THE LAZY LIFTER SERIES

CHO LIM

MINIMALIST FITNESS

THE REVOLUTIONARY STEP BY STEP SYSTEM TO BUILDING THE ULTIMATE PHYSIQUE WHILE ENJOYING LIFE

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SUCCESS STORIES

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

First, I want to congratulate you for making it through to this book because that means you're doing something that will benefit you and your future. It takes a lot of courage, commitment, and faith to take the first step towards change, for which I greatly commend you.

You see, the greatest investment that you can make is not in stocks, not real estate, and not even in your business — but in yourself. If you're not functioning at an optimal level, you won't do well in any areas of your life. Wouldn't you agree with that?

Purchasing this book is a very big investment in yourself, but it doesn't stop there. You must do the next important part of this investment, and that is to follow through. Getting this book is just one thing, but for you to really change everything in your life, you have to read and apply all the lessons that you will learn in this book. The sooner you accomplish this, the sooner you will see results.

Like in every success story, the hero always undergoes a trial that he should overcome first before becoming a truly recognized hero. In this story, YOU, the hero, will have to go through reading this whole book first and applying all the lessons before you shine through. You will need to fight your own dragons and defeat each of them to come out victorious.

This book will not only teach you the exact steps that I did for myself and for the thousands of clients that I worked with to transform their bodies, but it will also teach you everything on how you can help yourself. Yes, help yourself. But of course, first you have to be willing to help yourself.

Unlike other books, information products, and fitness instructors who only teach you to become dependent on them so they can make more money from you, this book will take care of the most important cause of any success — your own learning.

After finishing this book and mastering the principles, I guarantee that you won't need any other "fitness gurus" anymore, and that includes me. You will have the fundamentals that are needed to be a self-reliant and self-sustained fitness individual. You won't have to listen to hearsay, gossip, and other false information when it comes to working out. You will have your own stand, your two stronger legs, and you will be confident enough to troubleshoot any fitness matters you will encounter in the future. We will cover as much as we can in this book so I hope you will use it not only for the time being, but as a guide to your whole fitness journey.

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My outcome is to add massive value to you and to help you be successful in getting the body that you've always wanted — confidence, freedom, lifestyle, and whatever desires that you want — and to do that without the use of performance-enhancing drugs, and without depriving you of the fun lifestyle that you have or want to have.

I have no doubt that if you follow everything that is written in this book, you will be able to achieve massive success with regards to your health and physical goals.

With that said, I just want to assure you that we are on this journey together, and I am 100% committed to your success.

Now, are you ready to take your body to limits you never thought possible? Are you ready to finally be happy with your reflection in the mirror?

If so, let's get it on!

SEVEN SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THIS BOOK

This book will serve as your fitness bible, as your go-to when you need to have a fitness instructor and a workout partner. Reading this book will not only provide information, but will also provide inspiration to you when you find yourself slacking off or falling off track towards your fitness goals.

In reading this book, there are six suggestions I would like to give:

First, forget all the things you've heard and learned about working out. Just forget all of it and focus on the things I'm going to teach you here.

An open mind is needed to fully absorb everything that a book will say, not just this book. Judgments and assumptions are roadblocks that will hinder the process of learning, so be aware when your brain says something like:

"This is not true. This [fitness guru] said this and that and all of these are wrong."

"But this [expert] said the opposite, and he has a great body so I should believe him."

"I read this and that on some fitness website…"

When you catch yourself with such thoughts, STOP. Take a deep breath, and pretend that you just had amnesia.

Just until after you've finished and applied the principles in this book, forget everything you've learned about fitness. Imagine you're a 6-year old child excited about being lectured by Santa Claus. You trust him, right?

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Second, read this book from cover to cover, then read it again three more times. There are lots of basic principles that I am going to discuss here that most people don't know about, even the so-called experts. So, it is just crucial to read every word in this book to get the most out of it. Read everything, master it, then apply it. That's how you learn.

Third, once you're finished with the book, you can go back to it from time to time to revisit the principles, or the workout program, or whenever you need a refresher. What I wrote in this book can be applied for the rest of your fitness journey. Once you've mastered them, you will no longer have to follow other people's workout routines because you now have a thorough understanding on how to create one that's personally yours. You now know your body and you now know how it responds best.

Fourth, believe in yourself and this workout program. Everything written here has been proven not only in theory but in application as well. The information here is not new and thousands and even millions are already using it to transform their body. The thing I did was recompile them to make it simpler for you to digest and use.

If you don't fully believe in yourself or this workout program, then you likely won't take the necessary action required to achieve the body that you want. You will always follow what others are saying, what this fitness expert is saying, and what other rubbish fitness magazines are saying.

Fifth, commit to completing this workout program till the end. You can't get results without consistent action! And of course, that includes not skipping or jumping ahead to future steps in hopes that you will get faster results.

Skipping steps will just slow you down.

Sixth, I want you to take advantage of the Facebook group community that's included in the purchase of this program. Utilize this group to get help along the way, get motivated, and learn from each other. Introduce yourself, share your goals, make friends with each other, find gym buddies to do this workout program with, and always strive to help each other to make it to the top.

The more you participate, the more you will get out of this workout program.

Also, I encourage you to get the Goal Setting Guide (a separate purchase, together with the bonus workout splits and printable workout logs). It will teach you the necessary steps to manifesting everything in your mind into reality. All the things that I have right now started with the goal setting process, and this guide will teach you how to do that. If you want to accelerate your results, and if you want to commit to your goals and achieve your dream physique faster than ever, do yourself a favor and get it.

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THIS BOOK IS DIFFERENT...

This book is different because it is not a get-rich-quick scheme that will make promises and claims that are far from the truth. It will give you the tools to build muscle, lose fat, and get that dream physique of yours, but it will require time and commitment.

This book is different because it will not tell you to waste your money on supplements, performance-enhancing drugs, and crazy fad diets. It will not tell you to look for shortcuts and other quick fixes as they will not accelerate your result, but will only lengthen it.

This book is different as it will serve as a guide to teach you that fitness should be something that adds value to your life, rather than being your sole focus. Well, if fitness is your sole focus in life, that is fine, too. The main point of this book is to teach you how to blend fitness into your lifestyle, whatever your lifestyle is. You will also learn in this book that you don't have to dedicate your life to fitness just to transform your body. How cool is that?

This book is different because it will not discuss nor address the importance of sacrifice, because it knows that you don't have to put up with such a thing just to get the body you've always dreamed of.

This book is different because it will not lecture you about discipline, nor it will tell you to deprive yourself of all the fun and pleasures of life. It will not let you choose between a good life or a good-looking body. You can have them all, and this book is your answer.

This book is different because it will introduce you to an unconventional approach to training. It will introduce to you my training philosophy, which is working smart, and not always working hard. It will teach you the importance of optimal training frequency, recovery, and the most important factors in building muscle. It will not tell you to spend two-three hours in the gym, and workout six-seven days a week. It will tell you that you can work out as little as three times per week and still achieve results faster than those who train more, and it will teach you how. Yes, I am not joking.

This book is different because it will introduce you to a more exciting and fun way of dieting. Despite the book's intention of wanting you to be healthy, it will not tell you to eat broccoli, chicken breast, salads, and other smoothies that you can see all over the internet. That's boring. This book will tell you that you can enjoy eating ice cream, chocolates, pizzas, and fast food all while still achieving your goal physique!

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Imagine, partying with your friends, eating the foods that you like in front of them, drinking alcohol, and having the best gains of your life? Who would not want your lifestyle?! That's literally the "you can have your cake and eat it too" approach to fitness.

Are these claims too good to be true? It's okay to be skeptical at first, I understand that. Again, my request, just for the brief period of time, is leave all the information about fitness and nutrition that you've heard at the door and welcome the principles in this book. I guarantee you that you will not only experience the best gains of your life, but you will also have more fun outside the gym.

This book is all about getting results faster while having fun. It will give you the fundamental tools that you need in order to build the body you've always been dreaming of, while at the same time, cutting your whole fitness time in half in order to have time for the other fun things in your life.

The principles here are not new — I didn't reinvent the wheel. There are thousands of people who are already using everything that I am going to say here, but I did a very good job in putting them all together and making them simple to understand.

So, are you ready?

Just follow the exact program as it is written and watch your body change before your very eyes.

That's a promise!

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MY STORY

Okay, before I forget, I still haven't introduced myself to you.

My name is Cho. As you will see in this page, I have below-average genetics. Like you, I wasn't born with broad shoulders, square chest, wide back, and beefy arms.

I started out as very skinny. In this picture, at a height of 5'10", I weighed a staggering 135lbs.

I still remember the day when that photo was taken; I thought I wasn't skinny, but just LEAN. I thought I had enough muscle but just needed to work out for three months straight to look like those hunks on TV. Imagine that? I weighed 135lbs at that time, and not the slightest idea on how to lose fat and build muscle, but I was already thinking like a 165-lb guy. I know you can relate to this, don't you?

When I began my fitness journey, all my workouts were more of a mental battle than a physical one. I was hesitant to go to the gym because I was feeling embarrassed by how I looked. Every time I entered the gym, I thought everyone was mocking and judging me. There's a voice that was always whispering, *"Look at them. They're laughing inside and thinking that you couldn't even walk straight with your head up, let alone curl a dumbbell. Go home now. You will be a laughing stock."*

This went on for months, and it was really a struggle. I never made friends with anyone because most of them were already experienced lifters, and I thought being friends with them and asking for their advice would be stupid.

As the days passed, it was getting easier and easier. The mental battle was actually reaching the final stages, but there was still something missing — my results. I had been working out for months but still hadn't seen any changes.

I thought, "*It's normal. Building muscle takes time. I just need to work harder."* I committed myself to the physical battle and faced it with sheer determination. *No results? Work harder!* That was my motto. This continued for days, months, years, and going to the gym was more of a habit now than a process to achieve something — the goal of building a good-looking physique.

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In spite of that, I never thought that working out would be this much fun. Even though the results didn't come as fast as I expected, I kept going because I found happiness in what I was doing. That was the best part of it–I fell in love with the process more than anything.

In my quest to finding out the answer to my sought-after question of, "How can I build muscle in the fastest way possible?" I then turned to countless books and articles, bought lots of muscle building programs, and spent every penny on every supplement that promised to deliver results.

Finally, I noticed some changes. I got heavier, and I was very happy. Is it because of the sacks of weight gainers that I bought? Whey protein? Creatine? I didn't know and I didn't care. Nothing seemed more important than seeing the weight scale go up — and that's all I cared about.

After months of experiencing continuous weight gain progress, I found that I was just deluding myself that I was making muscle gain, when in fact, I was just getting fat. This is me after years of working out:

My weight was going up, but my lifts weren't getting any heavier. My shirt was getting fitter and tighter, but I couldn't even pull my shirt up in front of my classmates because they would discover that I wasn't the "macho" guy that I was portraying myself as. Suddenly, a thought came to me that said, "You are fighting another battle. That's right," I said. With a confident tone inside my head saying that I would figure this out… that I would soon get ripped and shredded.

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The big lessons? Don't just read and read, focus more on applying what you read and taking action. What else? Don't treat supplements as magic pills because they do very little in terms of your overall progress. You want more? Don't follow bodybuilding programs that you see on magazines and the Internet.

Around five years had passed at this point, and my knowledge had expanded from the materials that I read and from the tons of experiences of just throwing myself out there and trying everything, but my body… never mind. Funny to say, I did brain building instead of bodybuilding. I gained tons of experience, with very little results.

I told myself, "Maybe I'm just a HARDGAINER, a fat hardgainer," meaning someone who's cut from a different cloth and won't make muscle gains that easy. It turned out that I just needed to make a lot of mistakes and learn more. Fast forward to this day, where the fruits of my labor have shown up. Here I am -- bigger, leaner, and stronger.

I can say that those years were well worth it. I've learned a lot from these years over the journey and what you're reading now is all the wisdom I've collected and put onto paper.

To cut your learning curve and avoid the same mistakes that I committed, I will tell you the exact things that I did. Whether your goal is to gain muscle or lose weight, it doesn't matter. Just follow the things I am going to say here and you will experience the best gains of your life.

They say people learn from mistakes, but that doesn't mean that you have to commit the mistakes yourself, right?

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A GREAT PHYSIQUE: IS IT WORTH IT?

Let me ask you, is it right for you to continue to want to expand and become smarter?

Is it right for you make more money and contribute more to your loved ones and friends?

If you could have more in your life, then should you?

If you could have extra money in your wallet, would you want to have it?

If you could have a jaw-dropping physique that people will admire, would you have it?

Obviously, the answer is yes.

Having a great physique is linked to attraction, wealth, confidence, security, strong relationships, success, significance, and many more.

Visualize yourself, and I mean really imagine that you now have the body that you've always been dreaming of. See yourself walking on the beach, and feel the feeling that you would have carrying yourself with this new body. Who's with you? Are you with a group of friends that you have just met? Are you with your boyfriend, girlfriend, or spouse? What are your wearing? Are people looking at you? Are you happy? Are you smiling or frowning?

What a wonderful feeling, right?

Now do the opposite this time. Imagine that you haven't found this book and summer came. Where are you? Are you having a vacation somewhere? Or did you cancel your plans of going to the beach with your friends just because you still haven't achieved the body that's worth displaying? Or maybe, you are on a vacation. Are you walking in the beach? Are you partying at the shore? What are you wearing? Are you wearing a tank top because you're not confident to take that off? Or worse, are you wearing a t-shirt at a beach party? How are you seeing other people? Are the ripped guys having more fun that yours?

Awful feeling, right? I can relate to that.

I am not saying that having good looks is all you need. That's downright wrong. And I'm certainly not saying that having a great physique will be easy, but if you could allot a little time and make a few adjustments to have a profound impact to your fitness goals, would you do it?

I know everyone will.

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Think of your body as a bank. In a bank, you deposit money, and when you have deposited plenty of money, you feel secure, and you have peace of mind. It's the same with your health -- when you invest in health in the form of progressively challenging exercises, eating enough to support your fitness goals, and other healthy and fun activities, you become more secure. Not only that, you generally become happier, confident, more alive, and your ability to enjoy life multiplies tenfold.

Now I'm going to ask you again: Is having a great physique worth it?

CHAPTER 1 TAKEAWAYS

- The best investment you can make is in yourself.
- Purchasing this book is a very big investment.
- Purchasing this book is one thing, but the real magic happens after you follow through. That is, after you read and apply.
- After reading this book, you will be your own fitness instructor.
- There are six suggestions to get the most out of this book:
    1. Forget everything you've heard and learned about fitness. Be very open to the ideas that you will read.
    2. Read this book from cover to cover. Read it a couple of times more, then apply. That's how you learn.
    3. After reading the book, you can go back to it from time to time to revisit the principles or if you need a refresher.
    4. Believe in yourself and the workout program.
    5. Commit to completing the workout program until the end. You can't get results without consistent action.
    6. Take advantage of the private Facebook group community that's included. Make friends, share your goals, ask for help, and motivate each other. Also, I would suggest that you get the Goal Setting Guide, bonus workout splits, and printable workout logs to truly maximize your results.
- This book is different because its purpose is to give you the truth, not to sell you anything like what most fitness magazines do.
- I started as a skinny guy, then became a fat guy — I overcame both situations and transformed myself. This book is my knowledge and experience put into writing.
- Are the perks of having a great physique worth it? Imagine yourself already having the body that you've always wanted and answer it.

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CHAPTER 2: THE FOUNDATION

Okay, it's time to begin.

Hopefully, by now you're motivated and already pumped up to get serious about transforming your body. Unfortunately, you will need to spend a couple of moments first to learn how to do that. Just like building a house, the foundation and blueprint come before anything else. You wouldn't build a house without having the framework, right? This situation is no different.

This section will introduce you to the basic terminology, concepts, and elements that will form the bulk of your knowledge in becoming your own fitness instructor.

Without this section, the book will be lacking the key ingredients, and you will get easily confused reading the successive sections. I know some of you are beginners, so I will try to go this as thoroughly as possible. Now, let's get started with the most basic of them all…

TERMINOLOGY

I will include both weight training and nutrition terminology. You will see these words used quite often, so be sure to refer to this section if you find something that you don't understand.

Aerobic

It pertains to the presence of oxygen or air — e.g. aerobic or cardiovascular exercises

Amino Acid

Amino acids are the building blocks of protein, and muscle tissue. Many physiological processes relating to bodybuilding from energy, recovery, muscle hypertrophy, fat loss, and strength gains are linked to amino acids.

Anabolic drugs

Anabolic drugs, also called steroids, are drugs that promote anabolism or the growth of skeletal muscles. Though using these drugs will help you achieve your physique faster, it is also coupled with many nasty side effects that will impede your long-term health.

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Anabolic steroids

See *Anabolic Drugs.*

Anabolism

Is a metabolism phase in which fats and proteins, or complex molecules, are formed from simpler molecules. When you say anabolism, your body is in a phase of building muscle, which is good.

Anaerobic

This is the exact opposite of aerobic — it is the "absence of oxygen or air." Weight training is an anaerobic activity.

ATP

Is adenosine triphosphate ($C_{10}H_{16}N_5O_{13}P_3$) that provides energy for many metabolic processes. In short, it is your muscle's source of energy.

Bar

The steel shaft that forms the basic part of a barbell or dumbbell.

Barbell

Is a long metal bar to which weights are attached.

BCAA (Branched-Chain Amino Acid)

This is branched-chain amino acid (valine, isoleucine or leucine) that are incorporated into a protein or are catabolized for muscle fuel. These three amino acids make up approximately 1/3 of muscle protein, and they are important in building muscle, increasing workout performance, accelerating recovery and more.

Bi's

Refers to biceps, which are the two heads of your arms.

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BMR (Basal Metabolic Rate)

BMR refers to the amount of calories your body burns at rest. It represents the minimum amount of energy needed to keep your body functioning, including breathing and keeping your heart beating.

Bulking

Is a phase describing the objective of gaining weight, leading to caloric surplus. In short, when you're bulking, the goal is to increase your weight.

Calories

Measures the energy value of foods.

Caloric deficit

Interchangeable with "cut," "cutting," or "losing weight phase." When you're trying to lose weight and you are eating less calories than your maintenance level, you are in a caloric deficit state.

Caloric surplus

Interchangeable with "bulking," "bulk," "gaining weight." This is a condition when you're eating more than what you can burn. It is the opposite of caloric deficit.

Carbs

Refers to carbohydrates in foods and living tissues.

Cardio

Is an exercise that increases your heart rate.

Catabolism

The opposite of anabolism. It is a phase when amino acids are breaking down for fuel or energy. In other words, when you're in a catabolic stage, you are losing muscle.

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Complex Carb

A type of carbohydrate made of at least two monosaccharide units. See nutrition guide.

Compound exercise

Is an exercise that engages at least one joint to stimulate a muscle group. It works more muscles than isolated movements — e.g. deadlift

Concentric

Also called the "positive" part of a repetition — e.g. when you curl a barbell, the concentric part is the curling of the barbell from the starting position to the top position.

Cortisol

A stress hormone. When cortisol is high, your body has a high chance to go into a catabolic state.

Cut

Is a term used by bodybuilders when they diet in preparation for an event or completion — e.g. cutting calories.

Cutting

Is a phase describing a dieting period before a competition.

DB
Means dumbbell.

Deload

Is the reduction in intensity and volume of training for injury prevention, improved performance and recovery.

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Delts

Or deltoids refers to the shoulder muscle.

Dumbbell

Is a short metal bar to which weights are attached.

Eccentric

Opposite of concentric and also known as negative. It is the lowering of weight from the top position to the starting position.

Fats

They are semisolid, solid or soft organic compounds with esters of fatty acids and glycerol as well as their associated groups.

Forced reps

A rep is called a forced rep when a bodybuilder reaches his muscle failure in the set, then uses a partner to assist him in completing beyond his normal failure point.

Fructose

Also called fruit sugar. It is another monosaccharide sugar ($C_6H_{12}O_6$) found in honey and fruits.

Glucose

Also called blood sugar. It is a monosaccharide sugar ($C_6H_{12}O_6$) used by our bodies, or other living things, in obtaining energy through aerobic respiration. It is the main sugar in the bloodstream.

Glutes

Refers to the gluteal muscles or buttock muscles.

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Glycemic Index

Is a measurement done on carb foods and ways that directly affect the blood sugar.

Glycogen

The muscle's sugar and also your muscle's source of energy. Within the first few reps, your muscles will use ATP as its energy source. Once depleted, glycogen will come into play.

Hams

Refers to the hamstrings, the muscles at the back of your thighs.

Hypertrophy

The process of muscle growth.

Isolation exercise

It's an exercise involving a limited number of muscle groups and one joint. — e.g. bicep curl

kg – kilogram

Is the standard unit of mass.

Lactose

Is the sugar in milk, or milk sugar.

Lats

Refers to the latissimus dorsi, a muscle group on the backside of the body.

lb - pound

Unit of measurement.

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Lean Body Mass (LBM)

Your lean body mass is the amount of weight you carry on your body that isn't fat. The goal of any bodybuilder or fitness enthusiast is to increase LBM while reducing fat.

Macronutrients

They are substances needed in large amounts, especially for development and growth. They refer to protein, fat and carbohydrate.

Muscle fibers

They are muscle cells that make up our skeletal muscles. They are made of myofibrils that contract when stimulated.

Negatives

Refer to *Eccentric*.

Overtraining

Is the result of doing more work than your body can handle.

Pecs

Refers to the pectoral muscles, which are in pairs on each side of the chest.

Performance-enhancing drugs

Synonymous with steroids or anabolic drugs.

Personal Record (PR)

Means your personal record in exercise or bodybuilding. You will hear it when you achieve your record on a lift, for instance. — e.g. beating your bench press record from 200lbs to 205lbs is a PR.

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Plateau

Refers to the time in which your body isn't responding to your diet or fitness routine.

Positives

Refer to *Concentric*.

Progression

Progression means moving forward. Increasing your strength and muscle mass, and losing fat while maintaining muscle mass, are forms of progression.

Progressive Overload

A principle that states that, in order for a muscle to grow, strength to be gained, performance to increase, or for any similar improvement to occur, the human body must be forced to adapt to a tension that is above and beyond what it has previously experienced.

Progressive Resistance

See *Progressive Overload*.

Protein

Is a type of nitrogenous organic compound made of large molecules, which are made of at least one long chain amino acid.

Pump

Is the state wherein the muscle swells up during the workout, especially when you do high repetitions.

Quads

Refers to the quadriceps muscles, the muscles in front of your thigh.

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Range of Motion (ROM)

Refers to the movement potential of an exercise. A full range of motion means that you are lowering and lifting the weight from the fully extended position (stretched position), to the fully contracted position. A partial range of motion means you are only doing half reps or partial reps.

Reps

Means repetition, or the number of times you're lifting and lowering a weight to complete a set.

Ripped

Means a defined or ripped look in strength training.

Sets

Refers to a group of reps of an exercise.

Simple Carb

Sugars, or any carb that has a high glycemic index. See Nutrition Guide.

Shredded

See *Ripped*.

Total Daily Energy Expenditure (TDEE)

This is the amount of calories your body burns in a 24-hour period, sleeping, working, exercising, playing and even digesting food.

Tempo

Refers to how quickly you lift and how quickly you lower weight.

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Test

Testosterone, the male hormone that plays a huge role in the development of our body.

Time under tension (TUT)

Refers to the total time that a muscle resists weight while performing a set. Let's say you perform an exercise and you did 10 repetitions, your TUT would be around 30-50 seconds, depending on your tempo.

Training to Failure

Is a point when you can no longer lift the weight no matter how hard you try.

Traps

Refers to the trapezius muscles, which support the arm and move the scapulae.

Tri's

Refers to the triceps, which are any of the muscles with three attachment points at one end, such as the triceps brachii.

1RM

This simply means One Repetition Maximum or One Rep Max. It is the max force amount that can be generated using only one maximal contraction.

HOW YOUR MUSCLES GROW

When you do an exercise, you create micro tears on the muscle fibers. In other words, by lifting and lowering the weights, you are voluntarily causing damage to your muscle tissues. And since your body will perceive this as a potential threat, it will respond by repairing the muscles first, then adding additional layers of muscle fibers to prevent future threat. This is how your muscles grow.

The process of the actual muscle growth is scientifically known as "hypertrophy."

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To further illustrate:

Micro-tears through weight training -> Repairing of damaged muscle tissues through rest and adequate nutrition -> Increased muscle size and strength as your body's way to adapt.

It's a very basic concept that most people overlook. Now, can you see the importance of the recovery process? Can you also see the madness of working out five-six days a week? We will tackle this more later on. Let's now elaborate muscle hypertrophy further.

Two Types of Hypertrophy

1. **Sarcoplasmic Hypertrophy**
2. **Myofibrillar Hypertrophy**

Sarcoplasmic Hypertrophy happens when the fluid within your muscle cells swells and expands, which occurs with high volume training and moderate to high repetitions. This is the muscle growth that you experience from a pump, and this is also the swelling you experience after a day of your workout.

This type of hypertrophy, although fun, just covers a little portion of the overall muscle growth. Most of the pump and swelling within the muscle cells will soon go away after a few days of rest. In short, it is not permanent.

Myofibrillar Hypertrophy is the growth of the muscle fiber itself. This happens with weights that are heavy (5-10 reps) which will force your muscles to really grow. It is different from the pump, because you will rarely get pump from this type of training.

In this program, we will focus mainly on this type of hypertrophy. By giving importance to lower rep ranges, you will build muscle mass by means of myofibril hypertrophy, and you can be assured that this kind of muscle growth should last even if you don't work out for a while.

Don't worry, later in this book you will see the workout program to get the best of both worlds.

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FAST TWITCH AND SLOW TWITCH MUSCLE FIBERS

"You can train hard or you can train long, but you can't do both." - Arthur Jones, founder of Nautilus, Inc. and MedX, Inc. and the inventor of the Nautilus exercise machines.

To really understand the two types of hypertrophy, let's now discuss the different muscle fiber types.

There' are actually three types of muscle fibers, but for simplicity's sake, we will narrow them into two -- the fast twitch and the slow twitch.

Slow twitch muscle fibers are muscle fibers intended for endurance type of activities. These muscle fibers are activated when we walk, jog, run at a moderate pace. When you do an exercise with high reps (20 or above), you activate mostly slow twitch muscle fibers. These muscles fibers are also not susceptible to growth, which is why working out this way won't build as much muscle mass as compared to low to moderate reps.

Fast twitch muscle fibers are muscle fibers intended for heavy duty tasks that require intense muscular efforts. These muscle fibers are the ones responsive to growth. You can activate them doing heavy weights with low to moderate reps (5-15).

In this program, we will put all our efforts in developing the fast twitch muscle fibers. By doing this, we will expect progress on our strength output, which will carry over to the size of our muscles.

If your goal is to build endurance so you can run a 10-hour marathon, then this program might not be for you. I will assume that you didn't buy this book for that, am I right?

For the purpose of hitting the fast twitch muscle fibers, we will be using enough sets to stimulate, not annihilate. Further additional sets will just take a toll on the recovery system and will not promote further growth. Once you're done stimulating the muscles, it's time to get out of the gym.

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AEROBIC VS. ANAEROBIC

There are two types of exercises: Aerobic and Anaerobic.

These two terms refer to the presence and absence of oxygen, respectively.

When you do aerobic exercises, you basically do cardiovascular exercises where the purpose is to burn calories, or to improve your heart's condition. In this type of exercise, our cells get their energy by using oxygen to fuel the metabolism.

In an anaerobic exercise or non-oxygen conditions, you basically do weight training, in which the intensity is much higher. The purpose of this is to inflict damage on the muscle cells and create metabolic fatigue. In this case, oxygen is not required and the muscle cells must rely on other energy sources such as Adenosine triphosphate (ATP) to fuel muscle contraction.

In this program, we will put more focus on the anaerobic exercises because our goal is to produce muscle mass as fast as possible. Even when your goal is to lose weight, you will learn in the next few sections that building muscle should still and always be your sole focus.

Later on, in the nutrition section, I will teach you the most effective and efficient ways to lose fat while preserving your muscle, regardless of whether you want to do cardio or not.

MUSCLE STRENGTH VS. MUSCLE ENDURANCE

Using Arthur Jones's quote again, *"You can either train hard or train long, but you can't do both."*

There are generally two measures of muscle strength: Muscle strength, and muscle endurance.

Muscle strength refers to your ability to exert a maximal amount of force in a short period of time. For example, if you can bench press 300lbs for a single rep, that's a measure of your muscle strength.

Muscular endurance refers to the ability to perform an exercise for a prolonged period of time. For example, doing 100 push-ups in a row, running a marathon, or holding a plank for hours.

These two measures of strength require different types of training to develop. A man who can bench press 500lbs for one rep doesn't always mean that he can do 100 push-ups. In this example, he has well-developed muscular strength, but not much on muscle endurance.

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On the other hand, a man who can do push-ups for 500 reps will most likely fail at doing a bench press for 300lbs or even less. In this example, he has well-developed muscular endurance but not much on muscle strength.

This fact also relates to the slow twitch and fast twitch muscle fiber types. If you have trained for high reps for years, there's a high tendency that your slow twitch muscle fibers are well-developed, and vice versa.

We all have different levels of muscle strength and muscle endurance, but in this book, we're going to focus more on developing muscular strength. Why? Because as we've discussed, slow twitch muscle fibers don't have the potential for that much growth.

To further understand, have a look at these two types of runners: Marathon runners, and sprinters.

Marathon runners are an endurance type of athlete, and they can beat any body-builder or powerlifter in a marathon game anytime of the day. But if you look at them, they don't possess enough muscle mass. In fact, they look very skinny. That's because their type of training is mainly for developing his slow twitch muscle fibers.

On the other hand, look at sprinters. They look very powerful and strong, but they only run for a couple of seconds. By using power and speed, the sprinter activates his fast twitch muscle fibers to produce a great amount of force to complete the task in a very short time. This is the reason why the muscles of sprinters are huge and well-developed.

Do you understand now why doing a hundred pushups, a thousand sit-ups, and a million minutes of jogging are not going to build you any muscle?

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WHY BUILDING MUSCLE SHOULD ALWAYS BE YOUR GOAL

Whether your goal is to lose weight, gain weight, or just tone, your number one goal should be building muscle.

Let me explain that.

Losing weight

If your goal is to lose weight, would you be happy and satisfied if I shed all your unwanted fats on the stomach, legs, arms, and face? That would leave you with a very thin frame and you will look worse than before. Why? Because that's your only goal — to lose weight. But what if your goal is to gain muscle and lose weight? That would be better.

You see, people don't really want to lose weight; they want to lose fat, to be specific, and have muscles that will pop out once the flab is gone. And to do that faster, you have to focus on strength training while executing your weight loss plan, which you will learn later in this book.

And do you know the biggest reason why you should focus on building muscle? Because building muscle is correlated to fat loss. The more muscles you have, the faster your metabolism will get.

Gaining weight

You're skinny, I get you. If your goal is to just gain weight, then it would be easy for us because I could just instruct you to put five tablespoons of sugar in every glass of water that you drink — that will give you plenty of extra calories in a day. And a month from now? You will be way heavier, but you will be fat.

Is that your goal? Of course not. As much as possible, skinny guys want to gain weight in the form of quality muscles, because that would look great in a skinny frame right?

For that, you have to focus on building muscle by lifting big and gaining strength, and eating big to support the process of muscle growth. You're skinny, and your metabolism is very fast I assume, so I put an emphasis on eating big to accomplish your goal.

The only difference between people who want to lose and gain weight is their calorie intake, which you will also learn later in this book.

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Toning

Forgive me for saying this, but toning is just a marketing term.

If I ask you, what does toning mean for you? Let me guess, and tell me if I am right. Toning, as I understand it, is the working out of a muscle until it hardens, enough to be visible to the naked eye. Isn't that what gaining muscle is all about?

The mistake here is people think that muscles go from soft to hard, or hard to soft — they don't. Muscles themselves don't "firm-up" or "tone," they either shrink or grow.

Basically, toning falls under the "building muscle" category. It's just a hippie term to get more sales from people. If your goal is to tone, still, your goal is to build muscle.

CHAPTER 2 TAKEAWAYS

- Your muscles grow as a response to the damage that is induced during weight training.
- When you exercise, you are voluntarily causing damage or micro tears to your muscle tissues.
- Muscle growth happens with rest and adequate nutrition, not when you're pumping weights
- The process of the actual muscle growth is called "hypertrophy."
- There are two types of hypertrophy: Sarcoplasmic and Myofibrillar
- Myofibrillar hypertrophy focuses on actual muscle growth. Hence, it's more permanent
- There are two types of muscle fibers: Fast Twitch and Slow Twitch.
- Fast twitch muscle fibers have huge growth potential, while slow twitch muscle fibers don't.
- Anaerobic refers to weight training, aerobic refers to cardio/endurance type of activities.
- There are two types of strength: Muscular strength, and muscular endurance. Focusing on muscular strength, rather than endurance, will give you the most muscle growth.
- Building muscle should always be your goal.

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CHAPTER 3: THE PHILOSOPHY

In the previous chapter, we looked muscle building concepts from its basic roots and we also learned the different terminologies that we're going to use throughout this book.

This chapter now will introduce you to the training philosophy, or a set of principles that form the *Minimalist Fitness* system. You'll be surprised and amazed at how simple and straightforward the process really is.

But before we get started, let me just give you a little caveat. The information I'm going to present you here is guaranteed to help you succeed in the health and fitness game. Despite that, I am not claiming that my method is the be-all-end-all of everything.

What I am going to present to you is what I personally see works best, based on the following:

1. My own personal results and my decade of experience

2. My clients' results

3. Thousands of hours of research

4. Common sense

These four factors combined have given me the confidence and belief that everything I'm going to teach you here will give you dramatic results.

The only possibility that this won't work for you is if you don't apply the principles properly.

Are we clear on that?

Let's begin.

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MEME - MINIMUM EFFORT, MAXIMUM EFFECT

The whole workout philosophy that will be used in this workout program can be summarized into this acronym — MEME, or Minimum Effort, Maximum Effect. This means that we will be using only the least amount of effort to produce maximum results. In this case, the minimum required number of sets, reps, workout frequency, and intensity to produce substantial amount of strength without taking much from the recovery abilities of the body.

By following the MEME philosophy, we will not only spend very little time in the gym for more recovery and growth, but we will also have more time to do other fun things outside the gym.

I didn't make this MEME philosophy just to cut your gym time in half — that's not the purpose of it. Although it really does free up a lot of your time, its main purpose is to assist your muscle building and fat loss process through recovery and adaptation — the two missing pieces to most workout routines.

You see, the workout program you will see in this book is different from those that you will see on the internet or the one prescribed by fitness instructors in the gym. It is different in a sense that it is just one of the few workout programs that puts a huge emphasis on the importance of recovery, and you will see why in the next few pages.

Another important factor in the MEME philosophy that's often misunderstood and overlooked is its lack of complexities. MEME just focuses on effectiveness and results in the gym, and fun outside the gym. To accomplish these goals, we have to focus on simplicity. This applies to other areas of our life as well.

With just three colors, Michelangelo, Picasso, and Dali created masterpieces. With just seven notes, Beethoven, Gershwin, and Coltrane touched our souls. With just ten digits, Einstein, Hawking, and Tesla discovered hidden mysteries. And with just three workouts a week, Greg O'Gallagher, Martin Berkhan, Cho Lim, and a thousand others have transformed their physique. Effectiveness is not meant to be complex. The fact is, all great inventions, all breakthroughs, and all discoveries all come down to the simple and basic principles.

What I've done in this workout program is remove all its complexities and stripped it all the way to the absolute essentials. What you will see here will be the bare minimum to support the transformation of your physique.

Life is complicated already, and our job is not to complicate it even more but to find a way to make it simpler and cost-efficient.

According to Charles Poliquin, the world's best strength coach has said, *"The basics are the basics, and you can't beat the basics."*

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PROGRESSIVE OVERLOAD

One of the most important principles in any type of workout program is the principle of progressive overload. In fact, it is considered to be the most important.

This idea states that in order for a muscle to grow, the body must be forced to adapt to a tension that is above and beyond what it has previously experienced.

"If you're not getting stronger, you won't get bigger." This is the most basic, most important, underlying truth of building muscle, and this is number one under the MEME philosophy.

Regardless of how hard and how long you do your workouts, you can't add muscle size if you're not progressing on your lifts.

This is the biggest mistake that I always notice people are committing. Many people just go to the gym for the sake of pumping reps after reps, sets after sets, without having a goal in mind. They think that the mere exercising will make them grow.

Very wrong.

Without applying this principle, you will not grow.

Our body doesn't care about how it looks, it only cares about its survival. So, unless you give your muscles a reason to grow, it will do anything to resist change and maintain *homeostasis*. For your muscles to grow, you have to force them to grow. It's that simple. And to do that, you have to apply the principle of progressive overload to your workout program.

Any type of training will likely succeed if it revolves around this principle. So, if your workout program allows you to continuously progress on every exercise that you do, then you're on the right track.

These are some of the ways to apply progressive overload into your workout:

- By increasing the weight of your lifts
- By increasing the reps
- By increasing Time Under Tension (TUT)
- By increasing the workout volume (be careful on this)
- By increasing the range of motion of the movement
- By decreasing rest periods between sets

The easiest way to gauge the effectiveness of a workout is when you can add reps or weight on your given lifts regularly and consistently. If your workout doesn't increase your strength even in the small increments (+ 1 rep), then you have a problem.

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Let's look at this chart as an example:

	Bench Press			
	Workout	Weight	Reps	
This is how your workout should look like —>	1	100lbs	8	No workout should be the same. You should always strive for an increase in strength
	2	100lbs	10	
	3	105lbs	8	
	4	105lbs	10	
	5	110lbs	9	
	6	115lbs	9	

As you can see, no workouts are the same. There is always an increase in reps or weight for every workout.

Imagine if you would just continue making strength progress like this? In a few months, it would be possible for you to add 100+ lbs of weight on one of your main exercises!

Now let's look at the typical workout log of most people:

	Bench Press			
	Workout	Weight	Reps	
Most people do their workouts in this fashion.	1	100lbs	8	They are just working out for the sake of working out. If they feel that the weight is "heavy," they will go back to the weight they're comfortable at.
	2	105lbs	6	
	3	100lbs	8	
	4	95lbs	10	
	5	100lbs	8	
	6	100lbs	8	

Can you relate to this? Try to look back and see how much weight you have added to your exercises over the past six months. Is it 5lbs? 10lbs? Or are you still using the same weight?

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Remember, for you to get bigger, you have to get stronger. If you're not adding strength or if you're not striving to push harder than your last workout, then there's no reason for your muscles to grow. It's much easier for them to maintain the same size than to expand anyway.

Do you want some proof? Look for someone at your local gym who does 300+lbs bench press and check if his chest is wimpy and flat. Could you find one?

If his chest is not as big as you had expected, I can still assure you that his chest is way bigger now than when he was just bench pressing 100lbs.

Get stronger, and you will get bigger.

Wait, but there's a caveat:

For many lifters, not all, strength increases precede size increases. In other words, they will grow stronger for a while without the accompanied muscle growth that should come along with it. That's fine.

It is important to understand this for reasons related to motivation. As one continues to grow stronger, however, the strength increases will ultimately yield a muscle mass increase.

Most of the time, this problem comes down to calorie intake, which you will learn later on. Once you start introducing a surplus of calories, size will always follow.

In this workout program, we will be focusing mainly on the principle of progressive overload. In each workout, we will be adding reps, weight, and volume strategically until the progress slows down or stops, and then we will adjust accordingly.

Whether you're an athlete, bodybuilder, weightlifter, or someone trying to lose weight and build muscle, the principle of progressive overload should be your top priority.

INTENSITY

We've already discussed the importance of activating the fast twitch muscle fibers with regards to muscle hypertrophy. As stated, the quantity of effort or the number of repetitions in an exercise is not that important when we're trying to build muscle — it's the intensity and quality of the effort that truly counts.

If a person could bench press 200lbs for 10 reps without that much exertion on his part, do you think that would induce a substantial gain in strength and size?

Maybe. But like we've said, for the muscles to grow, you have to force them to grow.

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The intensity and quality of effort go hand in hand with the principle of progressive overload. Your goal is not just to add weight to your exercises, but to make sure that the weight you select will require you to produce the required intensity to stimulate muscle growth. In this case, 200lbs for 10 easy reps won't cut it. Maybe add another 10lbs, 15lbs, or 20lbs more?

Training hard is what is required to build muscle mass.

REST AND RECOVERY

Your muscles don't grow in the gym, they grow outside the gym -- when you're resting. Your only job when working out is to stimulate the muscle fibers and get out of there as soon as you're finished.

Many trainees apparently don't understand that the big picture in this workout game involves two important elements: workout and recovery. These two should be given equal importance — not 70:30, 60:40, 20:80, but 50:50.

Training the muscles with enough intensity and with progressively increasing resistance is the key to muscle growth, but that's only the first part of the equation. The second part of the equation is the recovery itself. Working out doesn't produce the actual growth, but only triggers the body's growth mechanism into motion.

It is the body that produces the growth, but only if it's left undisturbed during your recovery period. If you don't give your body the rest that it needs, the muscles will not grow. It's that simple.

"If you're not getting stronger, you won't get bigger." This is the basic formula, right?

Now let's add something to that statement:

"If you don't recover, you won't get stronger. If you don't get stronger, you won't get bigger."

Voila.

If you're training six-seven days a week, how do you think your body will recover and adapt if you're not giving it a chance to accomplish those?

Muscles grow while you're resting, not when you're working out.

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TRAINING FREQUENCY

As a natural trainee, the optimal training frequency that I would always recommend is three workouts per week, and no more than four workouts per week.

Take note. What I mean by training frequency here is your total workout frequency, not just the training frequency of a muscle group. For that, the short answer is you can train a single body part even twice a week.

I will outline in the next chapter how you can construct your workout to either 3-day splits or a 4-day one. I personally do and love 3-day splits because it is the one that works best for me.

Also, in the bonus workout splits (if you purchased this one), you will find a different specialization workout splits for arms, chest, back, shoulders, and legs. If you want a more personalized workout routine, you can email me at cho@thelazylifter.com and we'll talk about what you want.

Why only 3-4 days per week?

Because strength training three or four days per week gives you plenty of time for muscular and neural recovery, allowing you to hit each and every workout with full intensity. Like we've discussed, it's the intensity and quality of the effort that induce the most muscle growth, remember?

In addition, rest is important not only for your muscles, but for your whole body. What I mean by rest here is not a rest for each muscle group, but rest as a whole.

You see, apart from the muscles being trained, you're also exhausting your Central Nervous System(CNS) when you work out. Your CNS is the one that gets the most beating when pushing through a tough rep of a given set. This is the fatigue feeling that you feel the day after your grueling workout session.

So, what will happen when you train for a couple of days in a row? Worst case scenario is you may hamper the recovery process -- both the muscles and the CNS -- and will delay the adaptation of the muscle tissues.

Let's revisit the actual muscle growth process:

Micro-tears through weight training -> Repairing of damaged muscle tissues through rest and adequate nutrition -> Increased muscle size and strength as your body's way to adapt.

The first part is the damaging of the muscle fibers through weight training.

The second part is the healing of the muscles.

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The third part is the growth process.

Now this is when it gets interesting and confusing.

For the muscles to grow, recovery and healing have to take place first before the actual rebuilding process. Growth will not happen if the muscles are still under repair.

You see the point now? Recovery and growth don't happen simultaneously.

So, if you work out just before the healing or growth takes place, you will just dig a deeper hole and you will just lengthen the whole process.

Sure, it might not be that bad to train two days in a row, sometimes. But as you progress through your workout, the demands of the progressively increasing intensity of the workouts will take a toll on your recovery ability, and soon you will find yourself hitting sticking points more frequently.

I've been experimenting for years now and what I've noticed is that when I train five-six days per week, I couldn't progress on my exercises. Every workout was so frustrating because I couldn't even maintain my strength on my lifts; I was even regressing on some of them.

When this happens to you (which it will), training more will not be the solution. If you're training hard enough, then there's no need for you to train more. Doing so is not just a waste of time and effort, but counterproductive.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTENSITY AND RECOVERY

Arthur Jones, one of the most respected pioneers in the field of physical exercise and weight training, said that all of us have different recovery abilities when it comes to physical activity. He also said that our recovery abilities are not infinite, therefore, using his own words, *"It is only rational to use that which exists in limited supply as economically as possible."*

In his other statement, he also said that an increase in muscle size and strength does not equate to increased recovery abilities.

According to him, a person can increase his strength by at least 400% but his recovery can only increase by 20-50%. It's the recovery ability that causes the problems for us mere naturals. Hence, why steroids and other growth hormones are so popular and commonly abused.

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Sure, a well-trained athlete has faster recovery abilities than an average Joe, but to a limited extent only. Our strength and muscle growth increase exponentially but the recovery abilities increase only to an extent. This is to say that the stronger we become, the more stress we put on the body and therefore more recovery periods should be implemented.

If this statement is not true, bodybuilders must be working out 24 hours a day and still growing like a weed because their recovery abilities are also well-developed. Nope. That won't happen. That's also why overtraining and overfatigue exist.

He said that when a workout of a given muscle is performed, the muscles must make demands upon the system as a whole, and the system cannot recover that quickly.

The best example for this is when you get your tooth extracted. When you undergo a surgery like this, you have to give your whole body a good rest, not just your mouth. You are not allowed to exercise within a time period because your recovery abilities will be compromised. This also applies to any infection you have on any part of your body.

System recovery requires several factors. Let's say you just gave your chest a good, hard workout. Your recovery will take place not just on the chest muscles, but your whole body. Your chest muscles are not the ones that will provide healing to your chest muscles, other parts of the system will.

So, when you rest, rest as a whole.

EXERCISE SELECTION

Adhering to the MEME philosophy, we will pick the exercises that will give us maximum results without using too much of our recovery ability.

Before we tackle which exercises to do, let's discuss first the two types of exercises: *Isolation* exercises, and *Compound* exercises.

Isolation Exercises

Isolation exercises are single-joint exercises that only target a specific muscle group.

Examples of these are:

Dumbbell Flyes, which only works the chest muscle.

Bicep curl, which only works the biceps.

Dumbbell lateral raise, which only works the side shoulder.

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These are some examples of the isolation exercises. They are great for bringing up lagging body parts and they are best done usually at the end of the body part workout.

Compound Exercises

Compound or multi-joint exercises are those that use more than one muscle group in a given movement. And because they use more muscles, they are considered the mass builders. We will focus on more of these in this workout program.

Examples of compound exercises are:

Bench Press, which works not only the chest, but also the triceps and front shoulder

Pull-ups, which works not only the back, but also the biceps and rear shoulder.

Deadlift, which works the whole back.

These are just a few of the hundreds of compound exercises that you can do. Later on, in the training section, you will be introduced to the most effective, bang-for-your-buck exercises.

The key takeaway in this section is that you always have to choose compound exercises over isolation exercises when your goal is to build muscle faster.

Always choose Bench Press over Dumbbell Flyes.

CHAPTER 3 TAKEAWAYS

- This book is based on the following:
    1. My own personal results and my decade of experience
    2. My clients' results
    3. Thousands of hours of research
    4. The general consensus among fitness experts
    5. Common sense

- MEME philosophy stands for, Minimum Effort, Maximum Effect. In other words, using only the least amount of effort is required to produce maximum results.
- The principle of progressive overload is the most important principle in any type of workout program. Get stronger, and you will get bigger.
- Strength gains always precede size gains. In other words, sometimes, you will witness a lot of strength increases first before growth happens.

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- The intensity and quality of effort go hand in hand with the principle of progressive overload. Your goal is not just to add weight to your exercises, but to make sure that the weight you select will require you to produce the required intensity to stimulate muscle growth.
- "If you don't recover, you won't get stronger. If you don't get stronger, you won't get bigger." Muscle growth takes place when resting.
- As a natural trainee, the optimal training frequency that I would always recommend is three workouts per week, and no more than four workouts per week.
- Apart from the muscles being trained, you're also exhausting your Central Nervous System(CNS) when you work out. That's why you need to rest your whole system, not just the muscles.
- According to Arthur Jones, a person can increase his strength by at least 400%, but his recovery can only increase by 20-50%. Another reason that recovery should be given crucial importance.
- There are two types of exercises: Compound, and Isolation. Always choose compound exercises over isolation exercises if you want to build muscle and lose fat as fast as possible.

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CHAPTER 4: THE TRAINING

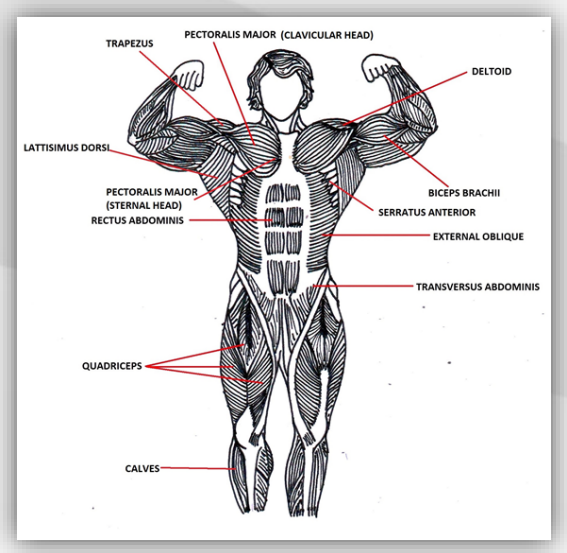
You've now learned the training philosophies that form the overall framework of this whole workout program.

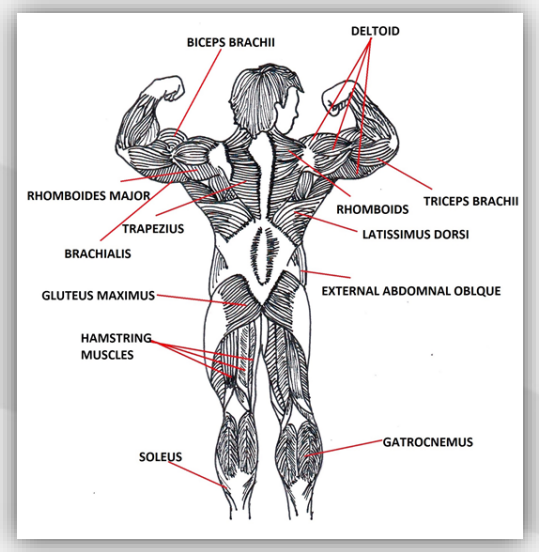
Just by understanding the ideas in the previous chapter, you're already way ahead of the majority of the people who are living by the "work hard, train hard" approach but showing little results.

In this chapter, we will be spending a lot of time talking about anything related to the training itself.

Let's begin.

MUSCLE CHART





THE ROLE OF GENETICS

Contrary to what you've been told, you can do very little to change the shape of your muscles. Let's say your chest muscles are round and you want to have the square look like your fitness idol. Doing his exact diet and workout routine, and even the way he breaths, talks, and all of his gestures, will not get you slightly closer. This is because the muscles' shape is largely determined by our genetic makeup.

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The is the reason why some of us have 6-pack abs, 8-pack abs, crooked abs, and perfect abs — these are all products of genetics.

Don't believe me? Search Arnold Schwarzenegger on Google and see if he ever got 6-pack abs over his bodybuilding career, let alone an 8-pack abs. Do you think that he had a choice over that matter? I mean, why wouldn't Arnold want 8-pack abs if that would make him a better bodybuilder?

That's because his genetics are different than those who have a perfect set of abs. It's not worse or better, just different. Despite the lack of ab development, other parts of his body are enormous — his arms, chest, and back won him seven Mr. Olympia titles.

While we can make adjustments on the way we train each body part, we can only do so little to influence how our muscles will look after they grow. That's the only thing we can do — make them grow. And this book that you're reading right now will give you everything you need to accomplish that.

So, what I would suggest:

- Stop whining and bitching about how your abs are not symmetrical, how the gap between your chest muscles are so big, and how your biceps lack the "peak" because there's nothing you can do about them.
- Stop asking your friends, your workout buddies, and your training instructor on how they've gotten their muscles to look a certain way because most likely they don't even know the real reason. What they would tell you is their workout routine, the number of sets they are doing, and the different exercises that hit the inner chest, outer chest, and other crap that you shouldn't hear.

Build each muscle and you will look better, regardless of how your muscles are shaped.

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THE BIG 5

We've discussed earlier that compound exercises are the best ones to do whether our goal is to lose fat, build muscle, or just increase our overall strength and fitness. And out of the hundreds of compound exercises that the human body can do, five of them are ranked above everything else. We will call them "The Big 5."

These exercises are:

- **Deadlift**
- **Bench Press**
- **Overhead Press or Military Press**
- **Squats**
- **Chin-ups or Pull-ups**

Each of these exercises has proven its timeless benefits with regards to building muscle, strength, and overall fitness conditioning.

Bodybuilders, powerlifters, and athletes swear by these exercises and they form the overall bulk of the most popular training programs like *Starting Strength, Bigger Leaner Stronger, LeanGains*, and of course, *Minimalist Fitness.*

And you know what else is amazing? Working out using only these five exercises and improving on them will build you a muscular, ripped, and solid physique!

What we are going to do in this workout program is focus on these five exercises, but since I don't want you to get bored so soon, we will throw additional exercises here and there while still adhering to the MEME philosophy above.

Also, in the exercise manual, you will see all the exercise substitutes that I recommend and the instructions + illustrations on how to perform each of them. Would that be cool?

Contrary to popular belief, you don't need to have five different exercises for the chest, seven for the back, nine for the legs, and so on. You also don't need to hit the body part in ten different angles (e.g inner chest, outer chest, etc.) for the muscles to grow. You only need to do a couple bang-for-the-buck exercises that will stimulate as many muscle fibers while not taking too much toll on the recovery abilities of the body.

Later on, I will provide you with the base template for this workout program listing all the exercises that you will use. I will also give you the list of the exercise substitutes in case you can't perform any of the main exercises for whatever reason.

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Having said that, I would still suggest that you follow the exact workout routine and minimize any modifications. You can rest assured that if you do the program as it is written, you will experience outstanding results.

For now, let's discuss each of the Big 5 first.

DEADLIFT

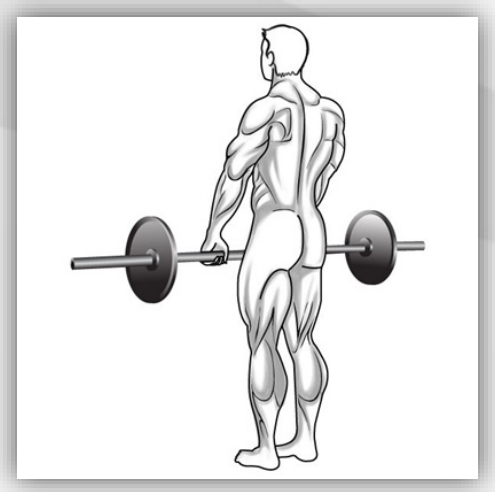
Many call this “The King of All Exercises,” and I have to agree on that. This exercise not only builds the entire back--from lats to traps to rhomboids and to erector spinae--but also almost all the muscles from your neck down to your calves.

Do you understand now why it is possible to grow with only a couple of exercises? This should also give you a slight clue to never skip it.

Since deadlift is the exercise that allows you to use the most amount of muscles, it is also the exercise that will allow you to lift the most weight.

However, I'd like to point out, as fast as the deadlift builds muscle, it could also be as dangerous when done in poor form--the potential of getting injured in this exercise is higher than the others. Unlike other exercises, deadlift should be done with its proper form kept in mind all the time. You can't do a "cheated deadlift" like a "cheated barbell curl," because doing so is inviting trouble.

So, when doing this exercise, make sure form precedes your ego.



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For the full Deadlift instructions, refer to the exercise manual.

Trapezius (Traps)

Rear Deltoids

Forearms

Latissimus Dorsi (Lats)

Erector Spinae (Lower Back)

Teres Major and Minor

Rhomboids

Glutes (Butt)

Hamstrings (Hams)

Quadriceps (Quads)

Calves

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BENCH PRESS

Bench press is as awesome as the deadlift for building mass, especially for the chest. The popularity of this exercise is evidently shown by the number of trainees that have asked and received the question, “How much do you bench?” Like it's the only exercise that measures everything.

The bench press is the staple in any bodybuilder or powerlifter's workout routine because it doesn't only overload the pectoral muscles, but also the triceps and the front shoulders. If deadlift is for the back, and squats are for the legs, then bench press is for the chest.

Bench press works the whole pectoral muscles, but it mainly stresses the sternal head(middle/lower).

For the full Bench Press instructions, refer to the exercise manual.

These are the muscles that Bench Press works:

Pectorals (Pecs)

Anterior Deltoids (Front Delts)

Triceps

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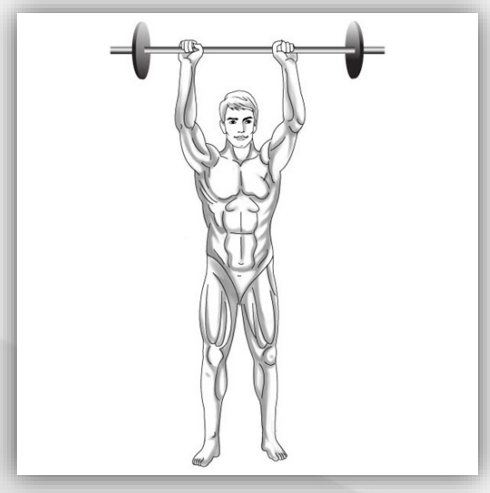
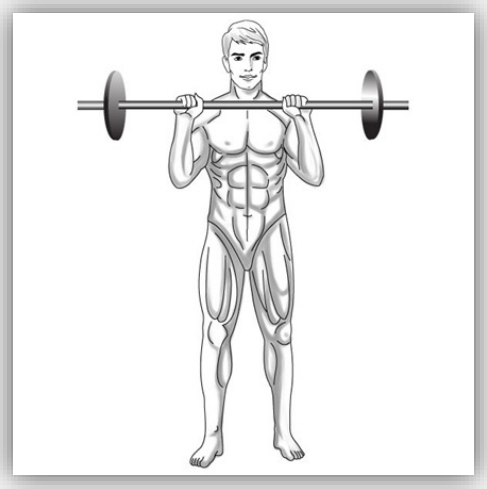
OVERHEAD PRESS

To build the overall shoulder mass, we need a compound exercise that allows us to overload the muscle with heavy weights.

Military press, or the Overhead Press, is the classic, most effective exercise that accomplishes that. It hits the anterior(front), and medial(middle) heads of the deltoids.





For the full Overhead Press instructions, refer to the exercise manual.

These are the muscles that the Overhead Press works:

Anterior Deltoids (Front Delts)

Medial Deltoids (Side Delts)

Triceps

Core (For Stability)

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SQUATS

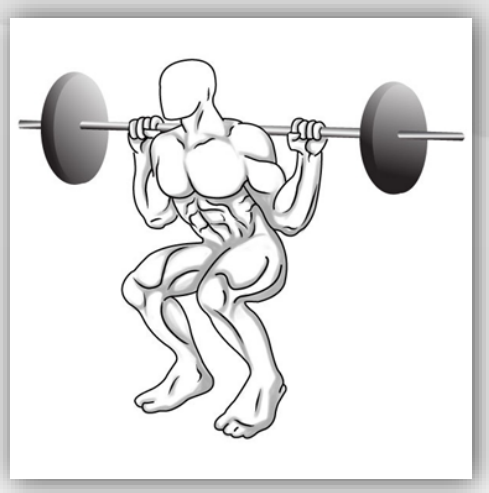
For maximum leg growth, I'm talking about the full back squats — the kind of the lower body exercises. No other lift comes close to the amount of muscle fibers that are activated during this exercise. It hits all the quadricep muscles, hamstrings, glutes, lower back, and even creates a "spillover effect" of muscle stimulation to the upper and lower body muscles.

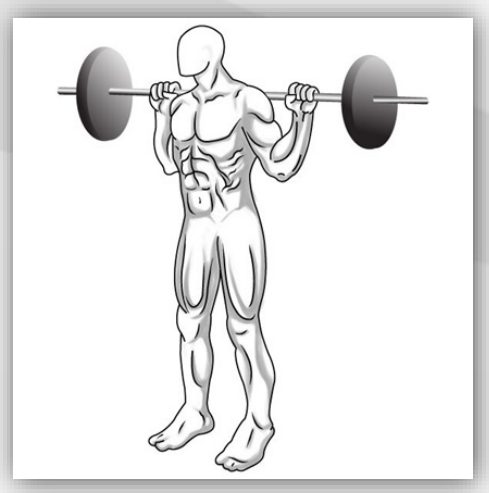
Many people substitute Leg Press over Squats because the former is easier and safer. The mistake here is thinking that the leg press is as good as the classic back squats, which is not. Take note, just because leg presses work the leg muscles doesn't mean that it's a good substitute for it.

Squats, like deadlift, activates almost all the muscles in the body when it is performed. This will cause your body to release a surge of anabolic hormones that will allow overall muscle stimulation and growth, not just the legs. This is why doing heavy squats is vital to accelerating your overall fat loss and muscle growth.

However, as much as it stimulates large amounts of muscle fibers, full back squats is also considered one of the most dangerous exercise to perform. Proper form should be the number one priority when doing this exercise, especially when you progress to heavier weights.

I suggest first learning the basic mechanics and setup of the proper back squat. Start with the bar first and work on your form.





For the full Back Squats instructions, refer to the exercise manual.

These are the muscles that Squats works:

Quadriceps

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Hamstrings

Glutes

Erector Spinae (Lower back)

Core

CHIN-UPS AND/OR PULL-UPS

While the deadlift works the back like no other exercise, it doesn't contribute much to building the V-taper frame of our body. In this case, Pull-ups and Chin-ups are necessary.

These exercises target specifically the latissimus dorsi or lats, the largest back muscle that's responsible for creating the "wings." The stronger we get on these exercises, the wider our lats become.

In addition, these exercises do a great job in stimulating the bicep muscles. Rest assured that if you get stronger on doing these, your biceps will become huge.

Later on, you will notice in the workout routine that the Lat Pulldown can be a substitute for these exercises. That truth is, they shouldn't get substituted for any machine exercises at all, but since many of you still don't have the strength to perform pull-ups or chin-ups, I will allow you to do a Lat Pulldown until you get strong enough to do them.

Chin-ups and Pull-ups are superior to any other back machine exercises because these are considered "natural movements" that our body mimics well.

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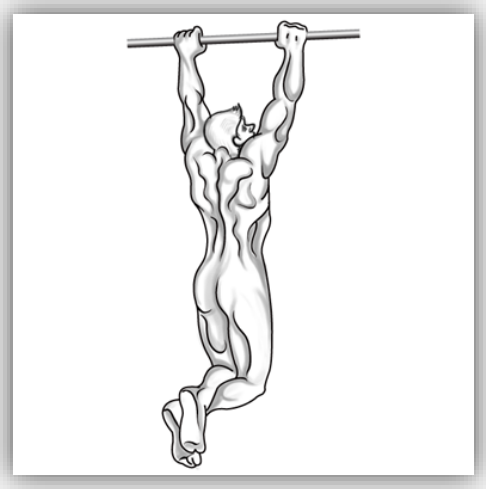
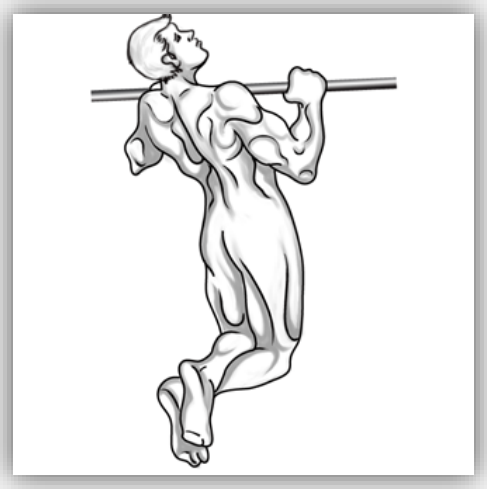
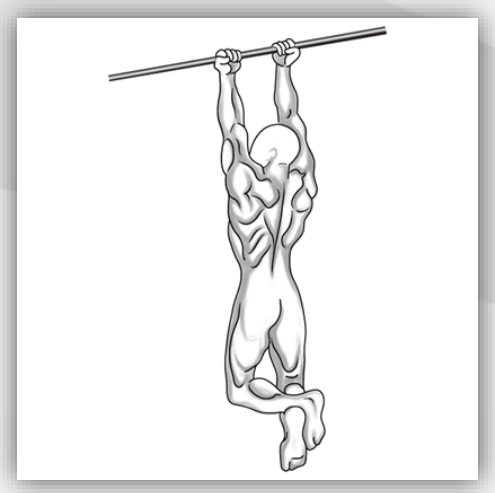
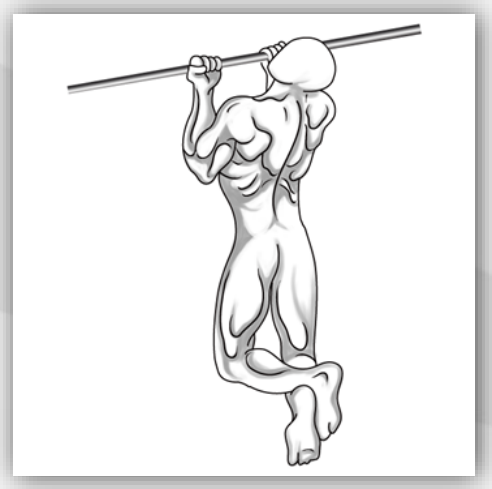
PULL-UPS





CHIN-UPS





If you can't do even a single rep, you can try what I call "negative only" training.

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This is how you do it:

After finishing your Lat Pulldown exercise, grab a chair and get in front of a pull-up or chin-up bar. Pull your body up at the top position with the help of the chair, then when you're at the top, fold your legs and go down to the hanging position very slowly. That's one rep. Step up the chair again and repeat for five negative only reps. Do only one set of negative only training together with your regular back routine that you will see in the workout routine section.

A few weeks after doing this, you will increase your strength very fast and you will now be able to do full repetitions of regular pull-ups or chin-ups.

For the full Chin-ups or Pull-ups instructions, see the exercise manual.

These are the muscles that Chin-ups and Pull-ups work:

Lats

Rhomboids

Teres Major and Minor

Rear Deltoids

Biceps

Abs

Aside from the fact that these exercises contribute to the greatest amount of your strength and muscle growth, these exercises are also very accessible and you won't have to worry about getting into a gym with fancy equipment to do all these. You only need a bench, pull-up bar, and barbells with lots of plates. That's it.

So, there you have it — the five best exercises to build your overall physique. Make sure to prioritize these exercises above everything else.

They are called "The Big 5" for a reason.

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TRAINING THE ARMS

"That's it? But where's my bicep curls?"

First, like we've talked about, you don't really need a lot of exercises to build your muscle. Doing the big 5, your arms are already covered.

Bench press and dips hit the triceps hard.

Pull-ups and Chin-ups hit the biceps hard.

Progressing on these exercises will give you huge arms, I swear. And if you don't believe me, go to Google and search "gymnast muscle." What you will see are people who have huge arms that don't even bother doing bicep curls or any isolation exercise for triceps. These people do pull-ups, chin-ups, and dips all the time!

But of course, since I know that you won't be convinced by the statement above, I will include biceps and triceps exercises in the workout program.

TRAINING THE LEGS

"But, I don't want big legs, and I only care about my upper body. Can I skip them?"

The short answer is NO.

Few points:

1. It looks ridiculous.
   We've all seen it, and we've all labeled them as "Johnny Bravos." These are guys with a massive upper body who look like they're walking on a pair of toothpicks.

   It's up to you. If you want to look funny, then skip the legs.

   Lastly, did you know that guys with huge butts are viewed sexier and hotter by either the same or opposite sex? That's one good reason to do your Squats and Deadlift.

2. Your upper body will benefit.
   We've already discussed this but it's worth repeating:

   Doing Deadlift and Squats, or merely training the legs, will activate a huge number of muscles in the body. In effect, your body will be flooded with anabolic hormone — testosterone and growth hormone — that will stimulate growth not just on the legs, but the whole body. This is why doing heavy leg training is vital to accelerating your overall fat loss and muscle growth.

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So, if you want to achieve your dream physique as fast as possible, never skip legs.

3. You will increase your overall strength.
   Like we've said, training the legs creates a huge spillover effect on the other parts of the body. Not only that, but because core muscles are required to train the lower body effectively, the strength that you will acquire on your leg exercises will carry over to your upper body exercises.

   This is the reason why I never get bored doing squats and any leg training. I always aim for that gut wrenching set because I know that if I achieve that level of effort, the whole body will benefit.

TRAINING THE CORE

In the workout routine section, you will only see four exercises for the abs that I regularly do. These four exercises do quite well in hitting the *rectus abdominis, transversus abdominis, and external obliques.*

If you want to do a different set of abdominal exercises, feel free to do so, but make sure to use the same training principles that we've discussed throughout this book and make progressive overload your number one goal.

WORKOUT DURATION

The duration of the workout should be kept to a maximum of 90 minutes, or 1 hour and a half. This 90-minute period does not include warm-up sets or any rituals that you do inside the gym.

Since all workout programs in this book have only a few number of exercises, a workout session shouldn't take you as long as 90 minutes. You could even finish the workout in an hour or less.

As we've discussed, our goal is to "stimulate" muscle growth using maximum intensity and the least amount of volume in the shortest time possible. Training long is just downright unnecessary and counterproductive.

In addition, there's an old saying that after around 60-90 minutes of exercise, cortisol, the stress and catabolic hormone, will start to creep in and eat away your muscles. Although I personally don't believe that, it's still best to keep the workout duration within that time frame.

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Further, longer workouts mean slacking off in the gym. Your job is to stimulate the muscles then get out. Longer workouts mean very long rest periods in between sets, which isn't good because there's only a couple minutes before your muscles cool down. You'll lose your momentum when that happens.

If you want to socialize and chitchat, do it after your workout session.

Remember, you are either training hard, or training long, but not both.

IDEAL REP RANGE

There is a lot of debate and confusion as to what the "perfect" rep range is for building muscle and strength. Some even believe that a rep range for fat loss should also be different, which I would tell you is downright wrong.

Before we go any further, these are some of the important things to take note of:

1. Whether your goal is to build muscle or lose fat, your rep range should be the same.
2. High reps will not build muscle (See Muscle Strength vs. Muscle Endurance).

Now that we've cleared some common confusions, let's dive deeper on this topic.

The rep range argument will never end. Trust me. You'll encounter different people anywhere who have their own opinion about this subject. Well, the good thing is that what I'm going to tell you here is backed up by thorough research and personal experience.

The ideal rep range is 5-8 reps, which is basically 75 percent to 85 percent of your one rep max (1RM). The positive effects are evidently shown in a large review of the studies done in 2007 by researchers from Goteborg University. They found out that using the 5-8 rep range produces maximum hypertrophy and strength.

This means that we are going to pick a weight that will allow us to lift at least five reps, but not more than eight reps. If you can't get six reps, that's too heavy; if you can get eight or more, that's too light. I personally stick to the five-seven range because I like to lift heavy ass weights.

For the muscles like Abs and Calves, these are the exceptions. For these body parts, you can go as high as 15-20 reps to really stimulate them. If you can go more than 20 reps, add resistance.

For example, when doing sit-ups, you can add more resistance by holding a plate behind your head.

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MUSCLE PUMP

If you're used to doing high rep workouts, then you may notice that you will not get the usual muscle "pump" and swelling when doing heavy training. Don't be bothered, though. If for the first few weeks doing this workout program, your muscles feel less full and you feel like they're "shrinking," know that it's a normal reaction.

Since we're focusing on moderate to heavy reps, despite the absence of the "pump," the workout program will actually build more muscle mass by increasing the muscle fiber density (myofibril hypertrophy), and you can be assured that this kind of muscle growth should last even if you don't workout for a while.

In addition to that, muscle pump is not an indicator of the workout's effectiveness, nor it is that much important. Though it's kind of addictive, we're not going to focus on that.

So long as we're increasing our strength consistently and continuously week by week, it doesn't matter whether we get a pump or not.

TRAINING VOLUME

When discussing workout volume, we're not going to talk about the total number of sets in a given workout, but the total number of reps in a week.

My personal experience and my countless hours of research and testing have shown me that 40-80 reps every 4-7 days is the sweet spot for stimulating strength and size — depending on the level of training, of course, with the numbers increasing as the trainee's condition improves. Following the 5-8 rep range that we've discussed, this would take you around 5-10 sets total for each main muscle group.

This rule applies only to the main body parts, with Abs, Calves, and the smaller muscles not included because they require higher reps to respond.

Let's say it's Chest day today, these could be your options:

Option #1: Hitting 40-80 reps total in a single workout

Bench Press - 4 sets of 7 reps = 28 reps total

Incline Dumbbell Press - 3 sets of 8 reps = 24 reps total

Total chest workout volume = 52 reps

Let's say you perform this workout on Monday, your next chest workout would be a week after.

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Option #2: Hitting 40-80 reps total in two workouts

Workout 1 (Monday):

Bench Press - 4 sets of 7 reps = 28 reps total

Workout 2 (Friday):

Incline Bench Press - 3 sets of 8 reps = 24 reps total

Total chest workout volume for the week = 52 reps

You see the difference?

These are just examples. Later on, you will see the whole workout structure that you can easily follow.

Two important things to take note of:

1. If you're bulking, meaning you're in a caloric surplus diet, that's the only time you're allowed to do a more workout volume.
2. If you're cutting, meaning you're trying to lose weight and you're in a caloric deficit state, the best thing to do is stick to the lower end of the total workout volume.

The reason for this is when you're bulking, you have additional calories to handle the higher amounts of workout volume. And if you're cutting or dieting, your body doesn't have sufficient calories to support the higher workout volume, thus, you have a higher risk of overtraining.

If you're finding it hard to understand what bulking, cutting, caloric surplus and deficit means, don't fret, later in the nutrition section of the book you will learn more about this.

REP SPEED/TEMPO

Fast, explosive concentric should always be practiced when lifting as this type of movement activates the Type II fast twitch fibers more than when lifting slowly. And as we all know, fast twitch muscle fibers are the one most susceptible to growth.

So our lifting tempo should be like this:

1. Controlled (not slow) negative
2. Fast, explosive positive

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Just lift the weights as fast as you can and lower the weights without bouncing and without the use of momentum. Always use controlled negatives. Remember quality of effort? It refers to the quality of muscle contractions.

That's it. No need to count the tempo nor go super slow.

Important:

Not controlling the weight downward is what creates momentum, and this is not good and is dangerous.

Also, when you use momentum, you're not only cheating but you're also not stimulating the targeted muscles properly.

What's the point of doing cheat reps anyway?

Leave your ego at the door and lower the weight so you could perform the reps smoothly, with proper form, and in a full range of motion.

RANGE OF MOTION

Doing the repetitions smoothly and in a controlled manner means that you're getting a quality muscle stimulation with each rep, which is a very good thing.

To add even more quality to every repetition and to stimulate all the muscle fibers, you have to do every exercise in a full range of motion.

What does that mean?

When you perform an exercise, let's say dumbbell curls, you have to lower the weight to the fully extended position, meaning until your arms are hanging down at arm's length, then lift it up to the fully contracted position.

This is the proper way to stimulate all the muscle fibers. You go all the way down, then all the way up.

Don't be that person who lifts heavy weights but only performs half reps, which will only give you half the results.

The only exception for this is the Squats. You don't have to go all the way down with your butt touching the floor, but you still have to do a long range of motion -- your butt should go below parallel to activate your butt and hamstrings.

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So, if you want faster results, you have to apply this technique to all the exercises. Lower the weights by 10-20% and do a full range of motion.

REST BETWEEN SETS

Rest between sets for major exercises should be 2-4 minutes, and 1-1.5 minutes for Abs and Calves exercises.

Our goal here is to stimulate the muscles by overloading them with heavy weight, quality reps, and sufficient workout volume. Therefore, we must rest just enough to prepare our muscles to lift the same heavy weight for the next set, and then the next set, up to the last set.

The important thing is that you should be consistent with your rest periods. You can't say that you've gotten stronger on your lifts when you've extended your rest between sets from two minutes to four minutes. That's a big difference.

Just choose a rest period between sets that you're most comfortable and stick with it.

Personally, I choose one minute for the Abs and Calves exercises, three minutes for the upper body main lifts, and five minutes for Squats and Deadlifts since these two are very tiring.

TRAINING TO FAILURE

Though we've discussed the importance of doing intense, quality, full range of motion repetitions, it is not necessary to bring every set to muscular failure, but it can be beneficial when used **sometimes**.

So what does "training to failure" mean?

Training to muscular failure means training to the point at which you are unable to do an additional repetition despite your greatest efforts.

There was a study done recently (Morán-Navarro 2017) to examine the differences in long-term adaptations from strength training when training to failure versus not.

Surprisingly, it was concluded that training to failure slowed down the recovery process by around 24-48 hours. Thinking about it, that's huge!

On the other hand, there are other camps that give huge credit to training to failure as if it's the be-all and end-all of training. Like "if you don't train to failure, you're wasting your time."

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So, where do we position ourselves?

Since I've seen both sides work, I've devised a plan to make the most of the two. This is what I would recommend:

- For weeks 1-5 of each Phase, never train to failure. Stop your sets with 1-3 more reps left in the tank. This applies to all exercises.
- On the 6th week (the week before the deload), take the LAST set of each exercise to failure -- but ONLY the last sets. This is crucial to your recovery so keep this in mind. Since you will be deloading for a week the week after this, training to failure will be safe you will reap the benefits of it.

So this is how you'll do it...

Old way:

Bench Press - 200lbs - 8, 8, 8, 8

New way (6th week, last sets only):

Bench Press - 200lbs - 8, 8, 8, x (as many reps as you can until failure)

x = Take the last set to total muscular failure by going beyond your rep count. If you think you can only do eight, go for nine or ten like your life depends on it.

Got it?

Notes:

- This technique is not mandatory. You can still make excellent gains regardless whether you use this or not. But if you can, do it. This type of training, when used sparingly, will provide you with a greater muscle stimulation and will result in more strength and muscle growth.
- If you don't have a spotter, never use this on Bench Press or any exercises that will put you at risk
- If you don't have a Squat rack, don't do this on Squats

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OVERTRAINING

Overtraining means performing any more exercise than is required in terms of both volume and frequency than is minimally required to stimulate growth. - Mike Mentzer

In the most basic sense, overtraining means the body is being put under greater stress than it can handle. It's that simple. This is the concept that I've been talking about since the beginning of this book, that's why I have been hammering the importance of rest and recovery inside your head.

Any additional stress, above and beyond what's necessary — like doing plenty of sets and exercises in a single workout, or training five-seven days a week with minimal rest — will result in a failure to recover and grow. Your body will use most of its resources to patch up the hole that's been created instead of using them for muscle growth.

If you overtrain, your progress will slow down — this is the first symptom. If you continue to punish your body without letting it recover first, the hole will get deeper and deeper, and the next sign you will notice is strength regression. This is different from the strength loss that you will experience from losing weight or cutting back on calories.

Aside from the performance regression, if proper rest is still not implemented, severe symptoms will manifest all over like overworked joints, beaten down immune system, unusual fatigue, lethargic feeling, insomnia, and nutrient deficiency. These are severe symptoms, of course, and you don't want yourself to get to this point.

This is why it's very important:

To do quality reps — slow repetitions in a full range of motion

To do just enough number of sets.

To train three-four times per week.

To prioritize rest and recovery.

This way, you're stimulating the muscle fibers real hard without taking much from their recovery ability. You can be confident that most of the resources available will be allotted for muscle growth.

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DELOAD WEEK

This is another thing that sets this program apart from others. Most often, the workout programs that you see on the internet, or the ones that you see people doing in the gym are not effective because they don't apply this principle.

These people keep on smashing their muscles day after day, week after week, and they wonder why they're hitting a plateau very quickly. And worse, since they don't see progress anymore, what they will do is add more sets, exercises, and other advanced voodoo techniques thinking that they're not progressing because they're not hitting the muscles "enough." The fact is, they're overdoing it. And as we've discussed, they're digging a deeper hole.

Training at full intensity week after week places stress and demands on the body that can't be remedied just by eating tons of food and taking a bunch of supplements. What you need is proper rest. Period.

As we've discussed earlier, intensity and recovery don't grow proportionally. The more you gain strength, the more you stress your body, and the more you need to recover. So, to allow continuous gains in strength and size, you must incorporate a "deload" week once in a while. In this case, every six-ten weeks, depending on the individual's recovery ability.

Deload doesn't mean resting for a full week, but it means lowering your overall workout intensity, volume, or both. It means that if you're benching 200lbs for six reps for four sets max, you'll cut back to 160lbs for five reps for two sets this week.

If you are not sure what to do, follow these guidelines for the whole deload week:

- Reduce the exercises' weight from the previous week. If you're doing 200lbs on the deadlift last week, reduce it by 20-30% this week.
- Reduce all your workout sets by one-two. If you're doing four sets, make it only two. If you're doing three sets, make it one or two.
- Reduce all your exercises repetitions by two-three reps. If you're doing 200lbs Bench Press for eight reps, do only five-six.
- Despite lifting lighter weights, you should focus on speed and technique. Lifting weights faster is said to improve recovery. This is also the time to improve your technique and mind-muscle connection.

This way, you're allowing yourself to rest and at the same time giving your body just enough stimulation for it to maintain its conditioning and strength. Once you go back, you will feel stronger. Your bones, joints, CNS, and other parts of the body will feel well-rested, and you will also be motivated to hit the gym even harder.

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The longer you train, the more experience you get, and the stronger you become, the more it is important for you to pay attention to deload weeks.

Usually, when you're at the intermediate - advanced stage, muscle growth and strength progression are very slow. The stress you're putting on your system just by lifting heavier and heavier weights already precedes your recovery ability.

By the end of the 6th to 10th week period of continuous, high-intensity training, stress will be at its peak. A deload week is necessary to unmask the fatigue and let your body catch up and adapt to the demands you've placed on it. In return, you will return fresh and strong, ready to face the succeeding weeks again.

On a last note, you don't have to fear taking a break from the gym once in a while. Your muscles will not shrink nor your strength will plummet after a few days of no exercise. In fact, you may even get bigger at this period because your glycogen storage — the carbohydrates inside the muscle cells — will be replenished. Having more glycogen would increase muscle size because our muscles are composed mostly of glycogen and water.

Aside from this, the increase in strength you will experience after a deload is the evidence that fatigue is unmasked, and fitness level has risen up. This is a good thing.

The beauty of this workout program is that you're not under the magic spell and illusion of the muscle pump, which should go away after taking a break from training. The muscles you will build here are real.

Deloading FAQs:

Q*: Can I skip the deload?*

A: No.

Q*: The program suggests to take a deload every 7th week, should it really have to be done on that week?*

A: Not necessarily. I erred more on the conservative side when I designed the program so I put 7th week there just to be safe. It's in the middle ground. Some can handle 12 straight weeks without deloading, while others, need less than 7 weeks (I deload every 4th week or else I won't progress).

The key here is not only listening to your body, but continuously tracking your progress so you'll know what's effective and what's not. Maybe try deloading on the 8th then measure your progress. Is progress linear and steady? Then try deloading on the 9th week, and so on.

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Just remember, the stronger and bigger you get, the demands you place on your system increases, so the more frequent your deloads should be.

Q: *Can I just rest for a full week instead of deloading? Would that be better?*

A*:* You'll encounter conflicting answers to this but I would suggest against resting for a full week. Not only it is healthy for you to do light exercises, but also because we don't have want our **Motor Neuron Pathways** to weaken. In layman's term, we don't want our body to forget the mechanics of Deadfliting, Squatting, Bench Pressing, etc., for having a full week of rest.

MUSCLE BUILDING TRAINING VS. FAT LOSS TRAINING

We've already discussed a little bit about this in the Workout Volume and Ideal Rep Range section, but let me just expound it a bit more.

The only adjustment necessary when switching from a bulking to cutting workout, or from muscle building to fat loss training, is the total workout volume. When you're cutting, your total workout volume (or reps) should be on the lower side of the spectrum, which is 40-50 reps.

But remember, your main goal is still the same: to increase strength on your exercises by adding weight, reps, or both.

Though there's also another caveat here:

If you're trying to lose weight, that is, if you're on a caloric deficit, you may notice that you're finding it difficult to add weight on any of your exercises. You may also notice that you're even losing strength. Don't fret, as this is a normal case for the majority of people.

This is not to say that it's impossible to increase strength when you're eating less calories. It is possible, but let's view it this way:

When you're losing weight and you're maintaining strength, that means you're technically increasing your strength because you're lifting the same weight with less body weight. And for those who aren't familiar, people who weigh heavier, that is, fatter people, have the leverage to lift heavier weights because of different muscle angle, positioning, and shorter range of motion.

So, when trying to lose weight, your goal should still be the same — to increase your strength. Don't use dieting and cutting as an excuse to not aim for workout progression as gaining strength is still better than maintaining strength alone.

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But if you find it impossible to progress on your lifts, rest assured that if you're maintaining strength while losing weight, you are on the right track.

Lastly, if you increase your total workout volume while you're eating below your maintenance level of calories, you will have a higher tendency to lose muscle and risk overtraining. So be warned.

CARDIO

When it comes to deciding whether to do cardio or not, it's important to know first what your goal is. Is it to burn more calories? To condition your heart? What is it exactly?

If your goal is to lose fat and want an extra boost, then I would recommend doing cardio three times a week on your off days.

If you're a skinny guy or someone who's trying to gain weight, then I would recommend staying away from it, unless you know what you are doing.

And if you're an average guy who just wants to get fit and improve his heart health, then three times a week would also be enough.

I would also like to point out that doing cardio isn't necessary to lose fat. You can if you want, but it's not necessary. In fact, I've never done any cardio exercises even when I was cutting out.

Once you learn how to count calories and track your macros (which you will learn later on), you will realize that the role of cardio in the weight loss game is very little.

Let me give you an example:

One cup of rice is around 200 calories, and for you to burn 200 calories, you have to jog for around 15-20 minutes. That's only a cup of rice, viands are not included. Add a lot more rice and other stuff and you'll get to 600-800 calories, which will require you to jog for more than an hour just to reach a point of breakeven — where gain and loss will not happen.

What if you just limit your food intake and avoid eating those 600-800 calories? Would you still need to do any cardio? The answer is no. You can do cardio of course, but you won't be needing it to lose more weight because you've already taken care of that through your food intake.

This is why I've never done any cardio sessions in my entire fitness journey, except for a recreational jog or basketball, or maybe a 5-10-minute treadmill warm up. That's it.

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And do you know the other reason why cardio is not effective for everyone when it comes to burning fat? Because doing cardio makes you hungry. What I've noticed is people who do cardio tend to eat a lot more later in the day than those who don't.

Now, if you really can't let go of your cardio sessions, these are some of my suggestions:

- No more than 30-40 minutes of steady-state, low intensity cardio two-three times a week on your off days. Fasted or not, it's up to you.

  Or

- Or if **conditioning and stamina** is your worry, do a High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) for 20-30 minutes max, two-three times a week on your off days. Take note, HIIT affects recovery so beware.

How to do HIIT:

1. Jog for 1-2 minutes to warm you up.
2. Slightly increase your speed.
3. For 45-60 seconds, sprint as fast as you can.
4. Slow down to your jogging pace again for 60-90 seconds.
5. Sprint again for 45-60 seconds.
6. Rinse and repeat for 20-30 minutes.
7. Cool down.

HIIT Facts and Misconceptions

- HIIT won't burn more fat than steady state cardio. The amount of calories burn overall is the same. (https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25675374)
- HIIT places greater recovery demands on the body so be careful if you're considering this

When choosing between the two, I'd go for steady state, low intensity cardio. I'd only recommend HIIT for those athletes who need conditioning work.

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THE ISSUE WITH IMPROVING ENDURANCE, STRENGTH, AND MUSCLE ALL AT THE SAME TIME

Who wouldn't want to run faster, longer, have bigger muscles, and lift superhuman weights? If we can have all those, why wouldn't we?

The issue is that training for conditioning and cardiovascular health CAN conflict rather seriously with strength and muscle gaining goals. How much they conflict comes down to how deeply you want one or the other - or worse, both.

It's like having a goal of building muscle and losing fat at the same time. You either choose one over the other, or you get mediocre results on both.

The only advice that I can give to people wanting to improve their conditioning for whatever reason (maybe for sports) while at the same time gaining muscle and strength, is to do a HIIT sessions on your off days, 2-3x a week. Alternatively, you can play sports instead on these days.

Just keep in mind however, though these activities improve stamina and conditioning, they also affect your recovery to an extent.

Lastly, for those who just want to have a healthy cardiovascular health for longevity and other health purposes, low intensity, steady- state cardio is all you need 2-3x a week.

CHOOSING A TRAINING PARTNER

Like in every relationship, a bad partner will always suck your energy and enthusiasm, putting both of you in a negative downward spiral. This is the same with a bad workout partner — he will put you in a negative state by passing you his laziness, his lack of motivation, and his inability to set both of your standards high.

But like in every relationship, a good partner will always rejuvenate you. He or she will give you inspiration, clarity, and direction. He or she will encourage you to do more and praise you with the little achievements you have. This is the same with a good workout partner.

In this section, we will discuss the benefits of having a good workout partner, the basic criteria you have to look for, and the rules you both have to abide by to get your results even faster.

You can do this alone of course, but if you want a more enjoyable journey and quicker results, I would suggest having a training partner with you.

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The benefits of having a training partner:

Motivation

Accountability

Healthy competition

If your workout partner doesn't provide you with any of these benefits, dump him! Or maybe encourage him to get this book and practice the ideas I am going to outline here.

So before making a commitment to train with someone, or if you already have a training partner with you, make sure that:

1. You are on the same page.
   Is is important to have a training partner that knows what you're doing and what you want to achieve.

   Preferably, you would want to have a training partner that knows the same workout principles that you are following. If you are following the same workout program in this book, then that's all the better.

   The last thing you want to hear from a training partner is, "That's wrong. You have to do this and that and you have to do more sets of this bla bla bla." That's a red flag you have there.

   But if you have a training partner that follows different training principles and workout program, you could encourage him to follow the same as yours or if it's not possible, just tell him to respect what you're doing and politely ask that you don't want him to interfere with it.

   If his ego gets in the way, then you're better off training alone.

2. He motivates you.
   A good workout partner is both inspiring and motivating. He will inspire you through his hard work and the effort that he's putting on beating his previous workout numbers, and he will motivate you to do the same. He will not tolerate slacking off and will smack you in the face if needed. He's driven, and has a clear goal in mind.

   Even if you are following a different set of workout principles, it is still possible to have a training partner that will motivate you through your workouts without interfering with what you're doing.

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Look for someone like this or set yourself as an example to encourage your training partner.

3. He's consistent.
   Rain or shine, sad or happy, bad or good day, he always shows up. He always does. Nothing is worse than an inconsistent training partner.

4. He's not there to socialize and chitchat
   A training partner that keeps on socializing with you and with other people in the gym will bring you down and decrease the quality of your workouts. In addition, he or she will lengthen your time inside the gym and shorten your life outside, and that sucks.

   Always encourage each other to focus.

5. He knows how to "spot".
   Another big mistake that I keep seeing in the gym is that these "spotters" don't even know how to spot. They overload the bar with weights beyond the trainee's capacity and then help him push the weight up. What the hell is that for?
   Spotting should be used only as a safety precaution, and nothing else. If the spotter lifts the weight for you, all he is doing is making the weight easier and lighter. If that's your goal, then why not just lower the weight and then do it yourself?

   Ask your training partner to never help you lift the weights up unless you're in a life and death situation.

   So that's it. If your training partner fails to live up to these points, then you're better off training alone.

WEIGHT LIFTING STRAPS, BELT, BARBELL PADS, GLOVES, KNEE WRAPS

I am not a fan of any workout accessories for the simple reason that I view them all as crutches. Yes, I know, some of these have their proper place in the overall picture of the iron game, but I know very well, too, that they are not needed. If you are an advanced lifter, then we can assume that you already know what you are doing. But if you're a beginner - intermediate trainee, I would advise to stay away from these.

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Weight lifting straps - these are mainly used for exercises that require a lot of grip strength. If you rely on these, your grip will suffer in the long run.

Belt - I always think that it's funny whenever I see someone squatting below 200lbs and they're wearing a belt. Only wear belts when you have a lower back injury. Yes, I know, wearing belts give you more strength, but it won't help you build the proper muscles to handle heavy back squats or deadlift once it gets really heavy.

Barbell Pads - I call these "Pussy Pads." Your traps are your pads. Don't rely on these. Learn how to do back squats properly and you will be fine.

Gloves - yes, they will prevent calluses, but they would also weaken your grip strength because of the added thickness that your hand would have to deal with. Use a chalk instead.

Knee Wraps - like a belt, don't use this one unless you have a knee injury or your squats are still below 200lbs.

Train raw and don't be a pussy.

WARM UP AND COOL DOWN

In any exercise program, a proper warm up is always needed to ensure that your mind and body are prepared for the intense workout ahead. By doing a proper warm-up, you will greatly decrease your chance of injury, and it will also loosen up your muscles and joints that will let you handle the heavy weights that you're about to tackle.

The important thing to remember is that a warm-up is just a warm-up. What I've noticed is that people make the mistake of tiring their muscles out by performing a lot of warm-up sets, which reduces their ability to lift heavier weights.

This is how I do my warm-ups:

First, I do a 5-10 minute light jog on a treadmill just to get a little sweaty.

Second, I warm-up using the first exercise on my workout list, like this:

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	Bench Press			
	Set	Weight	Reps	
	1	80lbs	8-12	<— Loosen up
	2	120lbs	5	
	3	160lbs	5	
	4	190lbs	3	<— Don't tire yourself
Working set —>	5	200lbs	6-10	

After doing the first exercise, my body will be warmed up already, and there's no need to repeat this on the next exercise if it's the same body part.

Let's say your first exercise is Bench Press, and your next exercise is Incline Dumbbell Press. Since both of these exercises are for the chest, there's no need to do additional warm-up sets when switching between them.

But if your next exercise involves a different body part, make sure to apply the same warm-up technique but with fewer sets, since your body has already been warmed up well enough by this time.

STRETCHING

Regarding stretching, I think it's a bit overrated. Studies have shown that stretching provides little to no benefit as a pre-workout warm-up. Some studies even concluded that stretching your muscles before working out can actually weaken them.

Just do a light stretch after your proper warm-up routine and you're good to go.

COOLDOWN

Like stretching, cooldown shouldn't take up much of your time. Just do a light stretch afterwards and leave immediately.

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CHAPTER 4 TAKEAWAYS

- Genetics determines your muscle growth potential, as well as your muscle shapes when they grow. You can't copy someone's workout and nutrition and expect to look the same.
- The Big 5 exercises are all you need to build a body that looks good and is very functional.
- The Big 5 are: Deadlift, Bench Press, Overhead Press or Military Press, Squats Chin-ups or Pull-ups.
- The Deadlift is the king of all exercises. It works all the muscles on your back — from neck to toe.
- Bench Press works the chest mainly, but also the front deltoids and the triceps. It is the staple in any bodybuilder and powerlifter's workout routine.
- Overhead Press is like the bench press for shoulders. It will overload your shoulders and give them intense stimulation. In return, you will experience massive growth.
- Squat is the king of the leg exercises. You can't substitute a leg press over it. It works the entire legs, the lower back, plus the core.
- Pull-ups and Chin-ups contribute greatly in building the wings or the lats. They also work the biceps, rear shoulders, and your core.
- Compound exercises such as dips, chin ups, etc., work the arms real hard. Think of gymnasts.
- You shouldn't skip training the legs because it will give a huge growth to your upper body muscles as well.
- The four exercises in this workout program will hit *rectus abdominis, transversus abdominis, and external obliques.* If you want to substitute another exercise, feel free to do so.
- The workout duration should be kept under 90 minutes, or one and a half hours.
- Whether your goal is to build muscle or lose weight, the rep range should be the same.

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- The ideal rep range for building muscle and strength is 5-8 reps, or 75 to 85 percent of your one rep max.
- For muscles like calves and abs, higher rep ranges (15-20 reps) are needed to stimulate them.
- When you train with heavy reps, you won't experience that much pump. But don't fret, muscle pump is not an indicator of the workout's effectiveness anyway.
- When discussing workout volume, we're not going to talk about the total number sets in a given workout, but the total number of reps in a week. For that matter, 40-80 reps every 4-7 days is the sweet spot for stimulating strength and size.
- If bulking, you can endure a higher workout volume. If cutting, you should tone down the workout volume a bit to prevent overtraining.
- Lift the weight as fast as you can to activate more Fast Twitch muscle fibers, the ones susceptible to growth.
- Lower the weights without bouncing and without the use of momentum. Always use controlled negatives.
- To add even more quality to every repetition and to stimulate all the muscle fibers, you have to do every exercise in a full range of motion.
- The rest between sets for major exercises should be 2-4 minutes, and 1-1.5 minutes for Abs and Calves exercises. Our goal here is to stimulate the muscles by overloading them with heavy weight, quality reps, and sufficient workout volume.
- Training to muscular failure means training to the point at which you are unable to do an additional repetition despite your greatest efforts.
- Use training to failure on your 6th week, just before the deload week. But only use it on the last sets of each exercise to avoid burnout.
- Any additional stress, above and beyond what's necessary — like doing plenty of sets and exercises in a single workout, or training 5-7 days a week with minimal rest — will result in overtraining, or a failure to recover and grow.

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- To allow continuous gains in strength and size, you must incorporate a "deload" week once in a while. In this case, every 6-10 weeks, depending on the individual's recovery ability.

- The only adjustment necessary when switching from bulking to cutting workout, or from muscle building to fat loss training, is the total workout volume.

- If you can't add strength on your exercises while on a cutting phase, the next best thing you can do is maintain your strength.

- Doing cardio isn't necessary to lose fat. You can if you want, but it's not necessary.

- There are two ways to do your cardio session:

  1. No more than 30-40 minutes of steady-state, cardio two-three times a week on your off days.

  2. Do a fast, High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) for 20-30 minutes max, two-three times a week on your off days. Take note, HIIT can affect your recovery. Use it only when you need conditioning and stamina work.

- The issue with conditioning and cardiovascular work is that they can conflict with your strength and muscle building goals.

- A good training partner will make or break you. If he's a burden, dump him.

- I am not a fan of any workout accessories for the simple reason that I view them all as crutches. As much as possible, especially if you are a beginner and if you don't have any pre-existing injuries, avoid these ones: Weight lifting straps, belt, barbell pads, gloves, knee wraps.

- The important thing to remember is that a warm-up is just a warm-up. What I've noticed is that people make the mistake of tiring their muscles out by performing a lot of warm-up sets, which reduces their ability to lift heavier weights.

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- Just do a light stretch after your proper warm-up routine and you're good to go.

- Like stretching, cooldown shouldn't take up much of your time. Just do a light stretch afterwards and leave immediately.

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CHAPTER 5: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Most workout programs you will see at your local gym are somewhat like this:

Bench press - 4 sets of 10-15 reps

Incline Bench Press - 3 sets of 10- 15 reps

Decline Bench press - 3 sets of 10-15 reps

Incline DB flyes - 3 sets of 15-20 reps

Flat DB flyes - 3 sets of 15-20 reps

Dips - 3 sets to failure

That's one of the typical chest workouts I always see guys doing at the gym. And the sad part is, they are also the ones who keep complaining that their chest is not growing.

"I am doing sets of this and that and four more sets of this but my chest is still lagging."

No wonder. The problem is you're doing way too many sets and exercises for the chest!

The funnier thing is, if you ask them how much do they bench press, you'll get an answer like, "80lbs," or, "100lbs." They think doing lots of sets and exercises outweigh the importance of doing only a couple, but getting really stronger on them.

The workout routines in this chapter will give you the most muscle growth, not muscle pump, while saving you a lot of time and energy.

INTRODUCING PHASE 1-4 WORKOUTS

The Minimalist Fitness workout program consists of four Phases — phase 1 has the least amount of workout volume, and phase 4 has the most for each body part.

Don't worry, all the workout routines in the four phases can be finished in less than 90 minutes.

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Overview:

Phase 1: 2-day split, 3 workouts per week

Phase 2: 2-day split, 3 workouts per week

Phase 3: 3-day split, 3 workouts per week

Phase 4: 4-day split, 4 workouts per week

2-day split means alternating between 2 workouts — Workout A, B

3-day split means alternating between 3 workouts — Workout A, B, C

4-day split means alternating between 4 workouts — Workout A, B, C, D

All the training philosophies and principles that we've discussed will be incorporated in this workout routine, but feel free to go back and revisit them from time to time to really make the most out of the workout.

The four phases have a 7-week gap in between — because we're going to give an importance to the deload week that we've discussed.

So the routine will run like this:

For every six weeks of doing a specific phase, you will incorporate a deload for the 7th week, then resume the 8th week either doing the same phase (e.g. phase 1), or the next phase(e.g. phase 2).

A set of criteria and guidelines, which we will be discussing in a few moments, should be met first before moving on to the next phase of the program.

Depending on your rate of progress, you may be able to complete all four phases in 28 weeks, or maybe even more.

Before we begin, please read over the following section first as it contains important information with regards to the workout plan.

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BEFORE STARTING THE PROGRAM

- Go to Chapter 13 (Taking Measurements/Weighing In) of this book and read it. Take your measurements and photos tomorrow morning because you're going to say good bye to your OLD you. Might as well keep a record of it.

- If you're coming from another workout program, take 1 week off from the gym before starting this one. No cardio. No weight lifting. No strenuous exercises. You need full rest before starting this program.

- If after choosing your goal and cutting is the choice (see Diet and Nutrition section), all "5 sets" exercises should be reduced to 4 sets, and all "4 sets" exercises should be reduced to 3 sets as cutting impedes recovery. Caloric deficit = recovery deficit

WORKOUT PLAN NOTES AND REMINDERS

**You can print this one and include it in your workout logs folder*

- For phases 1-3, do the workouts on three alternate days of your choice. (e.g. M,W,F or T,TH,S, or even S, T, TH)
- For phase 4, since it's four days a week, it's much more flexible. You can do two consecutive workouts, followed by a rest day, then workout again, then rest. Just don't do three workouts in a row. Also, your rest days should be at least three days in a week.
- If cutting, reduce all 5-set exercises to 4 sets, and all 4-set exercises to 3 sets.
- You can incorporate your cardio sessions on your off days. See Cardio section.
- For each and every workout, you should strive to improve slightly by either increasing the poundage on each exercise or performing more reps. No workouts should be the same!
- Use the 2-step pedal progression — complete the desired reps for all sets first, then add weight the next workout. (See Workout Progression section below)
- If you are unable to perform certain exercises for whatever reason, you can pick and choose alternative ones on the exercise substitutions section.
- If you are unsure of how to perform any of the outlined exercises, refer to the exercise manual for illustrations and instructions. Alternatively, you can do a quick Google search.
- If you want to follow a specialized routine for a specific body part, see the bonus workout splits (for those who purchased). If you want to get it, check this link.

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- Rest period between sets is 2-3 minutes for most major exercises, except for Abs and Calves which is 1-1.5 minutes. You can go 3-5 minutes for Deadlifts and Squats. The key here is being consistent with your rest periods.
- If you can't do Pull-ups or Chin-ups, substitute them with Lat pulldown — wide grip for Pull-ups, and underhand grip for Chin-ups.
- If you can do regular Pull-ups and Chin-ups, invest on a dip belt where you can add weight around your waist for continuous strength progression.
- Log every workout using the printable workout logs (for those who purchased), or a simple notepad app on your phone (Evernote).
- Don't try to add sets and exercises.

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PHASE 1 (WEEKS 1-6)

The bread and butter. The basics. The default one. The essentials. The bare minimum. This is the workout program that I often use most of the time. I just keep going back to this because it saves a lot of time and it lets me spend more time outside the gym and have fun. Plus, it gives me continuous progress by giving my whole system a lot of time to recover.

If you don't want to spend a lot of time working out, you can stay with PHASE 1 for as long as you want and neglect the other three phases. If you stick to the principles that we've discussed, this will cover everything for you. And yes, intermediate to advanced trainees can use this as well.

Workout A - Chest, Shoulder, Triceps, Abs, Calves
Bench press - 4 sets of 6-8 reps
Overhead press - 3 sets of 6-8 reps
Close grip bench press - 3 sets of 8-10 reps
Abs (superset two exercises) - 3 supersets of 15-20 reps
Calves (pick any) - 3 sets of 15-20 reps

Workout B - Legs, Back, Biceps, Abs, Calves
Deadlift/Squats (alternate each workout) - 4 sets of 4-6 reps
Weighted Pull-Ups/Chin-ups (alternate each workout) - 3 sets of 6-8 reps
Barbell row - 3 sets of 6-8 reps
Dumbbell curl - 3 sets of 8-10 reps
Abs (superset two exercises) - 3 supersets of 15-20 reps
Calves (pick any) - 3 sets of 15-20 reps

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Alternate these two workouts over the week. Let's say your workout schedule is MWF:

Week 1

Monday = Workout A

Wednesday = Workout B

Friday = Workout A

Week 2

Monday = Workout B

Wednesday = Workout A

Friday = Workout B

Week 3

Monday = Workout A

Wednesday = Workout B

Friday = Workout A

And so on.

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PHASE 2 (WEEKS 8-13)

After doing Phase 1 for a full six weeks and you've already done your deload week, you can now add a couple of exercises/sets to each workout routine. You are now ready for Phase 2.

But first, these are a couple of requirements:

- You've already added at least 15lbs on deadlift.
- You've already added at least 15lbs on Squats.
- You've already added at least 10lbs on Bench Press.
- You've already added at least 10lbs on the Overhead Press.
- You've already added at least 10lbs on Pull-ups or Chin-ups or Lat Pulldowns.
- You've already done your deload week.

If you haven't accomplished any of these yet, stay with the Phase 1 program and strive to improve on all the exercises before jumping to Phase 2.

Workout A - Chest, Shoulder, Triceps, Abs, Calves
Incline DB bench press - 3 sets of 6-8 reps
Flat DB Bench press - 3 sets of 6-8 reps
DB military press - 3 sets of 6-8 reps
Barbell upright row - 3 sets of 10-15 reps
Triceps pushdown - 3 sets of 8-10 reps
Abs (superset two exercises) - 3 supersets of 15-20 reps
Calves (pick any) - 3 sets of 15-20 reps

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Workout B - Legs, Back, Biceps, Abs, Calves
Deadlift/Leg Press (alternate each workout) - 4 sets of 4-6 reps
Pull-Ups - 2 sets of 6-8 reps
Chin-ups - 2 sets of 6-8 reps
1 arm DB row - 4 sets of 6-8 reps
Incline DB Curl - 3 sets of 8-10 reps
Abs (superset three exercises) - 3 supersets of 15-20 reps
Calves (pick any) - 3 sets of 15-20 reps

Alternate these two workouts over the week. Let's say your workout schedule is MWF:

Week 1

Monday = Workout A

Wednesday = Workout B

Friday = Workout A

Week 2

Monday = Workout B

Wednesday = Workout A

Friday = Workout B

Week 3

Monday = Workout A

Wednesday = Workout B

Friday = Workout A

And so on.

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PHASE 3 (WEEKS 15-20)

Now, after you've gone through the whole phase 2 for another six weeks with continuous strength improvement, and you've noticed that your strength gains are slowing down, you may now graduate to this phase, which is a 3-day workout split. This will allow you to hit the muscle groups every seven days rather than every four-five days. It will also give each main muscle group the day of their own, allowing you to hit each with greater focus, intensity, and more volume.

The downside is, you won't be able to progress on your exercises faster because you're only hitting each body part once a week unlike in the first two phases. But if you're already experiencing a slow down in progress on Phase 2, then this would be your next phase. The added volume will make up for the lesser frequency.

But first, these are a couple of requirements:

- You've already added at least 15lbs on Deadlift.
- You've already added at least 15lbs on Leg Press.
- You've already added at least 10lbs on Flat DB Bench Press.
- You've already added at least 10lbs on the DB Military Press.
- You've already added at least 10lbs on Pull-ups or Chin-ups or Lat Pulldowns.
- You've already done your deload week.

If you haven't accomplished any of these yet, stay with the Phase 2 program and strive to improve on all the exercises before jumping to Phase 3.

Workout A - Back, Biceps, Abs, Calves
Deadlift - 3 sets of 4-6 reps
Wide grip pull-ups - 3 sets of 6-8 reps
Chin-ups - 3 sets of 6-8 reps
Barbell row - 3 sets of 6-8 reps
Barbell curl - 3 sets of 8-10 reps
Abs (superset 3 exercises) - 3 sets of 15-20 reps
Calves - 4 sets of 15-20 reps

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Workout B - Chest, Triceps, Abs, Calves
Bench press - 4 sets of 6-8 reps
Incline DB press - 3 sets of 6-8 reps
Flat Dumbbell Flyes - 2 sets of 8-10 reps
Dips - 3 sets of 6-8 reps
DB Overhead Tricep Extension - 2 sets of 8-10 reps
Abs (superset 3 exercises) - 3 sets of 15-20 reps
Calves - 4 sets of 15-20 reps

Workout C - Legs, Shoulders, Abs, Calves
Squats - 3 sets of 6-8 reps
Lunges - 3 sets of 6-8 reps
Arnold Press - 3 sets of 6-8 reps
Barbell Upright row - 3 sets of 6-8 reps
Dumbbell Lateral raise - 2 sets of 10-15 reps
Abs (superset 3 exercises) - 3 sets of 15-20 reps
Calves - 4 sets of 15-20 reps

Do these three workouts over the week. Let's say your workout schedule is MWF:

Monday = Workout A

Wednesday = Workout B

Friday = Workout C

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PHASE 4 (WEEKS 22-27)

After the deload week, you have the option to do phase 3 again and continue progressing on each of the exercises, or graduate to Phase 4, a 4-day split. This is an optional phase for those looking for more volume.

Following the same principles and requirements from the previous phases, your phase 4 routine will look like this:

Workout A - Chest, Shoulders, Triceps, Abs
Bench press - 4 sets of 6-8 reps
Incline DB press - 3 sets of 6-8 reps
Dips - 3 sets of 6-8 reps
Barbell upright row - 3 sets of 6-8 reps
Triceps pushdown - 3 sets of 6-8 reps
Abs - 3 supersets of 15-20 reps

Workout B - Back, Abs, Calves
Deadlift - 5 sets of 5 reps
Weighted Pull-ups - 4 sets of 6-8 reps
1 arm DB row - 3 sets of 6-8 reps
Incline DB curl - 3 sets of 6-8 reps
Calves - 4 sets of 15-20 reps

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Workout C - Shoulders, Chest, Triceps, Abs
Overhead Press - 4 sets of 6-8 reps
Flat DB flyes - 3 sets of 10-15 reps
DB lateral - 3 sets of 10-15 reps
Close grip bench press - 3 sets of 6-8 reps
Abs - 3 supersets of 15-20 reps

Workout D - Legs, Back, Biceps, Calves
Squats - 5 sets of 5 reps
Chin ups - 4 sets of 6-8 reps
Barbell row - 3 sets of 6-8 reps
Dumbbell Hammer Curl - 3 sets of 8-10 reps
Calves - 4 sets of 15-20 reps

Do these four workouts over the week. This is a sample template that you can follow:

Day #1 = Workout A

Day #2 = Workout B

Day #3 = Rest

Day #4 = Workout C

Day #5 = Rest

Day #6 = Workout D

Day #7 = Rest

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PHASE 4 AND BEYOND: WHERE TO GO AFTER FINISHING THE PROGRAM?

After finishing Phase 4 of the program, you have 3 choices on how to continue on:

1. Take a deload, then continue phase 4 for another 6 weeks but this time, substitute the exercises. See Exercise Substitutes section.

E.g

Flat DB Press instead of Bench Press

Lunges instead of Squats

Alternatively, you can just rearrange the order of the exercises but ONLY for the same muscle group.

E.g

Instead of doing Bench Press first for the Chest, you may want to do Incline DB Press first.

Instead of doing Weighted Pull-Ups first, do DB row instead.

Keep the routine for 6 weeks before changing again.

2. Take a deload, then go back to Phase 3. Just keep doing this back and forth after every deload (most recommended).

You can also switch exercises and exercise order like in the #1 suggestion.

This is how I'd do it:

Weeks 1-6: Phase 4

Week 7: Reload

Weeks 8-13: Phase 3 (switch exercises)

Week 14: Deload

Weeks 15-20: Phase 4 (switch exercises)

Week 21: Deload

Weeks 22-27: Phase 3 (change exercise order)

And so on...

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3. Wait for my next program.

I don't have something in my mind yet but I'm sure there will be a sequel to this.

AB WORKOUTS

My four favorite ab exercises:

- Hanging knee raise oblique crunch
- Hanging leg raises
- Weighted sit-ups with plates or dumbbells
- Ab wheel rollout

See Exercise Manual for instructions and illustrations.

NEW AB WORKOUT ROUTINE (AB RIPPER X VARIATION)

If you don't want to do the ab exercises above, you can substitute this ab routine. Do this three times a week on your off days or after each workout session.

Instructions: Do all exercises back-to-back with little or no rest in between for 20 reps each. If you can't do 20 reps, that's fine. Do 10 each and work your way up.

1. In-and-Outs
2. Bicycles
3. Crunchy Frog
4. Wide Leg Sit-ups
5. Fifer Scissors
6. Hip Rock and Raise
7. Butt Ups
8. V-ups
9. Bicycle Crunch
10. Mason Twists

A quick search on Google will give you an idea on how to perform each exercise.

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EXERCISE SUBSTITUTES

These are exercises that you can substitute for the main ones. You can start switching to these exercises once your progress has slowed down or once you hit a plateau. You can also change the exercises for the sake of variety, but you have to keep in mind that the main exercises are selected for a reason. Given that, feel free to enjoy yourself but always keep these in mind:

- When substituting exercises, it is always better to choose free weight (bar and dumbbell exercises) substitutes over machine exercises. This is critical most especially if you're a beginner.
- I would advise against substituting an exercise just because it "feels hard" when you do it. Man up and learn how to do it.

CHEST

Incline Bench Press

Incline DB Press

Flat DB Bench Press

Incline DB Press

Dips

Machine Chest Presses

Weighted Push-Ups

BACK

Lat pulldown

Barbell row

1 arm DB row

T-bar rows

Pendlay Rows

Rack Pulls

Machine rows

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LEGS

Leg press

1 leg pistol squat

Lunges

Bulgarian Split Squats

Front Squats

Romanian Deadlift

Stiff-legged Deadlift

Sumo Deadlift

SHOULDERS

Arnold Press

DB shoulder press

Barbell upright row

DB Upright row

Cable Upright row

Bradford Press

Machine Shoulder Presses

DB Lateral can be substituted with Cable Variation

BICEPS

Barbell Curl

Incline DB Curl

Dumbbell Hammer Curl

EZ Bar Curl

DB Concentration Curl

Cable Curl

Machine Curl

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TRICEPS

Close grip bench press

Triceps pushdown

DB overhead tricep extension

Close Grip Pushups

Bench Dips with weights

Skullcrushers

Triceps Kickback (cable or DBs)

ABS

Kneeling Cable Crunch (using rope)

Hanging Knee Ups

Plank

Machine Crunch

Russian Twist with plates or medicine ball

Some of the exercises here are shown in the Exercise Manual. For others, just do a quick Google search.

FINDING YOUR STARTING WEIGHTS

Starting weights vary from person to person. Even if we all started lifting at the exact same date, our strength would still differ. Some are born stronger, some are weaker. Therefore, it is up to you to find your own starting poundages.

If you're a total beginner, I would suggest that you use the lightest dumbbells and the bar without the plates, and focus all your energy in getting the form of the exercises right. Add weight slowly (5lb increments).

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WORKOUT PROGRESSION

As we've discussed, the most important aspect in the MEME philosophy is the principle of progressive overload. If you're not increasing your strength on the exercises, you will not grow.

In this workout program, we're going to use a simple method of workout progression that we will call, "2-step pedal progression." Let me explain:

Almost all exercises have a 6-8 rep recommendation, and the small muscle groups have 15-20.

The first step in the pedal progression is to get your reps to the high end of the range, which is 8 reps for the main exercises, and 20 reps to the other exercises.

Let's say your Bench Press workout log is like this:

Bench press - 200lbs - 6, 6, 6, 6

Your first goal in the 2-step pedal progression is to get your bench press to 8 reps on all 4 sets. Then after accomplishing that, that's when you do the second step — add weight.

At first, your workout log should go smoothly like this:

Workout 1:

Bench Press - 200lbs - 6, 6, 6, 6

Workout 2:

Bench Press - 200lbs - 7, 7, 7, 7

Workout 3:

Bench Press - 200lbs - 8, 8, 8, 8 <—— add weight next workout

Workout 4:

Bench Press - 205lbs - 7, 7, 7, 6

And so on.

First pedal = get to the desired reps

Second pedal = add weight

Always add weight in small increments (5-10lbs).

For squats and deadlift, if you're a beginner, an increase of 10lbs each workout is normal. But since we're all different, progress at your own rate.

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Important:

A progress is a progress. Even one additional rep is worth celebrating already. Don't get discouraged if you're not progressing as fast as your workout buddy.

AB EXERCISE PROGRESSION

Since the abs are like any other muscles that need progressive overload to grow, it is just wise to continuously add resistance when the exercise gets easy or when you've reached the 20-rep count without much effort. The problem is, many ab exercises have their limits as to how resistance can be added to them to promote further development.

For this, follow these progression guidelines:

- Hold a plate or DB if possible, like in Sit-Ups, Russian Twist, and the likes.
- Place a DB between your feet when doing Leg Raises, Knee Ups, and the likes.
- Ask someone to place a plate behind your back when doing a Plank.
- For other exercises where we can't add weights like the Ab Wheel Rollout, we can increase resistance by doing a longer range of motion and/or doing the reps more slowly. You can also add a pause at the extended position to make it even harder. This also applies to every ab exercise that you do.

TRACKING PROGRESS

I suggest using the printable workout log (if you purchased that one) to record every possible detail about your workout. That would make you more accountable to every workout session that you have because you will see in real time how well you're progressing.

If you prefer not to use the printable workout log that I provided, feel free to use Evernote or any other notepad (preferably on your phone so you carry it all the time).

Your workout log should have these:

Name of exercise - of course that's obvious.

Weight lifted - in lbs or in kilos.

Sets - all sets including those cheat sets or bonus sets that you snuck in.

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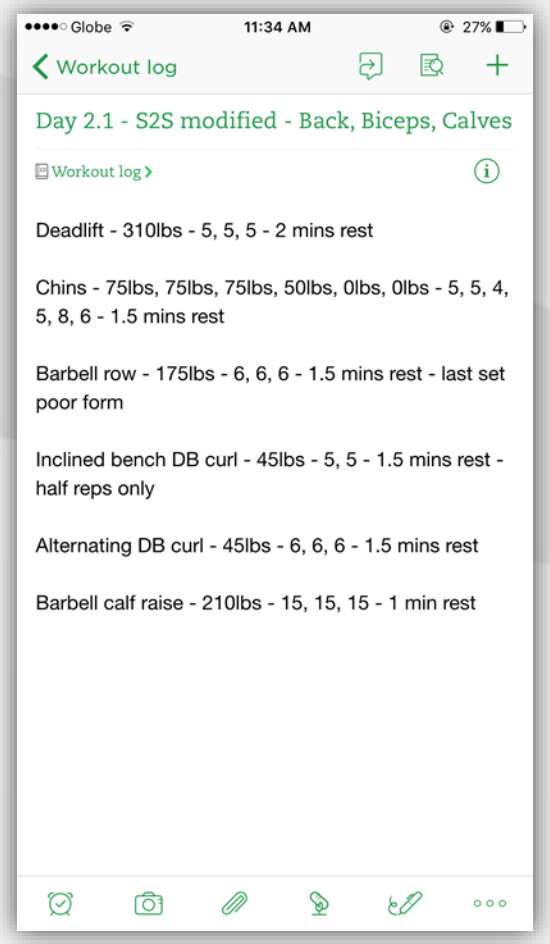
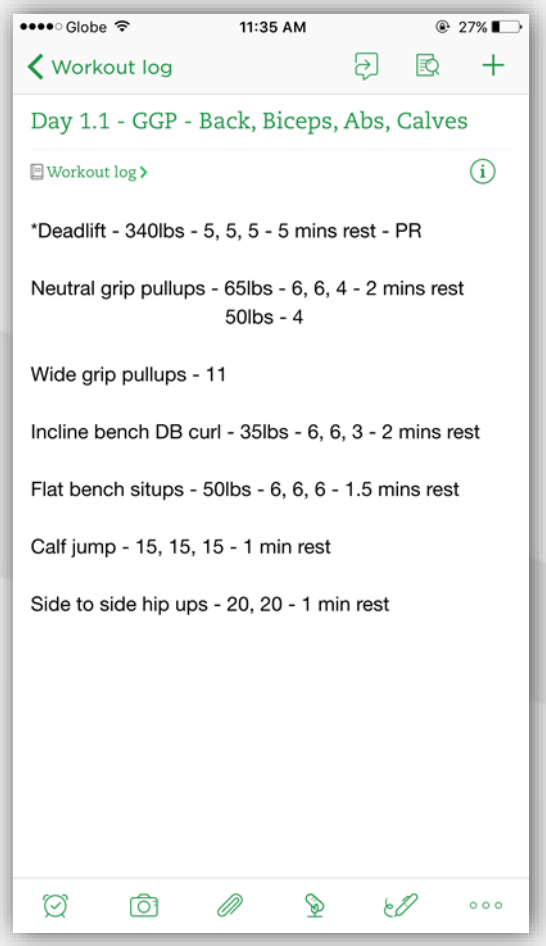
Reps - it doesn't matter if you only did half reps. Record it. Let's say 3 reps and on the 4th you couldn't get it up. Write 3.5 reps.

Rest between sets - use a timer and be strict with yourself. You can't say that you've progressed when you've also increased your rest period from two minutes last week, to five minutes this week. You didn't increase strength then, you just increased your rest period.

Notes or comments - put a note at the bottom of your log and make it like a journal. Say something about your workout. For example, "I am feeling weak today. I only had 5 hours of sleep." Or something like that. Or in my case, I always like to write, "Wearing Airmax black shoes, that's why the leg raises were hard." Say anything.

Examples:





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WORKOUT PLATEAUS AND REGRESSION

A workout plateau, or the point when everything comes to a halt, is almost inevitable to any type of training. In fact, sometimes, we're not only going to get stuck at an x number of lbs and reps in an exercise, but we're even going to lose strength! This can be one of the most frustrating parts in our fitness journey.

When this happens, ask these questions:

1. Are you trying to lose weight by eating less calories, or are you trying to gain weight by eating more calories?

   - Like we've discussed in the Muscle Building vs. Fat Loss Training section, if you're trying to lose weight, it can be difficult to gain strength. Maintaining your strength is the best that you can do. See that section again.

2. Are you losing more than 1-1.5 lbs each week?

   - Chances are, you are losing a lot of muscle, too. The key is to slow down and up your calories a bit. We want to lose fat, not just weight.

3. Are you having enough sleep?

   - How many hours of sleep are you getting each night? If you're not sleeping enough, then it may greatly affect your workout performance. The solution is to get more sleep, or if for some reason that's not possible, lower your total workout volume.

4. Are you stressed with your job, school, business, relationships, or anything?

   - Stress is normal, but too much of it is not. This will greatly affect your recovery ability and workout performance. The solution is to lower your stress levels, or reduce your total workout volume.

5. Are you eating at least one gram per pound of protein per body weight?

   - This will be discussed in the diet and nutrition section. The short answer is you should get a lot of protein, regardless of whether you are trying to gain or lose weight.

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6. Are you doing a lot of cardio sessions?

   - If you are trying to lose weight and you're eating less, doing a lot of cardio is fatal to your progress. The solution is to cut back on your cardio sessions or your total workout volume.

7. Are you incorporating deload weeks?

   - If not, then maybe you've reached the point of overtraining. Rest for a while and let your body recover before hitting it hard again.

8. Are you doing a lot more than the required number of exercises, sets, and reps?

   - Doing a lot more than required will surely slow down your progress. Like we've discussed, you don't need a lot of exercises and sets, you need workout progression. Stick to the original workout routines and resist the urge to add more.

9. When did you reach the plateau? Is it a week ago? A month ago?

   - If you haven't seen any progress or if you have been only losing strength for a week or two, just stick to what you are doing and continue monitoring your workouts. Maybe you're just having a rough week.

Now, if you're still stuck after a month of doing the adjustments above, maybe you need to add a few more modifications. These include:

A. Change the exercise

Maybe you've been doing the same exercises for too long now and the body has already adapted and it won't budge. Just choose another exercise from the compound list and stick to it for at least six-eight weeks before changing again.

Let's say for chest, you hit a plateau on Bench Press, you can substitute incline bench press or just switch to dumbbells. Your goal now is the same -- to progress on the substituted exercise until you hit a plateau again. Once that happens, your choice would be to go back to doing Bench Press, or switch to another effective compound exercise for the chest.

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B. Switch things up

If you don't want to change exercises, you can try switching things up a bit and notice a steady gains again. You can do this by changing your rep ranges — instead of doing 5-8, try doing 8-10 reps and monitor for at least three-four weeks.

Another option is to vary the rest period between sets — from three minutes make it one-two minutes.

Remember, any changes you make should be written on your workout log.

C. Up your calories

If you're not cutting, this is a solution that should work without you doing any changes on your workouts. Upping the calories will support additional recovery and muscle growth, and it will transfer immediately by means of strength increases.

If you're cutting, this might be difficult. The only thing I would recommend that will help you blast through your plateaus is to up your protein intake to 1.4g per pound of body weight. Although this won't guarantee a strength increase, I can assure you that you will maintain your strength and muscle mass while cutting with this method.

HOW TO PREVENT INJURIES

Believe me, when you're training hard and making consistent gains, getting injured is the worst thing that could ever happen to you. When you get injured, a lot of time will go to waste, and both of these will happen:

You will lose all the progress and gains that you've had, and you will be back to the starting line.

You will lose the opportunity to better your physique until your injury gets healed.

Imagine getting injured when it is almost summer and you're already excited to show off at the beach? It sucks right?

"Prevention is better than cure", as they say, and that is so damn right. Here are the guidelines that you should follow to prevent the disaster from happening:

1. Always do a proper warm up
2. Always use proper form
3. Don't lift more weight than you can handle (Don't ego lift!)
4. Don't do more than necessary

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TRAINING AROUND INJURIES

No matter how careful we are, there comes a time that injuries get the best of us. We train as hard as we can, push our bodies to the limits, and those nagging aches and pains always somehow manage to turn into worse.

What do we do?

Most of us will probably want to "gut it out" and continue training, but I would strongly advise against doing that. Worse comes to worst, an injury can cripple you physically and mentally and maybe put an end to your lifting career if you're not careful.

With that said, here are my 10 injury-workaround tips

1. Determine what type of injury

Acute injuries are usually the result of a single, traumatic event. Common examples include bone fractures, ankle sprains, shoulder dislocations, tearing of a muscle. This injury is serious, and having checked by a doctor ASAP should be your number 1 priority. Exercising at this point is not recommended.

Chronic injuries can be also called overuse injuries. This is the one that builds up over months or years. Examples are muscle strains and various wear and tear injuries that progressively get worse.

This type of injury is probably the most frustrating because although you can still train, you can't train with maximum intensity and you may find that performance and progress are hampered. For this, depending on the severity of the pain, you can continue to train but you have to be extra cautious. You may also avoid training the injured area for a while and rest more when you need to.

2. Up your nutrition

Certain foods can promote inflammation within the body, while others have an anti-inflammatory effect.

Avoid inflammation-promoting foods such as fried foods, processed white flour, eggplant, cayenne, tomatoes, potatoes, and hot peppers, and eat more foods that are high in omega-3 fatty acids.

Be sure to drink plenty of fresh juices made from fresh, organic, raw veggies, because raw veggies are high in important enzymes and vitamins that can speed up the healing process.

Keep your protein intake high even when you're just resting and recovering as the added protein from your diet will help tissues and cells recover faster.

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Lastly, get your micronutrients handled.

3. Rest, Ice, Compress, Elevate -- RICE method

Ice: Ice can help with inflammation and swelling by reducing the blood flow to the injured area. I recommend 15 minutes up to an hour, multiple times a day.

Compress: Like ice, compression can help with the swelling and reduce recovery time. Use a bandage wrap plus ice as this combo is much more effective than using one alone.

Elevate: Elevation works by decreasing blood flow to the injured area. You do this by keeping the injured area high above your heart.

4. Do cardio

All recovery is aerobic in nature. Blood flowing around an injured site as well as throughout the body promotes an exchange of waste and the rebuilding of cells and speeds recovery.

Cardio can range from jogging to a light circuit training with weights. Even brisk walking will do. The idea is to get the blood flowing throughout your body.

5. Train with very light weights

If the pain is manageable and you're confident that you can train the injured area, choose a very light weight and perform higher repetitions.

6. Use strict form

No bouncing and jerking. Leave your ego behind. Our goal here is to focus on dealing with the injury and accelerating its recovery.

7. Train around the injury

If you have an upper body injury, train the lower body. If you have a lower body injury, continue training the upper body. Having an injury, most of the time, isn't always an excuse to not train every body part of the body.

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If you have an injured right or left limb, train the other one. Don't worry about having strength and muscle imbalances as the other limb will catch up fast later on once it's recovered. Also, keeping the other limb strong will help with the overall recovery.

In addition, you also shouldn't neglect your core.

Lastly, be extra careful now and don't add another injury.

8. If it hurts, stop

9. Stay positive

Let's face it; injuries can be very frustrating, but research suggests that maintaining a positive attitude and expectancy when recovering can help speed up the healing process.

So instead of looking at your injury as an obstacle, think of it as an opportunity to learn more about how the body works and as a reminder to continue learning and practicing proper form when lifting.

It always pays to look on the bright side, so even if you are injured, stay positive and you can still make progress, even while injured.

CHAPTER 5 TAKEAWAYS

- The Minimalist Fitness workout program consists of four Phases — phase 1 being the easiest, and phase 4 the hardest.
- The four phases have a 9-week gap in between — because we're going to give an importance to the deload week that we've discussed.
- Phase 1 (Weeks 1-8) The bread and butter. The basics. The default one. The essentials. The bare minimum. If you don't want to spend a lot of time working out, you can stay with PHASE 1 for as long as you want and neglect the other 3 phases.
- Phase 2 (Weeks 10-17) After doing Phase 1 for a full six weeks and you've already done your deload week, you can now add a couple of exercises/sets to each workout routine. You are now ready for Phase 2.

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- Phase 3 (Weeks 19-26) is a 3-day workout split. This will allow you to hit the muscle groups every seven days rather than every four-five days. It will also give each main muscle group a day of their own, allowing you to hit each with greater focus, intensity, and more volume.

- Phase 4 (Weeks 28-35) After the deload week, you have the option to do phase 3 again and continue progressing on each of the exercises, or graduate to Phase 4, a 4-day split. This is an optional phase for those looking for more volume.

- After finishing Phase 4, you can switch back to Phase 3 and keep doing this back and forth while substituting exercises.

- There are exercises that you can substitute to the main ones. You can start switching exercises once your progress has slowed down or once you hit a plateau.

- If you're a total beginner, I would suggest that you use the lightest dumbbells and the bar without the plates, and focus all your energy in getting the form of the exercises right. Add weight slowly (5lb increments).

- Use the 2-step pedal progression — complete the desired reps for all sets first, then add weight for the next workout.

- I suggest using the printable workout log (if you purchase that one) to record every possible detail about your workout. If you prefer not to use the printable workout log that I provided, feel free to use Evernote or any other notepad (preferably on your phone so you carry it all the time).

- A workout plateau, or the point when everything comes to halt, is almost inevitable to any type of training. When this happens, ask yourself a couple of important questions and make the necessary adjustments.

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- "Prevention is better than cure", as they say, and that is so damn right. Here are the guidelines that you should follow to prevent injury from happening:
    1. **Always do a proper warm up**
    2. **Always use proper form**
    3. **Don't lift more weight than you can handle (Don't ego lift!)**
    4. **Don't do more than necessary**

- Dealing with injuries is stressful, but there's a workaround for it. Keep in mind these 9 tips accelerate the recovery and get you back on track.

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CHAPTER 6: 10 WORKOUT MYTHS

Mainstream fitness tips and advice are full of crap.

More and more people today are getting hammered left and right by false information and bad advice. The worst thing is, a lot of them usually come from "experts."

I'm not saying that these people are lying to you. It just so happens that these notions, the stuff that we've been taught and have picked up along the way, were wrong to begin with. And since we never question them and no one told us differently, sadly, we accept false information as truths and they become part of the norm.

This chapter will discuss the most common workout myths that the average lifter would have no idea how to argue against. After reading this, you will be equipped with unbeatable knowledge that even the experts don't know about.

Let's begin.

1. Fat will turn into muscle when you start lifting.

Fat and muscle are two different components, and they can't turn from one into the other no matter what kind magic trick you use. It's like saying your eyes will become a nose when you work it out. It's impossible.

When you see transformations of people who lose fat and gain muscle at the same time, two processes have been achieved:

A. Lose fat

B. Build muscle

They don't convert from one to the other.

2. You need to achieve muscle "pump" to build muscle.

One of the biggest motivators for lifters who are just starting out is the "pump." It is the feeling that you get when you train with weights, more specifically during a high rep training, and blood becomes trapped inside the muscles. In turn, the immediate effect you will see is the swelling up — leaving your body feeling bigger and tighter. No wonder it is a good motivator because you're seeing yourself get jacked in a matter of seconds.

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While the pump feels awesome, it has very little, if anything to do with stimulating the muscles to grow. It is simply the result of the increased blood flow to the muscles and should not be a basis for the workout's effectiveness.

As we've discussed, a successful workout should be determined by the principle of progressive resistance or overload. If you've added weights or reps from your last workout, then you did a good job.

3. If the guy has a good physique, you should follow his advice.

Most people today, especially beginners, love to mimic the exact same workout routines of their fitness idol. They think that if they do the very same exercises, reps, and sets, then their muscles will grow the same way. This is the first reason why you shouldn't just blindly follow a bodybuilder's advice.

The next one is, a lot of these so-called bodybuilders give workout tips and advice, even the exact workout routine that they're doing that will require you to spend three-four hours in the gym, but they won't tell you that they're taking steroids.

Beginners then will be impressed by the dedication and hard work they're putting, and they will also credit these "experts" muscle gains to the three-four hour marathon training sessions that they constantly do. What they don't know about is that it's not the marathon training session itself that gave these people the success that they've had, but the drugs.

Focus on yourself and your rate of progress, and soon you will reach the better version of your physique.

4. Squats are bad for your knees, and Deadlifts are bad for your back

Squatting and deadlifting per se are not bad for your knees, and back. Bad squatting and deadlifting are.

Doing these exercises properly are in fact, the best thing that you can do to strengthen your muscles and joints.

Whenever someone tells me that doing these exercises hurts them, I always ask them to show me how they do it. Most of the time I cringe, and part of me dies as I watch them.

Like in every exercise, there is always a proper way to do them, and then there is another. Unfortunately, many people aren't familiar with the former.

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If squatting hurts your knees, it's because your form suffers and it allows excessive forward movement of the knees. I said excessive because some forward

movement is natural and inevitable when doing squats. It's the excessive that puts a huge stress on the knees.

If deadlifting hurts your back, that's because you're using more weights than you can handle and your lower back is rounding.

Learn how to properly execute these two exercises and practice them.

5. You can reduce the size of your belly by doing sit-ups

In the fitness community, there is this term called "spot reduction." It is the belief that one can shrink a particular body part by targeting it with specific exercises, such as doing sit-ups in an effort to lose fat around the stomach area.

I'm sorry, but spot reduction does not work.

If you want to lose fat on your belly, a thousand sit-ups a day won't reduce it, nor a thousand bicep curls will remove fat on your arms.

The amount of body fat you possess on certain areas of your body is largely dictated by your genetic makeup.

Therefore, the only way to lose your fat belly is to lose fat overall…or you can try liposuction if you want.

We should also take note that this applies to every fat inside the body, including the fat on our face. This seems to be a problem for people like me who are always hesitant when it comes to losing weight, unless it's summer, when the beach becomes a huge bodybuilding stage.

Having a long face, dropping a few pounds causes me to look stressed and fugly, and as this section says, there's no way I can prevent fat from leaving my face area. So, what I've been doing now is finding that sweet spot where both of my face and body look okay.

Luckily for others, they look great in a lower body fat percentage.

Well, you just gotta accept and love yourself, bruh.

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6. Women will get bulky when they lift weights.

True, if the woman injects shitloads of steroids.

It's funny because women think that lifting weights will turn them into incredible Hulks overnight. That's the problem we men like to have.

The truth is, women won't build as much muscle mass as men no matter how hard they train because their bodies don't produce enough testosterone, the primary muscle-building hormone in the body.

That's a fact.

The average male produces ten times more testosterone than the average female, and you can see that some of these men can't even build muscles after years of training. Just imagine that.

So, unless you plan on taking steroids or some of your friends are secretly putting anabolic drugs on everything you eat, you have very little to worry about.

7. High reps for fat loss and muscle definition.

A common error that I always notice at the gym is when people switch to lighter weights and higher reps during a "fat loss" program, or when they want more muscle "definition." They think that doing high reps will help them achieve those…

Wrong.

First, muscle definition is 100% determined by the amount of body fat that it covers. A more "defined" muscle is a bigger muscle plus a lower body fat percentage, so it's just obvious that you can give your muscles more definition by growing them and losing a bit of fat.

That's the problem with doing high reps—it doesn't build as much muscle mass as heavier weights! Thus, it won't give your muscles more definition.

Second, lighter weights and higher repetitions don't burn fat better than heavier weights with low to moderate repetitions. This rep range is ideal for aerobic-type of training and it works only the slow twitch or the endurance type of muscle fibers, which don't have the potential for growth. And remember, building muscle mass is correlated with burning fat—the more muscles you have, the more fat you burn. That's science.

Sure, you can burn an extra ounce of calories by doing more repetitions, but why not just do cardio instead if burning calories is your goal? That would be more effective.

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If building a great physique is what we're after, we can say that lifting light weights for higher repetitions is a complete waste of time.

The amount of resistance and repetition scheme that you use to build muscle when you are bulking up should also be the same as when you're trying to lose weight. The ideal rep range is from 5-10 reps, depending on the muscle group.

8. If you are not sore, your workout is not effective

Delayed Onset Muscle Soreness (DOMS), the addictive pain we're feeling the day after we exercise, is not an indication of muscle growth nor the effectiveness of a workout. It is just a side-effect from the lifting and especially the lowering of the weights which creates micro-trauma to the muscle's connective tissues.

Many bodybuilders and athletes train without any desire to experience such pain as it impedes their training performance, yet they grow like weeds.

So, don't treat DOMS as a badge of honor and a gateway leading to your gains. Instead, focus on workout progression. That's the best measurement of any workout's effectiveness.

9. Lifting weights will stunt growth.

I kept hearing this when I was still in my teenage years. Little did I know that I should've taken advantage of this time because of the surging hormones puberty creates.

When you hit the puberty stage, all the hormones necessary for growth are at their peak. These hormones are what bodybuilders and freaks look for when they inject and take steroids. So, if you're young and reading this, better do your workout soon and maximize what you have.

Weightlifting is very unlikely to impact negatively on growth. In fact, the reverse is probably true. There are so many studies that suggest the importance of strength training to children and teens.

Done properly, bones and muscles respond positively to exercise and mechanical loading, meaning that growth will be enhanced. In addition, strength training increases HGH and testosterone levels which play a vital role in the further development of bones and muscles.

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10. Sweating means fat is being burned.

No. Sweating means sweating.

Your body sweats as a way to cool down when your body temperature gets too high, and it shouldn't be a basis for how many calories your body burns. What you should be concerned about is how long and how intense your workout is.

If you run for 30 minutes and you haven't broken a drop of sweat, you still burned around 300 calories. Likewise, if you sit there under the sun or inside a sauna, you will sweat like crazy but you will NOT burn calories.

So, don't worry about producing tubs of sweat during your workout. Any weight loss you experience after sweating a lot is only water weight anyway, and you'll gain it right back as soon as you rehydrate yourself.

CHAPTER 6 TAKEAWAYS

10 Workout Myths

1. Fat will turn into muscle when you start lifting
2. You need to achieve muscle "pump" to build muscle.
3. If the guy has a good physique, you should follow his advice.
4. Squats are bad for your knees, and Deadlifts are bad for your back
5. You can reduce the size of your belly by doing sit-ups
6. Women will get bulky when they lift weights
7. High reps for fat loss and muscle definition
8. If you are not sore, your workout is not effective
9. Lifting weights will stunt growth
10. Sweating means fat is being burned

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CHAPTER 7: DIET AND NUTRITION BASICS

So, there you have it. You've learned all about the training philosophies and principles that will dramatically change your physique in less time. You now have some easy-to-follow recipe to execute the best workouts of your life. Now, all you have to do is apply the ideas in the gym, sit back, and wait for muscle size and strength to sky-rocket, right?

Nah. Not that fast.

Do you remember what your goal in the gym is?

If you've listened carefully, then you'd know that your purpose in the gym is to stimulate and damage your muscle fibers in order to trigger an adaptive response from the body. After doing this, the real magic happens when you leave the gym.

Since your muscles have been damaged, your body is in a state of breakdown. Your muscles are starving and waiting for sufficient tools for the recovery and rebuilding to happen. Like a house, it would be physically impossible to construct it without the bricks and other materials, and building muscle is no different.

For that, let's now dive in to the other half of the two grails of building a great physique: Nutrition.

As you may have known, nutrition is another side of the coin: some say it's 50% of the equation, some say it's 90%, and others say it's not as important as working out. Well, I'd say, I'll go for the 50:50 ratio, exercise to nutrition. And oh, you still have 100% for the mindset so it's really 200%.

Huh? The book cover says I can eat anything I want? Now you're saying it's also important? WTH.

Relax. Just because I say it is 50% of the equation doesn't mean I am requiring you to eat healthy meals — stuffing yourself with kamote or sweet potatoes, chicken breast all day, broccoli, all greens, etc. I'm not that kind of guru and even not that kind of person.

Since we've covered the first 50% of the equation, let's now discuss what comprises this whole 50% of nutrition and why it is important if we want to get to our goal physique.

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Important:

I am telling you as early as now, that even if you master the principles of working out but you fail to learn the basic science of diet and nutrition, you will not succeed in your fitness journey.

You've been warned.

CALORIES

Whether your goal is to build muscle, lose weight, increase performance, or just simply maintain, the most important thing you need to learn is getting your calorie intake right.

Not macros, not meal timing, not eating chicken breast and avoiding gluten or any of that stuff — but simply, calorie intake.

If you don't get this aspect right, you're guaranteed to fail in your fitness journey.

By definition, calories are the energy from food or drinks that fuel our body; much like gasoline fuels our car and batteries that make our mobile phones functioning. Without calories, our organs will not function — hearts will stop pumping, lungs will not function, and the brain will not be able to work. In other words, we need calories to survive, and we consume calories each day of our lives.

Yes, I already know that. If we don't eat we will die. What do this have to do with building muscle and getting 6-pack abs?

Calories hold the key, and the only key, to manipulating the numbers on the weighing scale. Regardless of whether you want it up, down, or to stay the same, calories have the answer.

There are two things you need to remember:

If you're not losing weight, that means you have to eat less calories.

If you're not gaining weight (whether muscle or fat), that means you have to eat more calories.

Sadly, most of us can't manipulate our calorie intake simply because we don't know how much calories we need to start with.To further understand, let's go over the basics first.

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Important:

The next section will require you to do mathematical calculations and some metric conversions. I would suggest that you have a calculator with you, and an internet connection in case you don't know how to convert.

CALCULATING THE BMR

All of us have what we call Resting Metabolic Rate (RMR) or Basal Metabolic Rate (BMR). They both have the same meaning. But for the purpose of simplicity, we'll use BMR.

Basal Metabolic Rate, in other terms, simply means our "metabolism." It is our body's individual rate of burning calories while we're at rest. In other words, even if we're not doing something and we're just lying in bed 24 hours a day, we're still burning calories.

Now, to get us a step closer in determining our daily caloric needs, we need to calculate our BMR first. We need to do this because as I've said, all of us have different BMR. To do this, we're going to use two formulas:

1. Harris-Benedict Formula (Less accurate, but no need to know your body-fat percentage)

To do this using a calculator, I would recommend using this link.

To do this manually, use this calculation:

Men (kg):

BMR = 88 + (13.4 x weight in kilos) + (4.8 x height in cm) – (5.7 x age in years)

Men (lbs:)

BMR = 88 + (6.1 x weight in lbs) + (12.2 x height in inches) – (5.7 x age in years)

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Women (kg):

BMR = 448 + (9.2 x weight in kilos) + (3.1 x height in cm) – (4.3 x age in years)

Women (lbs):

BMR = 448 + (4.2 x weight in lbs) + (7.9 x height in inches) – (4.3 x age in years)

Using myself an example:

I'm 5'10" (177.8cm), and I weigh 75kg (165lbs)

To calculate my BMR using the above formula, I will use the (kg) method.

BMR = 88 + (13.4 x 75[my weight in kg]) + (4.8 x 177.8[my height in cm]) - (5.7 x 27[my age])

First, we need to solve the equations inside the parenthesis first. So, it will look like this:

88 + (13.4 x 75) + (4.8 x 177.8) - (5.7 x 27)

88 + (1,005) + 853.44 - 153.9

1,093 + 853.44 - 153. 9

BMR = 1,792.54

My BMR is 1,792.54 (You can just round it off to 1792).

If you're obese, then the above formula will overestimate your BMR, and if you are very lean, then the above formula will underestimate your BMR. Therefore, I prefer to use the Katch-McArdle BMR Formula. This requires us to calculate body-fat percentage, but I have a guide for this.

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2. Katch-McArdle Formula (More accurate, if you have a good idea of your body-fat percentage)

To do this using a calculator, I would recommend using this link.

To do it manually, use this formula:

(kg)

BMR (men and women) = 370 + (21.6 x lean mass in kg)

(lbs)

BMR (men and women) = 370 + (9.8 x lean mass in lbs)

Using the calculator above, I set my weight in KG and my body fat to 10%.

I got 1,828 using this formula, which is quite close to Harris Benedict Formula (1792.54).

I can use any number between them and still be in a safe position.

CALCULATING THE TDEE

Now, after calculating the BMR, we will now calculate our Total Daily Energy Expenditure (TDEE). This is your BMR + activity multiplier.

If your BMR is your rate of energy expenditure when you're at rest, your TDEE is your energy expenditure taking into account your daily lifestyle.

Take note, you don't have to be 100% precise with the calculations. Just do your best estimate and we'll adjust along the way.

To calculate your TDEE, multiply your BMR to these numbers (just estimate):

Sedentary lifestyle - little to no exercise. Spend most of the day sitting (bank teller, office, desk job):

BMR x 1.2

Lightly active - training/sports 2-3 days a week, or someone who spends a good part of the day standing (teacher, salesman, models):

BMR x 1.375

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Active - training/sports 3-5 days/week, or someone whose job has a lot of physical activity (mailman, waiter):

BMR x 1.55

Very active - training/sports 6-7 days a week. or someone whose day requires heavy physical activity (carpenter, athlete):

BMR x 1.725

Using myself as an example, I would choose the Lightly Active (x 1.375) multiplier because I only train three days a week, plus my work (freelancing and writing) requires me to sit in front of a laptop all day.

To get my TDEE:

BMR x 1.375 = TDEE

1,792.54 x 1.375 = 2,464.74

My TDEE is 2,464.74, or I can just round it off to 2500.

From the calculations above, we now have our approximate TDEE. TDEE is the same as your maintenance level of calories — the amount of calories you can take without losing or gaining weight. Let's say you've calculated a TDEE of 2500, if you eat 2500 calories for the day for seven days, your weight will be the same.

It's important to know that these calculations are not 100% accurate, but most likely to be our best guess, and that's good enough.

SETTING TARGETS: BUILD MUSCLE, OR LOSE FAT?

Legend:

*Cutting phase = losing weight phase

*Bulking phase = gaining weight phase

Next thing we must do is set our goal: Lose fat (cut), or gain muscle (bulk)?

But before that, I want to shed some light on the bigger picture of this whole fitness game.

I know most of us have the same goal in mind — build muscle and lose fat at the same time. But to give you some perspective, and to avoid future disappointments, I want to tell you that there's a possibility that this may not happen.

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Generally speaking, losing fat and building muscle at the same time is downright difficult, if not impossible. The only people who could achieve this are those who are on steroids, those who are completely new to working out, or those who have exceptional genetics.

Now if you're properly training for over a year or two, don't expect that you can build muscle and lose fat at the same time. If you're fat, and your goal is to lose weight, focus on just losing weight and maintaining your muscle and strength. You don't have to worry about gaining muscle at this point because there's a high possibility that it's not going to happen. Like we've discussed in the workout section, you may even lose strength, and therefore, even lose muscle because you're not providing your body with enough calories. This is normal.

When trying to lose weight, your goal is to maintain strength and maintain muscle mass while reducing fat. And when you've already shed some fat and you hit your target weight, it is now time to bulk up and build muscle.

That's it. You only pick one goal before doing the next.

Are we clear on that?

THE CUTTING PHASE: HOW MUCH FAT CAN YOU LOSE IN A WEEK?

To answer that, let's look at this chart:

Body fat %	Weekly fat loss
More than 30%	~2.5 lbs / 1.1 kg
20-30%	~2 lbs / 0.9 kg
15-20%	1.25-1.5 lbs / 0.45-0.7 kg
12-15%	1-1.25 lbs / 0.45-0.6 kg
9-12%	0.75-1 lbs / 0.35-0.45 kg
7-9%	0.5-0.75 lbs / 0.2-0.35 kg
<7%	~0.5 lbs / 0.2 kg

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These numbers are just mere and safe guidelines, and they're not etched in stone. The higher ends of the numbers are the safe estimates, meaning they are the safest fat loss rate that a person can achieve without losing any muscle.

A general rule to follow and a healthy weight loss goal to aim for is -1 pound a week.

Now, how do you adjust your calculations to achieve this fat loss rate?

To further understand…

A pound of fat requires a deficit of 3500 calories. So, TDEE - 3500.

So, in order to lose that, we're not going to starve ourselves for two days to reach the 3500 deficit because most likely, our muscles will be sacrificed that way.

Instead, we're going to aim for a healthy weight loss goal without (much) muscle loss. That's the goal. So, to lose a pound in a week, what we'll do is divide 3500 to 7, because 1 week = 7 days.

3500 divided 7 = 500 calories

We'll now subtract 500 to our TDEE.

Let's say our TDEE is 2500, subtract 500 and we'll get 2000. This number (2000), will now be our daily calorie target to lose a pound in a week.

Are you following? Let's do a recap again.

Why 2000? Because we subtracted 500 from 2500.

And why 500? Because 500 each day will add up to 3500 calories in a week, and 3500 calories is equal to 1 pound of fat.

If you do this right, you'll step up on the weighing scale and you will see a deduction of 1lb of bodyweight.

And if you need to lose more than a pound a week, just do your calculations based on the 3500 calories = 1lb of fat.

E.g.

You want to lose 1.5lbs a week.

3500 x 1.5 = 5250

5250 divided 7 = 750

Deduct 750 to your TDEE and that would be your daily caloric intake to lose 1.5lbs a week.

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Adjustments:

- If weight drops too quickly, there is a potential risk of muscle loss. Up your calories a bit.
- If weight remains the same or you're not losing as quickly as you want, drop your calories a bit more.
- Adjustments should be done slowly and not drastically. An increment of 100-200 calories per day is enough. Monitor again.
- Your daily caloric needs is constantly changing as your weight changes. Calculate your new TDEE once in a while.

Important:

We should note that the calculations made are solely based on diets alone, and no cardio or any type of exercise is included in this computation. If you're going to do your cardio, which I would suggest to go no longer than 30-40 minutes, you also have to consider that.

20-30 minutes cardio will burn around 200-400 calories, depending on the intensity. Don't rely much on exercise when it comes to fat loss, as it doesn't have as much impact as getting your diet on point.

THE BULKING PHASE: HOW MUCH MUSCLE CAN YOU GAIN IN A WEEK OR IN A MONTH?

What I'm about to say here might disappoint you or motivate you: muscle growth is a very slow process.

This is a chart that Alan Aragon, one of the most well-known experts in the field, made:

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Alan Aragon Model

Rates of realstic LBM gain based on training status*		
Training status	**Definition**	**Monthly gain (% total BW)**
Novice	Less than 2 years consistent training	1 - 1.5% (1.5 - 2lbs)
Intermediate	2-4 years consistent training	0.5 - 1% (0.8 - 1.5lbs)
Advanced	More than 4 years of consistent training	0.25 - 0.5% (0.4 - 0.8lbs)

* women can expect to acheive the lower end of these figures

And another one from the great Lyle Mcdonald:

*I suggest you read about these two guys so you'll know that what we're discussing here are facts.

Year of Proper Training	Potential Rate of Muscle Gain per Year
1	20-25 pounds (2 pounds per month)
2	10-12 pounds (1 pound per month)
3	5-6 pounds (0.5 pound per month)
4+	2-3 pounds (not worth calculating)

As you can see, muscle growth is indeed a very slow process. This is assuming you're not on steroids or any other performance enhancing drugs. These charts will also tell you who are on to something and who are mere naturals.

A novice/beginner can only gain 0.375 - 0.5 pounds a week.

An intermediate can only gain 0.2 - 0.375 pounds a week.

An advanced lifter can only gain 0.1 - 0.2 pounds a week.

Now, can you see how training six-seven times a week is absurd? Of course, those who are on steroids can do well with that type of training.

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Depending on your level of training, we can determine how you can make adjustments to your diet for the purpose of increasing muscle mass.

For now, let's talk about the basics of bulking.

BULKING 101

If you're trying to gain weight, whether in a form of muscle or fat, then you're in a bulking phase. This means that you're eating more calories than your maintenance level or your TDEE.

The unfortunate thing in bulking is, it's much more difficult to determine how many calories to add each day because we don't have the exact (or close enough) number of calories in a pound of muscle. Unlike in cutting, it's much easier because we know that 3500 calories is equivalent to a pound of fat.

So, it's really a trial and error when in a bulking phase. You have to find your own rate of muscle gain.

With that said, there are **three ways to bulk**:

Dirty Bulk - this is what powerlifters and sumo wrestlers do. They just eat whatever they want as long as they're eating above their TDEE. They don't really care how many calories they're consuming. If it's over the maintenance level, then that's fine.

500-1000+ calories above maintenance each day is normal when doing the dirty bulk.

Controlled Bulk - this is the kind of bulk that tests your muscle growth rate capacity by going slightly above your maintenance level, knowing at first hand that some fat gain will happen.

Let's say you're training for over two years now, and you know that your muscle gains have slowed down. You will still try your luck and hope that the extra calories that you will consume each day will all be used for muscle growth, much like what beginners experience.

Going around 400-500 calories above maintenance each day is normal.

Slow Bulk or Lean Bulk - this is the strictest and slowest of them all. This is the kind of bulk that will allow you stay very lean year-round. You add very little calories to your maintenance level and progress from there.

This bulk is for people who are already very familiar with how their body responds to food, and for those who stay at a certain body fat levels while still gaining very slowly. One of the cons is, of course, it is slow.

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Around 200 calories above maintenance each day is normal, or even less.

It's really up to you on how you want to do your bulk.

If you want to gain maximum muscle mass without caring about fat gains, go either with dirty bulk or controlled bulk.

If you want a slower gains but have abs the whole year, go for lean bulk.

The key is monitoring your calories each day.

Adjustments:

- If weight is gained too quickly, most likely fat is gained as well. Decrease calories a bit.
- If weight gain is not happening or it's not quick enough, increase calories a bit.
- Adjustments should be done slowly and not drastically. An increment of 100-200 calories per day is enough. Monitor again.
- Your daily caloric needs is constantly changing as your weight changes. Calculate your new TDEE once in a while.

SHOULD YOU BULK OR CUT FIRST?

The answer is, it depends. These are the factors to consider:

1. Your personal preference

Do you want to be skinnier or fatter? You only have to pick your poison.

Cutting pros and cons:

Pros

- You will lose fat
- You will get to see your abs sooner
- Once leaner, you will have built a solid base for the bulking phase and it'll be easier for you to build muscle while staying lean (lean bulking)

Cons

- You will get skinnier
- Cutting is not the optimal time to build muscle, so you will build less muscle or even not

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- You will get hungry
- Cutting is not the optimal time to build strength

Bulking pros and cons:

Pros

- Bulking is the optimal time to build muscle, so most likely you'll build a lot provided you're training smart and recovering
- Bulking is the optimal time to build strength, so you will get strong
- More food!

Cons

- You will gain fat (yes, even on lean bulk)
- Abs will fade
- The longer you bulk, the more you get fat, and the longer you need to cut later on. Longer cut means higher risk of muscle loss and longer time to be in a sub-optimal time to build muscle and strength

2. Your body fat %

For non-competitive athletes/bodybuilders who just want to look good, I'd say 11% - 17% body fat is the range considered to be pleasing to the eye. But again, it still depends on you. Some people are more comfortable at around 20% body fat and they'd choose the "bear" look over abs anytime of the day.

Following the 11% - 17% range, if you're at the higher end or above, you may want to cut first until you're at the lower end -- and vice versa.

If you have no idea what your body fat % is, there are a couple of ways to measure it using only a tape measure and a calculator. You can do a quick Google search and you'll have loads of site appearing right in front of you.

One thing to remember is, there is no 100% accurate way to measure your body fat %. Different methods will always give you different results, but that's ok. We just need to have an idea where we're coming from.

If you want a visual representation of how body fat percentages look like, check this link.

-- https://www.builtlean.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/body-fat-percentage-men.jpg

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HOW LONG SHOULD YOU BULK OR CUT?

The answer again is, it depends. You'd want to set either a body fat % target, a weight target, or a timeline.

This is how I'd do it:

- I will bulk/cut until I'm xxx% body fat, then do the opposite after reaching the target
- I will bulk/cut until I'm xxx lbs, then do the opposite after reaching the target
- I will bulk/cut for 12-16 weeks, then do the opposite afterwards

Important note:

If not competing, it is okay not to be strict about your targets. If you hit your body fat %, weight, or time target and you're still not satisfied with the results, you can still continue your bulk/cut for as long as you want.

This usually happens to people who carry a lot of fat around the midsection area. They think that reaching a certain body fat % will reveal their abs, only to find out that they underestimated their target and need to cut more.

MACRONUTRIENTS

When people refer to "macros," what they're talking about are the three macronutrients:

Protein

Carbohydrate

Fat

These macronutrients comprise your calorie intake, and all foods (except alcohol) have either protein, carbohydrate, fat, or all.

Protein - 1g = 4 calories

Carbohydrate - 1g = 4 calories

Fat - 1g = 9 calories

If you eat a food that has 10g of protein, 1g of carb, and 1g of fat, that food has 53 calories.

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Because looking at the above guidelines,

10x4 + 1x4 + 1x9 = 53 calories

You following?

Let's now go over each of them.

PROTEIN

Protein is probably the most important macronutrient for someone trying to build muscle and lose fat. It helps us recover from our workout, preserves muscle mass when we're dieting, and helps us grow at a faster rate when bulking.

Therefore, a low-protein diet is probably the worst diet of all. Have you heard anyone lifting weights say that he's on a low-protein diet? Smack that guy in the face.

Protein requirements are typically higher for active individuals such as athletes, bodybuilders, and us trying to build a great physique because our muscles need it. However, this doesn't mean that more protein equals more results.

We have to remember that protein, like other macronutrients, contains calories, and calories from whatever source can make you fat. Plus, getting all your calories from protein will leave your wallet very shredded — remember the steak you wanted to order last time but you couldn't because it was expensive?

What we want to find here is the "optimal" amount based on our individual weight, or to be exact, our lean body mass (LBM). The more LBM you have, the more protein you need.

The bodybuilding rule of the thumb for decades, and the one I always recommend to my clients, is 1 gram per pound of bodyweight (or 2.2 grams per kilo gram of bodyweight). It has been proven effective for years so we're not going to invent the wheel here.

So, if you weigh 170lbs, you should get 170 grams of protein per day. It's not a hard-fast rule but it's a pretty good estimate.

And don't forget to calculate your calories from your protein sources.

170 grams of protein = 680 calories (170x4)

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Important:

- If you have a high body fat percentage, you can get away with eating a "little" less protein, but you should aim for a number that's "not too far" from your weight.

- If you're trying to lose weight, you should try to aim higher. The leaner you get, the more protein you need. The reason for this is restricting calories can eat away your hard-earned muscles, and protein is your best friend in this situation. If you're very lean and still trying to lose weight, aim for 1.2 to 1.4 grams per pound of bodyweight, or follow this guideline:

  Cutting = 1g - 1.3g per pound of body weight

  For a 170-lb guy, that's 170g - 221g of protein per day. As you get leaner, your protein requirements should increase as well.

  Bulking = 0.8g - 1g per pound of body weight

  For a 170-lb guy, that's 136g - 170g of protein per day.

- We should note that the government RDA for protein is usually very low. A big difference lies between the lowest end of human needs, which is the government RDA, versus what is optimal for those building muscles and sculpting their body.

- High protein diets are not bad for your kidneys. There are a lot of research and studies that have already dispelled that myth. I will include this in the nutrition myths section.

BEST SOURCES OF PROTEIN

There are two types of protein: *Complete*, and *incomplete*.

Complete proteins are those that contain all nine essential amino acids in sufficient quantities. Some examples are:

Chicken Breasts

Steaks

Whole Eggs

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Egg Whites

Tuna

Salmon

Lean Pork

Lean BeefDairy products (milk, yogurt, whey)

Eggs

These foods should be the bulk of your protein intake.

Incomplete proteins are those that don't contain all nine essential amino acids. Hence, they're *incomplete.* Some examples are:

Nuts & seeds

Legumes

Grains

Vegetables

Just because they're incomplete doesn't mean that they have no use inside your body. They just have to be combined with other proteins to provide the right balance of amino acids.

Getting your protein from incomplete proteins is okay, but getting it from complete proteins is better.

PROTEIN POWDER OR REAL FOOD?

After reading a bit about the protein section, most of you may be well surprised that we need to get that much amount of protein to get optimal results. I don't blame you. I was like that, too. Good news is, protein powders are everywhere.

Downing six cans of tuna or 50-60 egg whites just to get that 150-180 grams of protein isn't easy. I know. That's why protein powders are very useful for hitting your daily protein requirements, not to mention the convenience factor when you don't have any high protein food on the table.

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However, real food should always be your number one choice for protein intake because it's much more filling than the scoops of protein powders. Especially when dieting, hunger is our worst enemy.

On the other hand, getting enough protein from food when bulking can be tough, as not all of us has the appetite to devour a hundred grams of protein a day. Here, a protein powder is your friend.

And do you know when is the time a protein powder is your best friend? After working out — this is the time protein powders are far superior to real foods.

Learning how to combine real food and protein powders can give you the best of both worlds.

PROTEIN FOODS COMMONLY SEEN IN SUPERMARKETS

Aside from the most basic ones such as eggs, chicken breast, lean beef, etc., these are some of the foods that you'll see in the supermarket that will somehow help you reach your protein goals.

Just a fair warning, most of these have high sodium content and consuming excess sodium is bad for your health. Average intake is around 1500-2500mg per day.

Click the item to see the image

Baked Porky Popps (Oishi) — The big one has 22g protein, 1g carb, and 3g of fat

Harvey Fresh Lactose Free Skim Milk (Blue) — I think this around 100 (or less) calories with 9g of protein per glass

Gardenia Amazing Black Forest Loaf — 2 slices will give you 22g of protein

Century Tuna (Solid [not chunks] in Water or Vegetable Oil) — It has 13g of protein per 56g of serving. 1 can will give you around 40g of protein.

Mega Tuna (Flakes in oil) — Also has 13g of protein per serving. A can will give you around 40g.

Flavored Century Tuna (Adobo, Mechado) — A small can will give you 30+g of protein.

Skippy Extra Crunchy Peanut Butter (Blue) — 2 tbsp will give you 7g of protein.

Lily's Peanut Spread Lite — 2 tbsp will give you 8g of protein.

If you know some that didn't make it to this list, please share it in our Facebook group. I'm sure everyone will benefit from it.

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WHERE TO GET HIGH PROTEIN MEALS WHEN EATING OUT

If it's not a birthday party or a gathering where you have a choice in the matter, pick a place where you can order healthy (preferably), high-protein foods.

These are the most common food establishments that the MF group and I came up with (Philippines):

Fast food chains: Chicken (always ask for the breast part)

Jollibee: Champ (high protein and fat though)

Mang Inasal: Chicken breast

Señor Pollo: Roasted Chicken

Conti's: Baked salmon, Roast beef

Max's: Half or Whole chicken

Subway: Roast Beef, Roasted Chicken breast

Kenny Rogers: Roasted chicken or OMG unfried chicken

Army Navy: Fearless Fried Chicken (sarap)

Jamba Juice: Any drink + whey protein

Any restaurant that has STEAK, roasted chicken, chicken breast, tuna, or salmon will satisfy your protein needs. When in doubt, always order additional eggs.

I know there's hundreds and even thousands more that we can add to this list so if you know some, share it in the Facebook group!

FATS

Fats, like carbs, are not bad. They're important for regulating our hormones, especially our most anabolic hormone, testosterone. Lower testosterone means lower muscle growth and slower fat loss. Also, if you drop your fat intake too low, one thing you'll notice is a decrease in sex drive. Would you want that?

Fats, unlike carbs and protein, should be taken with a little more consideration. It's the macronutrient that has the most calories = 9 calories per gram.

While most fats are harmless, the only fat you should stay away from is trans fat. It is an unsaturated fat that's artificially created to increase the food shelf life, and it is not found in nature.

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Many researches have linked several diseases to trans fat, so limit your intake to as low as possible.

Some of the best fat sources are:

Natural Peanut Butter

Avocados

Olive Oil/Flaxseed Oil

Fish Oil -

Almond Butter/Cashew Butter

Almonds

Pecans

Walnuts

Cashews

HOW MUCH FAT SHOULD I TAKE?

If you're cutting, I suggest to limit your fat intake to 20-25% of your total calories for the day. So, if your daily calorie needs are 2500, and you want 25% of your calories from fat, this is how you calculate it:

Daily calorie needs x 25% = daily calories from fat.

2500 x 0.25 = 625 calories from fat.

And since 1g of fat is equivalent to 9 calories, you should divide 625 by 9 to get the grams of fat that you need per day.

625/9 = 69g of fat per day

If you're bulking, I suggest to get 25-30% of your total calories from fat. So, if your daily calorie needs are 2500, and you want 30% of your calories from fat, this is how you calculate it:

Daily calorie needs x 30% = daily calories from fat.

2500 x 0.30 = 750 calories from fat.

And since 1g of fat is equivalent to 9 calories, you should divide 750 by 9 to get the grams of fat that you need per day.

750/9 = 83g of fat per day.

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CARBOHYDRATES

Carbohydrates are the macronutrient that is often misunderstood. Of all three (protein, carb, fat), they are the most avoided — worse than fats! People think carbs are the source of all the fat gains they've had and will have. Thanks to these "nutrition" experts and other so-called ones that have given a bad reputation to this macronutrient.

Well, yes, eating too many carbs will make you fat, just as eating proteins and fats, as all of them have calories in the first place.

The good thing about carbohydrates is that it plays an essential role in building muscle and losing fat. They provide a positive impact on our hormones, fuel us through our workouts and other activities, and they replenish our stores of glycogen, which is the primary source of energy for our muscles. When we run low of it, we run out of fuel faster.

Another benefit carbohydrates give is they spare your muscles from getting used up as energy. Having sufficient carbohydrates in the body prevents amino acids from breaking down into glucose, thus, giving all your proteins the chance to do its thing, which is to repair and build your muscles.

Unlike protein, you have more freedom in controlling how many or how few carbohydrates to eat, depending on caloric intake and energy needs. You can restrict them, but I won't recommend that you eliminate them. If you eliminate them, your workouts will suffer. And if your workouts suffer, your muscle gains will as well. So, what we need to find out is the optimal amount just enough to have an effective workout while not going overboard on our caloric intake.

HOW MUCH CARBS SHOULD I TAKE?

Carb intake for the day is dependent upon the remaining calories left after you've calculated your protein and fat needs. Think of carbs as the balancing equation to fill in the calorie space left.

If you need 2500 calories for the day, and you already calculated 2000 calories from fats and protein, then the remaining 500 calories should be from carbs.

Don't be so strict about this. You can experiment with adjusting your fat and carb needs, but leave protein on the high range (1g - 1.4g per pound of body weight) regardless if you're bulking or cutting.

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SIMPLE CARBS VS. COMPLEX CARBS

Carbohydrates are categorized into two types: Simple, and Complex.

Simple Carbohydrates

Simple carbs are those soft in texture. They are easily digestible and they are rapidly absorbed in the bloodstream. Eating plenty of this type of carbohydrate will cause energy spikes because of the heightened blood sugar, which can be good and bad depending on the situation.

Some food examples are:

Sugars (any sugars)

White Rice

Rice Cakes

White Bread

Potatoes

Candies

Desserts

Soft Drinks

Fruit Juices

Simple carbs, though they give a quick burst of energy, have a downside of their own. Consuming plenty of them triggers the body to release the hormone insulin, whose function is to lower the blood sugar levels by delivering the excess glucose to either your liver, muscles, or fat stores. By releasing insulin, heightened energy from the blood sugar spikes will suddenly go down, causing a "crash" in the energy levels. This is the feeling of tiredness and sleepiness you get after consuming a high carb meal.

Simple carbs aren't bad at all; they just have to be consumed at the right times. They're best taken immediately after your workout, for your post workout meal, because glycogen stores inside the muscle cells are depleted at this point and insulin is a very anabolic state at this time.

A spike in insulin levels are only bad when it is triggered any other time aside from post workout.

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Complex Carbohydrates

Complex carbs are long-changed simple carbs (three or more) that are bind together. These are slowly digested in the bloodstream.

Some examples are:

Brown Rice

Oats

Pasta

Nuts

Legumes

Sweet potato (Kamote)

All-bran

Whole Grains

Most Vegetables (exceptions- carrots, corn, root vegetables)

Complex carbs don't give a quick burst of energy unlike simple carbs. Instead, they supply a steady flow of carbohydrates in the bloodstream. Since they don't trigger the release of insulin in the body, it's an ideal carb source to take throughout the day aside from your post workout meal.

The majority of people call it the "good" carbs.

THE "PERFECT" MACRONUTRIENT RATIO

The percentage and numbers for each macronutrient in the above recommendations are mere guidelines. To tell you the truth, there is no perfect macronutrient ratio. You really have to find what suits you best and what will make what you're doing sustainable in the long term.

Like what I've recommended, I am keeping my protein intake high and just juggling between carbs and fats. That's what I found works best for me and I enjoy every bit of my day following my own recommendation.

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If the macronutrient guidelines and calculations confused you, or if you didn't bother calculating, you can just follow the International Sports Sciences Association (ISSA) macro recommendations:

Ectomorph: Ectomorphs are naturally thin, with skinny and long limbs (think of NBA players). They have a fast metabolism and have a high tolerance for carbohydrates. A good starting macronutrient ratio for an ectomorph would be something like 25% protein, 20% fat, and 55% carbs.

Let's say you've determined that you need 3000 calories for the day. This is the breakdown of your macronutrients:

3000 x 0.25 = 750 calories from protein, divide by 4 = 187.5g of protein per day.

3000 x 0.20 = 600 calories from fat, divide by 9 = 66.7g of fat per day.

3000 x 0.55 = 1650 calories from carbs, divide by 4 = 412g of carbs per day.

Mesomorph: Mesomorphs are naturally muscular and athletic. They have an average metabolism and moderate carbohydrate tolerance. A good starting macronutrient for a mesomorph would be 30% protein, 30% fat, and 40% carb.

Again, if you need 3000 calories for the day, this is your macronutrient breakdown:

3000 x 0.30 = 900 calories from protein, divide 4 = 225g of protein per day.

3000 x 0.30 = 900 calories from fat, divide by 9 = 100g of fat per day.

3000 x 0.40 = 1200 calories from carbs, divide by 4 = 300g of carbs per day.

Endomorph: Endomorphs are the soft, chubby ones. They are the ones who easily gain weight. They have a low carbohydrate tolerance and a higher sensitivity to insulin. Remember insulin? If you're an endomorph, your good starting macronutrient ratio would be 35% protein, 40% fat, and 25% carbs.

Using 3000 calories again, your macronutrient breakdown would be:

3000 x 0.35 = 1050 calories from protein, divide by 4 = 262.5g of protein per day.

3000 x 0.40 = 1200 calories from fat, divide, by 9 = 133.3g of fat per day.

3000 x 0.25 =750 calories from carbs, divide by 4 = 187g of carbs per day.

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Again, these are just safe estimates. I suggest you experiment and see what works for you. Just stick close to the percentage of the macronutrients and you'll be fine.

What I've noticed is people tend to go overboard with carbs, making their macronutrient ratio 70% carbs, 20% fat, and 10% protein. I have plenty of friends that can easily finish 4 cups of rice with only 2 hotdogs as their viand, plus ketchup.

However, that isn't good for building muscle and burning fat.

CALORIE/MACRO CYCLING

We've calculated above the daily calories and macronutrient ratios that we need each day depending on our goals, but do we have to be so strict with them? I mean, should we eat exactly 2500 calories each day, seven days a week?

Should we? Yes. But do we need to? No. We can be more flexible than that.

First, determining our daily calories removes the complications that we might encounter on our diet. Simply eating 2500 calories each day or whatever amount you've calculated is straightforward. So, if you do not want to get confused and stressed any more, stick to the same calories and macro ratios each day.

But if you want to get the taste of more freedom and enjoyment yet with an added little work, continue reading.

Calorie and macro cycling means that you switch up your calorie and macros for your training days, and rest days (or any day that you want), but you still stick to the same total calories for the week.

This means that you're going look at your weight loss or weight gain plan in a weekly view, not daily.

Let's say your daily caloric needs are 2500. A typical diet would go like this:

Day 1 = 2500 calories

Day 2 = 2500 calories

Day 3 = 2500 calories

Day 4 = 2500 calories

Day 5 = 2500 calories

Day 6 = 2500 calories

Day 7 = 2500 calories

Total = 17500 calories

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When doing calorie/macro cycling, assuming you also need 2500 calories per day, your days would go like this:

Day 1 = 3000 calories

Day 2 = 2000 calories

Day 3 = 2800 calories

Day 4 = 2200 calories

Day 5 = 3100 calories (because Friday is party day)

Day 6 = 2800 calories (another party day but don't do it)

Day 7 = 1900 calories

Total = 17500 calories

The idea here is to eat a lot more on training days (Day 1,3,5), and less on rest days. Studies have shown that this way of eating promotes a positive effect on both muscle gains and fat loss because you're giving more nutrients to the body when it needs it most.

I've done it for years and prefer it more than the typical 2500 calories a day of eating because it's more fun to eat extra calories after a workout.

Go try it and monitor your results.

REFEEDS

This is another fun topic to talk about.

Others call it "cheat" days, we will call it "refeed" days. The idea here is to go beyond your total calories for the day, not only to reward ourselves for a job well done at the gym, but also to boost our muscle growth and fat loss.

How can a refeed day do that?

Refeeds have a psychological and physiological benefit to us human beings. When we're dieting, the hormone Leptin, which is a satiety hormone, plummets, and in turn makes us hungrier and hungrier each day. When we do refeeds, we boost this leptin level and we feel full and satisfied, ready to go on bouts of dieting again. This will prevent us from giving in to temptations and messing up our whole dieting plan. It will also boost our body's natural fat burning process by raising our metabolism.

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A refeed day is not an eat-all-you-can indulgence. It only requires you to up your calories by up to 10-15% more, and most calories should come from carbs. The best way to do a refeed day is the rest day before you work out. In my case, I do it on Sunday.

If my daily calories are 2500, my refeed day should be around 2875-3000 calories — about 15-20% addition to my daily needs.

Some people can go about 25-30% more on refeed days, depending on how intense their diets are and how lean they are. Again, these are mere guidelines. It would still be best to experiment and know where you respond best.

Like what I've said in the beginning of this book, I won't only teach you how to do this and that, but I will also teach you how to help yourself.

Important:

Refeeds are mostly used and beneficial for those who are dieting. If you're on a bulking stage, you can skip doing refeeds or use it sparingly.

When to do refeeds?

If fairly lean (10-11% body fat or lower), do it once a week and see how your body responds.

If more than 10% body fat, do it once every 2-3 weeks.

DIET BREAKS

Depending on your starting stats and progress, I would recommend a diet break once every 12-16 weeks of continuous dieting.

What's a diet break? It's eating at your maintenance for 1-2 weeks when weight loss already slows down or comes to a halt despite many attempts at reducing caloric intake.

It's like a week-long or two of refeeds, but not going past your maintenance.

I know some of you have seen people who eat so little calories and yet won't lose weight. It's because their metabolism has slowed down and they're in starvation mode when their body does its best to conserve energy because it thinks that its survival is threatened. The solution for this is to bring back their intake to maintenance so to "reset" the metabolism clock.

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For this, you don't exactly need to recalculate your TDEE to know your baseline (because you've lost probably a lot of weight at this point). Just add 300-500 calories to your current intake and run it for a week or two. Afterwards, you may resume your cutting phase until you experience a slowdown/plateau again.

Diet break reasons:

- Psychological benefits
- To reset your metabolism as dieting can slow it down

What to expect:

- Your weight will go up, but that's ok. Yes, it is possible that there will be little fat gain, but most of your the weight gain you'll have will be from water retention and your muscles filling with glycogen
- You may feel bloated and fatter

Last note

As you get leaner, the need for diet breaks becomes more and more important. Starting at a higher body fat level, you may want to start at 12-16 weeks (depending on your progress) before doing a diet break.

Later, once you get noticeably leaner, you may find that you need to do a diet break shorter than 12-16 weeks to keep your sanity and progress running, and that's okay. If you feel like your progress has been slowing down on the 8th week even after lowering your calories even more, go on, take that break.

STARVATION MODE: VERY LOW CALORIES AND STILL NOT LOSING WEIGHT?

Meet Rob.

Rob is 22 years old, 6 feet tall, and weighs 260lbs with 30% body fat. Obviously, he's on the heavy side and he needs to lose weight.

3 months ago, he enrolled himself at a gym and hired a personal trainer. His 3-month plan is like this:

Cardio for an hour 4x a week

Circuit training for an hour 2x a week

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His diet consists of a handful of fruits, oatmeal, and some leafy veggies and protein shakes. Basically, he consumes around 1000-1200 calories a day, and that's a huge deficit for his size.

3 months have passed and he's lost a whopping 2 pounds! Maybe half of that is even water weight.

So, how did that happen? Rob was on a huge caloric deficit (1200 calories per day) and he's also in the gym 6x a week yet he's not seeing progress!

The answer is...]

Starvation mode.

"Starvation mode," or sometimes called "metabolic damage," is the body's natural response to long-term caloric restriction.

When this happens, your body will respond by reducing your caloric expenditure (the amount of calories you burn) in an attempt to maintain energy balance and prevent starvation.

Despite reducing calories even more, as per Rob, your body fights back, doing everything it can to make you stop losing because it feels its survival is threatened.

The solution?

(See Diet Break section)

Depending on the length of the restriction, Rob needs to bring back his calories to maintenance for a period of time to allow his hormones to recover and return back to normal. Afterwards, he must avoid drastically cutting calories or else he will face the same problem again.

Update:

12 weeks since his 3-week diet break, Rob has lost over 15 pounds and he's the happiest he's ever been.

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USING MYFITNESSPAL TO TRACK EVERYTHING

You now know your calorie and macro needs… what's next? How do you determine each food's calories?

Of all the calorie counting apps and software, many choose MyFitnessPal for the simple reason that it's free and that it has a very huge food database (over 5 million and counting).

This health and fitness app is also very easy to use, being an on-the-go tool to help you manage your eating habits, physical activities, calories, macros, water intake, and so much more.

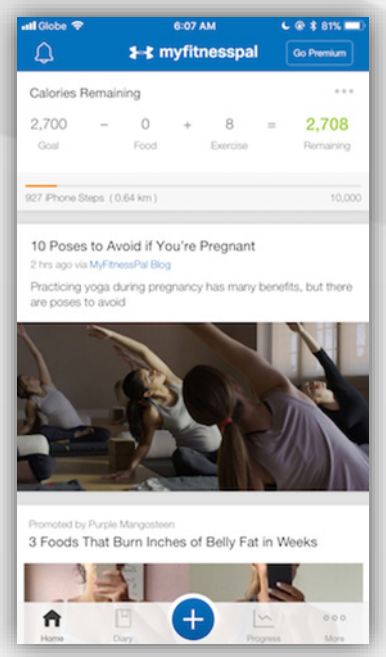
With all that said, the most important feature that we will use most of the time is its calorie and macro tracking feature.

But to get started with it, follow this guide:

PART 1: GETTING STARTED

STEP 1: Sign up

Once you've successfully downloaded it on your phone, open it, sign up, then follow the on-screen instructions.



Once done, you'll be taken to the "Home Page."

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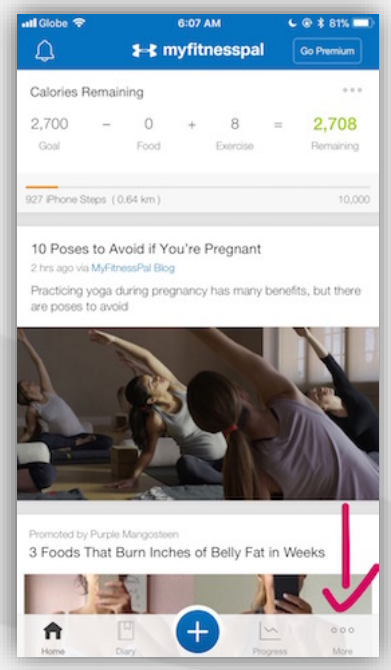
STEP 2: Set nutrition goals — Important!

The app will automatically calculate your daily calorie and macro needs, depending on the info and goal that you provided.

But here's the next step.

Remember the calculations that you made earlier when you computed your TDEE, protein, fat, and carb needs? I would suggest to follow that rather than relying on the app's computation.

You can go to the app, then tap "More." After that, you will see a lot more options.



STEP 3: Choose "Goals."

Step: 4 Below the "Nutrition Goals," tap "Calorie & Macronutrient Goals."

From there, you can set your daily calorie and macro targets based on your computations above.

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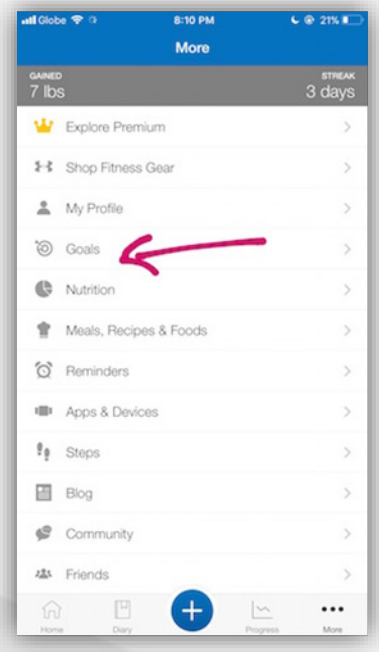
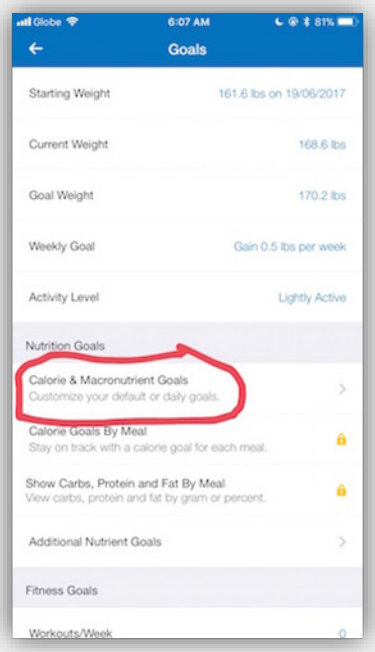
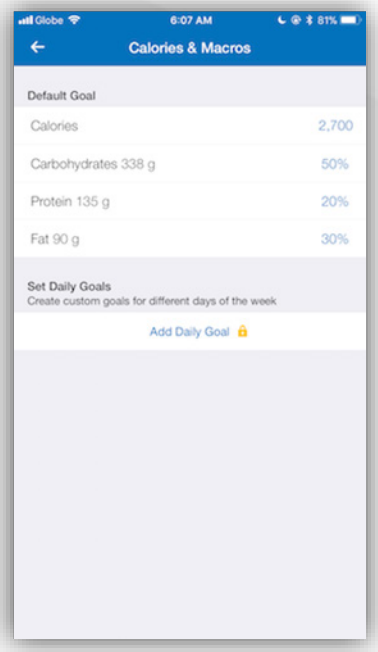


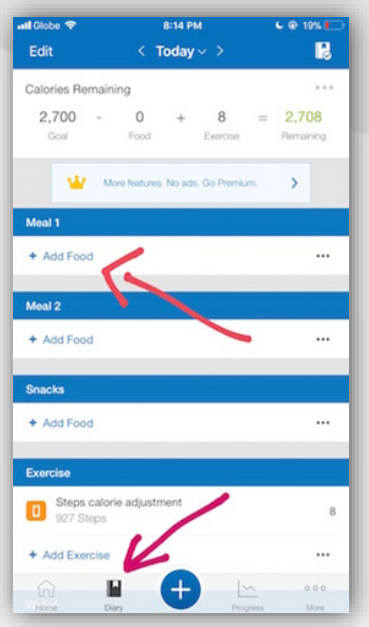




PART 2: FOOD INTAKE

STEP 5: Look for the food diary and enter food items.

If you're ready, enter your food item and then press "Add Food." Choose which meal is that – breakfast, lunch, dinner or snack (or Meal 1, 2, 3).



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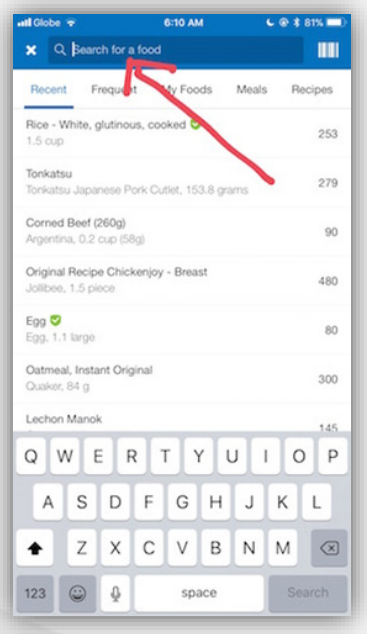
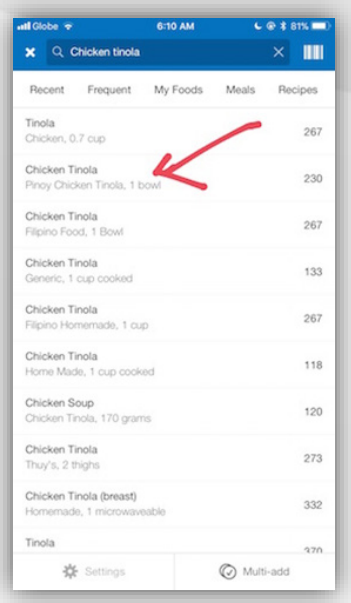
STEP 6: Choose the food to add in the diary.

Example: You've selected a food item for "lunch." Look for the area saying, "Search for food."



Type the food item to list.

STEP 7: Pick foods.



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Look for the oval search bar to start searching for food.

With your keyboard, enter what you had for the meal. When done, tap the blue "Search" button.

From the search results, look for foods, each with its title and small description, calorie count and portion size.

If you had Chicken Tinola, then look for that. If you had Pork Adobo, then choose that.

If you can't find the exact food you're looking for, just choose one that closely resembles what you had.

If the food is branded, like some type of oatmeal or cereal, it's a good idea to spend some time scrolling through to find the right brand as there can be huge differences between one brand and another.

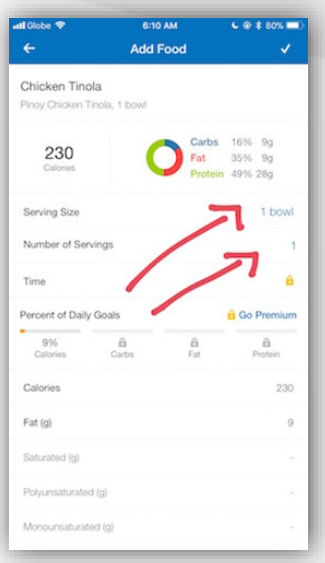
Choose this food item and tap it.

Important:

A lot of times, especially when you're the type of person who always eats out, you won't be able to find the foods in the database. The best thing you can do is pick one that closely resembles the foods that you've taken and just trust the process. Remember, measurements don't have to be perfect, but you have to be closely accurate when logging. Do your best and just adjust along the way.

STEP 8: Enter the food to the Food Diary.

When you've chosen the food item, you can modify the number of servings you had by tapping the area saying, "Number of Servings."



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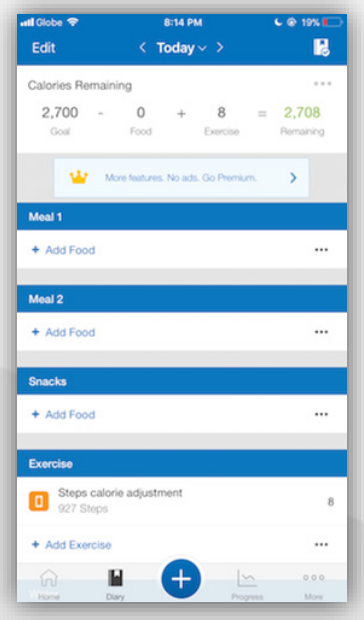
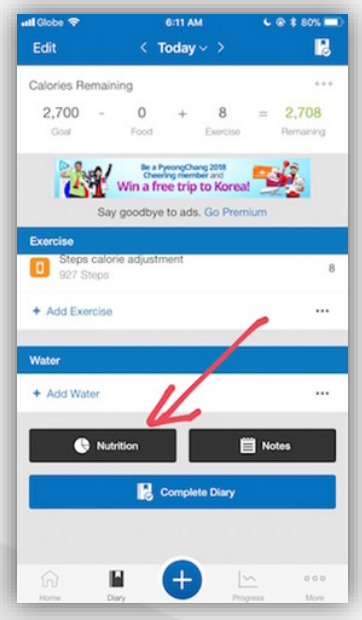
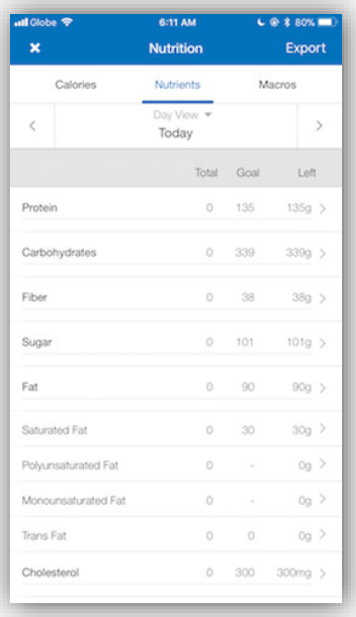
From that, scroll until you reach the number of servings you had. If you only ate half of that tasty burger, then select half serving.

Press the white check mark when finished adding the food to your Food Diary.

You will then be redirected to your Diary's main page.







STEP 9: Find the number of calories and macros you consumed and remaining number in the "Nutrition" tab at the bottom of the Diary's main page

That's it. The most important part is done. I only use MyFitnessPal to track my calories and macros, but if you want to use its other function such as tracking water intake, exercise, sodium, saturated fat, etc., feel free to do so.

I suggest you learn a bit more about the app and spend some more time with it.

Tracking/Logging Tips:

- Commit to using the app for a period of time.
- You don't have to get hung up on the numbers. Your MyFitnessPal is yours -- it's personalized. It has your own set of rules that you alone can judge more accurately.
- If you're going to use Yum Burger #1, just use it consistently for the rest of your life. If you used White Rice #3 when you had one yesterday, then continue using it. If you logged Tapsilog #5 when you ate at a specific karinderya, then always use that one whenever you eat at that spot again.

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If it's a homecooked spaghetti meal, find an entry in the MyFitnessPal database that you think fits, then use that. It won't matter if other people use Yum Burger #2 or Tapsilog #7 as that's their own MyFitnessPal rules. Don't complicate things.

- Remember, MyFitnessPal will get better and better the more you use it. You'll get the most of it if you are consistent even though at first, your inputs might be inaccurate, and that's okay. As time goes by, you'll learn how to adjust and your record will tell you if you're doing it right. The key here is consistency.

- To add accuracy, get a food scale.

By tracking everything, you can reach your goals faster (weight loss, improved health, muscle growth, etc.). And for that purpose, using an app like MyFitnessPal is the smarter approach. It helps improve your effort and reach your target weight faster as it lets you monitor your progress, giving you an insight on whether or not you need to tweak your current diet and exercise plan for improved results.

TIPS FOR STAYING ON TRACK WHEN EATING OUT

Remember, cooking and preparing your own meals is better as you have control over the whole process and the foods are easier to track. But when you're left with no choice (you don't know how to cook [then I'd suggest learning it ASAP] or you're simply lazy like me), only then can you resort to outside tactics that will keep your MyFitnessPal daily log happy.

Here are some guidelines to follow when you're faced with the added difficulty:

1. Plan ahead. Eat at a place where you can order meals that will fit into your macros for the day.

2. If you can't plan ahead and you're in an unfamiliar food establishment, check the menu and look for food items that will fit well with the macros you have left for that day. Since most of us are looking for protein, foods in the **Protein Section** can be our basis.

3. When the meal comes, note the ingredients used and search for them in MyFitnessPal. If you're unsure of something, don't hesitate to ask the server.

4. Estimate the quantities served on the generous side as it's better to overestimate than underestimate from a calorie perspective.

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5. If the food is not in MyFitnessPal's database, just search for a similar item. i.e. If I order a Roasted Chicken from a Chooks-to-go, I can find a similar item in MFP and will use it whenever the exact entry isn't available. I just have to make sure it's a comparable size. Again to be safe, If I have 3 choices with the lowest being 600 calories and the highest being 800 calories, I usually go with the highest (overestimating).

6. If you know you're eating out later on but you have no idea where (family gathering, birthday party at someone's house, etc.), the best thing to do is get most of your protein earlier in that day. This way, the only thing you're left to worry about is your total calories for the day.
7. If you can, prepare a scoop or two of your protein powder and just bring it whenever you're eating out. This will save you the stress of choosing which protein foods to eat. Just order the foods you love, then chug 2 scoops of protein afterwards.

8 .Take it easy on the drinks and avoid sugary sodas when you're on a cut. Drinking is often a big part of the social aspect of eating out, but a few beers, wines, sodas later and you could be at 500 calories in liquid alone so keep this in mind. For more info on how to drink alcohol while remaining on track, see **Guide to Drinking Alcohol While Building Muscle and Losing Fat** section.

CHAPTER 7 TAKEAWAYS

- Your purpose in the gym is to stimulate and damage your muscle fibers in order to trigger an adaptive response from the body. That's only 50% of the equation. The other 50% lies in your nutrition intake.

- Even if you master the principles of working out but you fail to learn the basic science of diet and nutrition, you will not succeed in your fitness journey.

- Whether your goal is to build muscle, lose weight, increase performance, or just simply maintain, the most important thing you need to learn is getting your calorie intake right. If you don't get this aspect right, you're guaranteed to fail in your fitness journey.

- If you're not losing weight, that means you have to eat less calories. If you're not gaining weight, that means you have to eat more calories.

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- All of us have what we call Resting Metabolic Rate (RMR) or Basal Metabolic Rate (BMR).

- We can calculate our BMR using either of these two formulas:
  1. Harris-Benedict Formula (Less accurate, but no need to know your body-fat percentage)
  2. Katch-McArdle Formula (More accurate, if you have a good idea of your body-fat percentage)

- Now, after calculating the BMR, you will now calculate your Total Daily Energy Expenditure (TDEE). This is your BMR + activity multiplier. If your BMR is your rate of energy expenditure when you're at rest, your TDEE is your energy expenditure taking into account your daily lifestyle.

- Next thing we must do is set our goal: Lose fat (cut), or gain muscle (bulk)?

- Generally speaking, losing fat and building muscle at the same time is downright difficult, if not impossible. The only people who could achieve this are those who are on steroids, those who are completely new to working out, or those who have exceptional genetics.

- 1 pound of fat equals 3500 calories.

- A healthy weight loss goal is -1 pound a week. If losing more than that, most likely muscles are also being sacrificed.

- Subtract 500 calories from your TDEE to achieve -1 pound in a week. If not losing, reduce 200-300 calories more.

- Diet is more important than exercise when it comes losing or gaining weight.

- Muscle growth is a very slow process:
  A novice/beginner can only gain 0.375 - 0.5 pounds a week.

  An intermediate can only gain 0.2 - 0.375 pounds a week.

  An advanced lifter can only gain 0.1 - 0.2 pounds a week.

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- Bulking means you're eating more calories than your TDEE.
- There are three ways to bulk: Dirty bulk, controlled bulk, slow/lean bulk.
- If not gaining, add 100-200 calories more and monitor again.
- Should you bulk or cut first? It depends on your: Personal Preference; Body Fat %
- Bulking and Cutting have pros and cons
- 11% - 17% is a body fat range that's pleasing to the eye
- How long should you bulk or cut? For that, you'd want to set either a body fat % target, a weight target, or a timeline.
- It's okay to extend your cut or bulk if goals aren't met yet.
- Macronutrients refer to protein, carbohydrate, and fat.
- 1g of protein has 4 calories, 1g of carb has 4 calories, 1g of fat has 9 calories.
- Protein is probably the most important macronutrient for someone trying to build muscle and lose fat. Therefore, a low-protein diet is probably the worst diet of all.
- The bodybuilding rule of the thumb for decades, and the one I always recommend to my clients, is 1 gram per pound of bodyweight (or 2.2 grams per kilo gram of bodyweight). So, if you weigh 170lbs, you should aim to get 170g of protein, or a number that's close to that.
- If you're cutting and you're lean already, you should aim to get 1-1.3g of protein per pound of body weight.
- There are two types of protein: Complete and incomplete. Try your best to eat the best sources of protein.

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- Learning how to combine real food and protein powders can give you the best of both worlds.
- There are commonly seen high protein foods in the grocery so check them out.
- There are a lot of food establishments that offer high protein selections and we came up with a list.
- Fats, like carbs, are not bad. They're important for regulating our hormones, especially our most anabolic hormone, testosterone. Lower testosterone means lower muscle growth and slower fat loss. Also, if you drop your fat intake too low, one thing you'll notice is a decrease in sex drive.
- While most fats are harmless, the only fat you should stay away from is trans fat.
- If you're cutting, I suggest you limit your fat intake to 20-25% of your total calories for the day.
- If you're bulking, I suggest you get 25-30% of your total calories from fat.
- Carbohydrate plays an essential role in building muscle and losing fat. They provide a positive impact on our hormones, fuel us through our workouts and other activities, and they replenish our stores of glycogen, which is the primary source of energy for our muscles. When we run low of it, we run out of fuel faster.
- Another benefit carbohydrates give is they spare your muscles from getting used up as energy.
- Carb intake for the day is dependent upon the remaining calories left after you've calculated your protein and fat needs. Think of carbs as the balancing equation to fill in the calorie space left.
- Carbohydrates are categorized into two types: Simple, and Complex.

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- Simple carbs spike insulin. It is beneficial after a workout.
- Complex carbs provide a steady source of energy without the crash.
- There is no perfect macronutrient ratio. You really have to find what suits you best and what will make what you're doing sustainable in the long term.
- Ectomorphs should start with 25% protein, 20% fat, and 55% carbs.
- Mesomorphs would do well with 30% protein, 30% fat, and 40% carb.
- Endomorphs can start with 35% protein, 40% fat, and 25% carbs.
- Calorie and macro cycling means that you switch up your calorie and macros for your training days, and rest days (or any day that you want), but you still stick to the same total calories for the week.
- Refeed days or cheat days have a psychological and physiological benefit to us human beings. When done correctly, they will accelerate weight loss.
- "Starvation mode," or sometimes called "metabolic damage," is the body's natural response to long-term caloric restriction.
- Long term dieting can lead to very slow metabolism. This is why you'll see some people who eats like a bird and still won't lose weight
- Starvation mode can be remedied by taking diet breaks. How long depends on how long he or she is dieting and how huge the deficit is
- MyFitnessPal has a very huge food database (5 million and counting).
- Use MyFitnessPal to track and count your calories and macros.
- Just keep using MyFitnessPal and track food to the best of your ability. It's ok not to be accurate.
- The more you use MyFitnessPal, the more accurate it gets because it builds around your own set of rules.
- There are strategies that can keep you on track even while eating out. Check them out.

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CHAPTER 8: NUTRITION STRATEGIES FOR THE HEDONIST — THE PLEASURE SEEKER

Are you a hedonist? A pleasure seeker? Don't you want to give up all the foods that you love yet you still want to have your dream physique? I'm telling you — yes, it is possible.

This chapter will teach you how to maintain your current lifestyle — regardless of whether you're a party person, healthy person, etc. What this chapter will teach you is that you can still get all the pleasures in life while still building that physique you've always been dreaming of. You just have to know how.

Let's begin.

IF IT FITS YOUR MACROS (IIFYM) AND FLEXIBLE DIETING

If you've been an Internet lurker for a while now, you've surely heard of people talking a lot about IIFYM or flexible dieting. And chances are, you will see conversations, photos, and statuses all talking about junk food and drinking alcohol while dieting.

What is this concept exactly?

Since we've already covered the basics of calories and macronutrients, this is much easier to discuss now.

IIFYM, or flexible dieting, is just a method of eating that revolves around the saying, "HOW MUCH you eat is way more important than WHAT you eat."

Example:

1 scoop of ice cream = 1 cup of rice. From a calorie standpoint, they are almost the same.

It doesn't matter where you get your calories because our body does not know the difference between the calories we consume in an ice cream or donuts, versus the salads or oatmeals or any other healthy meals. What it understands is that these foods all contain the same calories and macronutrients.

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In other words, regardless of whether the food is healthy or not, as long as it fits our calorie intake for the day, it's okay. Hence, the term, "if it fits your macros."

This is not an innovation. It is a science that has been proven and backed up for years. As long as you're eating less calories than your maintenance, regardless of where you get those calories, you will still lose weight.

Now here's a caveat: From the weight loss and gain standpoint, this way of eating seems more fun and sustainable. But in the long run, eating healthy foods would still be better. You can't eat junk food seven days a week and expect to be healthy.

I still try my best to eat around 50-70% of my calories from "real" foods, meaning those healthier ones. But the fun part is, the post workout meal is when I go all out, especially those sugary foods.

This is beneficial to your muscles because what they need after a workout are fast digesting carbohydrates like sugars to refill the lost glycogen stores inside the muscles.

The rest of the day, try eating healthier.

INTERMITTENT FASTING — MORE FUN WHILE LOSING WEIGHT

One of the most effective and most enjoyable eating approaches that I've tried that is not only for sustainable fat loss, but also for increasing productivity, is intermittent fasting (IF). This, combined with the IIFYM concept, will give you the most enjoyable moments of your life while building the body that you've always wanted.

Intermittent fasting is an eating strategy, not a diet, where you cycle between periods of eating, and not eating. Others call this, *Feast* and *Fast*.

Years ago, when I was browsing the internet, I stumbled upon this blog that discusses intermittent fasting. This is where I learned everything about it. And since I was taught differently, that I should be eating four-six meals a day and shouldn't skip breakfast, I was so dubious and skeptical about its content. But seeing plenty of weight loss testimonials and reading good feedback online, I was convinced to try it out. I ventured out to see if the hype was all worth it.

The result? It has been four-five years now and I've never gone back to my old eating habits. I've been able to lose fat very quickly and enjoy every meal like a fat kid enjoys his chocolates.

Also, the majority of the success stories that I've received from my clients — from losing fat to building muscle — they all have achieved the fastest results doing this. Just see the testimonials and judge them yourself!

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There are many variations of IF but I do the 16:8 approach — I fast for sixteen hours, then eat in an eight-hour window. This is inspired by Martin Berkhan from lean-gains.com

To further understand, this is an example of my day:

10am - I wake up, then do my morning rituals

11am - Workout time

1pm - First meal. I go full blast eating around 1000-1500 calories, depending on my goal

5pm - Second meal. I eat another 1000+ calories.

6pm until tomorrow - fasting

By doing IF, I am able to consume more food in a single meal and feel really full and satisfied. Since I only eat two meals a day, I am allowed to devour a whole pig in each meal without the fear of getting fat–because I know that I am not crossing the line and going overboard on my calories. This is more fun than eating more frequently but holding back in each of those meals.

This also makes my life easier and productive.

I know some of you are reacting already, telling themselves that they can't even hold their hunger for three hours, let alone go for sixteen hours without food. I understand. Hear me out first.

REASONS WHY INTERMITTENT FASTING IS SO EFFECTIVE

Reason #1: Because it allows people to create and sustain a caloric-deficit lifestyle almost effortlessly (when you're past the getting-used-to-fasting stage), and enjoyably!

Reason #2: Because eating larger meals rather than the popular four-six smaller meals, allows our body to produce the hormone *Leptin* — a satiety hormone that blunts your appetite for an extended period of time. Eating smaller meals doesn't trigger the production of this hormone, and that's why you're much more likely to eat a lot when you're eating less each meal.

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Reason #3: Because it gives people the freedom and control to eat whenever they want. This lessens catabolism by lowering stress levels.

Reason #4: For many people (including me), IF taught them discipline. This was their start. It taught them how to be in control and how to commit to something. It created a snowball effect that affected other areas of their lives. I mean, if you can withhold eating for over 16 hours, what else can't you do?

Reason #5: Because it enhances focus. My morning has been the most productive ever since doing IF. I could train, write, read, and do other important stuff than preparing oatmeal or cracking eggs just because I had to.

At first, of course, you will find it difficult, especially if you belong in the breakfast-is-the-most-important-meal-of-the-day club. Because of this hormone called ghrelin, a hunger hormone which makes us get used to eating at the same time each day, it would take you about a week to adjust. After that, you will not only wake up hunger-free, but you will experience a much more productive morning.

And if you want to see more benefits fasting brings to the table, here they are:

- Increased Insulin Sensitivity - continuous energy and mood levels.
- Increased Cell Resistance - slows down the ageing process and stronger immune system.
- Lower Cortisol Levels - less muscle catabolism and lower stress levels.
- Reduced Inflammation - faster recovery and healing.
- Reduced Cognitive Decline.
- Reduced Incidents of Heart Disease.
- Reduced Cancer Cells Proliferation Rate.

Now, who wouldn't try IF?

Intermittent fasting + IIFYM is the new way to get shredded while having fun.

If you want to learn more about IF, you can check these resources. These are the ones that I personally read and I am still using them until now:

The Chaos Bulk

Eat Stop Eat

These resources will give you information on how to fit IF to your schedule plus a lot more!

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BLACK COFFEE AND INTERMITTENT FASTING

The number one enemy of starting intermittent fasters is *hunger*. So, how do you survive those "I'm hungry and I'm going to die" days when you're just starting out? What should you do to reap the most rewards while minimizing suffering?

Simple. Drink coffee. Black coffee.

Why is that?

First reason is black coffee blunts the appetite real hard. When I fast on a non-workout day, my hunger will show itself around five-six hours (that's because I'm used to fasting already) after waking up.

Once I drink black coffee, my hunger will be suppressed for another three or four hours. This means I have three-four hours more to be productive. This is when I usually do my creative endeavors — writing blog posts, writing for clients, brainstorming ideas, writing anything, working on my speech, etc.

Intermittent fasting + black coffee puts my creativity on steroids. Really big help.

And if you think blunting hunger and giving you an extra productive time are the only things that coffee does, then I will tell you a lot more.

Here are other benefits of drinking coffee:

- Coffee boosts workout performance.
- Coffee can help you lose weight.
- Coffee blunts appetite.
- Coffee has little or no calories.
- Coffee boosts cognitive performance.
- Coffee drinkers outlive nondrinkers.
- Coffee reduces the risk of diseases such as Alzheimer's, Parkinsons, Diabetes, Liver disease.
- Coffee is one of the greatest sources of antioxidants.
- Coffee makes you feel amazing by boosting dopamine levels.

In a nutshell, coffee is awesome–it's one of the healthiest drinks you can consume that will jive well with intermittent fasting and your weight loss goals.

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When I was cutting out for summer, I was driving to Starbucks almost every day just to buy Cafe Americano. Not only did it blunt my hunger and make intermittent fasting so effortless, but it also kept me super focused on all my workouts. Back then, I was using pre-workout supplements, but when I ran out, I usually went back to black coffee.

Tips to get the most out of this strategy:

- Go with black coffee. Not the cappuccino, frappuccino, mocha, latte, macchiato, or any type of coffee that's difficult to pronounce. I like either Americano or Espresso. I chose these two because they are the plainest ones–they don't have milk and/or sugar that adds unnecessary calories unless you include them.

- Though a little creamer, milk, or sugar won't hurt, I suggest you just drink it plain and naked — no added anything. Every time I order Cafe Americano at any coffee shops, I always ask them not to put any sugar nor milk in it. If you add sugar to your coffee, that would lessen the effects of fasting because your system will now have an immediate energy source available, in this case, carbs(sugar), and your body won't turn to fats for fuel.

- To make the most out of drinking coffee and avoid building tolerance, make sure to drink it only during the fasting window. Drinking it after your fast will reduce your sensitivity to caffeine and you'll find out later on that you need a higher dose to feel its effect. Remember, more is not always better, so more coffee wouldn't be a good idea.

- To get past the initial stage of being hungry in the morning, I would also recommend not drinking coffee as soon as you wake up. Wait until you feel like you're about to get hungry, then shoot up a black coffee in your system. This way, you're only using the coffee for the purpose of suppressing the appetite, not as an energy crutch that you will get dependent on soon. This tip will make IF easier and more powerful.

- Make sure to drink your coffee slowly and don't chug it all down. Your coffee dose depends on your sensitivity to caffeine, so start slow and assess your tolerance. I suggest limiting yourself to 1-4 cups per day. Go higher at your own risk.

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- If you're super sensitive to caffeine and you always feel wired, jittery, and nervous after drinking a cup, try to take your coffee with *L-Theanine*, a supplement that you can buy at a health shop. It is an amino acid that creates a calming effect and that goes really, really well with caffeine. I swear by this combo when it comes to giving me insane energy and focus without the jitters.

- It's safe, don't worry. I won't recommend anything that I personally don't use and didn't do research on. So, go try it, and tell me its effect.

- *L-theanine* is usually found exclusively in teas — which is why green tea is more calming than coffee.

- Lastly, I would suggest cycling coffee on and off, meaning you simply take a break from consuming caffeine. You might also want to do this with your pre-workout drinks as most of them contain a considerable amount of caffeine.

One of the dreadful effects of taking caffeine is the Adrenal Fatigue Syndrome. It is usually characterized by morning tiredness and lack of focus. Habitual drinkers of coffee may have experienced some of these symptoms — even though they got eight-ten hours of sleep, they would still feel tired after waking up. There'a lot of theories and arguments regarding whether or not Adrenal Fatigue Syndrome really exists, but it's better to be safe than sorry.

I suggest a cycle of one month on, two weeks off. If you've been a drinker since, I suggest you take a break for at least a good month.

Important:

A cup (not glass) of coffee has around 40mg of caffeine. Cafe Americano from Starbucks has 200+mg of caffeine. Studies show that 400mg is even safe, but don't quote me on that.

If you will use *L-Theanine* with caffeine, I suggest a 1:1 or 2:1 caffeine to *L-theanine*. I do 200mg caffeine and 200mg *L-theanine*.

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INTERMITTENT FASTING AND FASTED TRAINING MISCONCEPTIONS

You may have heard a lot of people praising IF for its ability to burn fat while building muscle, but is it true?

Based on many research and studies that were currently done, IF doesn't actually boost fat loss per se, it's the caloric deficit that was created during IF that's responsible for weight loss.

Surprised?

I know, I know. I was also a believer that IF does many wonders when it comes to fat loss and even advocated it and fasted cardio as superior methods for burning fat. But as of now, I can no longer say that they're accurate based on the current evidence.

With that said, it's good news for us!

Why is it a good news? Because:

- *We no longer have the need to be strict about our fasting schedule (16:8)*
- *We can just eat whenever we want provided that we track our calories for the whole day*
- *We can now forget fasted workouts if that's difficult for us because it doesn't make any difference*
- *We don't have to feel guilty anymore if we break our fast early on*

Alongside the benefits that IF brings to the table (see the above section), accelerating fat loss is not one of them. Let me be clear on that.

The big question now is, is IF right for you?

Only you can answer that. For that, you just have to remember these things:

- *IF is not a requirement for fat loss*
- *IF's purpose is to compress your eating time so you can eat more per meal, and that's it. Maybe add productivity to your day as well*
- *It's not true that when you do IF, you can just eat whatever you want without tracking your caloric intake. Tracking calories and macros is mandatory.*

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- *IF will not burn fat and build muscle at the same time*
- *The best eating strategy and meal frequency for you is the one you can stick with and adhere to. It's the total calories for the day that counts, not the meal timing*

So, is IF right for you?

References:

https://www.bodyrecomposition.com/research-review/meal-frequency-and-energy-balance-research-review.html/

https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/9155494

BUT I STILL WANT TO TRAIN FASTED!

Okay, okay! If you prefer training fasted, then so be it. No one's forcing you to eat before working out and that's completely fine. In fact, I've always done my workouts on empty stomach. Doing this gives me more focus and I get to do a lot more. Subjectively speaking, I also found this more effective because I have more energy and I can last longer in the gym.

Though this might not be for everybody, what I've found is most people who have tried this often give up just before their bodies get used to it. There's an adjustment period for this — usually around a week or so.

If you really want to get used to doing fasted workouts for whatever reasons, then do it, and stick with it. Give it a week or so, and go light on yourself. For the first week, eat a very light meal. The second week, just drink Gatorade or some drink with sugars in it and see if you can do your workouts properly. Then once you get the hang of it, eliminate everything and just drink BCAAs during the workout. You will get used to it in no time.

If you're going to train fasted, follow these guidelines:

- Take 5g-10g BCAAs immediately before or during your workouts.
- If you have a pre-workout drink, like coffee or a pre-workout supplement, take it 20-30 minutes before your workout then just take BCAAs immediately before training.

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BCAAs are important when training fasted to prevent muscle breakdown, assist muscle growth, and accelerate recovery.

GUIDE TO DRINKING ALCOHOL WHILE BUILDING MUSCLE AND LOSING FAT

What?! Can I drink alcohol and still achieve the body that I want?!

Yes, of course! Alcohol, in moderation, will not kill your gains and will not make you fat.

Now, before planning your binge-drinking night out, here are some of the important things that you should know about:

1. Alcohol won't make you fat, excess calories will.

Anything that has calories will make you fat, but only if you go above your maintenance level.

To give you an idea:

1g of alcohol contains 7 calories. One bottle of San Mig Light has 15g of alcohol, which is 105 calories. One bottle of Red Horse has 31g of alcohol, which is 220+ calories.

If you're going to drink, please do your assignment and adjust from there. Calories are still everything. Make sure you always leave room for alcohol calories to sit in your system.

If you get fat, don't blame the alcohol, blame your total calories for that day.

2. Alcohol and testosterone

You've probably heard or read somewhere that alcohol lowers testosterone. Let's discuss that.

For the alcohol to really have a negative impact on testosterone, around 120g of alcohol must be consumed. That is equivalent to eight beers, and that number is already considered plenty.

Drinking at this rate will lower your testosterone levels by up to 23% for up to sixteen hours. Honestly, 23% isn't that much to hurt your gains, provided that you don't binge drink every night.

Well, if you're a bodybuilder or someone preparing for a fitness show, by all means, stay away from it. That's obvious I guess.

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In addition, some studies even suggested that moderate amounts of alcohol (four-five drinks) actually leads to testosterone increase for both men and women. This could be one of the plausible reasons why we suddenly perform at a porn-star level when we drink in moderation.

3. Alcohol and the body's ability to build muscle.

These are the studies(1, 2, 3) relating to this topic. To summarize:

Moderate alcohol consumption does not impair overload-induced muscle hypertrophy and protein synthesis.

It was concluded that acute ingestion of alcohol has no effect on several indicators of exercise-induced muscle damage.

Consumption of moderate amounts of alcohol after damaging exercise magnifies the loss of force associated with strenuous eccentric exercise.

Out of the three studies, only the last one appeared negatively. And that's because the subjects took the alcohol post-workout, which wasn't really nice to read.

I mean, who would drink alcohol right after working out? Or even before working out?

Try to space out your workout and drinking time as far as possible. Better if it's days apart.

MODERATION IS THE KEY

If you want to nail the sweet spot between having fun and building your goal physique, you must learn to drink in moderation. This means downing one-four drinks tops over the course of the night. That's the key word here, "moderation," and it is one of those words that I truly admire as it signals discipline, self–control, and self-respect.

What I've noticed about most people is when they finish a bottle, they think that they've already fucked up so they just go all the way and get themselves drunk. Don't be one of those people.

Beers, hards, tequilas; they can all be Ok. Following a few simple practices could save your day.

If you want to have fun while building a great physique, you must adhere to these rules. So, on the days you're going to drink:

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1. Make room for the alcohol calories.

Do this by lowering your calories fats and carbs (not protein) to make room for the alcohol you're going to consume for the day.

Let's say you're planning to have five beers, which would approximately be 500+ calories depending on what type. The smart thing to do is reduce your food intake by 700 calories to allow enough room for the alcohol and an additional buffer in case you go overboard. Plan ahead.

Keep the protein high (at least 1g per pound of bodyweight) as it is essential for preventing muscle breakdown and blunting hunger.

2. Stick to low calorie drinks.

Good choices would be dry wines, rum, vodka, whiskey, gin, scotch, and tequila. Take them straight or with diet sodas (just for tonight).

The most common alcoholic beverages and their calories:

Beer, **Light**: 100 calories for 330ml bottle (San Mig Light)

Beer: 220 calories for 500ml bottle (Red Horse)

Beer: 140 calories for 330ml bottle (Pale Pilsen)

Beer: 160 calories for 330ml bottle (San Mig Apple)

Malt, Liquor: 157 calories for 12 ounces (Colt 45)

Gin: 97 calories for 1.5 ounces (Generic)

Vodka, premixed: 300 calories for 330ml bottle (Tanduay Ice)

Vodka: 60 calories for 1 shot (Absolut Vodka)

Rum: 104 calories in 1.5 ounces (Bacardi Black)

Rum: 86 calories in 1 shot (Captain Morgan)

Whiskey: 104 calories for 1.5 ounces (Jack Daniels)

Whiskey: 69 calories for 1 shot (Black Label)

Tequila: 104 calories for 1.5 ounces (Jose Cuervo Gold)

Wine, **White**: 160 calories for 5 ounces (Generic)

Wine, **Red**: 160 calories for 5 ounces (Generic)

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3. Drink lots of water.

Alcohol is very dehydrating, and we know that's not good for the body. Always keep a bottled water beside you.

4. Avoid after-drink pigging out.

This is the biggest issue drinkers have. They consume 800+ calories from alcohol then slam another 1000+ calories from food and then wonder why they're getting fat.

One of the ways to counteract this is to bring a protein bar or a protein drink with you. If you get hungry, eat/drink it. The high amounts of protein will keep your hunger in check and will prevent you from binge eating later on.

Yes, whey protein is okay to take with alcohol.

5. Limit this to once per week.

You don't want alcohol to affect your workout, right?

I usually drink on Saturdays.

CHAPTER 8 TAKEAWAYS

- If It Fits Your Macros (IIFYM) and Flexible Dieting is just a method of eating that revolves around the saying, "HOW MUCH you eat is way more important than WHAT you eat." Our body does not know the difference between the calories we consume in an ice cream or donuts, versus the salads or oatmeals or any other healthy meals. What it understands is that these foods all contain the same calories and macronutrients.

- The most effective and most enjoyable eating approach that I've tried that is not only for sustainable fat loss, but also for increasing productivity, is intermittent fasting (IF).

- Intermittent fasting is an eating strategy, not a diet, where you cycle between periods of eating, and not eating. Others call this, *Feast* and *Fast*. There are many variations of IF but I do the 16:8 approach — I fast for sixteen hours, then eat in an eight-hour window.

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- IF provides a lot of benefits, but accelerating fat loss is not one of them.
- Doing IF and training fasted is more of a personal preference. It's not mandatory.
- Intermittent fasting + IIFYM is the new way to get shredded while having fun.
- Black coffee helps in fasting because it blunts the appetite real hard.
- Coffee has a lot more benefits than suppressing the appetite.
- Fasted workout/cardio gives me more focus, but it's not for everybody.
- If you want to do fasted workouts, give your body a week to adjust.
- Take 5g - 10g of BCAA during fasted workouts.
- Alcohol, in moderation, will not kill your gains and will not make you fat.
- It's not the alcohol, but the calories that have the potential to make you fat.
- Alcohol doesn't have a huge negative impact on testosterone and muscle growth.
- On the days you're going to drink, you have to adhere to some rules.

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CHAPTER 9: MEAL/NUTRITION TIMING

Meal timing isn't as important as experts have led us to believe. Eating every two-three hours has been proven a myth, as evidenced by these intermittent fasting clubs that emerged a couple of years ago that showed great results in terms of muscle gain and fat loss.

In the sample eating schedule that I've shown above, eating two meals per day is very optimal for me — it has made each of my meals very enjoyable because I get to eat more. Though when I am bulking, this is a challenge.

Some days I still eat three times a day, but I always make sure to track everything I eat — from the beers that I drink to the condiments that I dip my food into. I only estimate them and leave all the perfect measurements aside. Don't worry much about your meal frequency and just worry about the total food you eat for that day.

I've found out that as long as I'm tracking my meals, regardless of whether the measurements are perfect or not (but you have to be accurately close to not mess it up), and regardless how many times I eat in a day, I am still able to meet my goal weight just as I expected.

However, there are two crucial nutrition times that I want you to take note of…

PRE-WORKOUT NUTRITION

If you've decided that you can't do intermittent fasting or a fasted workout, this is where pre-workout nutrition comes into play. What I've found is there are no hard and fast rules about this — other people respond well to fasted workouts like myself, and others don't. I suggest you test both and see what works best for you.

When having a pre-workout meal, aim for something that has:

20-50g of medium to low glycemic carbs such as oatmeal, brown rice, etc.

20-40g of protein

And minimal fat.

This ensures that you have sufficient high quality carbohydrates that will supply you with energy to do intense workouts. Protein also acts as an immediate source of nutrients for recovery and growth.

Again, just try both and see your results. I found that when I train fasted, my focus is much more intense and I feel light during the whole workout.

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POST-WORKOUT NUTRITION

It has been years since science has proved the importance of post-workout nutrition. Studies concluded that we have this 30-60 minute anabolic window when we should feed our muscles with fast acting sources of carbs and protein. In this case, a simple sugar plus whey protein are the perfect combination to spike insulin. And you know what else to add to that? Creatine. Creatine is most absorbed when insulin is elevated. So, taking whey protein, simple sugars, and creatine should be your best bet.

50-100g of simple carbs such as dextrose powder

20-40g of whey protein

5g of creatine

CHAPTER 9 TAKEAWAYS

- Meal timing and frequency aren't as important as the total calories you will consume for the entire day.
- There are no hard and fast rules when it comes to training fasted or having a pre-workout nutrition. Choose one that suits you best.
- Take advantage of the 30-60 minute anabolic window post-workout.
- Whey protein, simple sugars, and creatine are the perfect ingredients post-workout.

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CHAPTER 10: RECOMPOSITION—CAN YOU BUILD MUSCLE AND LOSE FAT AT THE SAME TIME?

One of the most recurring fitness questions I get is people asking whether they can lose fat and gain muscle at the same time. That is, whether it is possible to 'recomp'.

First, what does "recomp" means? Recomposition or "recomp" simple means losing fat and at the same time, building muscle. It's the holy grail of bodybuilding -- the goal of everyone who lifts. The question is, is it really possible?

Fortunately, the answer to that is a yes and no, depending on who's asking (or answering).

To keep this chapter simple and straightforwad, these are the only cases when "recomping" is possible:

1. When the trainee uses performance-enhancing drugs

- That's what steroids do.

2. When the trainee is in the beginner/newbie category

- Coming from a background with little or no physical training, his or her body will respond to any type of resistance training by building muscles regardless of the caloric intake. Not very soon though, that progress will stop, and he or she will have to follow the basic approach to dieting (calorie surplus to gain muscle).

3. When the trainee is not a newbie but is coming back from a long layoff from the gym

- Muscle memory is real. Rebuilding and regaining size and strength is always quicker than the first time around, even on a caloric deficit.

Aside from any of these, then no. Forget about recomping and just focus on losing weight while preserving muscle mass. Think about building muscle later on when you're on bulking mode.

On the other hand, if you're confident that you're qualified to have a successful recomposition -- whether it's because you're on drugs, you're a newbie, or you're coming from a layoff -- you may want to keep these strategies in mind that I'm about to show you. Adhere to these and you will have a higher chance to build muscle and lose fat at the same time.

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Just remember, this will only work if you're qualified to have a recomp. Attempt at this if you don't belong in either #1, #2, #3 will be a waste of time and effort. It's much better to focus on either bulking or cutting alone and reap the benefits quicker, rather than doing both at the same time and getting no results.

6 TIPS FOR A (MORE) SUCCESSFUL RECOMP

1. Slight caloric deficit — around 200-300 calorie deficit

The keyword here is **slight**.

The reason for this is we don't want to have a huge deficit because we're not only aiming for FAT LOSS, but also muscle gain. We need calories to build muscle and that's why we're not going to remove as much.

2. Higher protein intake — up to 1g - 1.4g grams per pound of body weight

So if you're weighing 150lbs and you want to do a recomp, aim for up to 150g - 210g of protein **per day**. The higher the better. If you are more on the soft side and you possess higher body fat %, you can get by with 1g of protein per pound of body weight. As you become leaner you are, the higher your protein intake should be.

This is because when dieting (caloric deficit), our body has a high tendency to use all macronutrients, even protein, for energy. In other words, there's a high risk of muscle loss when we restrict calories. This is why a very high protein intake is needed if recomping is the goal.

3. Tapering your workout volume a little bit to ensure strength progression

Tapering means lowering down of workout volume. Why should we do that? Because dieting is a huge stressor that can affect our progress in the gym. Lifting weights is also a stressor, so dieting plus working out more will risk overtraining and will result in no progress. So by lowering our workout volume a bit (making all 5 sets to 4 sets and 4 sets to 3 sets when cutting), we can be sure that we're still stimulating the muscles just enough to elicit growth.

4. Focusing on progressive overload

Like we've discussed, if you're not progressing, you're not growing.

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5. Using the right supplements

Aside from Whey protein to bump up your protein intake for the day, I would also suggest taking Casein protein (See Supplements Section), a slower digesting protein to ensure you have adequate protein supply throughout the day. You drink this during the day and before bedtime.

In addition, if you're going to train or do your cardio fasted, it is crucial that you take 10g of BCAAs before doing so. I'd also advise taking 5g in the middle of your fast. This acts as an insurance policy for muscle loss during a cut.

CHAPTER 10 TAKEAWAYS

- Recomp or recomposition means building muscle and losing fat at the same time
- There are only 3 instances when recomp is possible: when on drugs; when beginning lifting; and when coming from a layoff
- Recomping will only work if you're qualified to have it. Outside those instances, attempting to recomp is just a waste of time and effort.
- It is still better to focus on one goal at a time, either bulking or cutting, and not do both to achieve quicker results.
- If you're qualified to have a recomp, there are 6 tips that you have keep in mind.
- You have to have a slight caloric deficit — around 200.
- You have to keep your protein high — 1g - 1.4g of protein per pound of body weight. The higher, the better.
- You have to cut back on volume a bit
- Focus on progressive overload
- Use the right supplements: Whey, Casein, and BCAAs

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CHAPTER 11: 10 NUTRITION MYTHS

This chapter will discuss the most common workout myths that the average lifter would have no idea how to argue against. After reading this, you will be equipped with unbeatable knowledge that even the experts don't know about.

Let's begin.

1. YOU HAVE TO EAT FOUR-SIX MEALS PER DAY TO BOOST YOUR METABOLISM.

This myth was exposed in a study that was done at the University of Ottawa. The study concluded that there was no weight loss advantage in splitting calories into six meals rather than the usual three.

Another study even found that having small, frequent meals actually just made people want to eat more because they make it harder for us to feel full, potentially leading us to indulge later on.

Bottomline: It is not true that eating smaller, frequent meals leads to an increase in the body's metabolism. The amount of energy it takes for our body to digest the food is proportional to the amount of food we consume. So, it doesn't matter if you eat once a day or ten meals a day, your body will still burn the same calories.

2. BREAKFAST IS THE MOST IMPORTANT MEAL OF THE DAY.

If you believe that breakfast is the most important meal of the day, you, or the one who told you, or the one who told the one who told you, is more likely a victim of an ad campaign designed in 1944 to sell more cereal.

Sorry. There's nothing magical about breakfast. Intermittent fasters already show you the proof.

Bottomline: If you like breakfast, have it. If not, skip it. Just don't go longer than three days without a meal. You might die.

3. YOU CAN ONLY ABSORB SO MUCH PROTEIN.

Many "experts" claim that the body can only absorb so much protein per meal. Well, is that true?

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If you put the concept of Intermittent Fasting into this claim, you would bet that it is false.

Looking at this study, intermittent fasters were tested to eat the whole days' worth of protein in a four-hour window, then followed by a twenty-hour fast. It was concluded that the eating pattern didn't negatively impact muscle preservation.

Bottomline: Your body is much smarter than you think. Don't deprive yourself of any protein that you can munch on anytime of the day.

4. EATING LATE AT NIGHT WILL CAUSE YOU TO GAIN WEIGHT.

So does eating at morning or noon or any time of the day.

We've been taught wrong again. This myth also made sense because our ignorance in this area made us think that since we're less active at night, calories that are consumed are likely to be stored as fat.

That's not how the body works.

The truth is, there's not much big difference in how much calories the body burns when we're awake versus when we're asleep — according to this study. If you have a habit of eating at night like it's your last meal, it's not the timing of the meal, but your overeating that's sabotaging your weight-loss efforts.

Bottom Line: How much you eat– the total calories consumed– is far more important than when you eat. So, go ahead. Eat late at night.

5. HIGH PROTEIN DIETS ARE BAD FOR YOUR KIDNEYS.

It is often said that consuming high amounts of protein in our diet puts a strain on the kidneys and increases the risk of kidney failure.

Is it true?

Unless you have an existing problem with your kidneys, you shouldn't worry about this.

The latest research tells us that although it is true that people with established kidney disease should cut back on protein, this is definitely not true for healthy people.

A study examining bodybuilders with high protein intake vs. athletes with moderate protein intake revealed no significant differences in kidney function between the groups.

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If high protein diets are bad for the kidneys, we would've been alarmed long ago by the number of bodybuilders who would have have died for this reason.

Plus, for some of you who don't know, getting protein from diets is quite difficult.

Our kidneys are incredibly efficient at filtering toxic substances from the body, and consuming a high-protein diet is not a problem for them. They are built to handle this kind of stress anyway.

In addition:

High protein diets are not bad for your liver, says this study.

High protein diets are not bad for your bones, says this study.

High protein diets are not bad for your heart, says this study.

Bottom Line: Eating lots of protein is perfectly safe. I suggest getting at least 1 gram per pound of bodyweight.

6. EGG YOLKS ARE BAD FOR YOUR HEALTH.

Whole eggs are one of the most nutritious foods on Earth, and most of its nutrients are found in that yellow circle people are scared off. Telling someone to throw the yolks away is ridiculous.

There has been numerous research and studies that show the innocence of egg yolks with regards to cardiovascular health and increasing cholesterol. In fact, some of the studies concluded that they only increase "good" cholesterol, and they don't increase the risk of heart disease.

Unless you have a pre-existing health condition like diabetes or any heart disease, don't bother throwing the yolks away.

Bottom Line: Egg yolks are not evil. Yes, they have cholesterol in them but so do protein, vitamins, minerals, and loads of other nutrients. Just because a food has high cholesterol in it doesn't mean it will translate to an increased cholesterol in your blood.

7. EAT FRUITS IF YOU WANT TO LOSE WEIGHT.

Yes, fruits are healthy. They're packed with vitamins, fiber, and antioxidants. And since many of us believe that if a food is healthy, you should eat more of it. The problem with this is, fruits — like all food — contain calories. And consuming more calories will just make you fat.

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In addition, eating plenty of fruits, with regards to the calories being absorbed, is the same as eating plenty of ice cream. They both contain high amounts of simple carbs.

And what did we learn about calories and simple carbs?

This could explain why, despite the healthy lifestyle of people, they're getting fatter and fatter.

Bottomline: Yes, you can still eat fruits even if your goal is to lose weight. The main point I'm trying to make here is that fruits are not calorie-free foods. Don't treat them that way.

8. SALTY FOODS WILL MAKE YOU FAT.

Sodium will not make you fat. Sodium will make you "look" fat.

Diets high in sodium will cause water retention–that is, will make your body hold more water, make you look bloated, and make you gain weight, but only temporarily.

Weight gain from water retention is different from weight gain from building up extra fatty tissues. So, don't freak out if you find yourself heavier than yesterday because you ate too much salty foods! It's only water weight, baby. Relax.

Unless you're a bodybuilder or someone preparing for a photoshoot or a show, my advice is not to stress yourself about this.

Bottomline: Salt doesn't make you fat. The weight gain you experience after eating salty foods is more of a water weight. This doesn't mean that you should eat plenty of salty foods either. Too much sodium can lead to a chock of problems that last longer than bloating does.

9. FAT WILL MAKE YOU FAT.

This one's very logical. If we eat fat, we get fat. It's the same word, right?

Well, yeah. Fat will make you fat, so do carbohydrates and protein. What we should be concerned about is the total calories we consume each day.

If you only eat FATTY foods for a week but you don't consume more calories than you burn, you will still lose weight.

Likewise, if you don't eat FAT for a week and just consume carbs and protein but you take in more calories than you burn, you will gain weight!

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The only reason Fat has the potential to make us fatter is because it has more calories than the other two macronutrients.

Bottomline: Don't be afraid of Fat. Moderate amounts of Fats in a diet have been shown to be more effective for weight loss than low-fat diets.

10. DETOX TO CLEANSE YOUR SYSTEM AND LOSE WEIGHT.

There's no such thing as "detoxing." In medical terms, it's bullcrap. It's a scam. I'm sorry to tell you this, but it's true.

The idea that you can wash toxins away from your body by eating just this and that is the perfect excuse for having a fast-food and alcohol-indulgence lifestyle.

Remember, our body has kidneys, liver, lungs, colon, and skin that are cleansing our system at this very moment. These built-in, clean-up babies are already powerful and no fad diet can outwork them.

And since the body is always in a natural state of "detoxification," we don't need to do a juice cleanse or follow any liquid detox diet to be healthy — according to this study.

With regards to weight loss, if there's any way that a detox/cleansing diet causes you to lose weight, that's because of their huge food restrictions. People who go to a detox diet consume less calories than they normally have, so they lose weight. There's nothing mystical about it.

Once they go back to their normal eating habits, most likely they will get all the weight back again.

What about those detox products?

Most of the detox products I know have laxative and diuretic ingredients in them. These ingredients don't do anything except dehydrate you and flush away minerals, electrolytes, and fiber. You may lose weight this way of course, but that would be just water weight. Don't bother with them.

Bottomline: The best 'detox' strategy is a proper diet, regular exercise, drinking plenty of water, and not smoking.

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CHAPTER 11 TAKEAWAYS

- You have to eat four-six meals per day to boost your metabolism
- Breakfast is the most important meal of the day
- You can only absorb so much protein
- Eating late at night will cause you to gain weight
- High protein diets are bad for your kidneys
- Egg yolks are bad for your health
- Eat fruits if you want to lose weight
- Salty foods will make you fat
- Fat will make you fat
- Detox to cleanse your system and lose weight

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CHAPTER 12: SUPPLEMENTING FOR MASSIVE GAINS

Being new to the fitness scene, you're probably wondering, "Do I really need supplements to build muscle and lose fat?"

Great question, that is.

The very first thing we need to answer this question is by first going back to the definition of "need":

"Need" basically means requiring something because it is very important or essential to what you're trying to accomplish.

Do you need water to survive? Yes. Do you need oxygen? Yes.

Do you need supplements to gain muscle and strength, improve performance or increase energy?

The answer is "NO."

No matter what the billion-dollar supplement companies claim, taking supplements is not mandatory to increase muscle mass and strength. You can still achieve the same progress without supplements, provided that you know the basics of workout and nutrition — which you should already know by now.

So if you're someone consuming an adequate amounts of fats, carbohydrates, and proteins from real foods (based on your calorie needs), there's no doubt that you will see significant results in terms of size and strength even without supplements.

That's a fact.

The most common mistake that I've been noticing with a lot of people is that they think supplements will give them more than 50% of the results. They think that if they take a specific supplement or a protein shake, gains will come automatically and easily.

Wrong!

Supplements should never get credited more than your training and nutrition.

After trying almost everything out there, I would say that supplements only contribute about 10-20% of the overall gains that you have. Supplements are just supplements.

So again, are supplements necessary to build muscle, increase strength, and lose fat? The answer is no. Period.

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And given that they aren't mandatory, should I just treat them all as a waste of money?

The answer to that is also no.

While these supplements aren't required, they can be beneficial for accelerating your results.

However, you should invest in the right products, use proper amounts, and follow proper timings so that you can see excellent gains — and this is the purpose of this guide.

If you're willing to spend extra to get the best gains you possibly can, then supplementation is a not a bad idea. If you want to save your money and do things the old fashioned way, then that's fine too.

Before buying, consider the following:

- Workout routine: No supplements will fix your ignorance to working out. Your workout knowledge and application is far more important than the supplements you will be having for the rest of your life.
- Nutrition: Make sure you're getting your diet/nutrition right. If you didn't spend time learning about calories and macronutrients, and if you're not getting the required nutrients that your body needs, supplements will just waste your money.
- Financial: See to it that your money is going to food first, then to the recommended supplements (see below) before getting anything else.

If you have looked into these factors, supplements can be helpful for boosting your progress.

RECOMMENDED SUPPLEMENTS

The following recommended supplements are backed by solid research and have been shown to be both safe and highly useful. These are the most basic products out there, and you should spend your money on these first before buying anything else.

As I said earlier, supplements are just supplements, but if you do decide to use them, the following products are what I would recommend:

1) Protein Supplements

2) Multivitamins

3) Fish Oil

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4) Creatine

5) Others (BCAA, pre-workouts, fat burners)

If you're only allowed to get one supplement, that would be a protein powder. If two, protein powder and multivitamins.

Important:

I already said this but it's worth repeating over and over again…

No supplement will work if you are not training and dieting correctly. All these will do is just give you an expensive urine. All aspects of your workout and nutrition should be in their proper place first before benefitting from any supplementation program.

With that said, here are the supplements that are worth discussing.

PROTEIN POWDERS

If your goal is to either lose fat, build muscle, get fit, or simply become stronger, an important part of the equation you shouldn't miss is getting your protein intake right.

As we've discussed in the diet and nutrition section, we need at least 1g of protein per pound of body weight (and even more), and getting this number all from food is possible, but it's difficult. This is where a protein powder does its job.

In the fitness world, protein powders come in many forms. The most common ones include whey protein, casein and soy protein.

Before we discuss each of them, let's talk about the benefits protein powders give.

WHY PROTEIN POWDERS ARE IMPORTANT

Protein powders are important because they play a crucial role in the muscle building process of the body.

They are used in the production of amino acids, as well as in the manufacture of enzymes, hormones, nucleic acids and cellular messengers.

When protein is insufficient, your body cannot put together essential cell, tissue and organ structures nor produce biochemical substances for muscle contraction, cardiovascular function, healing and growth of the muscles.

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And if you're weightlifting, inadequate protein levels in your system would lead to slow healing and overtraining muscles, which will become more prone to injury, and worse, muscle loss.

One obvious thing that makes protein powders superior to whole foods is its convenience.

Let's say you weigh 200lbs. That means you will be needing around 200g of protein each day. To reach 200g of protein in a day, you need to consume 6-7 cans of tuna, or 35 whole eggs, or 70 egg whites. That's almost impossible to take, right? With protein powders, 1 scoop is already equivalent to almost a can of tuna. That will save you a lot of hassle.

Aside from convenience, protein powders are superior to whole foods because they are quickly absorbed by the body. This is very beneficial especially when taken right after working out — when your muscles are starving for protein sources to be used for healing and rebuilding.

And because solid protein sources, including turkey meat or lean chicken meat, takes more time than protein powders to digest, it's a no-brainer to pick protein powders over them when feeding your muscles post-workout.

HOW MUCH PROTEIN POWDER DO I NEED?

As we've discussed, we need at least 1 gram of protein per pound of body weight. The number of protein powder scoops you can have in a single day will depend on your diet.

If you're eating a lot of protein from whole foods, meat for example, then you don't need to take that much protein powders. If you're a vegan or if your diet doesn't contain adequate protein to reach your goal, you can have as many scoops as you want.

WHEY PROTEIN

Just like anything on earth, not all proteins are created equal. Simply, some are more superior and inferior than others, and in this protein powder topic, whey protein beats them all.

Whey protein is found in milk (20% of milk is whey), and it is the highest quality protein of all because it possesses all the essential amino acids, which are quickly absorbed by the muscle.

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The reason why it's superior than other types of protein is because it has the highest concentration of Branched Chain Amino Acids (BCAA), especially the amino acid Leucine, which is highly anabolic.

Another reason for its superiority is that it has a high biological value — meaning that the amino acid ratio is excellent for building muscle because most of it is absorbed and utilized by the body very efficiently.

In addition, whey contains active properties such as lactoferrin, lacto globulins, immunoglobulins, glycomacropeptides and others — which may be good for overall health.

Whey also have antioxidant-enhancing and immune-system enhancing properties, has recently been researched for other potential health benefits and is even considered a "functional food" by many health authorities.

In the bodybuilding world, whey protein is concluded to be the fastest acting and absorbing protein source, making it ideal for that post-workout drink.

To summarize, whey protein can help you improve strength, build muscle, lose fat, and make you healthier overall — all at the same time.

TYPES OF WHEY

When buying whey protein powders, aside from the brand and its packaging, this is another important thing that you should be looking at.

Most supplement companies only put "WHEY PROTEIN" on the label because they know most consumers wouldn't bother looking at its main ingredients. So, the next time you're going to buy a protein powder, check the label and main ingredient yourself. Just having this knowledge will save you lots of money and even give you some better gains.

1. Whey Concentrate - it is about 80% protein and contains fat and lactose. It is the cheapest of whey powders. If you find that this brand of whey is cheaper than the other one, chances are, the cheaper one uses whey concentrate as its main ingredient.

Important:

Since whey concentrate contains lactose, some may experience upset stomachs when consuming it. If you can't handle this situation, the best thing to do is switch to a whey protein brand that uses whey isolates or whey hydrolysate as its main ingredient.

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2. Whey Isolates - it has at least 90% protein and has lower fat and lactose content. This whey powder is for the lactose intolerant individuals, but also the more expensive option. Also, it is the type of whey that gives the highest quality per serving, plus it doesn't cause stomach upsets.

3. Whey Hydrolysate - it is also called hydrolyzed whey that is absorbed the fastest among the others because it has been pre-digested; it leads to up to 43% insulin level spike than isolate does — but also the most expensive one.

If you have an extra money to spare, then go for this. If not, I would stick to whey isolates.

From now on, since you've already learned about the types of whey, always make sure to check the profile ingredients of your protein powder. This way, you now don't have to trust hearsay, gossip, and recommendations from people who don't really have the basis for their feedback aside from their "feelings."

If you're confused what brand of whey protein to buy, follow these guidelines:

- If the budget is tight, go for Whey Concentrate, but expect occasional stomach upsets, especially if you're lactose intolerant
- If budget is not a concern, go for Whey Isolate or Whey Hydrolysate.
- Whey Isolate and Whey Hydrolysate don't differ that much, so I would still prefer Whey Isolate.

Best time to take whey protein

You can take whey protein anytime — you can take it with food, on an empty stomach, make it your water, or whenever you want. But the best time to really take whey protein is pre-workout and post-workout (See pre-workout and post-workout nutrition).

CASEIN PROTEIN

Casein, or micellar casein, also found from cow's milk, accounts for about 80% of protein in milk, while whey is 20%.

Casein, like whey, is a very high quality type of protein. It has a great amino acid profile (high in BCAAs) and it has a high biological value. The large difference is, whey is rapidly absorbed, while casein takes longer to digest.

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Does that mean it's a bad type of protein? No. That means your body gets a steadier source of protein for its slow release action, and it also means that your muscle will get a constant protein supply for a longer time.

But then, if you'd combine whey and casein, you could be able to maximize both their effects.

Casein is for continued supply of amino acids due to its slow release action + whey for peak anabolic response due to its higher leucine content

There are lots of protein powders that have whey + casein combined, you just have to look for them.

Personally, I would like to buy each of them separately. I want all my protein from whey post-workout, while other times I want casein. It's a matter of preference.

Best Time to Take Casein

You can take it between meals and/or before bedtime.

EGG PROTEIN

Derived from egg whites, egg protein contains high levels of protein and it is fat-free. It offers an excellent protein profile for its glutamic acid, essential amino acids and BCAAs.

These are the main highlights of taking egg proteins:

- It becomes completely absorbed once in your system and is ideal for people allergic to dairy or soy.
- It is lactose-free – perfect for lactose-intolerant individuals who cannot consume dairy products.
- It contains less cholesterol and fat as well as fewer carbohydrates –ideal for weight loss.
- Just like other types of protein, egg protein powder aids in muscle protein synthesis and muscle growth due to its high concentration of leucine (9%). Leucine helps the body to reach peak anabolic response after eating.

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Egg protein is processed – it is pulverized and dried. Others have egg yolks included, while others only have egg albumens (egg whites).

["Albumen" means most of the fat has been taken out during filtration.]

In a nutshell, egg protein is a slightly inferior version of whey. If your budget is very tight and you can't afford to buy whey protein powders, go for egg protein powders.

Alternatively, just take a number of whole eggs + egg whites a day to cover your needs.

SOY PROTEIN

Another great protein source (but not as good as whey, casein, or egg) is soy– heart healthy, low in saturated fat and cholesterol-free.

It is the protein in soybeans, consumed to replace meat proteins. Soybeans, in particular, are the only plant-based food that has eight amino acids. It also has B vitamins, iron, fiber, calcium and zinc.

Soy can also provide you with additional health benefits – reduced risk for chronic illnesses, such as heart disease and certain cancers, such as prostate cancer.

It can also combat the formation of free radicals when exercising, speeding up recovery time and reducing fatigue.

For maximizing muscle growth and fat loss, I would stick to whey and casein. For that reason, I'm not going to discuss soy protein too much.

PROTEIN BARS

They are food bars containing high amounts of protein and are consumed by fitness seekers looking to gain muscle. They are designed and created for people who want a protein source in an instant.

Take note though, there are many kinds of protein bars and each has its purpose. For example, meal replacement bars aim at replacing nutrients you'll get from whole foods, while energy bars fuel the body in the form of carbohydrates.

Protein bars have fewer carbs versus energy bars, or lower in dietary nutrients, vitamins and minerals than meal replacement bars. Overall, protein bars have the highest protein amount than any of the two.

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Many of these protein bars are made with whey, casein, egg, or soy protein, along with nuts, seeds or sometimes fruits. Others are made from green pea, rice and other plant-based protein.

But when looking for protein bars, you should choose those containing high protein, balanced carbohydrates and fats and little amounts of sugar.

Also, use the knowledge that you've learned on simple vs. complex carbohydrates, healthy fats, and different types of protein when buying protein bars. Always check the ingredient profile.

The best time to take a protein bar

1. Pre-workout

If you're one of those guys who hate fasted workouts, a protein bar pre-workout will get the job done. Look for one that has lots of good carbs and quality protein to fuel your workout. For the best results, eat one hour before a workout.

2. Post-workout

You need it for protein and carbohydrate supply to speed up growth and recovery.

3. As a meal replacement

Meal replacement bars particularly have high amounts of fiber and protein, and most of them contain low calories.

MASS GAINERS

Mass gainers are calories turned into powder. Like a protein bar, it is usually packed with protein, carbohydrates, and healthy fats.

This is usually beneficial for people who have a hard time gaining weight, or for those who are too lazy to eat. If you can't eat your food, drink it.

When choosing a good mass gainers, always make sure to check the nutrition label. Get one that has a mix of fast-acting and slow-acting proteins, plenty of complex carbohydrates, and a lot of healthy fats.

You don't want to get your calories from just sugars alone, right?

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MULTIVITAMINS

After discussing protein and its types, let's proceed to another essential pack of nutrients needed for fat loss and muscle growth.

First, what are multivitamins? They are a combination of vitamins and minerals that we can get from whole foods.

If carb, protein, and fat refer to the macronutrients, vitamins and minerals refer to the micronutrients. Like any other supplements, they will give you better results, but they are not needed.

However, when we cannot simply get sufficient micronutrients through our diets, we could suffer from deficiencies that lead to digestive disorders, poor nutrition and weak immune system. Our body will also function sub-optimally when this happens and building muscle and losing fat will slow down.

When you only do a type of diet that is solely based on the calorie content of food, like when doing a "dirty cut," or pure IIFYM type of diet, rest assured that you're not getting adequate quantities of the essential vitamins and minerals.

Also, when doing intense training sessions, our body gets depleted of the important vitamins and minerals, so it's just smart to have a good multivitamin supplement on our side. This is when it does its job.

So aside from watching your major macronutrient and calorie needs to promote overall progress, take a look at the following multivitamins and minerals to ensure you're getting enough – and learn what they have to do with building a great physique.

- Thiamine (Vitamin B1): It ensures that your body uses the carbs you're consuming as an energy source. It also promotes a strong nervous system.
- Riboflavin (Vitamin B2): It helps you process fat, carbs and protein and promotes healthy skin.
- Niacin (Vitamin B3): It plays a crucial role in keeping a healthy nervous system and energy production. It also promotes healthy digestion.
- Vitamin C: It is one of the most known antioxidants that help you fight colds and flu as well as free radicals that destroy the cells. It also aids in maintaining the health of connective tissues in the tendons and cartilage.
- Biotin: It stimulates the action of other nutrients and maintains red blood cells, which are the key to transporting and delivering oxygen and nutrients to every cell of the body, especially for bodybuilders and athletes who participate in strenuous and taxing activities.
- Retinol (Vitamin A): It ensures not only a healthy and clear vision for you, but also a strong immune system.

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- Vitamin D: It helps us absorb phosphorus and calcium, ensuring our bones are healthy and strong.
- Vitamin E: It's an antioxidant that strengthens our immune system and ensures proper blood flow. It also aids in tissue repair, making it important in muscle recovery after workouts.
- Vitamin K: It makes sure that our blood clots, especially when we cut ourselves. Having low levels of it in our bodies might be a serious situation, so we should ensure we have our daily dose of it.
- Magnesium: This mineral plays a role in protein synthesis and energy production. It is a crucial mineral for weight lifters.
- Zinc: Zinc aids almost in every process of growth, and it also raises testosterone production.
- Iron: This mineral helps carry oxygen around the body. The more oxygen you can provide your muscles with, the faster nutrients will get delivered and the faster they can recover as you work out.
- Sodium: An electrolyte that plays a role in muscle contractions. It also regulates the amount of water your body holds or excretes.
- Potassium: Also plays a huge role in muscle contractions. If levels are low, you will experience dehydration, muscle weakness, and cramps.
- Phosphorus: An important mineral that contributes to the production of creatine phosphate. Creatine phosphate plays a critical role in increasing the ATP, the muscle's main energy source. It also reduces muscle fatigue and lactic acid buildup.
- Chromium: This mineral helps regulate insulin levels. It also plays a role in the metabolism of the macronutrients, helping your body properly transport amino acids, glucose, and fatty acids to your body cells, especially the muscles.
- Calcium: Calcium not only plays a crucial role in bone development, but it also affects muscular contractions.

Important:

Multivitamins, or any supplements for that matter, won't do the hard work for you. They support you to help you stay fit, lose weight or build mass and supply your body with the nutrients for muscle gain and fat loss.

While they can help you in developing more muscle than only diet and exercise, you still have to eat right and exercise enough to grow.

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VITAMIN D3

The reason I didn't include Vitamin D3 on the multivitamin section is because I want to discuss the plethora of benefits that it brings as a standalone supplement.

Vitamin D3 works in several ways, particularly keeping muscle and bone health and preventing inflammation. While your supplement stack and training regimen may already be perfect, you might not be able to get the most out of it if you're missing on vitamin D3.

Here is why:

Vitamin D is an important nutrient, both for reparative and preventative benefits. It is linked to benefit people with illnesses and diseases, including depression, heart disease, influenza, osteoporosis and obesity.

But for bodybuilding, we're not talking just about any vitamin D, but vitamin D3 (cholecalciferol) to get stronger, reduce body fat, raise testosterone levels and increase muscle protein synthesis.

BENEFITS OF TAKING VITAMIN D3

Stronger bones

In bodybuilding, Vitamin D3 helps promotes stronger bones. It stimulates calcium deposition in your bones, making them healthier and stronger. With low levels of it, calcium be drawn out from the bones and returned to the bloodstream. And if it continues over time, your bones will be weak, leaving you susceptible to injuries.

Increased muscle function

If you're deficient in vitamin D3, you will not gain strength.

What's worse is that deficiency of the nutrient is common among strength builders and athletes. It is linked with muscle atrophy and muscle weakness.

Decreased risk of heart disease, high blood pressure or heart failure and diabetes

Aside from helping you absorb calcium, it also protects the heart. According to research, those deficient with it are more susceptible to cardiac disorders and high blood pressure.

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Vitamin D3 Dosage

Bodybuilders, athletes, fitness enthusiasts, and those who are active are recommended to get between 2000-5000 IU of vitamin D3.

So instead of worrying about getting too much of it, you should be more concerned about having too little of it in your body. See to it that you're including it in your diet to take your performance to a notch higher.

FISH OIL/OMEGA 3S/ESSENTIAL FATTY ACIDS (EFAS)

This guide on supplementation won't be complete without us discussing essential fatty acids, particularly fish oil. So, in the following, let me discuss what its benefits are and what it does in bodybuilding.

First, fish oil can be derived from a plethora of sources –fish, such as salmon and tuna, and seafood in general, or in the form of supplements that are on the market.

Fish oil has essential EFAs, including docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) or eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) that offers plenty of benefits, including prevention of stroke and heart disease.

Aside from these, here are its other benefits:

Supports healthy cholesterol levels

It keeps a healthy blood cholesterol profile in check and at normal range. As an example, consuming adequate amount of omega 3 daily can promote healthy cholesterol levels and ensures proper concentration of triacylglycerol in your system — supporting the overall well-being and health needed to keep up with training.

Promotes bone health

Workouts can have detrimental effects to the bones. Think of lifting heavy weights or pounding the pavements when running.

On that note, it would be smart to look into your fish oil consumption to maintain bone health, especially if you're regularly training with weights, or if you're a woman who's entering her menopausal years.

So aside from supplementing with calcium, see to it that you're supplying your body with fish oil for bone health.

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Improves mood

Fish oil also offers mood support, especially if you load up on processed foods, which do not provide your cells with adequate nutrition, resulting in stress and buildup of mood disorders, including anxiety and depression.

With fish oil, your serotonin, the "feel good" hormone levels increase, leading to a better mood, which also helps you avoid food cravings that happen a lot when you're stressed.

Still not convinced?

Taking adequate amounts of EFAs can improve:

- Testosterone production
- Growth hormone secretion
- Energy production of the cells
- Metabolism
- Skin appearance

Fish Oil/Omega 3 Dosage

Take 2-3 grams EPA and DHA combined (check the label).

*Take it with meals to avoid the "fish burp" after taste.

CREATINE

For so many years, Creatine has been one of the most effective and cheapest body-building supplements that has ever been created. It is a compound that occurs naturally in our bodies, with almost 95% of it is found inside the muscle cells.

Though we can get it from food sources like fish and red meat, we have to eat a ridiculously large amount of these foods to get the proper amounts. That is why creatine supplementation is the only efficient and cost-effective way to go.

Creatine is one of the few supplements that has been proven time and time again to have a significant impact on muscle size and strength. This stuff works, and is highly recommended for anyone who wants to dramatically increase their gym performance.

So, what exactly does creatine do?

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Let's discuss each of its benefits:

- Increased strength
- Increased muscle mass
- Quicker recovery time between sets
- Enhanced brain function

Increased Strength

Creatine increases the body's ability to generate ATP — the fuel source that our cells use to generate bursts of power.

By increasing ATP production, your muscles can generate higher amounts of energy and sustain it for longer periods of time. This will allow you to lift more weights in the gym and pump up more reps. And as you already know, more weight and more reps are equal to more muscle growth.

Without a sufficient supply of creatine, your body cannot produce energy during high intensity exercise. As a result, you cannot increase performance output and stimulate muscle growth.

Increased Muscle Mass

Supplementing with creatine will super-hydrate your muscle cells, — that is, more water will be stored in the tissues, giving you a more muscled appearance.

Well, aside from the bigger look, is this important?

The answer is yes. Your muscles are 70% water and higher amounts of it will create a greater overall anabolic environment within your body.

More anabolism = more growth.

Quicker Recovery Time Between Sets

Research evidence suggests that its supplementation could reduce inflammation and cell damage following heavy bouts of workouts. It can also promote faster recovery by creating a "buffer" effect for the buildup of lactic acid on the muscles.

Less lactic acid means less muscle catabolism and less muscle burn during training. In effect, since your muscles will have an increased tolerance for fatigue and pain, you will be able to crank up more reps even with less rest time between sets.

Enhanced Brain Function

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Since our brain relies heavily on ATP, supplementing with creatine will boost your brain power.

More muscle mass and strength + increased IQ and decreased mental fatigue — who wouldn't want that?

TYPES OF CREATINE

With the changing times and technologies, new creatine types have been introduced and here they are:

Creatine Monohydrate

It is the original creatine supplement people have been using for years and still one of the most sold. It is also the most effective based on many studies concerning creatine supplementation. However, it might lead to stomach upset and bloating to some users.

Micronized Creatine

It is creatine monohydrate, but it is micronized, meaning its molecules have been cut up, increasing its surface area by up to twenty times and reducing the stomach discomfort that some users reported about monohydrate. Non-responders to monohydrates can try this creatine.

Creatine Citrate

Just like the ester-attached type, the citrate form is absorbent and soluble, reducing stomach discomfort. However, it requires double the amount of monohydrate for effectiveness, and it is very expensive.

Creatine Ethyl Ester

It is attached with an ester, hence the name. It is the most absorbent of all creatines, up to 99% absorption because the ester counteracts the charges to improve absorption.

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Creatine Serum

It is one of the most debated types.

Scientific evidence suggests that serum isn't useful and it is unstable in liquid. It also breaks down and turns to creatinine when dissolved for a long period of time. [Creatinine only damages the kidneys].

On the other hand, the proponents say that it is best among all types because it is absorbed quickly without needing the loading phase.

Tri & Di Creatine Malate

It is also bonded with other molecules for improved absorption rate. They aid in faster workout recovery and less muscle fatigue, and they are water-soluble. However, the side effects are yet to be known.

Creatine Orate

This type of creatine has its own energy-boosting property and it can give you more energy than what you'd get from monohydrate. It can also decrease workout-related fatigue. On the downside, it is VERY EXPENSIVE.

Creatine Kre-Alkalyn

It is also bonded to a molecule, but clinical trials are yet to be made on it, although the general consensus from users is positive. Less bloating and no loading phase needed to use it, but it is pricey.

Creatine HCL

Creatine hydrochloride (HCL) is creatine bound with hydrochloric acid. It works well because adding the hydrochloride group to the creatine molecule lowers the pH of the creatine, making it more absorbable with less stomach issues.

These are just a few types and I know there are a lot more. It is not important to know all the creatine types as all of them provide the same benefits.

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WHAT CREATINE TYPE SHOULD I GET?

Personally, I would get either a plain creatine monohydrate, micronized creatine, or creatine HCL.

But as with any supplement, you can experiment and see what works best for you.

Creatine dosage

A dose of 5-10g a day should be enough. No loading phase needed.

Best times to take it should be 30 minutes to an hour before a workout and right after it, along with a protein shake.

This is how I do it:

Workout days: 3-5 grams 30 minutes before workout, and 3-5 grams immediately after workout, together with whey.

Rest days: 5 grams upon waking up.

Important:

Make sure to drink at least twelve glasses (or more) of water a day when taking creatine supplements. This will not only boost the effectiveness of it, but will also remove the possibility of stomach discomforts.

GLUTAMINE

Glutamine is an amino acid affecting the function and growth of the cells in the intestines and stomach.

It is used alongside a human growth hormone when treating short bowel syndrome.

It plays important roles in cell volumizing, increasing immune function, and accelerating metabolism. It also promotes human growth hormone secretion, helping your body metabolize fat and supporting new muscle growth. And with its anti-catabolism property, it prevents muscle breakdown.

Other Benefits

- It helps restore glycogen to restore energy because it is known to be a nitrogen and carbon donor.
- It is an important muscle protein component that builds and repair muscles.

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- It prevents catabolism or the state of the muscle being eaten up.
- It also helps in cell hydration and volumization to shorten recovery and healing times.
- It also helps produce growth hormones by more than 400%.
- It boosts your immune system.

Glutamine dosage

Take 10 and 15 grams two to three times daily. Each serving is 5 grams.

The best time to take it is in the morning upon waking up, after training with your creatine and whey, and before going to bed.

BETA-ALANINE

Known as the building block of a molecule that helps in buffering acids in the muscles, carnosine. Beta alanine, like creatine, can improve workout performance and can help in muscle growth. [Carnosine appears to be an anti-aging and antioxidant compound that delays the onset of muscle failure].

Many pre-workout supplements have already put beta-alanine in their main ingredient. If that's the case, you don't have to buy it separately.

Benefits:

- Improved muscular anaerobic performance: It increases the carnosine content of the muscle; thus, it can aid in improving workout performance by delaying the onset of muscular failure. In effect, you will be able train longer and harder, especially during high intensity exercises.

- Improved aerobic endurance: It can also enhance your cardio, such as sprints, performance.

- Increased Muscle mass: Because it increases carnosine in your muscle, you gain strength, develop lean muscle and increase endurance.

Beta-alanine dosage

The standard dose is between 2 to 5 grams daily, taken best before and after workouts.

A surefire way to tell if your pre-workout has enough beta-alanine is when you get that tingling sensation on your skin after a couple of minutes taking it.

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BCAAS

Branch Chain Amino Acids (BCAAs) — Leucine, Isoleucine, and Valine — are the body's building blocks, making up 35% of muscle mass. Of the nine essential amino acids, these three account for the main drivers for muscle recovery and growth.

To give you a brief overview of each:

Leucine

It is the most anabolic amino acid based on the Journal of Physiology, 2013. One reason whey protein is superior than others is because it contains a lot of the amino acid leucine. It aids in muscle growth and it works better than whole foods that take too long before it is absorbed by the muscles.

Isoleucine

It is an essential fatty acid that must be obtained from the diet because it cannot be manufactured by the body. It is important for the manufacture of functional and structural proteins in your body. Consider it as supplementation if you're on a low protein diet or you exercise a lot. It can be available as a standalone supplement but it might be better to find one that has all three BCAAs.

Valine

It works with leucine and isoleucine to repair tissue, fuel the body, promote cell growth and regulate blood sugar. It also stimulates the central nervous system, prevents muscle breakdown and removes excessive nitrogen from the liver.

These three amino acids work better when taken together, not a standalone.

Benefits of BCAA

When we train, our body produces cortisol. And when the system produces high amounts of cortisol, our body tends to go into a catabolic state--the state of muscle breakdown. This happens around the 60-90-minute mark of the activity.

By supplementing with BCAAs--before, during, and after training-- you're doing your muscles a favor by preventing muscle breakdown, giving more fuel for energy, and accelerating recovery.

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You can compare BCAAs with whey protein — both act fast in providing nutrients for recovery and growth, but BCAAs do its job much quicker.

This is why it is very beneficial to take during a fasted workout or during your fasting hours.

BCAA dosage

Before/during training: 5-10g

Optional:

After training: 5-10g

Upon waking up: 5g

Between meals: 5g

AMINO ACIDS

After discussing about BCAAs, let's talk about amino, or amino acids – the building blocks that increase fat metabolism and form muscle tissue. They can help build muscle tissue, improve strength and enhance workout performance.

A few points:

- There are twenty-two amino acids. (nine essential; thirteen non-essential)
- Essential amino acids are from food containing protein and they cannot be manufactured by the body. It is important to get enough protein so that your body can make the thirteen non-essential amino acids from the nine essential amino acids. See "Protein Section" for complete and incomplete proteins.
- Non-essential amino acids are manufactured by the body through combining at least two essential amino acids.
- Amino acids are left when the proteins are broken down.
- The body uses amino acids to manufacture proteins in order for us to repair body tissue, grow, break down food, perform cell functions, and as an energy source.
- We use conditional amino acids in times of stress and illness. They include glutamine, arginine, serine, ornithine, glycine, tyrosine and proline.

From these details, we can say that amino acids are really essential, not only for bodybuilding but for general health and well-being.

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But then it might be impractical to supplement on different products to supply our bodies and to meet our protein needs with amino acids.

For that matter, I recommend just buying protein powders, not amino acid supplements.

Why? For these reasons:

- Amino Acid supplements can't fill up your daily protein/calorie needs.
- Protein powders, especially whey protein, offers a complete amino acid profile. You get all the essential amino acids plus your protein needs in a couple of scoops.

PRE-WORKOUTS

These are performance boosters that contain essential ingredients working in harmony to improve your endurance and energy, crank up muscle growth, increase strength, and/or help in fat loss.

Out of so many pre-workout supplements to choose from, these are the main ingredients that you should be looking for:

Caffeine

We all know that it's a powerful stimulant – increasing alertness when it binds to brain receptors and keeping fatigue down and nerve activity up.

It is added in pre-workouts and thermogenics for one important reason – because it works!

Caffeine reduces workout-related stress and fatigue, improves muscle function and raises adrenaline (for the rush!).

And if you dose and use correctly, you can take reflexive power output by up to 50% more.

For the best results, you can dose between 150mg to 300mg. Don't go over 400mg within the 24-hour period.

Creatine

See Creatine section.

Beta Alanine

See Beta-Alanine section.

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Betaine

Also known as trimethylglycine, a modified amino acid, betaine boosts performance and increases strength by up to 25%; thus, it helps you take more reps for faster gains.

L-arginine or Arginine AKG

Arginine is one of the most popular pre-workouts around because it can be instantly converted to nitric oxide. It occurs naturally in poultry, meat and fish and is necessary to manufacture protein, promote muscle protein synthesis, raise growth hormone and relax blood vessels.

You can find this ingredient in most pre-workout supplements because it is the one responsible for giving you maximum muscle pumps. Aside from the good feeling it gives, it is also beneficial for better nutrient delivery to the muscles.

L- Citrulline or Citrulline Malate

It is a combination of malic acid and citrulline that increases your energy levels through getting rid of ammonia. Thus, it can delay fatigue, helping you crank more reps on a given set, and speed up recovery time.

Having this ingredient with creatine, beta-alanine, and betaine will give you a lot of workout firepower.

Extras

The ingredients above are the ones that will bring your workout to the next level, but I know that almost all pre-workout supplements have a lot more than that. There are pre-workouts that have ingredients to raise focus, increasing fat burning capabilities, providing electrolytes, and so much more.

As long as the pre-workout has all (at least most) of the ingredients above, you're all set.

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FAT BURNERS

These are supplements that burn fat, improving the appearance and health of users.

Many use fat burners to lose weight and achieve their desired aesthetic effects.

Bodybuilders, on the other hand, use them to burn the top fat layer to get a more toned and sculpted physique with a more defined muscle appearance.

Many of them stimulate and speed up metabolism so that our bodies can burn fat faster by using them for energy. They also improve our energy levels, helping us prevent fatigue. Some of them produce adrenaline, causing elevated blood pressure and heart rate as well as reduced tiredness and pain.

Caffeine

It burns fat through thermogenesis, a process that boost metabolism and increases body temperature, speeding up fat burning.

Green Tea Extract

It contains caffeine that burns and reduces existing body fat.

Coffee Bean Extract

Another effective fat burner. Coffee bean extract may help reduce up to 17 lbs of weight over a 22-week use. It works even better if you take it during a workout.

It contains chlorogenic acid that inhibits glucose absorption, increasing weight loss.

Raspberry Ketones

Raspberry ketones can promote weight loss by boosting metabolism. It also contains a protein that aids in breaking down body fat, adinopectin.

It also supports weight loss through the enzyme lipase, which is responsible for freeing fatty acids from fat cells.

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Garcinia Cambogia

It contains hydroxycitric acid that promotes weight loss in two ways. It suppresses the appetite by raising serotonin levels, preventing emotional eating, which increases your tendency to eat more when stressed or depressed. It also lessens cravings overall.

HCA also inhibits the production of fat by limiting the activity of citrate lyase, the enzyme used to make fat from the carbs you eat.

CLA

Conjugated linoleic acid reduces body fat and preserves lean body mass. It can help you lose more fat because it prevents fat storage while preventing muscle loss.

L-carnitine

Helps in transferring long-chain fatty acids into the mitochondria, where they may be converted to an immediate source of energy.

Acetyl L-Carnitine

ALCAR is a form of amino acid with the ability to transport fat to the areas where it would be used for energy. By supplementing with it, you will burn fat through better metabolism. It also decreases glucose consumption so that your body can make use of fatty acids as an energy source, benefitting those who are looking to retain muscle while losing weight.

Yohimbine/Yohimbe

Functioning as an appetite suppressant, like Garcinia Cambogia, Yohimbe can inhibit the action of the adrenergic receptor system's alpha-subunits that suppresses fat metabolism. In short, Yohimbine can stimulate fat loss because it boosts the impact of beta-subunits.

5HTP

Also called oxitriptan, 5-Hydroxytryptophan or 5HTP is a chemical precursor and amino acid that can burn fat by increasing energy levels, reducing appetite and cravings and speeding up metabolism.

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Forskolin

Increases lipolysis in cells and boosts testosterone. It also helps our thyroid health, which is important for burning fat.

Bacopa Monniera

It helps in the production of T4, a thyroid hormone that boosts metabolism, aids in brain function, and supports mood and decreases cortisol.

Dandelion Extract

A diuretic ingredient that helps flush water out of the skin. It doesn't burn fat literally, but will make you look even more shredded.

Don't worry about this if you're not competing. Dehydration is not healthy.

Final Note

You can look for a fat burner that has most of these ingredients, or you can just buy each of them separately.

TESTOSTERONE BOOSTERS

The following are the supplements that increase testosterone levels. Why is this good? Because higher testosterone levels is important in muscle growth.

A few known are ZMA and tribulus terrestris that are said to boost your testosterone levels.

But do they really work?

Let's discuss each of them:

Tribulus

Also called tribulus terrestris — it is a popular testosterone booster that's claimed to raise testosterone in the body, but that's a falsehood.

In theory: It's supposed to raise the body's luteinizing hormone, which sends signals to the testes to manufacture testosterone, levels.

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And if combined with weight training, the idea of supplementing with it sounds perfect. But it's not really.

A placebo controlled study in the Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research reveals the truth.

The researchers tested it using 24 rugby players, who were divided into two groups. [One group, placebo; the other was given 450mg]

They used the same training protocol over the course of five weeks.

Conclusion: Tribulus didn't lead to better muscle gain or strength improvement or body fat reduction of those who were given tribulus versus those who were not. It may raise your libido, but not your free testosterone levels.

ZMA

ZMA (zinc aspartate and magnesium aspartate) is a testosterone booster that increases a bodybuilder or an athlete's performance and strength. It is marketed as a non-steroidal and natural supplement. The supplement is often sold along with other ingredients, along with vitamin B6.

The precise effective dose is 450 mg of magnesium, 30 mg of zinc, and 10.5 mg of Vitamin B6 on an empty stomach, before bed.

Final Note

If you're not suffering from low testosterone levels and if you're not under 40 years old, I wouldn't bother with testosterone boosting supplements.

Save your money from food and other beneficial supplements.

CHAPTER 12 TAKEAWAYS

- Supplements aren't necessary, but they can be beneficial.
- They account for only 10-20% of your overall results, and not more.
- Supplements will not work if your workout and nutrition are not handled first

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- Recommended supplements:
  1) Protein Supplements
  2) Multivitamins
  3) Fish Oil
  4) Creatine
  5) Others (BCAA, pre-workouts, fat burners)

- If you're going to get one supplement, get a protein powder.

- Getting at least 1g of protein per pound of body weight each day from food is difficult. Protein powders will help.

- Aside from convenience, protein powders are superior to whole foods because they are quickly absorbed by the body. Best taken post-workout.

- The number of protein powder scoops you can have in a single day will depend on your diet. If you're eating a lot of protein from whole foods, meat for example, then you don't need to take that much protein powder.

- Whey protein is superior than any other protein.

- Whey protein has a high BCAA content and biological value

- There are three types of whey: Concentrate, Isolate, and Hydrolysate.

- Whey Concentrate - it is about 80% protein and contains fat and lactose. It is the cheapest of whey powders.

- Whey Isolates - it has at least 90% protein and has lower fat and lactose content. This whey powder is for the lactose intolerant individuals, but is also the more expensive option. It provides the highest quality per serving.

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- Whey Hydrolysate - it is also called hydrolyzed whey that is absorbed the fastest among the others because it has been pre-digested — but is also the most expensive one.

- You can take whey protein anytime, but the best time is pre-workout and post-workout.

- Casein, like whey, is a very high quality type of protein. It has a great amino acid profile (high in BCAAs) and it has a high biological value. The large difference is, whey is rapidly absorbed, while casein takes longer to digest.

- That means your body gets a steadier source of protein for its slow release action, and it also means that your muscle will get a constant protein supply for a longer time.

- If you'd combine whey and casein, you could be able to maximize both their effects.

- You can take casein protein between meals and/or before bedtime.

- Derived from egg whites, egg protein contains high levels of protein and it is fat-free. It offers an excellent protein profile for its glutamic acid, essential amino acids and BCAAs.

- Egg protein is a slightly inferior version of whey. If your budget is very tight and you can't afford to buy whey protein powders, go for egg protein powders.

- Another great protein source (but not as good as whey. casein, or egg) is soy– heart healthy, low in saturated fat and cholesterol-free.

- For maximizing muscle growth and fat loss, I would stick to whey and casein. For that reason, I will not discuss soy protein too much.

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- Use the knowledge that you've learned on simple vs. complex carbohydrates, healthy fats, and different types of protein when buying protein bars. Always check the ingredient profile.

- You can take your protein bar either pre-workout, post-workout, or as a meal replacement.

- When choosing a good mass gainers, always make sure to check the nutrition label. Get one that has a mix of fast-acting and slow-acting proteins, plenty of complex carbohydrates, and a lot of healthy fats.

- Multivitamins refer to the micronutrients. Like any other supplements, they will give you better results, but they are not needed.

- When we cannot simply get sufficient micronutrients through our diets, we could suffer from deficiencies that lead to digestive disorders, poor nutrition and weak immune system. Our body will also function sub-optimally when this happens and building muscle and losing fat will slow down.

- Vitamin D3 gives stronger bones, increased muscle function, and decreases the risk of heart disease.

- Bodybuilders, athletes, fitness enthusiasts, and those who are active are recommended to get between 2000-5000 IU of vitamin D3.

- Fish oil can improve:
    - Cholesterol levels
    - Bone health
    - Mood
    - Testosterone production
    - Growth hormone secretion
    - Energy production of the cells
    - Metabolism
    - Skin appearance

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- Take 2-3 grams EPA and DHA combined (check the label).

- Take it with meals to avoid the "fish burp" after taste.

- Creatine has been concluded for so many years to be one of the most effective and cheapest bodybuilding supplement that has ever created.

- Creatine's benefits are:

  • Increased strength
  • Increased muscle mass
  • Quicker recovery time between sets
  • Enhanced brain function

- There are different types of creatine. Personally, I would get either a plain creatine monohydrate, micronized creatine, or creatine HCL. But as with any supplement, you can experiment and see what works best for you.

- A dose of 5-10g of creatine a day should be enough. No loading phase needed.

- Best times to take it should be 30 minutes to an hour before a workout and right after it, along with a protein shake.

- Make sure to drink at least twelve glasses (or more) of water a day when taking creatine supplements. This will not only boost the effectiveness of it, but will also remove the possibility of stomach discomforts.

- Glutamine plays important roles in cell volumizing, increasing immune function, and accelerating metabolism. It also promotes human growth hormone secretion, helping your body metabolize fat and supporting new muscle growth. And with its anti-catabolism property, it prevents muscle breakdown.

- Take 10 and 15 grams of glutamine two to three times daily. Each serving is 5 grams.

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- The best time to take Glutamine is in the morning upon waking up, after training with your creatine and whey, and before going to bed.

- Beta-alanine improves anaerobic and aerobic performance, and increases muscle mass.

- The standard dose of beta-alanine is between 2 to 5 grams daily, taken best before and after workouts. A surefire way to tell if your pre-workout has enough of beta-alanine is when you get that tingling sensation on your skin after a couple of minutes taking it.

- Branch Chain Amino Acids (BCAAs) — Leucine, Isoleucine, and Valine — are the body's building blocks, making up 35% of muscle mass. Of the nine essential amino acids, these three account for the main drivers for muscle recovery and growth.

- By supplementing with BCAAs--before, during, and after training-- you're doing your muscles a favor by preventing muscle breakdown, giving more fuel for energy, and accelerating recovery.

- You can take 5-10g of BCAA during training, after training, upon waking up, and/or between meals.

- I would not recommend getting an amino acid supplement over protein powders because amino acid supplements can't fill up your daily protein/calorie needs.

- The ingredients to look for when buying a pre-workout supplement are: Caffeine, creatine, beta-alanin, betaine, l- arginine or arginine AKG, l-citrulline or citrulline mallate.

- As long as the pre-workout have all (at least most) of the ingredients above, you're all set.

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- Tribulus may raise your libido, but not your free testosterone levels.

- The precise effective dose of ZMA is 450 mg of magnesium, 30 mg of zinc, and 10.5 mg of Vitamin B6 on empty stomach, before bed.

- If you're not suffering from low testosterone levels and if you're not under 40 years old, I wouldn't bother with testosterone boosting supplements.

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CHAPTER 13: TAKING MEASUREMENTS/WEIGHING IN

The only way to tell if your weight loss/gain plan is working is by measuring yourself. This is very important to your progress and you shouldn't take it for granted. Mirrors and "feelings" shouldn't be the sole basis for your success measures as they only give you a tiny fraction of what's really happening. Instead, trust the weighing scale and the tape measure — and if you know how to use a caliper to measure your body fat percentages, then that would be better (but that's outside of the scope of this book).

I suggest taking your measurements on a Sunday or Monday morning. You should do it on an empty stomach -- no food and water -- for accurate measurements. I would also suggest you get a digital weighing scale for easier monitoring and progress tracking.

This is how you'll do it:

Pick a day when you are going to do your weigh ins and measurements. Set a calendar alarm to remind you that when you wake up this day, the first thing you will do is step on the weighing scale. Take note, first thing after waking up. That means no drinking of water before or whatsoever. After you do this, write down your exact weight on a piece of paper or on your phone.

Next thing would be to take a tape measure. Measure each and every part of your body. These are the things that you should measure:

Waist

Chest

Left and right arm (flexed)

Shoulder width

Hips

Left and right thigh

Left and right calf

A couple of tips:

- Measure right and left parts individually. Don't measure your right arm then leave your left arm and just copy the number. The same applies to your legs and calves.

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- Measure the waist just slightly below the belly button. Measure it flexed and unflexed.

- Measure the chest just above the nipple area. Slightly above. And don't flare out your lats. Just measure in the most relaxed position.

- This is obvious but of course, you have to write down your measurements.

That's it. Do this again next week after waking up.

Important:

Alternatively, you can also weigh yourself every single day and compute the average after the 7th day. This is much more accurate and it goes like this:

Monday - 170lbs

Tuesday - 169lbs

Wednesday - 171lbs

Thursday - 168lbs

Friday - 168lbs

Saturday - 169lbs

Sunday - 170lbs

Average - 169lbs

The reason for this is that there are quite a number of factors that affect the body weight itself — water, sodium levels, meal frequency, etc. If you only weigh yourself on Monday and on Sunday for example, you wouldn't know that your fat loss method is working because you will see that your weight (170lbs) is still the same after the 7th day.

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PHOTOS

The next thing you should do is take progress photos. Don't worry, I wouldn't require you to send your photos to me or to have them posted on your social media. We just need something to look at later on.

This is how you will do it:

Ask someone to take a photo of you the same day and time you take your measurements -- in the morning and on empty stomach.

These are the guidelines:

- Take a picture of front, back, side -- all relaxed position.
- Take a picture of double biceps pose front, double biceps pose back.
- Preferably, wear only decent-looking underwear or boxer shorts so you can also see the progress of your legs.
- Make sure that you have good lighting and all the body parts should be clearly seen. Don't take a photo against the light.
- It's preferable to take the photos at the same time of the day. Other houses are affected by the sunlight so the lighting effect may have a huge difference on the photos.

That's it. Do this again the next week, and the next.

Our goal after 27 weeks is to look at our day one photo, then look at it side-by-side on the last day of the 27th week.

Sounds exciting right?

CHAPTER 13 TAKEAWAYS

- The only way to tell if your weight loss/gain plan is working is by measuring yourself. This is very important to your progress and you shouldn't take it for granted.

- I suggest taking your measurements on a Sunday or Monday morning. You should do it on an empty stomach -- no food and water -- for accurate measurements. I would also suggest to get a digital weighing scale for easier monitoring and progress tracking.

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- Measure each and every part of your body and record it.
- The next thing you should do is take progress photos.
- Ask someone to take a photo of you the same day and time you take your measurements -- in the morning and on empty stomach.
- Our goal after 27 weeks is to look at our day one photo, then look at it side-by-side on the last day of the 27th week.

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CHAPTER 14: CLOSING

You've made it! This is the end, right? Hell, no. Ending this book is only the beginning of the journey. Like I've said, following through on the things that you've learned is the other part of the whole equation.

So, how do you feel now? Are you confident that you can achieve the body of your dreams in a couple of months from now? I hope so, because if you've truly read and understood the contents of this book, you should be able to answer yes to that.

Within three-four months from now, you'll be pretty amazed by how much change you're going to witness. The best part is, it is not just a change on how you look, which I know should the main goal of this book, but also a change in your overall well-being. Aside from transforming your body, fitness will change a lot in your life. It will teach you discipline, hard work, perseverance, and many other things that you might not have thought of. Fitness will turn your life upside down — for the better.

From here on, all you have to do is take the route that this book has laid out for you, and a couple of months from now you'll think, "I'm glad I did, and I am proud of myself."

My goal is to help you achieve your fitness goal, and I hope this book has given you a lot of tools to help you do that. If so, could you promise me that you'll let me know once you've reached your goal?

You can connect with me:

Blog: www.thelazylifter.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/thelazylifter

Twitter: www.twitter.com/thelazylifter

Instagram: www.instagram.com/thelazylifter

Email: cho@thelazylifter.com

Thanks again! I hope to hear from you and your success story. If you have questions, please check the FAQs.pdf. I wish you all the best!

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WOULD YOU DO ME A FAVOR?

If you think this book has helped you out, or if you think it will help a lot of people, could I ask you a small favor and write a short review on my Facebook page?

CLICK HERE TO LEAVE ME A REVIEW ON FACEBOOK

Also, if you have any friends or family members who might benefit from this book, you can recommend it to them.

Again, thank you so much! I wish you all the best and I'm looking forward to hearing from you!

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PERSONALIZED WORKOUT PLAN, 1 ON 1 COACHING, AND FITNESS/NUTRITION CONSULTATION

If you want a more detailed coaching and want me to personally teach you everything in this book that you don't understand, shoot me a message on any of these:

Facebook: www.facebook.com/thelazylifter

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Email: cho@thelazylifter.com

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RESOURCES THAT HAVE HELPED ME

*Just click the product name to view it on its website

The Chaos Bulk

Eat Stop Eat

These two products have given me a lot of information about intermittent fasting. If you want to learn more about it and master the ways on how to do it, you should definitely get these books.

Paleo Reboot

Anabolic Cooking

If you're a fan of cooking or preparing delicious meals, these two products are the best out there. Since my eBook doesn't tackle much about food preparations, these two will give you hundreds and hundreds of recipes to try. They're packed with muscle-building nutrients of course!

Fat Diminisher System

This is a great weight loss product if you're the type of person who's not fond of eating unhealthy foods and tracking macros and calories.

The End

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