

A shirtless man with a beard and short hair is shown from the waist up, flexing his right arm and chest. He is set against a dark, moody background.

THE PURE BODYBUILDING PROGRAM

PUSH PULL LEGS

JEFF NIPPARD

IMPORTANT PROGRAM NOTES

READ BEFORE STARTING

Perform a full general warm-up and exercise-specific warm-up every workout as outlined on the next page (should only take 5-10 mins max)

There is a Weak Point & Arms day in this program where you will select a weak point from the table below and perform 1-2 exercises for your weak point on this day. Please read The Hypertrophy Handbook for more detail.

Note that most sets in this program are taken to an RPE of 9-10. This means you will push most sets within ~1 rep of failure or to failure. Make sure you are focused mentally before starting each working set!

All working sets are broken up into Early Sets and Last Sets. The Early Sets are all the sets that come before your Last Set. Usually the Early Sets should be a little bit easier than the later sets (slightly lower RPE) whereas the Last Set is pushed to failure on most (but not all exercises). See The Hypertrophy Handbook for a full explanation of RPE.

Each exercise has a clickable link which demonstrates how to perform the exercise. I suggest watching each exercise demo before starting the workout.

Note that this Push/Pull/Legs/Arms split is an asynchronous split, which means that the program runs on a 10-day cycle instead of the usual 7-day cycle. This is explained in more detail in The Hypertrophy Handbook.

All other aspects of the program, including how to understand the Last-Set Intensity Technique column, when to make an exercise substitution and how to progress through the rep ranges given is explained in The Hypertrophy Handbook. Give it a full read before starting your first workout! Let's crush it!!

WARM UP PROTOCOL

General Warm-Up

Perform the following general warm-up before every workout (should take 5-10 mins max). You can save time by doing some of the dynamic stretches as you do warm-up sets for the first exercise.

5-10 minutes	Light cardio on machine on your choice of machine (treadmill, stairmaster, elliptical, bike, etc.)
10 reps per side	Arm Swings
10 reps per side	Arm Circles
10 reps per side	Front-to-Back Leg Swings
10 reps per side	Side-to-Side Leg Swings
15 reps per side	Cable External Rotation (optional)

Exercise-Specific Warm-Up

Perform the following exercise-specific warm-up according to the number of warm-up sets listed in the program

1 Warm-Up Set Listed	Use ~60% of your planned working weight for ~6-10 reps (or until you feel warm and loose)
2 Warm-Up Sets Listed	Perform a mini warm-up pyramid: Warm-Up Set #1 = ~50% of planned working weight for ~6-10 reps Warm-Up Set #2 = ~70% of planned working weight for 4-6 reps
3 Warm-Up Sets Listed	Perform a full warm-up pyramid: Warm-Up Set #1 = ~45% of planned working weight for ~6-10 reps Warm-Up Set #2 = ~65% of planned working weight for 4-6 reps Warm-Up Set #3 = ~85% of planned working weight for 3-4 reps

WEAK POINTS TABLE

Weak Point	Exercise #1 Options	Exercise #2 Options
Shoulders	1. <u>Cuffed Behind-The-Back Lateral Raise</u> 2. <u>Machine Lateral Raise</u> 3. <u>Dumbbell Lateral Raise</u> Pick one of the options above. Do not do all of them in one day!	1. <u>Machine Shoulder Press</u> 2. <u>Smith Machine Shoulder Press</u> 3. <u>Standing DB Arnold Press</u> Pick one of the options above. Do not do all of them in one day!
Lats ("Back Width")	1. <u>Cable Lat Prayer</u> 2. <u>DB Lat Pullover</u> 3. <u>Machine Lat Pullover</u> Pick one of the options above. Do not do all of them in one day!	1. <u>Lat-Focused Cable Row</u> 2. <u>Elbows-In 1-Arm DB Row</u> 3. <u>Half-Kneeling 1-Arm Lat Pulldown</u> Pick one of the options above. Do not do all of them in one day!
Quads	1. <u>Leg Extension</u> 2. <u>Reverse Nordics</u> Pick one of the options above. Do not do all of them in one day!	1. <u>Single-Leg Leg Press</u> 2. <u>Sissy Squat</u> Pick one of the options above. Do not do all of them in one day!
Glutes	1. <u>Machine Hip Abduction</u> 2. <u>Cable Hip Abduction</u> 3. <u>Lateral Band Walk</u> Pick one of the options above. Do not do all of them in one day!	1. <u>Barbell Hip Thrust</u> 2. <u>Single-Leg DB Hip Thrust</u> Pick one of the options above. Do not do all of them in one day!
Chest	1. <u>Low Incline DB Flye</u> 2. <u>Low-To-High Cable Crossover</u> Pick one of the options above. Do not do all of them in one day!	1. <u>Chest Press Machine</u> (incline if upper pecs are lagging, flat if entire chest is lagging) 2. <u>Dumbbell Chest Press</u> (incline if upper pecs are lagging, flat if entire chest is lagging) Pick one of the options above. Do not do all of them in one day!
Neck	1. <u>Plate-Loaded Neck Curls</u>	1. <u>Head Harness Neck Extension</u> 2. <u>Plate-Loaded Neck Extension</u> Pick one of the options above. Do not do all of them in one day!

Weak Point	Exercise
Hamstrings	There is a lot of hamstrings volume in this program. If they are a weak point for you, simply focus on executing the exercises listed with your best effort and execution rather than adding more volume.
Calves	Rather than adding more calf training volume, focus on the execution of the sets given in the program first. Ensure you are pausing at the bottom of each rep and reaching a high level of effort. Feel free to sprinkle in 1-2 extra sets per exercise if they are a major priority for you.
Mid-Back ("Back Thickness")	There is a lot of mid-back volume in this program. If this is a weak point for you, simply focus on executing the exercises listed with your best effort and execution rather than adding more volume. Really focus on squeezing your shoulder blades together on the positive and feeling your back pull apart on the negative when doing mid-back focused rows.
Upper Traps	The upper traps shouldn't require a high level of volume to grow, especially when there is a lot of mid-back work. Before adding sets, focus on the execution of the sets given in the program first. Ensure you are squeezing your traps at the top of each rep and reaching a high level of effort. Feel free to sprinkle in 1-2 extra sets per exercise if they are a major priority for you.
Abs	The abs shouldn't require a high level of volume to grow. If you are wanting to see your abs, your diet will be mainly responsible for lowering your level of abdominal fat to allow them to show through. Before adding sets, focus on the execution of the sets given in the program first. Ensure you are allowing your lower back to round on crunches and leg raises as you squeeze your abs. Feel free to sprinkle in 1-2 extra sets per exercise if they are a major priority for you.
Biceps	Because there is a dedicated arm day in this program and the biceps will get plenty of indirect work back exercises, adding even more sets would probably not be productive and would most likely fall under the "junk volume" category.
Triceps	Because there is a dedicated arm day in this program and the triceps will get plenty of indirect work from pressing, adding even more sets would probably not be productive and would most likely fall under the "junk volume" category.

PULL #1 (LAT)

<u>Straight-Bar Lat Pull</u>	Long-length Partials (on all reps of the last set)	1	3	12-15			~9-10	10	~1-2 min	<u>Machine Lat Pullover</u>	DB Lat Pullover	Lean forward to get a big stretch on the lats at the top of the ROM and then stand upright as you squeeze your lats at the bottom.
<u>Hammer Preacher Curl</u>	N/A	1	3	10-12			~9-10	10	~1-2 min	<u>Fat-Grip Preacher Curl</u>	Hammer Curl	These will target the brachialis and forearms hard. Squeeze the dumbbell hard in the middle of the handle and curl about 3/4 of the way up (i.e. stay in the bottom 3/4 of the curl).
<u>Lying Paused Rope Face Pull</u>	N/A	1	3	10-12			~9-10	10	~1-2 min	<u>Rope Face Pull</u>	<u>Bent-Over Reverse DB Flye</u>	Pause for 1-2 seconds in the squeeze of each rep. Contract the rear delts hard!

	<u>Overhead Cable Triceps Extension (Bar)</u>	Dropset	1	3	8			~9-10	10	~1-2 min	<u>Overhead Cable Triceps Extension (Rope)</u>	DB Skull Crusher	Feel a nasty stretch on the triceps throughout the entire negative. Pause for 1 second in the stretch part of each rep.
	<u>Triceps Pressdown (Bar)</u>	Dropset	1	2	8-10			~9-10	10	~1-2 min	<u>Triceps Pressdown (Rope)</u>	Close-Grip Assisted Dip	These are meant to be fairly heavy, which is why we're using a bar instead of a rope. Aim to add some weight week to week at the set rep target. Always keep the form tight as you overload the triceps.
	<u>Cable Crunch</u>	Myo-reps	1	3	10-12			~9-10	10	~1-2 min	<u>Machine Crunch</u>	Plate-Weighted Crunch	Round your lower back as you crunch. Maintain a mind-muscle connection with your 6-pack.

OPTIONAL REST DAY

	<u>Leg Extension</u>	Long-length Partials (on all reps of the last set)	1-2	3	10-12		~9	10	~1-2 min	<u>DB Step-Up</u>	<u>Reverse Nordic</u>	Set the seat back as far as it will go while still feeling comfortable. Grab the handles as hard as you can to pull your butt down into the seat. Use a 2-3 second negative. Feel your quads pulling apart on the negative.
	<u>Leg Press Calf Press</u>	Calf Static Stretch (30 sec)	1	3	12-15		~9-10	10	~1-2 min	<u>Donkey Calf Raise</u>	<u>Seated Calf Raise</u>	1-2 second pause at the bottom of each rep. Instead of just going up onto your toes, think about rolling your ankle back and forth on the balls of your feet.

<u>Seated DB French Press</u>	N/A	1	3	10		~9-10	10	~1-2 min	<u>EZ-bar Skull Crusher</u>	<u>DB Skull Crusher</u>	Place both palms under the head of a dumbbell and perform overhead extensions. Feel a deep stretch on your triceps at the bottom. Avoid pausing at the top of each rep.
<u>Bottom-2/3 Constant Tension Preacher Curl</u>	N/A	1	2	12-15		~9-10	10	~1-2 min	<u>Bottom-2/3 EZ-Bar Curl</u>	<u>Spider Curl</u>	Stay in the bottom 2/3 of the curl. Don't squeeze all the way up to the top. Keep your triceps firmly pinned against the pad as you curl. No pausing at the top or bottom: constant tension on the biceps!
<u>Cable Triceps Kickback</u>	N/A	0	2	12-15		~9-10	10	~1-2 min	<u>Bench Dip</u>	<u>DB Triceps Kickback</u>	There are two ways you can do this: upright or bent over. Choose the one that feels more comfortable for you. The main thing is that when you're in the full squeeze, your shoulder should be positioned back behind your torso.
<u>Roman Chair Leg Raise</u>	N/A	0	3	10-20		~9-10	10	~1-2 min	<u>Hanging Leg Raise</u>	<u>Reverse Crunch</u>	Allow your lower back to round as you curl your legs up. 10-20 reps is a broad range on purpose: just go until you hit RPE 9-10 (0-1 reps shy of failure) with controlled form.

MANDATORY REST DAY

PULL #2 (MID-B)

<u>Inverse DB Zottman Curl</u>	N/A	1	3	10-12		~9-10	10	~1-2 min	<u>Slow-Eccentric DB Curl</u>	Hammer Curl	Do a hammer curl on the positive, then turn your palms facing up at the top and use a palms-up grip on the negative.
<u>Cable Reverse Flye (Mechanical Dropset)</u>	Mechanical Dropset (on all sets)	0	3	5,4,3+		~9-10	10	~1-2 min	<u>Reverse Pec Deck</u>	Bent-Over Reverse DB Flye	You'll probably want to watch the video for this one. Take ~3 big steps back from the cable machine and do your first 5 reps. After those first 5 reps, immediately (without resting) take 1 step forward and do another 4 reps. Then (without resting) take another step forward and do at least another 3 reps (or until you hit RPE 9-10).
<u>Cable Paused Shrug-In</u>	N/A	1	3	10-12		~9-10	10	~1-2 min	<u>Machine Shrug</u>	DB Shrug	Shrug up and in. Think about shrugging "up to your ears". 1-2 second pause in the squeeze (at the top) of each rep, then another 1-2 second pause in the stretch (at the bottom) of each rep.

	<u>Low-Incline Dumbbell Flye</u>	Long-length Partials (on all reps of the last set)	1	2	15-20		~9	10	~2-3 min	<u>Low-To-High Cable Crossover</u>	<u>Pec Deck</u>	Focus on feeling a deep stretch in your pecs at the bottom of each rep. Keep the dumbbells in the bottom ~3/4 of the range of motion as there will be no tension on the pecs at the top. We are including these because the dumbbells' resistance profile really accentuates the stretch.
	<u>Katana Triceps Extension</u>	N/A	1	3	10-12		~9-10	10	~2-3 min	<u>Overhead Cable Triceps Extension (Rope)</u>	<u>DB French Press</u>	Flare your elbows out at about 45° and keep your elbows locked in place as you complete the extensions.
	<u>Ab Wheel Rollout</u>	N/A	0	3	10-20		~9	~9-10	~1-2 min	<u>Swiss Ball Rollout</u>	<u>LLPT Plank</u>	Don't just bend at your hips, use your abs to lower yourself down under control and pull yourself back up. If you don't have the core strength to get all the way extended at the bottom, try to progressively increase the ROM week to week.

OPTIONAL REST DAY

	A1: Machine Hip Adduction	N/A	1	3	10-12		~9-10	10	~0.5-1 min	Cable Hip Adduction	Copenhagen Hip Adduction	Mind-muscle connection with your inner thighs. These are great for adding thigh mass from the front! Push them hard!
	A2: Sissy Squat	N/A	1	3	10-12		~7-8	~7-8	~0.5-1 min	Leg Extension	Goblet Squat	Allow yourself to come up onto your toes and push your knees forward past your toes. This is safe for the knees. If you feel knee pain doing them, though, feel free to go with a substitution. They may feel awkward at first, but they're really underrated for the quads! Don't give up on them too quickly.
	Standing Calf Raise	Calf Static Stretch (30 sec hold)	1	3	10-12		~9-10	10	~1-2 min	Leg Press Calf Press	Donkey Calf Raise	1-2 second pause at the bottom of each rep. Instead of just going up onto your toes, think about rolling your ankle back and forth on the balls of your feet.

<u>Kneeling Overhead Cable Curl</u>	N/A	1	3	10-12		~9-10	10	~1-2 min	<u>Overhead Cable Curl</u>	Spider Curl	Kneel down, stick your arm straight out to the side and do cable curls. You should feel a tight squeeze at the top of each rep on these.
<u>Triceps Diverging Pressdown (Long Rope or 2 Ropes)</u>	N/A	1	2	12-15		~9-10	10	~1-2 min	<u>Cable Triceps Kickback</u>	DB Triceps Kickback	Use two long ropes or one long rope. Lean slightly forward, flare your elbows slightly out and keep your arms back in line with your torso. Then do triceps pressdowns, getting a full, big squeeze at the bottom.
<u>Incline DB Stretch-Curl</u>	N/A	1	2	12-15		~9-10	10	~1-2 min	<u>DB Incline Curl</u>	Bayesian Cable Curl	Keep your upper back planted against the bench, rotate your arms outward until you feel a massive stretch in your biceps. Go light on these and instead focus on feeling your biceps pull and squeeze.
<u>Cable Crunch</u>	N/A	1	3	10-12		~9-10	10	~1-2 min	<u>Machine Crunch</u>	Plate-Weighted Crunch	Round your lower back as you crunch. Maintain a mind-muscle connection with your 6-pack.

MANDATORY REST DAY

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<u>Lying Paused Rope Face Pull</u>	N/A	1	3	10-12			~9-10	10	~1-2 min	<u>Rope Face Pull</u>	<u>Bent-Over Reverse DB Flye</u>	Pause for 1-2 seconds in the squeeze of each rep. Contract the rear delts hard!

	<u>Overhead Cable Triceps Extension (Bar)</u>	Dropset	1	3	8		~9-10	10	~1-2 min	<u>Overhead Cable Triceps Extension (Rope)</u>	DB Skull Crusher	Feel a nasty stretch on the triceps throughout the entire negative. Pause for 1 second in the stretch part of each rep.
	<u>Smith Machine JM Press</u>	N/A	1-2	2	15-20		~8-9	10	~2-3 min	<u>Barbell JM Press</u>	Close-Grip Bench Press	Lower the bar down to your chin. Think of the movement as a combination of a skull crusher and a close-grip bench press.
	<u>Cable Crunch</u>	Myo-reps	1	3	10-12		~9-10	10	~1-2 min	<u>Machine Crunch</u>	Plate-Weighted Crunch	Round your lower back as you crunch. Maintain a mind-muscle connection with your 6-pack.

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	<u>Leg Extension</u>	Long-length Partials (on all reps of the last set)	1-2	3	10-12		~9	10	~1-2 min	<u>DB Step-Up</u>	<u>Reverse Nordic</u>	Set the seat back as far as it will go while still feeling comfortable. Grab the handles as hard as you can to pull your butt down into the seat. Use a 2-3 second negative. Feel your quads pulling apart on the negative.
	<u>Leg Press Calf Press</u>	Calf Static Stretch (30 sec)	1	3	12-15		~9-10	10	~1-2 min	<u>Donkey Calf Raise</u>	<u>Seated Calf Raise</u>	1-2 second pause at the bottom of each rep. Instead of just going up onto your toes, think about rolling your ankle back and forth on the balls of your feet.

<u>Seated DB French Press</u>	N/A	1	3	10		~9-10	10	~1-2 min	<u>EZ-bar Skull Crusher</u>	DB Skull Crusher	Place both palms under the head of a dumbbell and perform overhead extensions. Feel a deep stretch on your triceps at the bottom. Avoid pausing at the top of each rep.
<u>Bottom-2/3 Constant Tension Preacher Curl</u>	N/A	1	2	12-15		~9-10	10	~1-2 min	<u>Bottom-2/3 EZ-Bar Curl</u>	Spider Curl	Stay in the bottom 2/3 of the curl. Don't squeeze all the way up to the top. Keep your triceps firmly pinned against the pad as you curl. No pausing at the top or bottom: constant tension on the biceps!
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<u>Cable Reverse Flye (Mechanical Dropset)</u>	Mechanical Dropset (on all sets)	0	3	5,4,3+		~9-10	10	~1-2 min	<u>Reverse Pec Deck</u>	Bent-Over Reverse DB Flye	You'll probably want to watch the video for this one. Take ~3 big steps back from the cable machine and do your first 5 reps. After those first 5 reps, immediately (without resting) take 1 step forward and do another 4 reps. Then (without resting) take another step forward and do at least another 3 reps (or until you hit RPE 9-10).
<u>Cable Paused Shrug-In</u>	N/A	1	3	10-12		~9-10	10	~1-2 min	<u>Machine Shrug</u>	DB Shrug	Shrug up and in. Think about shrugging "up to your ears". 1-2 second pause in the squeeze (at the top) of each rep, then another 1-2 second pause in the stretch (at the bottom) of each rep.

	<u>Low-Incline Dumbbell Flye</u>	Long-length Partials (on all reps of the last set)	1	2	15-20		~9	10	~2-3 min	<u>Low-To-High Cable Crossover</u>	<u>Pec Deck</u>	Focus on feeling a deep stretch in your pecs at the bottom of each rep. Keep the dumbbells in the bottom ~3/4 of the range of motion as there will be no tension on the pecs at the top. We are including these because the dumbbells' resistance profile really accentuates the stretch.
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	<u>Ab Wheel Rollout</u>	N/A	0	3	10-20		~9	~9-10	~1-2 min	<u>Swiss Ball Rollout</u>	<u>LLPT Plank</u>	Don't just bend at your hips, use your abs to lower yourself down under control and pull yourself back up. If you don't have the core strength to get all the way extended at the bottom, try to progressively increase the ROM week to week.

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