
Front Squat	5	8	45 Sec.	
Leg Press	3	15	45 Sec.	
Walking Lunge	3	15	60 Sec.	
Hamstring Curl	3	15	60 Sec.	
Leg Extension	5	15	30 Sec.	1 second holds
Rope Pull-through	5	15	60 Sec.	1 second holds
Seated Calf Raise	3	12	45 Sec.	

CRAFTING A CLASSIC PHYSIQUE LEGS

CLASSIC TOOLS

Let's go over some nuances of the exercises we're going to perform. To build a classic pair of wheels, we need to pay special attention to detail. Please review these notes and images carefully before performing the exercises to achieve best results.

SQUAT

Keys to Success: Not only should you squeeze your shoulder blades, but you should tighten your lats before you even start. Get under the bar and tighten your glutes so your joints are stacked. Hinge at the hips and bend your knees until the crease of your hips is below the crease at your knees. Drive with your heals and engage your glutes first, followed by your quads.

CLASSIC TOOLS

HIP THRUSTS

Key to Success: Set yourself up with your upper back on a bench and a padded barbell across your lap. Keep your heals as close to your hips as your mobility will allow and use your glutes to press the barbell straight up. You will also feel your hamstrings engage heavily. Just go with it. You're getting stronger and that will transfer into your other lower body pressing movements and improve your growth potential.

CLASSIC TOOLS

LEG EXTENSIONS

Key to Success: Don't let your knees flair out to the sides. Your knees bend in ONE direction. Make sure that you're holding a contraction at the top of the movement and don't swing the weight. Keep it controlled at all times and let the resistance descend at a relatively slow rate. Avoid just going through the motions. This exercise can either feel super easy or super hard. Make it hurt.

CLASSIC TOOLS

ROMANIAN DEADLIFT

Key to Success: Do not lock your knees. Your knees should remain soft, and when you feel a nice hard stretch in the hamstrings, that's when you know it's time to come back up. You're not using your lower back, this is a hip-hinge movement. You will engage the glutes as well as your hamstrings at the top. Make sure to press your hips forward hard at the top by squeezing the glutes.

CLASSIC TOOLS

LEG CURL

Key to Success: Be explosive with your leg curls. Weak hamstrings make for improper movement patters in the squat, which is your most important lift for overall leg gains. If you're doing standing or laying leg curls, contract your glutes before you engage your hamstrings. This will make the movement significantly more difficult and give you superior results.

CLASSIC TOOLS

SEATED CALF RAISE

Key to Success: The best advice I can give on this movement is to stretch at the bottom and take your time reaching a peak contraction. Don't bounce. Use the ball of your foot – Think about pushing with the inside of your foot, not the pinky toe.

STANDING CALF RAISE

Key to Success: Similar to the seated version, Use the ball of your foot – Think about pushing with the inside of your foot, not the pinky toe. Keep the movement under control and do not bounce. You can hurt your Achilles tendon and you'll end up with skinny, pathetic calves and a limp.

CRAFTING A CLASSIC PHYSIQUE LEGS

CLASSIC TOOLS

FRONT SQUAT

Key to Success: Put the bar in a front rack position with your elbows up, your lats contracted, and your scapula retracted. Since the goal of the front squat is to emphasize the quads, take a slightly narrower stance than usual. Use a slow and controlled descent and keep your upper body as upright as possible. Otherwise, squat like normal.

CLASSIC TOOLS

LEG PRESS

Key to Success: There are tons of foot placement variations that will allow you to get specific with muscle targeting. If you have a weak posterior chain, a high and wide stance is best. If you need work on your quads, you get place your feet very low, which will allow you to mimic a heavy sissy squat to really blow up your quads.

CRAFTING A CLASSIC PHYSIQUE LEGS

CLASSIC TOOLS

WALKING LUNGE

Key to Success: Torture yourself. It'll be worth it. Just make sure you're taking comfortable steps and that you are lowing your self down so that you feel a stretch in your front quad and hip flexor before your press yourself up to take the next step. Don't bang your knees on the ground. Take care of yourself so that you can lift long into your golden years.

CLASSIC TOOLS

ROPE PULL-THROUGH

Key to Success: You might think this is a bit of a woman's exercise. Get that out of your head right now. Strong glutes help you squat heavier weight for more reps, which will give you a nasty set of legs. So isolate the glutes and hit them hard. Use a rope attachment on a low pulley on the cables. Hold it between your legs. Step out with a moderate to heavy weight on the stack. Start bent-over as if you were at the bottom of a Romanian deadlift and shoot your hips forward explosively and end with a hard squeeze in the fully contracted position. If you have really bad glutes, you can also move this exercise to the beginning of your workout.