



# POTENTIAL

**how  
big  
can  
you  
get  
naturally?**



**a book  
by  
nattyornot.com**

Dedicated  
To  
Those asking questions

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# PART I

## The Formula

### Is "Genetic Potential" a Dirty Term?

Social media altered our brain wiring forever. We don't want to hear about limitations anymore. We don't want to be restrained. We want to be limitless and omnipresent. Those in the way ought to eat the rocket launcher.

Talking about your genetic potential is a blasphemy in the world of iron. When a skinny warrior brings up the topic of a genetic ceiling, two groups get mad and overly defensive. The first would be the crew of fat *natural lifters* who immensely underestimate the quantity of lard in their system. Those poor martyrs believe they are 15% body fat when the actual number is 30%. Fat natty soldiers in denial avoid discussions of natural limits because the subject makes them feel naked, confused and obese. They prefer to live in a fairy tale world where they are big, strong and before all *functional* manly human beings. Leave them alone. Sooner or later, they all wake up and start pushing the prowler.

The other group hating the term genetic potential is the army of *fake natties*. They despise *limitation* talk because it exposes their secret. If people knew the true limits of the human body, the abuse of steroids in the world of muscular physiques becomes apparent and renders all muscle products useless. To prevent this aftereffect, the masters prohibit lustration.

By trapping us in a labyrinth of untruthfulness, which supposedly leads to an otherworldly physique, the industry preserves its money printer. The longer you stay in the maze, the longer you can generate profit for your leaders by purchasing protein powder and watching ads on YouTube.

All fake natties are co-conspirators paid to prolong the myth. They receive a commission from each sale in exchange for spreading fabrications. They get away with it because in the world of iron big muscles remove the need for logic. Muscular men are unquestioned authorities. Their physiques talk for them.

Sadly, or not, the term genetic potential is real and getting to your limits is not difficult. You don't have to be special or train for 20 years to achieve the best physique you can have naturally. It doesn't take that long. Your potential is not far from your *untrained* state.

Being limitless is great, but we are not and never will be. There are unbreakable limits part of this prison world. You can improve your piano playing with practice, but you can't change your genetics with exercises. The genetic wall is real.

"Shut up, skinny boy! We should always aim for the stars," says the hopeless romantic.

True.

Many humanoids set low standards without realizing that further progress is possible. We are not perfect, and therefore improvement is always an option. We can eliminate some miscalculations and get ahead in the human game.

I also understand that an ignorant individual could be happier than a *truther*. But some people stay in the labyrinth for too long and experience irreversible damage and stagnation. The cycle repeats year after year without visible results. One day the heart starts crying, but it's too late. The price for ignorance is about to be paid.

Do you want that? Do you want to stay in no man's land forever? I doubt it.

# The Power of Knowing Your Genetic Potential

I have a decade of experience in the same company. As the years went by, I started noticing a pattern – young college kids come with high expectations, Duracell energy and a strong desire to work, but somewhere along the line, everything goes wrong, and they leave in tears. Meanwhile, people in the main department often stay in the office after midnight.

"Big deal?! I've pulled many all-nighters in college," screams the dreamer with a high-pitched voice suggesting too much mom in his life.

Working late is not an issue. The problem is that the extra effort had a highly questionable value for two reasons. First, the managers were hysterical morons unable to organize the team efficiently. Second, the main department was always full of naive young workers eager to prove themselves. Those unaware creatures were subjects to the false idea that they had an epic future in the company. They thought they were climbing the corporate ladder.

The reality is that they never had a future there. After 6 months to a year, most people with an average IQ acquire 95% of the knowledge and skills that the company has to offer. When the initial period is over, progress ends too. There is no further advancement. You are benching the same weight until the end.

Unlike my coworkers, I never lied to myself that I am going to be a king and did just enough work not to lose my job. I knew right away that *potential* was not on the menu. If you're wondering why I stayed, the answer is dead presidents.

The resemblance between working in a similar company and lifting weights as a natural is striking. Many delusional souls believe that one day they will be huge monsters, but that day never comes. You have two options – keep lying to yourself that you are going to get big or invest elsewhere.

Knowing your potential makes you powerful because real progress happens when you learn what you cannot have and go for what's available.

# **You Are Special.**

# **You Are Not Special.**

No one sounds like you. No one looks like you. No one thinks like you. You will never be a replica. You will never be a clone. You will never come out of the toy factory. No other card in the deck can play your role. You are special. And yet subject to the elements as the rest of us. Humans have the same masters, the same fears and lead the same battle. We are all individuals and yet identical. Our universal human characteristics render our uniqueness irrelevant in many situations.

## **Universal Human Traits**

### **1. We are slaves to the same things.**

There are two worlds on this planet. The first is the human world. This is what we have created for ourselves. A celebrity is a celebrity only in the structure of our society due to mind conditioning. When people bump into a popular actor at the airport, they go crazy and want a selfie. When a bear confronts the same actor in the forest, it doesn't see him as something special... just meat. This is the other world. There, we are not special. The universe is cold and cares not about your *uniqueness*.

### **2. We want the same things.**

All humans crave the same things under a different form. At their basic level, our desires do not differ. Everyone wants freedom, love, good health and money. The only difference is the arrangement.



### **3. We share the same fears.**

#### **Fear Number One: Loneliness**

In many works of art, loners are mysterious individuals no longer controlled by the superficial desires of the crowd. This may be true for some, but more often than not loners don't want to be loners. They yearn to have followers and seek validation like everybody else. Even hardcore loners fear loneliness. Nothing hurts as much.

#### **Fear Number Two: Unrealized Potential**

Our egos keep telling us that we are all destined for greatness. Therefore, the second biggest human fear is not maximizing your potential. Jealousy is a common side effect of that fear. It forms inside of us regardless of our wishes. There aren't envy free people. Anyone can end up in a situation where jealousy is synthesized. You can learn to control it, but you will always know that it's there. In theory, the main purpose of jealousy is to teach and motivate, but that rarely happens in practice.

#### **Fear Number Three: Loss of Freedom**

All humans want to be free. The fight for money is not really a fight for money. It is a fight for freedom. If you don't have money, your time can easily be bought. Dead-end jobs crush the soul. No one dreams to follow orders like a robot or a slave.

### **The World of Bodybuilding Is No Different**

*Lifters come in all shapes.*

Some are tall. Some are short. Some have robust joints. Some have chicken joints. Some are naturally big. Some are naturally small. Some are naturally lean. Some are naturally fat. Some are naturally strong. Some are naturally weak. Some have wide shoulders. Some have shoulders hitting into each other. Some have good insertions. Some are all tendons.

Yet the process of getting bigger is only one and 100% dependent on natural laws. You can make training more comfortable, safe and efficient, but the fundamental principles never change.

## **Everyone Is Special = A Trump Card for the Industry**

The industry benefits tremendously from convincing us that everyone is an exclusive bunny. Only then, you can believe in the existence of a special training method that can unlock the growth safe just for you. We are special but not that special. The key is universal, not personalized.

This reminds me of love.

There may be a special one waiting for you, but that person will always be a result of your character and the conditions you've been placed in. Many souls in this world will be a good match for you. If this wasn't the case, humanity would have ended a long time ago. When you are attracted to someone, it's because of specific traits which can be represented by another person that could be equally lovable. Of course, the experiences you have had with someone could hardly be replicated, which is why bonds based on adventure are so strong and above everything else.

## **Fake Natties Love Being Special Too**

Fake natties are even more narcissistic than known steroid users. They will try to convince you that their unreal growth is the result of unique high-end genetics and hard work. Those narcissistic Instagram manwhores present themselves as angels on Earth, but the truth is that none of them is special. They are all pinning their glutes with identical substances provided by the same suppliers. The only variables that differ are the *dose* and the *response* to the drug.

# Motivation Changes Nothing

Motivation comes in two versions – *quick buck* and *subscription*.

The quick buck motivation is what you see floating everywhere in the cyberspace where our souls meet nowadays. It consists of motivational videos with epic string music in the background, Photoshopped images, quotes, speeches of celebrities and movie trailers. This is short-term motivation. It works well when you want to jump-start yourself, but the effectiveness stops there.

Think of it as an energy drink. You take it, and your heart starts beating faster. Your focus increases. You become a dog with a mission. The effect is strong but doesn't last forever. It stops and leaves you on the floor tired, used and helpless.

The quick buck motivation operates identically. It gets you wired, but the dance ends as soon as the first song is over. There is not enough energy to maintain the intensity forever. What do you do then? Most people just give up or buy another energy drink only to experience a harder crash later. This is a vicious cycle that may continue for a long time, but eventually, it fails because there isn't enough substance in it.

Get as motivated as you want. Watch every Rocky movie. Learn the quotes. Sing the songs. Repeat the speeches. Analyze successful people. Do whatever you need to motivate yourself. Get hyped. Get amped. I care not. When the motivation of choice is the quick buck, your ambitions die fast like sugars in your system.

The real motivation is called *subscription*. It is as eternal as earthly things can be. You just have to subscribe to the mission with your heart instead of your impulses. This type of motivation is rarely seen or advertised because you can discover it only within you. You cannot find it on Facebook. You cannot find it on TV. You cannot find it on the radio. You cannot find it anywhere but within

yourself. This is the real deal motivation. It starts when the music stops. This is what you need to keep going forever.

Unfortunately, neither the quick buck nor the subscription can help you fly out of the natty cell. No matter how motivated you are, the limits are the limits. You cannot change the unchangeable. You cannot open a door that doesn't even exist.

You have to stop treating yourself as an extraterrestrial pony that needs a special routine and meal plan. You don't. You may have to adjust a program to your needs, but the underlying principles will remain the same. When you go to the pharmacy and ask for a painkiller, you are not really searching for a product made only for you, are you? You are looking for something already working for millions of people. This proves that at our basic level we are not different. The only difference is the form.

# Steroids were not available until the 60s?

*Bitch, please! Steroids have been here for a very long time.*

In 1849, Arnold Adolph Berthold, a German physiologist and zoologist, pioneered procedures in endocrinology. His research focused on sex hormones and their role in the development of sexual traits. Berthold performed a groundbreaking experiment involving chicken castration and discovered that the testes correlate to the androgen hormone family.

A few decades later, the Harvard professor Charles Édouard Brown Séquard, extracted a "rejuvenating elixir" from the testicles of dogs and guinea pigs. At 72 years of age, he injected himself with the juice and reported energy and strength gains.

*Quote: "I have made use, in subcutaneous injections, of a liquid containing a very small quantity of water mixed with the three following parts: First, blood of the testicular veins; secondly, semen; and thirdly, juice extracted from a testicle crushed immediately after it has been taken from a dog or guinea-pig."- Séquard.*

The experiments of Séquard gained enormous popularity to the point where livestock dealers in San Francisco could not keep guinea pigs in stock. Doctors and researchers were buying the animals to perform the "Brown Séquard Operation".

In 1927, the popular chemical engineer Fred C. Koch provided access to large amounts of bull testicles ready for chemical analysis. Koch and his student Lemuel McGee derived 20mg of the magic substance from 40lbs/18kg of bull testicles. The results were solid. The substance helped castrated roosters bring back their masculine characteristics.

Károly David and Ernst Laqueur of Organon (a pharmaceutical company in the Netherlands) were also part of the pharmaceutical teams working hard to

decode the testosterone mystery. The two identified the chemical structure of testosterone by isolating 10mg from 100kg/220lbs of bull testicles.

**On May 1935, in Amsterdam was reported the isolation of crystalline compound from bull testes. The compound was named testosterone (testo=testis, ster=sterol, one=ketone).**

Testosterone's birth became public knowledge in the classic paper "*On Crystalline Male Hormone from Testes (Testosterone): More Active than Androsterone Preparations from Urine or Cholesterol*" published in 1935.

The downside of the method used up to May 1935 was that the synthesis of testosterone required an enormous amount of animal testicles, which made the substance impractical for commercial use. Luckily, a more efficient method was just around the corner.

The same year *two groups* of scientists found another way to synthesize testosterone. The biochemist Adolf Butenandt and G. Hanisch of Schering (Germany) were the first to do it.

On August 24, 1935, they published a paper entitled "On Testosterone Conversion of Dehydroandrosterone in Androstenediol and Testosterone: A Method for Preparing Testosterone from Cholesterol".

A few days later, Leopold Ruzicka and A. Wettstein from the pharmaceutical company Ciba group in Zurich, Switzerland came up with their form of testosterone synthesis. In 1939, Adolf Butenandt and Leopold Ruzicka won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry for their work on sex hormones.

**The period between the 1930s and the 1950s remains known as "The Golden Age of Steroid Chemistry".**

When you are aware of testosterone's birthday, it becomes obvious that even some of the old-school lifters could have experimented with it in the 40s.

Do you really think that an individual obsessed with improving his physique wouldn't go all out due to some kind of self-righteousness? Why? What for?

The people of yesterday were even more "YOLO" (You Only Live Once) than the smartphone generation of today.

## Steroid Use In Bodybuilding

before 1935	1935-1945	1945-1985	1985-1995	1995 - now
rejuvenating elixirs  herbs  animal products  drugs with questionable anabolic effects	<b>early forms of testosterone</b>	steroid boom  high quality drugs hit the world	IGF1, insulin and human growth hormone are added	large quantities of steroids, insulin and growth hormone are the norm in pro bodybuilding

### Additional "Red Pill" Facts

#### 1. The Use of Steroids in Professional Sports Dates Back to 1889

One of the first professional sports players to use performance enhancing substances other than food and supplements was James Francis "Pud" Galvin – an American Major League Baseball pitcher who was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1965.

During the 1889 season, Galvin openly used the Brown-Séquard elixir (the one described above). Ironically, the American media praised Galvin for relying on the new serum. Here's an excerpt from an article on Galvin published by the Washington Post:

*"If there still be doubting Thomases who concede no virtue of the elixir, they are respectfully referred to Galvin's record in yesterday's Boston-Pittsburgh game. It is the best proof yet furnished of the value of the discovery."*

## **2. Clinical Research Trials Began in 1937**

In **1935**, the Croatian organic chemist Leopold Ruzicka synthesized methyltestosterone, mestanolone and methandriol. Two years later, the injectable anabolic steroid testosterone propionate and the oral steroid methyltestosterone came to life, and the research trials began.

There is a research paper from **1940** analyzing the effect of testosterone supplementation on human urine. It's entitled "**Concerning the Metabolism of Testosterone to Androsterone**". The authors are Ralph I. Dorfman and James B. Hamilton. The Yale School of Medicine supported the research, and the paper arrived for publication on February 23, 1940.

## **3. Testosterone Was Recognized as an Anabolic Hormone in 1936**

Charles Daniel Kochakian, a professor of biochemistry and physiology from the University of Alabama at Birmingham, discovered the connection between the male hormone testosterone and muscle mass. His research concluded that artificially increased levels of testosterone result in muscle growth.

Experiments on dogs revealed that administration of androstenedione results in a larger musculature. The findings were published in the American Journal of Physiology (1936).



#### **4. In the 1940s, steroids became cheaper and even more affordable**

During the early 40s, Russell Earl Marker, an American chemistry professor, discovered that the raw materials required for testosterone synthesis could be derived from the plant diosgenin. In 1942, he started an expedition in Mexico funded by the pharmaceutical company Parke-Davis. The goal was to find the ultimate natural source of diosgenin.

Eventually, Marker discovered the “barbasco” variety of wild yam. Since the American pharmaceutical houses rejected the proposal of Marker to commercialize the new discovery, he founded Syntex SA in Mexico City, which became a major importer of hormonal drugs in the United States.

#### **5. 1000 Different Steroids were synthesized between 1948 and 1955**

Between 1948 and 1955 the company Searle Pharmaceuticals founded in 1888 by Gideon Daniel Searle synthesized over a thousand different testosterone versions, hoping to create a steroid with minimal androgenic effects.

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## What is Natural?

The advocates of steroids say that nowadays it is impossible for humans to be natural because modern food contains colossal quantities of *artificial* substances.

A hardcore steroid user, suffocated by his self-righteousness, once told me that no one eating fast food has the right to consider himself or herself natural because every bite is infested with hormones negating your "naturalness". Similar thoughts allow steroid addicts to rationalize their choice to inject.

Here's what the hardcore steroid defenders say:

**Mankind is evolving. Drugs like anti-baby pills, the day after tomorrow pills and sex stimulants are abnormal by Neanderthal standards, but nobody would call a modern woman or man unnatural for using them. We consider similar substances a byproduct of the contemporary world, just like the Internet and smartphones. Why can't steroids receive the same treatment? If you are eating, texting, and having *chemically***

***enhanced sex, you are not natural by the standards of the delusional natty activists.***

**We have a proposition for you, cowards.**

**Grow a pair, inject like you mean it and enjoy the benefits of being huge.**

- ***The Association of Pinner's***

It's true that modernized nutrition is filled with paint, garbage, sweeteners, artificial flavors and other forms of venom, but the magnitude of hormone infestation is not as large as steroid lovers suggest. If it was, men would be growing lactating bitch tits from eating burgers. The hormones in modern nutrition affect our bodies, but not nearly as much as a heavy steroid cycle. I get the point, though.

A monk in the woods who hasn't touched a pill or eaten "fake" modern food is not my definition of natural. When I talk about natties, I refer to humans who have never taken anabolic steroids, prohormones, growth hormone, SARMs or hardcore body fat cutting agents. If a substance doesn't have a tremendous impact on your muscular size, hormonal profile and leanness, it doesn't affect your natural status. Eat the telephone if you want to. I would still consider you natural.

## **Factors of Growth**

In this segment, I will present the factors that have the highest impact on *natural* muscle growth. All of them are essential and shape your natty destiny.

### **1. Body Chemistry**

When you are natural, your body produces a limited amount of testosterone, which declines with age and predetermines your potential muscle growth. Low testosterone levels explain why the average woman is smaller and weaker than the average man. The effects of hormones become even more apparent

when females start taking drugs and mutate into muscular monsters larger than a natural male.

Shredded to the bone 15-inch arms are very common for female pros. The majority of true natural bodybuilders will never have guns that big and lean. Your 17-inch fatceps don't count, bulking soldier. Call me when you have acquired 15-inch arms with highly *detailed* biceps heads. Some can do it. Some may reach beyond, but most of us can't. I repeat: Fatceps do not count.

No amount of dates with the barbell or the fridge can help you overcome the restraints created by your hormones. Training doesn't have the power to change your body chemistry. Trying to raise your testosterone levels through lifting is similar to amassing wealth by selling newspapers on the street. You may boost your income a little, but you are not going to become as rich as an investor banker or a professional football player. The mechanism to produce massive amount of money is just not present.

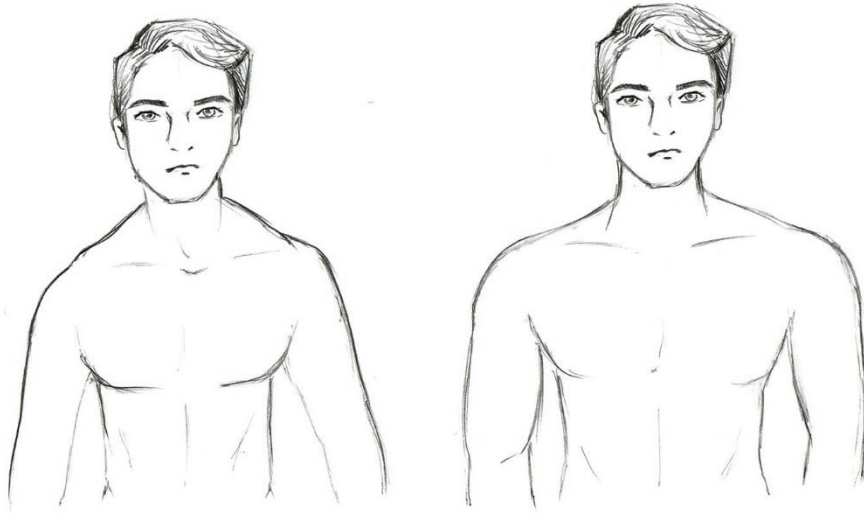
You can do any routine you want. Change the reps. Increase the volume. Decrease the volume. Increase the intensity. Decrease the intensity. It matters not. You are still a slave to the testosterone in your system.

The sellers of muscle dreams that you meet on forums and in the gym always forget to tell you this fact, even though it's as legit as the existence of death. Those blockheads purposely remove the truth from their growth theories and dissertations because discussing protein absorption is more lucrative.

## 2. Frame

Your frame has a tremendous influence on the muscular size that you can acquire as a natural. A man with pencil bones and a back narrow enough to pass through a water pipe or a cell does not have the capacity to carry as much muscle mass as a robust motherfucker with pterodactyl shoulders and massive joints.

## Narrow vs. Wide Frame



Note: A thick, wide frame equals bigger muscles by default.

The bad news is that nothing can change your frame. The good news is... well, there aren't any good news. You are stuck with your frame until you become worm food. Not even steroids can hide an inferior skeleton. Many muscle heroes suffer criticism for being too narrow. Phil Heath comes to mind.

People with thick and wide frames are bigger by default without training. Humans leaving the man cave on occasion can confirm. Just visit the local mall and observe. You will see men twice the size of a regular ectomorph all thanks to a superior skeleton.

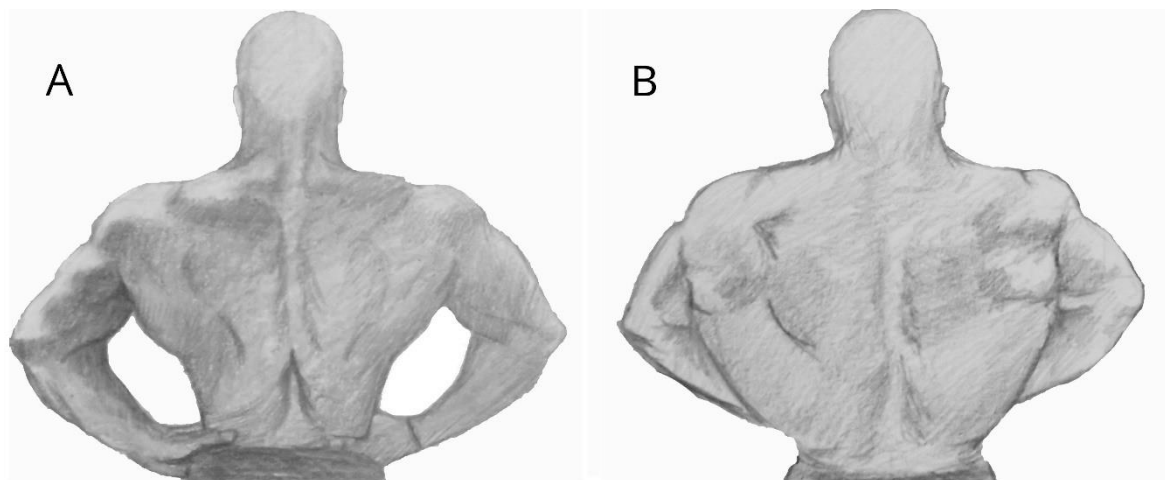
## Don't Confuse Thickness with *Height*

A 6'7"/2m tall man may carry more lean tissue than his 5'7"/170cm counterpart, but that kind of *vertical* mass is not relevant when it comes to overall muscular appearance. Mr. Tower will have to forge a lot more muscle filaments to fill out.

When I am talking about **frame**, I refer to shoulder width and bone thickness, not height. Some say that taller people are more likely to have thicker bones, but this is not true. Plenty of high altitude bros come out of the factory with

slim and thin parts whereas many hobbits enjoy wide, thick frames. Ultimately, height is not an advantage in bodybuilding because you have to suffer a lot more to escape from the rail look.

### 3. Muscle Insertions



High Lats (A) vs. Low Lats (B)

The longer the muscle, the more it can grow. Lengthy tendons limit your growth significantly. Your weaker body parts will often be those with long tendons and short muscles. People born with longer muscle bellies look fuller by default.

### 4. Response to Training

The term *response to training* refers to the way the body adapts to the stress produced by the fight against gravity. If you take two lifters and make them do the same chest routine for a year, one of them is going to have a bigger and a fuller chest even if both are lifting the same weights for identical number of sets and reps.

The previously mentioned growth factors have an influence on this one too. Skeletal frame and muscle insertions, for example, pre-determine exercise

technique. Your biomechanics decide which muscle is going to be the primary mover. Some are torso lifters; others are limb dominant.

## The Strong Skinny Boys

The Strong Skinny Boys [SSB] are thin soldiers deadlifting, squatting and benching a great deal of weight while looking like insects unable to do more than five push-ups in a row. One of the explanations behind this phenomenon is the response to training of those lifters.

Some men adapt to training with minuscule hypertrophy. For example, when I first deadlifted 400lbs/180kg, I looked almost the same as the day I lifted 200lbs/90kg. I know because I video recorded both lifts.

Training with weights has a significant impact on your muscles. They become denser, thicker and stronger, but not necessarily bigger, for the fact that the body adapts to stress by activating all available cores. The organism does not care that you want comical biceps to impress the sluts in the club and get 1000 matches on dating apps. The body only wants to live another day and adapts to training the way it was programmed

## 5. Age

Age is just a number, people say. Guess, what? So is your height, your salary, your free time, and your days here. Everything is a number. Numbers matter.

Age affects your physical peak *a.k.a.* the time of your life when you *can* operate at full capacity. After that period, there's nothing but a slow decline. Once your hair goes full gray, it never comes back. Therefore, age is another part of the growth equation because it influences the construction of thicker fibers directly. If you are unable to increase your size at 25, you won't suddenly grow at 45 naturally.

There are processes known as muscle and bone maturity, but neither of them has a strong impact on the overall muscle mass a man could carry.

Furthermore, the "maturing" of our muscles and bones comes with lower testosterone levels due to aging.

The movie industry wants us to believe that 40 is the new 20, and 50 is the new 30, which may be true for overall appeal when you are George Clooney, but we are talking about physical capabilities. As long as you are healthy, your body operates better when you are younger.

When I see alleged natural transformations of 60 years old men, I laugh. Most of the muscular grandpas are obviously injecting steroids to build and maintain their bodies. To be honest, I am not criticizing the granddaddies for injecting. I understand. Nonetheless, the muscular Santa Claus isn't natty and should stop lying to the kids.

## 6. Stress

Mental pressure has cancerous properties that could initiate demolition at any moment. In unhealthy quantities, the *stress hormone* cortisol transforms into a catabolic soldier working tirelessly against your ploy to forge thicker muscle filaments.

A young, handsome, trust-fund-powered man residing in Batman's castle is living in a more anabolic environment than a drone working 12-hour shifts in a supermarket under the supervision of a lunatic timing everyone's bathroom breaks.

The primary sources of stress in the human life are:

- poor health
- hard acquisition of money
- lack of love/loneliness
- unfulfilled career/feeling unimportant



Few are fortunate enough to have all levels under control.

Depression slaughters even the stars.

## **7. Muscle Fiber Distribution**

Muscle fibers divide into two types – fast and slow twitch.

Fast twitch fibers have a higher growth potential. Their job is to produce short and powerful movements, which is what happens during weightlifting and sprinting. By contrast, the slow twitch fibers are programmed for endurance and can't swell to epic proportions. You don't need big muscles to run long distances, do you? There are some lifting routines oriented towards slow twitch fiber hypertrophy, but their effectiveness is questionable.

## **8. Training**

Training is also a growth factor. You can't maximize your size without lifting. Even if you are genetically gifted and on steroids, you still have to train with weights for optimal results.

## **9. Nutrition**

You can't expect ultimate performance and supreme body composition when you are starving or overloading yourself with muffins. The body requires a decent number of nutrients to assemble new muscle. One of those nutrients is the almighty protein.

Protein is essential for muscle growth, but a natural cadet does not need over 120 grams. Forget the fairy tales about protein overdose. They are all written for/by permabulking soldiers in heat.

In an interview, Kirk Karwoski [huge retro powerlifter] says that he used to eat between 150 and 200 grams of protein a day. Throughout most of his career, he stopped the scale at 275lbs/125kg in a brutally lean condition for a

powerlifter. Yet there are natural noobs who stuff themselves with tons of tuna, eggs, meat and cheese to get to the magic 200-300-400 grams of protein a day.

Stop. What's the point? Protein is a building block. You need bricks to build a house, but they become clutter when there are no construction workers to lay them. If you are natural, you need a lot less protein than non-natural men such as Karwoski.

## 10. Sleep and rest

The famous book *Power to The People* by Pavel Tsatsouline says that once you add a few extra hours of sleep to your schedule, you should fear agents coming to bust you for possession of steroids. Pure nonsense.

It's not a lie that progress happens while you are sleeping, but extra hibernation does not equal brutal growth. You can sleep 20 hours a day if you so desire. Chaining yourself to the bed won't produce a high-level muscularity. You may even deflate due to low activity levels.

Honestly, all you need are the usual 6-8 hours of sleep, and you will be just fine. If you think that you are not big because you don't take a nap, you are mistaken.

## 11. Health

Health is an essential growth factor. You cannot expect your body to upgrade itself when it's ill. Sickness hurts your ability to train, eat, recover and forge muscle. Even a simple cold has a negative impact on your growth.

### In conclusion

The majority of the growth factors are genetic and do not respond well to natural treatment.

Your genetics are more important than what you do in the gym.

Let's repeat so that people get real mad.

Your genetics are more important than what you do in the gym.

I don't want this to be the truth, but it is the truth. Muscle growth is NOT a skill. Therefore, hard work rarely beats talent.

Think of beauty, for example. An ugly girl can apply as much make-up as she wants, and yet she will never be as beautiful as a genetically gifted princess. The pretty person will need less effort to shine and attract. The image becomes even more brutal when the beautiful girl decides to tune herself too. She will wipe the floor with the ugly one.

## How Big Can You Get Naturally?

At the beginning of NattyOrNot.com, I came up with the following guide for natural bodybuilders.

Height	Weight
6'2" (188cm)	197lbs (89.5kg)
6'1" (185cm)	190lbs (86kg)
6' (183cm)	184lbs (83.5kg)
5'11" (180cm)	177lbs (80kg)
5'10" (178cm)	170lbs (77kg)
5'9" (175cm)	163lbs (74kg)

<b>5'8" (173cm)</b>	<b>156lbs (71kg)</b>
<b>5'7" (170cm)</b>	<b>149lbs (68kg)</b>
<b>5'6" (168cm)</b>	<b>142lbs (65kg)</b>
<b>5'5" (165cm)</b>	<b>135lbs (61.5kg)</b>

Some people accepted the guide; some got mad. I still believe that those numbers are somewhat close to reality, although today, I am more pessimistic.

The majority of the lifters who accused me of presenting "low numbers" on purpose were either bulking soldiers or hungry naturals who want to believe in myths. Every gym rat has a story about that "really big" guy who barely trains, drinks beer all the time, eats candies instead of chicken, gets high, sleeps 3 hours a day, fucks the whole neighborhood and yet still has 20-inch arms at 4% body fat and benches 405lbs like it's just the bar. The world of lifting is full of fiction, lies and hyperboles.

Very few realized that if a man can attain the numbers in the table as a natural in a lean condition, he wouldn't care about natural limitations at all, for he will look stunning.

# The New Blueprint v.1

## Reverse Engineering

I've tested the methods of many scientific muscle saints to determine the maximum muscle mass that a man can gain and carry naturally. Despite the heavy science and complicated equations integrated in the codes, all mainstream formulas turned out defective due to optimism backed only by fantasies.

I realized that the only way to find the truth and come up with a useful blueprint is to take matter into my own hands instead of relying on the dreams of muscle nerds bowing down to posters of Steve Reeves and Arnold.

The biggest mistake of muscle researchers digging for the natty limit is looking forward instead of backward. We've been trying to figure out how much muscle you can gain naturally when the right approach is to determine how much you cannot gain.

**You have to reverse-engineer the weight of a professional bodybuilder to know how heavy one could become as a natural.**

How?

First, you need an answer to a very important inquiry – **how much mass can medium to high doses of steroids add to your frame realistically?**

To know the truth, you have to ask the pinners [steroid users].

Message boards are the best way to contact a large number of them. The members of anabolic forums vary from low-level roid rats to professional

bodybuilders. The anonymity provided by the computer makes most of them reluctant to lie as much as they do in real life.

I registered at many steroid forums and asked the men there how much mass they have gained from anabolic steroids. The dedicated pinners (members with a lot of posts) reported gains between 35lbs/16kg and 75lbs/34kg with **40-50lbs/18-23kg** being the average. The numbers fluctuate because of three variables – dosage, career length and response to drugs. A bodybuilder who has good genetics and takes 1 gram of gear will be bigger than a man on TRT cursed with a less potent reaction to drugs.

The next step is to subtract that magic number (40-50lbs) from the weight of a bodybuilder from the 70s. The reason to choose the Golden Era over today is that back then bodybuilders only abused steroids. Insulin and growth hormone (GH) came later when Dorian Yates set the "new standards" for mass. If you want to use the weight of a modern bodybuilder, you will have to subtract the mass acquired through insulin and GH abuse too. This makes the blueprint more inaccurate because of the extra variables. To keep it simple, utilize data from the 70s or earlier.

**Here's how the process would look for someone who is 6'2"/188cm tall and has good genetics.**

The 70s model of choice for that person would be Arnold – arguably the bodybuilder with the best overall genetics of all time.

Throughout most of his career Arnold was 235lbs/106.8kg at 6'2"/188cm. If we remove 40-50lbs from 235lbs, we get 185-195lbs/84-88.6kg. This is how much a 6'2" tall natural lifter with good bodybuilding genetics could weigh in a lean (single digit body fat) condition. Anything over that is unnatural in 99.9% of the cases. I leave 0.01% for the one in a billion genetic freak supposedly living somewhere in the jungle away from the evil modern world.

Most people don't have perfect bodybuilding genes, however.

Your frame/bone thickness has a very high impact on your weight. Two men can share an identical height and body fat, but the one with a larger skeleton will weigh a lot more.

There are four main types of frames:

Frame Type	Wrist Size
Small	5.5 to 6.5in 13.97cm to 16.51cm
Medium	6.5 to 7.5in 16.51cm to 19.05cm
Big	between 7.5 in. (19.05cm) and 8.5in (21.59cm)
Ultra-big	8.5+ in wrist

**Note:** The data is for men.

**SMALL FRAME**

I have a small frame. I am about 6'1"/185cm tall, and my wrists are 6.25 inches (15.87cm) thick. This makes me a lot lighter than other men of the same height. My father is around 6'2"/188cm but has a very thick frame and would need to starve for a long time in order to reach bodyweights that are sort of "normal" for me. Therefore, if you fall in this category, I feel your pain. Yet there is nothing you can do, for better or worse. You will always be on the lighter side especially when you are lean.

Men with lighter frames should remove **5-10%** from the starting point, which in this case is **195lbs/88.6kg**, because Arnold's frame was thicker (7.5-inch wrists).

The higher number (10%) is for individuals closer to the lower wrist value – 5.5 inches.

The lower number (5%) is for individuals closer to the higher wrist value – 6.5 inches.

I will use 10% to determine the *minimum*.

A 10% reduction of 195lbs/88.6kg leaves us with 175.5lbs/79.72kg.

This is the starting point for men who are 6'2" tall and have a small frame. The next step is to remove 5lbs/2.2kg for every growth factor against the individual.

### **1. long tendons and short muscle bellies**

**Note:** The areas where short tendons are commonly found would be the arms, the hamstrings, the calves, the forearms and the traps (giraffe neck).

If only one of those areas has short muscle bellies, don't subtract 5lbs/2.2kg. Just skip this step. If this is not the case, remove 5lbs/2.2kg.

175lbs – 5lbs = 170lbs/77kg

### **2. low testosterone**

Here we're talking about "brutally" low testosterone levels. If you are "average" or slightly below, don't subtract 2.2kg/5lbs. But since I am looking for the minimum, I have to remove 5lbs/2.2kg.

170lbs – 5lbs = 165/75kg

### **3. poor response to training**

What is a poor response to training? Simple. You do every program under the sun for years without any gains other than some strength. (Note: Poor response to training is also often connected to low testosterone.)



$$165\text{lbs} - 5\text{lbs} = 160\text{lbs}/72\text{kg}$$

The conclusion is that a 6'2" tall man with a very small frame and other unfavorable genetic factors could easily finish the race at **160lbs/72.7kg** in a very lean condition.

## **MEDIUM FRAME**

Arnold had a medium frame and a wrist hovering around 7.5 inches. If you have similar bone thickness, you can proceed by simply removing 5lbs/2.2kg for every "defect" you may have.

If you have a wrist closer to 6.5 inches, you will have to remove 5% of 195lbs/88.6kg from the starting point (195lbs/88.6kg) and use 185lbs/84kg for greater accuracy.

### **The process for a man with a medium frame:**

Starting point: 195lbs/88.6kg

#### **1. long tendons and short muscle bellies**

$$195\text{bs} - 5\text{lbs} = 190\text{lbs}/86\text{kg}$$

#### **2. low testosterone**

$$190 - 5\text{lbs} = 185/84\text{kg}$$

#### **3. poor response to training**

$$185 - 5\text{lbs} = 180\text{lbs}/81.8\text{kg}$$

The conclusion is that a 6'2" tall man with a medium frame could end the race at **180lbs/81.8kg**.

## EXTRA LARGE FRAME

We have to add 5% to 195lbs/86.5 kg to figure out the starting point for men with an extra big frame.

Starting point: 205lbs/93kg

### 1. long tendons and short muscle bellies

205lbs – 5lbs = 200lbs/91kg

### 2. low testosterone

200– 5lbs = 195lbs/88.6kg

### 3. poor response to training

195 – 5lbs = 190lbs/86kg

A man with a really big frame, but otherwise poor genetics, could easily finish the race at **190lbs/86kg** in a lean condition.

**Note:** The ultra-big frame is exceptionally rare (think 9-inch wrists). The vast majority of the population will fall within the first two categories.

# The New Formula 1.0

The weight of a bodybuilder from the 70s

—

The expected gains from steroids

—/+

Add or subtract weight according to your frame.

Subtract weight  
if there are growth factors against you.

=

How big you can get naturally

# A Table Based on the New Blueprint

If we know how much a **6'2" (188cm)** tall man with good or bad genetics could weigh (**160-205lbs/72.7-92kg**), we can easily create a new table for other heights.

Since an inch of height usually equals between 6lbs/2.72kg of weight (for men), all we have to do is add or subtract 6lbs [2.72kg] from 205lbs/93kg and 160lbs/72.7kg.

Here's a new table.

Height	Weight
6'2" (188cm)	205-160lbs/93-72.7kg
6'1" (185cm)	199-154lbs/90.5 -70kg
6' (183cm)	193-148lbs/87.7-67kg
5'11" (180cm)	187-142lbs/85-64.5kg
5'10" (178cm)	181-136lbs/82-61.8kg
5'9" (175cm)	175-130lbs/79.5-59kg
5'8" (173cm)	169-124lbs/77-56kg
5'7" (170cm)	163-118lbs/74-53.6kg
5'6" (168cm)	157-112bs/71-51kg
5'5" (165cm)	151-106bs/68.6-48kg

**Note: Add or remove 6lbs/2.7kg for every inch (2.54cm) to figure out the numbers for heights not in the list.**

The numbers above will probably stimulate the birth of many tears, but at least we are one step closer to the natty revelation.

## Challenging the New Blueprint

The new blueprint has two main downsides. The first is the impossibility to know exactly how much mass a bodybuilder could gain from steroids because of the three variables I mentioned before – dosage, response to drugs and career duration.

When we are talking about professional bodybuilders, we can safely remove the last variable (length of steroid use), for the fact that all pros inject drugs throughout their whole lives. The other two are harder to determine with precision.

You can never know exactly how much someone is injecting. What we do know, however, is that all pros have been pushing the envelope under the guidance of the YOLO (You Only Live Once) spirit. The desire to win makes people go all the way because the ego feeds off veneration and victory. If you are not willing to take the necessary quantities, someone who is will take your trophy. Therefore, it's not difficult to conclude that the pros inject as much as their bodies can take.

Also, since most bodybuilders from the 70s were living in the USA and Western Europe, they had access to similar drugs.

This analysis leaves us with only one highly flexible variable – response to drugs.

The response to drugs is a personal matter. Some get bigger; some get huuuge. You can't tell your body what to do with the drugs in your system. Once they are in, the auto-pilot takes over.

Frank Zane competed at 185lbs/84kg @ 5'9"/175cm whereas other men next to him were 220lbs/100kg at a similar height? Why? Because of genetic growth factors such as response to drugs and frame.

You have to realize that steroids are nothing but a booster dependent heavily on the organism's reaction. Consequently, if you have low-end muscle genetics and somewhat inadequate response to drugs, you will be a lot smaller than your rivals even if you're absorbing the same number of drugs.

This leads to a logical question – whose weight should we use for the new blueprint? The one of Frank Zane, Arnold, Bertil Fox, Mike Mentzer...?

In the best-case scenario, you would choose a bodybuilder who has a very similar frame to yours. If you are a thin ectomorph, it makes more sense to go with Frank Zane (185lbs). If you have a thicker frame and fuller muscle bellies, Mike Mentzer (210lbs) may be a more appropriate choice. But honestly, I think the table from above based on Arnold's weight and height will work fine for most people.

## **FAQs**

### **Are you kidding me? You can be as big as you want to be!**

I know that the low numbers above may be shocking to many, but they are common when every growth factor is against the individual. Genetics do not care about your feelings. Some people are pretty; others are afraid to take a picture without five buckets of makeup. What can I say? Life is cold.

**What about Bobby Pandour and Eugen Sandow? Many men from the 19th-century were massive. Explain or die, please!**

The ultra-old-school guys were not nearly as big as you think. You can't know their real weights and heights because back then there were no bodybuilding competitions with strict weigh-ins. Or maybe you think that in the 19th-century people didn't boost their stats?

Another common explanation behind the retro mass is the belief that the men of yesterday had higher testosterone levels compared to us. This idea is backed by both – conspiracy theorists and the mainstream media.

However, I don't fully embrace this concept anymore because I no longer believe that our grandfathers had significantly higher testosterone levels.

I think the explanation is much simpler – the muscle men from the past had good overall genetics and took photos from favorable angles. (Just like we do today.)

Moreover, what's so special about the 19th-century in regards to training?

What did the old-timers do differently?

Nothing. They lifted heavy and ate the same foods – eggs, meat, cheese, rice...etc. Their diaries do not hide an unknown mystery that the modern generation is unaware of. If you don't believe me, dig out the old books and put the methods to a test.

Will you get stronger? 100%

Will you get bigger? Yes, but not bigger than what a modern approach would produce.

**What about the Greek statues? They are big and shredded! Maybe there's an ancient secret that will make me huge. What is it?**

The Greek statues reveal only one thing – the ancient people had a great appreciation for a good-looking body. Besides, what do you expect them to build? A small figure of a short fat man? Those monuments represent the Gods of the past and mini mode doesn't work. The statues are more than likely a scaled-up version of a shredded natural.

**But Victor Pride from Bold&Determined.com says that there are no such things as genetic freaks. Just hard work, training, proper dieting and roids.**

It's true that training hard, eating and taking hormones will transform even someone with bad genetics into an alien compared to the modern humanoid incapable of doing 10 push-ups. But the real driving force behind the muscular ascension of this individual would be the drugs.

As you can see in some old photos, Victor Pride looked skinny until he roided up. Is this how you become a genetic freak?

Also, Victor Pride is a master at bending different terms and ideas in favor of his beliefs and products. I know that he has motivated many people to work harder, which is a phenomenal accomplishment, but he often twists different concepts to promote stuff to his readers.

## **How Much Mass Can You Add as a Natural?**

Until you start lifting like you mean it, you represent an *untrained* version of yourself, which acts as your starting base.

The untrained state comes in three modes – **skinny**, **average** and **power-fatso**. The skinny segment includes malnourished bros; the average state refers to lifters who are neither thin nor exceptionally fat; the power-fatso mode describes obese dudes with bloated red faces.



Extremely skinny beginners can expect more gains on paper whereas power-fatsos will gain the least amount of extra lean body mass due to their higher starting levels. As a result, I will use the middle [the average untrained state] as a reference point.

Once the **average untrained state** is unlocked by dieting up or down, people rarely gain more than **30lbs/13.5kg** of lean mass. Obviously, you can add an endless amount of fat to your body, but obesity worship is not why we are doing this.

### ***Why 30lbs/13.5kg?***

The *lean* untrained state (the way you would look if you just diet without lifting) of most men of average height is roughly between 130lbs/59kg and 160lbs/72kg. If you add more than 30lbs to this base, we are talking about bodybuilding proportions.

Unfortunately, or not, I have to state that those 30lbs/13.5kg are a very generous limit. Adding 30lbs of actual muscle demands **extremely** favorable growth factors.

That's why I laugh at dreamers who believe that anyone can weigh over 200lbs/91kg naturally in a lean condition. Unless you are over 6'3"/190cm or obese, you won't see 200lbs/91kg on the scale.

**What about Steve Reeves? He was 6'1"/185cm and 215lbs/97.7kg before steroids were even on this planet. Explain or die!**

Trying to figure out how big an average man can get naturally by looking up to the genetic marvels is like hoping to turn a small business into Microsoft.

Also, who told you that Reeves was natural?

Joe Weider?

Get serious.

According to the information in the public domain, anabolic steroids came to this planet in the 30s. Clinical trials on humans, involving either oral doses or injections of testosterone propionate, began as early as 1937.

Testosterone propionate is mentioned in a letter to the editor of Strength and Health magazine in 1938. This is the earliest known reference to an anabolic steroid in a U.S. weightlifting or bodybuilding magazine.

Steve Reeves won his first major bodybuilding contest, Mr. America, at the age of 21 in 1947.

In other words, anabolic steroids were a reality approximately 10 years prior to Reeves' debut on a large bodybuilding stage.

In an interview conducted by Brian D. Johnston the legendary bodybuilder Sergio Oliva stated the following:

**BDJ:** *Could you relay your own experience with drug use?*

**SO:** *This is an area of great interest for people. I don't care who wants to take steroids because that's a personal choice... that's his life. Now, today, everybody has access to them. I even saw in one of the big magazines that Arnold denies having used them, but Arnold was one of the first to bring steroids over to America. And everybody in the old days used them: Zane, Columbu, myself, Arnold, Larry Scott, Harold Poole, Dave Draper, and even Steve Reeves. There's no way to deny it.*

Obviously, none of this is 100% concrete evidence that Reeves was not natural. But it shows that it was possible to be unnatural even in his era. Steroids are not a modern invention.

### **How long will it take me to acquire my natty gains?**

Muscle construction is not a never-ending linear process. Those who say that you can keep on adding grams of muscle forever classify as idiots and/or liars. You can't do that. Growth is a fading process. Think of it as a song. It starts loud and gradually disappears into the nothingness.

You will make your best gains during the first 18 months of your lifting journey. By lifting journey, I don't mean doing dumbbell curls while texting on your iPhone with your free hand. I am talking about planned, deliberate training with resistance exercises suited for your current level of conditioning.

Every workout should be part of a progression plan making you stronger. You shouldn't just go through the motions. You have to train like there is an exam at the end of the month. Each step should be recorded and well calculated. If you don't track your progress, you can't know whether a program is working.

In weightlifting, there are two main ways to progress – by adding weight or reps.

Nonetheless, training is not enough. You have to eat sufficiently. I can't tell you exactly how much, but in most cases, it won't be over 2500-2700 kcal unless you want to become a fat man.

I like to follow a simple formula engineered by Lyle McDonald when determining my overall caloric needs.

It works like this:

If you are a male, the starting point for *losing weight* is 10-12 times your weight in pounds.

For example, if you weigh 190lbs/86kg, this equals between 1900kcal and 2280kcal.

If you are a male trying to maintain his weight, you should aim for 14-16 cal/per 1lb of bodyweight, which for a guy who weighs 150lbs/68kg would equal – 2100 to 2400kcal.

If you want to gain weight, you should add 200-500kcal to your maintenance. Therefore, if you weigh 150lbs/68kg, you would need 2300-2600kcal.

## **Note:**

The lower values are for women and men with slower metabolisms.

People with extremely high energy requirements may need more food, but let's face it – we are mostly clicking in this day and age.

My personal experience confirms the validity of the formula. When I was eating between 3000 and 4000kcal as a permabulking soldier, I got fat very quickly. Each week, I was adding 1-2lbs {0.5-1kg} to my body.

**But big & strong powerlifters say that you have to eat through your sticking points! I am not a bird. I need 7 000 calories!?**

Powerlifters love calories because the heavier you are, the easier it is to make love to a barbell. The extra lard and water protect your joints and improve your leverage for some lifts. That's why many powerlifters are somewhat fat and consume potatoes before a meet. The idea is that carbohydrates promote water gain, which in return protects your joints during heavy lifting. For the same reason, it's considered dangerous to lift heavy in a dehydrated, ultra-lean state.

I am almost sorry to inform you that most people have no business eating as much as world class powerlifters who represent the elite of the gene pool and take trucks of steroids to get stronger and move heavy iron. Behavior like that is similar to loading a car with fuel quantities meant for a space shuttle.

**But what if I run a strict high protein diet?**

Powder promoters have convinced everyone that extra protein comes with extra muscle. It doesn't. Past a certain point, every gram of protein turns into an expensive carb because it cannot be used for energy in its original form and has to transform. That process is inefficient. The body is forced to melt bricks and turn them into oil.

Any gram over 120 is of highly questionable value unless you are protein fasting to lose fat.

### **Is it true that you can carry a lot more muscle mass if you stay on the fatter side?**

Fat people have more of everything – fat and lean mass. The extra muscle that comes with obesity is not that much, however. When fat people, especially bulking soldiers, decide to lean out they are surprised how much weight they have to lose to see even a slight resemblance of six-pack abs. We always underestimate how fat we are.

When I was an overfed skinny-fat dude screaming underneath "heavy" barbells, I thought that I will have to lose only about 8lbs/3.6kg to get lean. Damn. I had to lose 40lbs/18kg, and the diet was a lot longer than planned.

The hardest thing to do as a natural is to let go of your fat deposits. Cutting is a scary process for natties because there isn't a ton of muscle underneath, and a weakness could reveal itself. That's why we want to hold on to our fat for as long as possible and lie to ourselves that we are bigger than we are. This is very common during the cold season when fatter guys look massive because the body is covered. In the summer, the story changes completely. The "big guys" suddenly turn into disgusting sweaty potatoes.

Ultimately, the additional lean mass that comes with the extra fat is too little to outweigh the 24/7 disadvantages of living the fatso life.

Don't trust the success bulking stories.

There are none.

The after pictures are often edited and taken from extremely favorable angles with the gut sucked in.

# How Lean Can You Get Naturally?

Lean muscles add a power punch to the physique and attract hungry eyes. A fat person with big muscles is just a fatso. Only men would turn their heads after a *permabulking* strongman mess with a non-existing neck and a heavily pregnant belly. Such individuals are invisible to prime women.

There may be some maniacs who experience pleasure in observing bouncing balloons filled with lard, but most people don't consider fat mountains an enjoyable sight. This has been the case since the beginning. Look at the ancient statues. All figures represent shredded to the bone bad boys. Why didn't the ancient Greeks make them fat? Because fat is not appealing to the larger percentage of the human population. A woman will never say – "I want to have sex this guy because he has a big fat belly." Curves don't work for men. Men are supposed to look hard which is impossible when you are a human swine. Consequently, physique competitors get "shredded". Downright brutal leanness is part of the "fuck-me-now-physique" evaluated highly in the age of Social Media.

If a physique competitor takes his shirt off in public, every single girl will look. The shameless ones may even get close, touch them abs and wink. There is no mystery behind this. Men with good-looking lean bodies are attractive to women the same way hot females turn on men. It is in our programming. If you try the same experiment with a fat guy, most girls will say "Put a shirt on." in their minds.

Years ago, some chubby men on the forums of StartingStrength.com used to say that their wives love them fat. Apparently, those bulking soldiers were too delusional to understand that this is a big lie and the equivalent of a man saying that he likes his wife "squishy" because "skinny bitches are too flat". People lie to each other to protect the peace in the house. In reality, most women don't care about the bulking war led by their husbands. They consider it pathetic even if they are telling you that you are getting powerful.

The question is can a natural transform into a shredded monster with a 1080p Full HD body?

The answer is – yes.

You can get stupid lean as a natural, but as always, there is a nasty catch.

## **How do we achieve leanness?**

A trillion-dollar question with a one-word answer – diet.

To get lean, you have to lose body fat through reduction of calories. Boring but there is no other way.

You don't even have to train. Look at the shredded drug addicts and musicians jumping on stage. Do you think those guys are lifting weights or doing HIIT? They spend their time drinking, snorting, "making love", singing and dancing. Men like that don't care about anything health related and yet they are leaner than many guys in the gym. How? Their "secret" is very simple – prolonged existence on low calories.

Many fat individuals believe that they have the ability to gain weight despite being on a perpetual diet of "almost nothing". Their "almost nothing" is often a big something.

One time, I saw a fatso in the supermarket checking the back of the products to find out their caloric content. She looked at a small fruit juice – a mixture of sugar, water and paint. It had about 150kcal in it which is actually little. The problem is that she took five and added them to a basket full of other garbage.

## **What about supplements?**

Thankfully, naturals don't have to take magical elixirs to get ripped. Steroids, fat burners, fat magicians, fat melting machines, fat destroyers or fat termites are not required. You can simply follow a low-calorie diet and stick with it for

as long as needed. Unless you have serious health problems, you are going to lose weight on a low-calorie diet no matter what. And if you aren't losing weight, you are probably not on a low-calorie diet.

It's not very difficult to get down to 12% body fat as a male. Yes, it could be hard for the average humanoid who wants to eat "normal" *a.k.a.* McDonald's every day, but if you invest some effort and patience, you can get there sooner than you think.

The journey gets more interesting further down the road.

This is when demons start to appear one by one.

This is when you begin to question your sanity.

Unless you have good genes for leanness, you will need extra effort to reach 10% body fat. Many people think they are at 10%, but in reality, they are at 15%. A sign that you are at 10% body fat is a clear and visible set of six-pack abs. I am not talking about ultra-cut abs, but I am not talking about a blurry four-pack either.

Since people store body fat differently, you may actually reach 10% and still have blurry abdominal muscles. However, that is rarely the case. Most people are simply fatter than they think.

When I say that extra effort is in order, I am talking about the diet, of course. Dieting is a hard 24/7 process that follows you like a shadow. It's harder than going to the gym for an hour and calling it a day. Food restriction affects your mood severely. When you are in cutting mode, the hormones in your body are doing acrobatics and play with your mental stability.

All successful cutting diets follow the same basic rules:

1. Eat less than you burn.
2. Eat foods rich in nutrients.
3. Eat a sufficient amount of protein.



I prefer low to medium carb diets, but I am not going to pretend that you can't lose weight on a high-carb diet. It's possible as shown by the vegans.

Eventually, you will get close to 10% body fat with diet alone. Most naturals will look fine at that body fat, but fitness models are leaner. Physique competitors maintain 6-8% BF perpetually. Anything over is considered an off-season shape in their industry.

Can you get to 6-8% as a natural? Yes.

Can you get there as a natural and remain sane? Not so sure.

I've never been 5% body fat myself, but I know naturals who claim to be that lean and have caliper based data to back it up. Both of them got ultra-shredded with a low carb diet and were pretty ripped to begin with. Unfortunately, or not, I don't think that average naturals can maintain 6-8% body fat for a very long time. I also doubt that most will diet long enough to achieve this kind of conditioning in the first place. I know I wouldn't. The good news is that you don't have to go that low to look good naked.

Another downside of trying to reach 5% body fat as a natural is that you will look super skinny, especially with your clothes on. When natties get lean, they look like starving humans...maybe because they are. Naturals do not carry sufficient mass on their frames and appear fragile and depleted on a diet in comparison to steroid users. When you are a cutting natty, people often ask you if you are about to leave this planet soon.

It is not advisable for natties to drop down to 5-8% body fat and try to maintain it. Even 8% could be brutality and a catalyzer of an underlying mental illness. Moreover, there is a high chance that your natural testosterone levels will drop into the abyss when your body fat is that low. The body simply doesn't love this condition.

## FAQ

**So, it is all about calorie reduction?** Yes. Training can help, but it is less important than your nutritional regimen when it comes to losing weight. Fat

cells don't join your body because you don't run 10k every day. They come because you eat a lot of garbage food that you don't need.

**Is it true that high-fat diets allow you to eat more?** This is debatable, but they are definitely more satisfying because foods high in fat and low in carbs are "denser" and promote stable blood sugar levels.

At the beginning, you may get through a low energy period called the keto flu because the body is depleting the glycogen storages and getting ready to switch to ketosis. If you are running a medium carb diet, you will not experience this.

The keto flu is also a side effect of your new habits. Since most people are addicted to sugar, we cannot feel satisfied and full without it even when we are eating plenty of other foods. Breaking a bad habit always hits your mind.

## Worthless Muscle Building Tricks

There are many commercial techniques meant to bridge the gap between average muscles and massive muscles. The common denominator is their powerful futility. Here are some of the most popular ones.

### 1. Anabolic window

According to idiots, incapable of thinking for more than 3 seconds, natural bodybuilders would be bigger if the *right nutrients* are taken at the *right time*. This simply isn't true because the timing of your meals does not make a difference as far as body composition is concerned.

Do you really think you are small because you didn't eat your protein meal 10 minutes after packing your gym bag? Do you really think that you will grow if you eat like T-Nation suggests? Sorry, but no. Almost everything presented by the mainstream media is flawed, but since the gospel is spread by big men, people assimilate all claims as truths.

The situation reminds me of a *get-rich-quick* seminar organized by masterful sales experts. At similar events, people listen attentively as if the speaker will give them the real formula. Why would he do that? It makes no sense. His job is to steer people in one section of the labyrinth and keep them there for as long as possible. Then, he pushes the crowd in another corner. He may get close to the exit but will never let the sheep pass through it. After all, someone has to attend the next seminar.

Rich (big) people give good advice only in two situations – if they are sincere or if you are able to discern the realness from the deception.

## **2. High Volume Training**

Many souls full of hope believe that extra volume results in extra growth. This is why programs like *Boring but Big*, *German Volume*, *Serge Nubret's Pump Routine* and *Vince Gironda's 8x8* are very popular among naturals desperately searching for ways to get "swol".

There are no fundamentals behind the statement that more volume equals more mass. The only thing happening during high volume routines is work capacity training. The trainee becomes more efficient at moving heavy or light objects for sets and reps. High volume routines build muscle but not as much as advertised.

## **3. HIT works when High Volume Fails**

While many of the ideas behind high-intensity training seem logical, Mike Mentzer simply went to the other extreme by recommending too little work and too much rest. That's why you are sore after every HIT session. The downtime between the workouts is too long. The muscles begin to lose their adaptation to training and enter a phase known as undertraining. In short, you are resting when you could be working.

The second problem is that even high-intensity training cannot help you overcome your natural limitations. It's simply impossible for a routine of any kind to do that. Not now, not ever.

#### **4. Some foods can trigger ultra-growth**

According to the Iron Guru, Vince Gironda, fertilized eggs can produce exceptional growth and eliminate the need for steroid injections.

Eggs may have muscle growth supporting content, but sadly, steroid-like explosion cannot happen as a result of food intake. You can eat every fertilized egg in the world if you want to. No extraterrestrial growth is coming for Christmas.

A good diet will improve your testosterone levels and body composition, but does not have the means to create growth beyond the believable. And by the way, the book of Vince Gironda, *Unleashing the Wild Physique*, is filled with guys on steroids. Every pro in it serving as an example was not natural. Zero surprises here.

#### **5. Supplements matter**

Supplements are 100% irrelevant when it comes to growth. That's not their purpose. They were created as means to monetize bodybuilding. It's not a coincidence that every bodybuilder launches a "revolutionary" supplement line after hanging up the thong.

This does not mean that supplements are bad in all circumstances. They have some good properties, but getting you big is not one of them. Besides, there isn't a supplement required to reach your genetic potential.

What are supplements anyway? Most of them are processed food in pill or powder form with questionable absorption. Therefore, supplements are as effective as food at best.

Yet some poor souls still feel guilty when they miss a protein shake. This is how deep the muscle media has penetrated our muscle hungry minds. If you are on the fence about buying a supplement to get big, don't. Save your money or buy a sandwich instead.

## 6. Secret vitamins and herbs

Every natural who wants to stay natural has searched for ways to hack the game with the help of magical homeopathic substances. The options are numerous. Some drink their sperm. Some buy expensive "hidden from the West" Chinese herbs. Some eat bull testicles. The results, however, are never marvelous.

It's true that some herbs can boost your testosterone levels, which is why you find them in sex pills, but dick hardness does not equal muscle growth.

I will say it again. There is a difference between boosting your testosterone levels and taking steroids. The increase of testosterone levels from steroids is larger and more significant. What will happen if a woman starts taking *Tribulus terrestris*? Maybe she will get acne and increase her sex drive, but she definitely won't mutate into a professional female bodybuilder or even a fitness competitor.

The same holds true for vitamins.

Multis are an even larger business than supplements. When a modern humanoid praying to Netflix suddenly decides to get healthy again, he/she immediately buys multi-vitamins and overdoses on orange juice.

This raises a logical question – are vitamins really that powerful?

The magic labels, the placebo effect and the idea that humans are weak form the false belief that taking pills filled with supposedly useful ingredients will upgrade you to superhuman mode. Sorry, but no. If this was the case, vitamins would be illegal.

Vitamins work like this – it's a great *disadvantage* to be severely deficient in them, but it is not a great *advantage* to overdose.

## 7. Blood restriction/Occlusion training

Occlusion training is a relatively new method to boost hypertrophy. It works like this: a lifter wraps a muscle at its two insertion points and then starts flexing it. The result is a greatly intensified pump in the area. Muscle scholars believe that this style of training stimulates more growth by amplifying the muscle to epic proportions while filling it with nutrients.

In the real world, occlusion training is not practical because it alters the natural operation of your muscles and joints. I would never use this technique when I am lifting heavy weights. Besides, the extra pump does not equal extra growth. You can get crazy, mind-blowing pumps every single day if you so desire. Nothing is going to happen. Thinking that a sick pump can make your muscles big beyond normality is similar to enlarging your dick through intense, brutal, otherworldly erections. Sorry, but no.

By the way, I don't care that occlusion training is advertised by alleged natural bodybuilders. Those men will advertise anything as long as it looks somewhat sane and pays.

## **8. SARMs**

SARMs are the new product meant to give you *steroid* results with minimal side effects. Sadly, this is not happening because SARMs share many similarities with steroids such as suppression of your natural testosterone production. Taking SARMs does not make you any more natural than injecting steroids. It's the same thing with a twist. In addition, SARMs are somewhat new, and thus, their side effects are less known.

## **9. Myostatin Blocking**

Myostatin is a villain protein acting as a hypertrophy break inhibiting the growth of the muscle cell. Some studies show that blocking myostatin keeps the body in a "fat-burning-mode" too. This leaves muscle lovers only one option – to demonize myostatin and seek ways to destroy it.

On paper, the removal of myostatin would be a miracle. The less of it you have, the more muscular you are. Except, it's not that simple, boy. Studies

have shown that mice deficient in myostatin have fragile tendons and suffer traumas. Muscles of steel and paper tendons are not a good combination. Nonetheless, similar results are not observed in bulls. I guess there is still hope for us.

Another negative effect that could manifest as a result of myostatin inhibition is hypertrophic cardiomyopathy – a disease in which a portion of the myocardium (heart muscle) enlarges without any obvious causes.

The war against myostatin is sponsored by supplement and pharmaceutical giants. Can you imagine how rich a company would become if it invents a substance that can safely inhibit myostatin? If whey protein and creatine have earned trillions, this one will make even the Illuminati jealous. Oh, wait! We are talking about the same people.

Various supplements claiming to inhibit myostatin efficiently have appeared in the past. Some looked professional while others were no names sold in weird bottles on eBay. The marketing of both was done by underpaid spammers on forums. Neither looked legit and convincing to people with a positive IQ.

The explanation is simple. There aren't anti-myostatin drugs that are both – effective and safe for humans. As a result, big pharma abandoned some of the researched compounds.

**Is it true that genetically gifted bodybuilders have low levels of myostatin in their systems?**

Of course, not. They just want you to think so. Pro bodybuilders are pathological liars of the highest order. Sooner or later, every pro goes mental and starts believing his own nonsense.

## **10. Exercise tempo**

According to many Prime Ministers of Muscle, maintaining proper exercise tempo with an accent on the negative is a great way to stimulate extra growth.

Cool, except that exercise tempo has more to do with proper execution than huge muscles.

Lowering the weight/yourself under control is essential and can help you avoid injury, but extra mass? No. Try again, bro. Do you really think that naturals are small because they don't lower the weight slowly enough? Cute. Time to hug your diary.



# Testosterone on a Budget

There are two hard facts about testosterone. First, it has a significant impact on protein synthesis and consequently muscle construction. Second, natural testosterone is a *limited* resource just like time. The older you get, the less of it you have. This leads to a scary conclusion – natural lifters live on a testosterone budget.

## There's No Going Back

Life is a limited series of moments burning one by one and disappearing into the nothingness. Your younger years influence your life path tremendously. The way you spend them is of high importance because each opportunity has a time limit. Once it has expired, you can never go back. Happy or not, the transaction is done. Reimbursement? Hmm... Do you even life?

## What if I tell you that testosterone is no different?

The initial training years mark your lifting career *forever* because you are spending your limited amount of testosterone on a *specific* group of muscle fibers. Once the testosterone credit is spent, there are fewer coins left to support the growth of other body parts.

The fans of 5x5 routines and bulking have been suffering from the *centaur* effect [big fat lower body coupled with T-Rex arms and a deceased upper chest] since forever. The common denominator of all classic low rep routines is the enormous amount of hip dominant training in the form of squats and deadlifts.

To understand why there's so much "hip" in 5x5 routines, we have to go back to the source.

How did the 5x5 system become popular?

Bill Starr's book, *The Strongest Shall Survive: Strength Training for Football*, introduced 5x5 to the unaware world, even though those training principles were a reality long before that. The keyword to remember is American football – a posterior chain dominant sport.

5x5 lifting was originally designed for strength athletes and football players with serious ambition to dominate. Aesthetics were never a priority.

5x5 and its variations represent a full-blown squat specialization of the highest order. Every time you go to the gym, you do SQUATS first. Every time you train, you are praying to the SQUAT GOD.

Ironically, the brainwashed low IQ noobs still wonder why their butts explode. Don't worry! I was one of you too. Bulking and low bar squats gave me the so-called bubble butt. I looked a bit like the Instagram attention whores taking selfies in weird positions to showcase their overflowing glutes. Girls started to check out my posterior chain. Maybe they wanted to have the same development and were wondering if I can show them the way. This happened many years ago, and yet my rear still shows signs of its former glory

How is that even possible?

Simple. I spent my testosterone budget mainly on my hips. Thanks, dear low bar squat.

## The Testosterone Budget

The idea is fairly simple. Your body has a set amount of **natural** testosterone, which together with the rest of the growth factors, determines how big you are going to get eventually.

**If you spend it on the wrong body parts, you are doomed.**

This explains why naturals have a hard time building a balanced body. There is not enough testosterone in the *natty* system to support noticeable growth

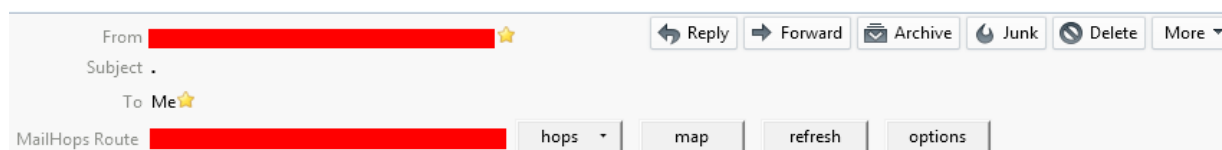
everywhere. You will rarely see a natty with both – a developed lower and upper body. Usually, it's one of the two.

When I first, presented this idea, some laughed at me and told me that I am essentially an idiot that has to commit seppuku asap. Then, they did low bar squats themselves and cried harder and louder than me.

## How should I spend my testosterone budget?

You should spend it like your time – set a priority and commit. If you want big biceps the most, train them hard and keep the rest to a bare minimum. If you want big lats, do pull-ups until the world turns upside down. I know that this is neither a scientific nor an industry approved method, but it is one of those irrational things that progress often demands. Yes, in theory, we should train the whole body with balanced routines to avoid injury and looking funny, but as you already know, theories are just theories. The field says otherwise.

Here's an e-mail I received from a reader who decided to follow an unconventional way to reverse the centaur effect.



Hi man, I have written to you a few times before, I just wanted to tell you how right you were when it comes to growing a bigger upper body. I remember a post you did mentioning that you had big glutes and you didn't know if you could get rid of them, and, due to them upper body gains were restrained because you had "run out of your testosterone budget". This happened to me thanks to sons of bitches from youtube and the fitness community, but I have overcome it finally, just by staying at a calorie deficit several months, and not training legs (not even walking if I could), and meanwhile I was training upper body heavily and having a huge amount of protein (despite in a deficit) and now I look way better than ever in my life. Just wanted to share the tip with you, even though I am sure you knew it. Hope everything is alright!

I am not saying that you should go to the same extreme. But definitely don't feel guilty if you spend a little more time and effort on a body part that you really want to develop for whatever reason.

You don't owe anyone an explanation nor do you need an approval.

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# The Impact of Tendons and Ligaments on Strength

Tendons act as ropes transmitting muscular strength to your bones whereas ligaments operate as tough and yet flexible cords keeping the structure stable. Since tendons connect muscle to bone and ligaments connect bone to bone, both classify as *connective* tissues.

## Building Stronger Tendons

Tendons and ligaments are of supreme importance to strength. It doesn't matter how strong your muscles are if the force never reaches the skeletal system. Similar to hypertrophy, tendon thickening is a partial mystery. There isn't an officially accepted theory how the strength properties of connective tissues improve.

Most studies examining the changes of tendons and ligaments under load focus on two extremes – immobilization and mobilization. The results often show that immobilization causes a decrease of the cross-sectional area and

loss of strength [tendon "atrophy"]. After remobilization, the values return to normal.

Studies report a potential for **up to 14%** ligament and tendon growth in the cross-sectional area.

## The Process

Tendons and ligaments need to be both – strong and elastic. As a consequence, they are composed of two fibers – collagen [strength] and elastin [elasticity]. A tendon thickens by adding additional collagen strands to the existing matrix. The body accomplishes this task by eliciting an immune response attracting the proteins that construct collagen.

### The Effects of Training on Tendons

When a muscle gets strong, it starts to overwhelm the existing connective tissues. Since our bodies are adaptable and built to survive, this change triggers an immune response, and synthesis of collagen begins.

As always, you have to combine two opposites to create something new. The two opposites in this case are low reps [heavy] and high reps [light].

High tension triggers the construction of thicker tendons, which is why many tendon strengthening programs focus on brutally heavy weights [five reps or below]. Some muscle masters even recommend partial reps and isometric training to increase the load even further. A popular example would be bench press and squat lockouts in the power rack. This method is suitable only for advanced lifters who know their bodies very well. Beginners should focus on the basics instead of attempting partial movements.

Heavy weights may be the heart of the process, but they are not enough by themselves.

Connective tissues have a pathetic blood supply and heal 10 times slower than muscles. This is where high reps (50+) come to complete the mission. Their job

is to intensify the blood supply of the area. More blood equals more "money" and respectively healing.

For example, rock climbers do wrist curls or wrist rotations in a rice bucket almost daily. Also, some bench press specialists and powerlifters perform high rep chest flies with light weights such as 5lbs/2.5kg. The goal is to flush the pectoral area with blood. I've also heard of gymnasts and acrobats who do high reps [100+] bodyweight calf raises in different foot positions to strengthen the Achilles tendon and prevent injuries from tumbling.

### **Negative repetitions/Eccentric Training**

Studies show that negative repetitions/eccentrics [the lowering phase] could be more effective than conventional treatment of tendon injuries because of their impact on tendon structure.

A group of runners suffering from Achilles tendonitis returned to normal training after a 12-week treatment with negatives. The runners used the healthy leg to do a calf raise and the hurt ankle to lower themselves slowly. The athletes did 3 sets of 15 reps twice a day for 12 weeks.

In the meantime, the other tested group relied on the classics [NSAIDS, ice, rest] and failed to acquire the same level of success. Similar results are the reason why negatives are sometimes added to tendon strengthening protocols.

### **The Keyword is "SLOW"**

Everything good related to tendons and ligaments happens slowly. A research from 2015 concluded that performance climbers with at least 15 years of experience have finger joints and tendons 62-76% thicker than those of non-climbers. This is why bodyweight movements like the iron cross and the maltese require many years to master. Even steroids can't speed up the process significantly. No matter the dose, joint based strength movements take ages to master.

On the good side, tendons lose their strength slowly too. This partially explains why some people take extended breaks without losing strength. A couple of years ago, I stopped training completely. I had all the time in the world to train but didn't want to. My motivation went deeper underground.

One day, I passed by something resembling a pull-up bar and tested my max. I got six which was a little surprising because I had stopped doing pull-ups long before the layoff.

I had a similar experience when I tried to deadlift after a ten-month break from barbell training. Before the pause, my deadlift was about 170kg/375lbs for 4 reps at 160lbs/73kg bodyweight. On the day of my return, I lifted 125kg/275lbs for a set of five. Two weeks later, I did a set of five with three plates. In short, my strength was recovering quickly.

The CNS also plays a big role in this game. Repeating what you have done before is easier than doing it for the first time. When you return from a break, the CPU accesses the dusty files associated with the activity and tries to perform as before. When there are no files to access, the mind panics, and you get the blue screen of death.

## **FAQ**

### **Should I do guru approved tendon voodoo if I don't have a specific injury?**

There is no need to do "underground tendon voodoo" unless you want to prepare a joint for something very specific. A simple example would be knuckle push-ups, which strengthen the connective tissues around the wrist.

### **Why can't bodybuilders do what gymnasts do?**

The strength elements on rings require an exceptional elbow strength in disadvantageous positions, a conditioned central nervous system and specific balance skills. A bodybuilder may have big biceps, but he doesn't have the rest. Furthermore, bodybuilders have more leg mass, which increases the upper body strength needed to perform a maltese or an iron cross.

## **Can naturals develop super strong ligaments and tendons?**

Yes. Naturals can develop exceptional tendon and ligament strength that would allow the execution of advanced movements. Nevertheless, the acquired strength levels are impressive only in proportions to the bodyweight [size] of the natty.

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## **The Truth about Natural Test Boosting**

Testosterone is the undisputed king of muscle architecture, but selling it in a steroid form hurts potential revenue because the demand for drugs is limited to adults who have a prescription. It's more lucrative to distribute "natural" test boosting substances backed by "research". The profit mechanism is pretty neat.

Hypertrophy experts find bits of studies suggesting that a nutrient helps testosterone elevation and then offer you that nutrient in the form of a pill. A noble act? Not entirely. Powerful nutrition companies are often sponsors of the backbone studies, and thus the data is rarely objective.



Test boosters can indeed increase the concentration of male hormones in your body until you want to hump the wall, but this effect has nothing to do with muscle gains. Horniness does not turn you into a muscle-building machine.

The explanation hides in the term – *natural testosterone range*. There is an upper threshold through which your natural testosterone cannot penetrate no matter what. Natural test boosting methods can only take you closer to that point. Then, it's game over. Unsurprisingly, even if the results show that your test is reaching the natty Milky Way, you will not experience an otherworldly physical transformation. The testosterone in your system still won't be enough to produce and maintain extraterrestrial growth.

Extra muscle enlargement may be part of testosterone's properties, but you don't get to see it by playing with your pre-determined *natural* values. Supraphysiological levels are required if decent muscle gains are the goal. This means a 200% increase. Similar savagery could only come through drugs *a.k.a.* test injections. 10-15% boosts are laughable when the goal is jaw-dropping mass. Tiny jumps are the equivalent of getting rich through penny-pinching. If you live like a monk in a cave, you can save a large percentage of your wage, but when your income is low, the result will never be spectacular. You may purchase the latest Samsung or iPhone someday, but you will never be truly wealthy. Natty test maximizing operates identically. Yet the gurus want you to believe that test boosters are the strongest natural weapon in the fight against muscle atrophy.

A few years ago, there was a huge promo of Zinc and Vitamin D supplements. The idea was that vitamin deficiency lowers your test levels. Although this is probably true, zinc and vitamin D pills are not the secret behind modern muscle mass. Moreover, how do you know that you are deficient? Most people just assume they are. The reality is that experts decide what you are deficient in by looking at their slowest moving line of supplement stock. If it's not selling, you are deficient in it.

The facts say that all versions of natural test boosting voodoo are too inefficient to make you big and cannot compete with TRT [testosterone replacement therapy]. The rise you get from nutrition and supplementation is a joke compared to the magic contained in the syringe.

I acknowledge that living the test boosting lifestyle could improve your life, but do you really think natties lack mass because they don't go to bed at the "right" time?

Most of the benefits that you are going to experience from natural test boosting techniques are not even testosterone related. You feel better because your life is healthier, not because your test is flying.

## **The Real Natty Test Boosters**

### **1. Winning**

Winning is the ultimate natty test booster. Studies confirm that a victory can increase your test levels ten times. No vitamin on the list comes close.

**Winning what?** Everything. Even a video game triumph could boost your test. I am serious. Video games are the equivalent of modern-day fighting and can generate powerful emotions. When you see frustrated gamers break their keyboards, you will understand what I am talking about. A gamer I knew almost got a heart attack when his local Counter-Strike rankings dropped due to a technical error. Now, imagine what being number one would do to a guy like that. The high from winning will catapult his test level into the clouds.

### **2. Accept the challenge**

Another way to increase your testosterone naturally is to challenge yourself. Testosterone is about being a man, and being a man is about doing the right thing even if it's hard.

### **3. Money + Status = Test Factory**

Do not listen to the wannabe saints. Getting paid is not evil. You need a certain amount of coins to lower your cortisol and preserve your test. Lack of money could degrade anyone into a beta bitch. I have seen men bend their principles to protect a miserable job. Necessary? Probably. Sometimes you have no choice unless you want to end up on the street or in prison. But if the self-worth piranha stays in you for too long, it will eat whatever alpha molecules have left in you.

#### **4. Dominant behavior**

Dominant behavior results in extra test. Walk tall and sit tall – a hard task when the boss is screaming, but committing to it will boost your test more than any herb or drug. There are no pride steroids.

#### **5. Move forward**

Unnecessary comparison to others and lack of confidence could destroy the test empire you are trying to build. You should only compare yourself to the person you were yesterday. Trivial? What isn't?

#### **6. Don't be a soft permabulker**

Living the life of a permabulker could wreck your hormones. The adipose tissue and the subcutaneous fat have an army of estrogen receptors. This creates a strong correlation between estrogen and body fat. High estrogen equals more body fat and vice versa. A person that has 25% body fat will typically have higher estrogen levels than somebody who is at 10-12%.

The catch is that if you diet down aggressively to the single digits and deprive your body of essential nutrients, your test levels will drop even though your body fat is low. Evidence? Type "skinny jeans" in Google and go to images.

#### **High Test Does Not Equal Masculinity**

You can be big, strong, aggressive, dominant, smart and yet still a beta bitch on a deeper level. I know military men behaving like cowards in real life. I

know rich men who are betas. I know college professors who are betas. I know men with money, status and successful businesses who are betas. No external factor guarantees masculinity.

Real manliness is exceptionally rare and impossible to replicate. You are born with a limited quantity. The only thing you can do is amplify the signal through action. Nothing else helps. Ultimately, masculinity is not about balls. It's about heart.

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# The Truth About SARMs

## What are SARMs?

SARMs [Selective Androgen Receptor Modulators] are relatively new drugs created to target the androgen receptor within a muscle cell. The main purpose of SARMs was to replace injections of synthetic hormones as a way of treating diseases associated with low testosterone.

## Understanding the Heart of SARMs

To know SARMs, you first have to learn how regular anabolic steroids operate.

In a nutshell, anabolic steroids pass through the membrane of a target cell and bind to an *androgen receptor* within it. This union alters the normal processes of the cell and triggers *protein synthesis* beyond the norm. To simplify the mechanism even further, you can think of androgen receptors as governmental employees receiving bribes to change the normal course of events. Not a very scientific comparison, but I know you will remember it.

If steroids cannot interact with the androgen receptors, they lose their effectiveness completely. [If a man does not accept your bribe, the desired results cannot manifest.]

## Anabolic and Androgenic Effects

Steroids have androgenic and anabolic effects. The anabolic outcome is *desirable*, for it represents an increase of lean body mass, recovery abilities and strength. Meanwhile, the androgenic reactions receive profound hate from the bodybuilding world because they induce the development of male sex organs and many side effects associated with anabolic steroids – male pattern baldness, acne, prostate enlargement and more.

The main mission of steroid chemists has always been to develop a drug that is as anabolic as possible with the least amount of androgenic effects. However, a drug that's 100% anabolic and 0% androgenic is just an illusion because you can't have good without bad in this world.

The conversion of steroids into other substances is behind many side effects. For instance, the 5 $\alpha$ -reductases enzymes transform testosterone into dihydrotestosterone a.k.a. DHT [responsible for male pattern baldness, acne and prostate enlargement].

The *aromatese* enzyme can also convert testosterone into estrogen. This is problematic because unbalanced levels of estrogen create unwanted results.

The problems mentioned above gave birth to SARMs – drugs designed to be an upgraded version of steroids.

## **Developing SARMs**

The idea for SARMs came from an already existing group of drugs called SERMs [Selective Estrogen Receptor Modulators]. SERMs have one medical use – to treat estrogen sensitive cancers in women. One of the popular SERMs is called Tamoxifen Citrate sold under the name Novadex. Athletes injecting steroids have been relying on Novadex to control estrogen spikes as a result of anabolic steroid abuse for decades. The job of Novadex is to block the estrogen receptor and prevent side effects such as gynecomastia.

The idea that well-engineered drugs can influence only pre-selected receptors was the main principle behind SARMs, which were supposed to work only on the androgen receptors.

The big features of SARMs are:

1. oral drugs
2. nonsteroidal

3. do not convert into estrogen or DHT

Therefore, *in theory*, the side effects associated with anabolic steroids should not manifest in SARMs users. And yet the androgenic effects are there despite what the SARMs dealers say.

If you are considering buying SARMs, calm down. SARMs are neither more anabolic than steroids nor free of side effects. Moreover, the current research is focused on people taking low doses that would be a rarity among muscle lovers.

### **Remember this:**

1. All SARMs are still experimental drugs. They have never been approved for human use globally.
2. The distributors of SARMs are ignoring patents owned by drug companies and thus breaking the law in several areas. This leads to the conclusion that the distributors of SARMs are dishonest men trying to monetize the hype.
3. A group of scientists purchased SARMs from a website and found 15% impurities in the product. This is a clear indication that the drugs were made in a poor laboratory. Large pharmaceutical companies don't do that. They may be manipulative and evil, but at least, they don't allow impurities in mainstream drugs.
4. SARMs cause many of the side effects associated with steroids while being less anabolic. [They suppress your natural testosterone production even at lower doses.]
5. Big pharmaceutical companies are still not selling SARMs officially.
6. SARMs are not supplements and whoever says otherwise is a liar and/or an idiot. SARMs are drugs.

7. 99.9% of the people who say SARMs are the greatest thing ever sell SARMs themselves.
8. SARMs are more expensive than steroids made by a pharmaceutical company.
9. SARMs can cause gynecomastia just like steroids.
10. Many SARMs are fake.

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## BCAA - The Key to Leanness and Mass?

The men who have performed the miracle of getting huge love to talk about supplements. One of their favorite topics are BCAAs better known as branched-chain amino acids. BCAAs have a special place in the kingdom of bodybuilding because they are metabolized in the muscle whereas "the peasant" amino acids go to party in the liver.

There is plenty of research showing that BCAAs increase the rate of muscle protein synthesis [MPS] and decrease the rate of protein degradation in resting muscles. The crew of BCAAs includes the amino acids leucine, isoleucine, and valine. Out of the pack, leucine is considered the most anabolic because it stimulates the mammalian target of rapamycin (mTOR), which in return leads to protein synthesis a.k.a. the thing muscle constructors live for.



When the body has no choice but to start eating lean tissue, the BCAA brothers are the first to go down. They are converted into glucose during a process called gluconeogenesis. This is why many people advise the consumption of extra BCAAs during diets and contest preparation.

In addition, the muscle scholars say that BCAAs facilitate the release of growth hormone (GH) and IGF-1 while also contributing to a favorable testosterone to cortisol ratio. When you combine this with the fact that BCAAs come with no side effects for the vast majority of people, you have a recipe for the perfect supplement.

As a consequence, the supplement companies want you to believe that there is something extremely special in the BCAA capsules they are selling. Sadly, I have to inform you that BCAAs are not a mysterious substance – they are found in every source of animal protein.

If you eat meat, you are getting plenty of BCAAs.

If you eat eggs, you are getting plenty of BCAAs.

(One egg contains more BCAAs than 4-5 capsules depending on the size of the egg and the particular brand.)

There are also plant-based sources of BCAAs - soybeans, almonds, cashews, corns...etc.

## **In conclusion**

You can argue that it is more convenient to take BCAAs in the form of supplements than to eat regular food, and you will be correct. But what's the point of ingesting extra BCAAs if you are already getting plenty from your food?

Some scholars say that BCAAs are a must when a lifter trains in a fasted state, but they are kind of wrong. First, if you are taking BCAAs, you are not really training in a fasted state, are you? Second, your muscles will not disappear if

you skip a meal despite what the big guys say. What matters the most is your food consumption throughout the entire day.

Unfortunately, or not, if your protein needs are covered, extra BCAAs do nothing besides occupying space on the shelf.

No amount of supplement based gymnastics will take you out of the natty prison. Taking BCAA is fine, I guess, but don't expect the unexpected because it is just not going to happen.

## **Frequently Asked Questions about Bodybuilding Supplements**

### **1. What are bodybuilding supplements?**

#### **/mainstream definition/**

Bodybuilding supplements are nutritional substances derived from food or synthesized in a lab. Their purpose is to supply your body with indispensable growth-supporting ingredients.

#### **/reality/**

Bodybuilding supplements are overhyped products that help muscular growth in theory, but in reality, their main purpose has always been to monetize bodybuilding by taxing the unaware and stupid population. Nevertheless, supplements still have value in specific situations.

### **2. What's behind the large variety of bodybuilding supplements?**

The industry relies on many tactics to enrich its portfolio of muscle elixirs. Some supplements are the same thing under a new label. The goal is to

confuse the buyer. Very often separate companies purchase base ingredients from a single wholesaler to create "unique supplements".

If a substance is legal, and there is a slight evidence that it facilitates muscular growth or another process linked to hypertrophy, it has to be available for sale. More products, more money.

### **3. Why do we buy supplements?**

There are two main reasons – deficiency and brainwashing. You either take dietary supplements due to a medical condition or because the big men told you so.

The brainwashing campaign follows a common principle – the media serves its advertisers [supplement companies] and fills your head with claims that reality cannot cash. And since we want to believe in miracles, we allow ourselves to be deceived. This doesn't mean that supplements are 100% bad and cannot be useful. They offer value, but you aren't getting truly big because of any supplement on this earth.

### **Something for nothing? Impossible.**

The golden rule of pharmacology says that if a drug doesn't have side effects, it probably doesn't work. The fundamentals behind this statement hide in the dualism found everywhere in this world. You can't have something for nothing. Thus, a drug that offers only benefits will never exist. And since supplements come with relatively small side effects, you can be certain that they cannot be super effective. Comparing supplements to steroids is like comparing a cup of coffee to cocaine.

### **4. How can I know if the supplements I am taking are effective?**

The fitness industry always targets the right brain, and consequently, there's always a possibility to experience the placebo effect – you convince yourself that the powders are working. This belief is reinforced by the fact that taking supplements has become a ritual for most people. Every time you drink a pre-

workout before your session, you are performing a habit that puts your mind at ease.

"I am doing something about my problem," you say to yourself and immediately feel better with or without the effect of the substances in question.

Very often supplements appear effective because we make them effective through training and nutrition. For example, when a lifter buys an expensive fat burner, he is more likely to stick to a diet because otherwise, the investment would classify as a waste. When the diet gets him cut, he brainwashes himself into believing that the cutting stack has played a major role.

## **The Test**

To learn whether a supplement is truly working, you can perform the on/off test. The principle is simple – you take a supplement for 1-3 months in the prescribed manner, and then you stop taking it for 1-3 months. If don't feel or look differently, and your performance doesn't suffer, you can obviously live without it.

### **5. Can I reach my natural potential without taking supplements?**

100%. Supplements do not change your natural potential. With or without them, the journey ends at the same destination.

### **6. Do you think that one day supplements will become as effective as steroids without the side effects?**

No, that's 100% impossible. If you play, you pay.

### **7. Is it true that professional bodybuilders use supplements?**

Rarely. The pros may try something from time to time but most don't care and avoid even their own products because they know that supplements don't have a significant effect on your training and appearance.

## **8. What are the common tactics used by supplemental companies to enter the mind of the victim?**

Supplement companies rely on the physiques of professionals to advertise their products. You would never see a natural on a label of a bodybuilding supplement. It has never happened and will never happen. Natural physiques don't sell well.

The next part of the plan is to make the bottle and label appear otherworldly. This is why companies give weird names to their supplements and include words like "tech", "carnivore", "100%", "Super Mass"... etc.

The goal is to make the user believe that he/she is taking something incredibly advanced that could lead to brutal muscle gains. Even if you realize that all of this is a lie, it still affects the subconscious mind.

## **The False Idea of Optimization**

Supplement ads appeal to the geek in you. The masters want you to feel incomplete and sub-optimal when you fall off the mainstream wagon [6 meals a day, protein before bed...etc.]. Since many people start lifting weights to compensate for something, this method works.

"My life sucks, but if I eat right, train and take protein, I will become the greatest ever," says the dreamer.

Obsessed naturals resemble IT maniacs who spend months researching what phone or computer to buy as if there's a huge difference at the end of the day. I laugh hard when those geeks upload videos on YouTube only to complain that the manufacturer has removed a key from their beloved device. Similar behavior is a sign that those men are overcompensating for something by desperately trying to create the perfect digital world.

Forget about optimization and perfection. You are not a robot. Just get the basics right and everything else will solve itself.

**9. But many supplements are backed by extensive research. They have to be effective.**

Does it really matter what the paper says if a method is not working for you? Not even 1000 pages of research will change the fact that millions of people take all kinds of supplements religiously and yet fail to get even remotely close to the level of professional bodybuilders and fitness models.

**10. People say that thanks to modern nutrition and supplementation natural bodybuilding has reached new heights. Any truth to this?**

How does zero truth sound? What kind of advancement are we talking about? McDonald's? Seriously, today the food situation is not better than it was decades ago. There aren't new foods nor secret diets that result in growth beyond the natural limits.

Nonetheless, supplements have definitely moved forward compared to the industrial waste they used to be. This improvement, however, has no effect on growth, unfortunately. It's mainly focused on purity rather than anabolic effects.

**11. So you are saying that taking supplements is basically 100% pointless?**

Not really, but you have to know exactly why you are taking them. For example, if you suffer from a medical condition helped by specific ingredients contained in a supplement, taking them makes sense because a direct benefit is expected. Also, if you enjoy the taste of protein powder, and you don't experience any negative side effects, there's nothing wrong with taking some. Honestly, the only major problem with supplements are the unreal expectations. As long as you are aware of the actual value offered by those powders, everything's fine.

# How Much Protein Do You Really Need to Build Muscle

Initially, the masters tried to monetize the muscle dream by selling barbells, but that turned out to be an ineffective strategy, for barbells are heavy and last forever. This is where powders came to save the day.

The advantages of protein over other bodybuilding products are endless. First, science says that protein builds muscle and the rest of the body. Second, protein supplements come with minimal side effects unlike prohormones, SARMs, steroids and fat burning pills. Third, protein is relatively cheap to produce, and a prescription is not required. Fourth, protein powders possess a special aura that makes people believe in the impossible. Fifth, the user has to buy protein constantly.

Once the information above has synced in, anyone could understand why the industry promotes extraterrestrial consumption of protein every single day. They want to set the bar so high that it becomes impossible to take the required protein through regular meals. They want you to feel obligated to buy their powders for "convenience". They have everything to lose and nothing to gain from promoting low protein intake.

The deception is deep and even medical professionals are subject to it. A long time ago, my doctor characterized me as a skinny chicken and instructed me to purchase "one of those protein powders". Ironic, right? He didn't tell me to eat more meat or eggs. He told me to buy powder. And, please, don't call my doctor stupid. He is a retired brain surgeon after all.

As dumb as it may sound, I didn't really understand what he meant by protein powders. Hardly a surprise because at the time I didn't know the difference between triceps and biceps, and protein sounded like a word part of an alien language.

I went to the local store and asked for "protein powders". "I have no idea what you are talking about, kid," the woman there said to me. Later, I learned that those things are actually sold in pharmacies. I bought a box with vanilla flavor and proudly took it home. The taste was nice but other than that nothing magical happened. The moral of the story is that even educated people can be deceived by so much propaganda.

## **How Much Protein Can Your Body Absorb**

There are two main camps. One says that anything over 20-30 grams of protein per meal is a waste because the body cannot absorb it. The other believes that the organism can absorb as much protein as you put in it. Both are right and wrong at the same time.

The organism can absorb more than 20-30 grams of protein per meal. Do you really think that if you consume 50 grams of protein, the body will use only 20-30 grams and sell the rest on the black market? Makes no sense. Nothing in nature is lost. If a substance is in the body, the system has to take care of it one way or another. The body can absorb almost as much protein as you put in it. Even if you consume 100 grams of protein in a meal, they will be absorbed. The question is for what purposes.

Only a small percentage of the protein [20-30grams] will be invested in protein synthesis [muscle growth]. The remaining amount will be redirected towards other body parts and converted to glucose if the rest of the macronutrients [carbohydrates and fats] are not sufficient to maintain the energy expenditure of the organism.

The mechanism described above is backed by the so-called "muscle-full effect". Here's how that works. Muscle protein synthesis has two major conditions. First, the muscles need to enter repair mode. Training achieves this goal. Second, the concentration of amino acids [the building blocks of protein] in the blood stream has to be high. This is where things get interesting.



Muscle protein synthesis goes up significantly only for 90 to 120 minutes at a time even if there are five trucks of amino acids in the system. This is the muscle-full effect. The body is not programmed to maintain high-intensity muscle protein synthesis forever. Once the muscles' yearn for protein is satisfied, the rest of the amino acids are invested elsewhere, and muscle protein synthesis returns to baseline levels.

## **How Much Protein Do You Need**

Your protein requirements are determined by the following factors:

### **1. Activity levels**

A PC clicker doesn't need as much protein as a construction worker lifting 3 times a week.

### **2. Food consumption**

On a diet, it's natural to reduce your fat and/or carb intake in favor of protein. However, when your fats and/or carbs are high, the protein requirements go down because the body has no reason to convert amino acids into glucose for energy.

### **3. Natural or not?**

People on steroids could benefit from more protein, for they are heavier and carry bodies capable of extra muscle protein synthesis.

### **4. Level of brainwashing**

The more brainwashed you are by the media, the more protein you think you need. Protein OCD is a real condition.

### **Let's talk numbers**

An average person needs about 0.5 grams of protein per pound of bodyweight. This equates roughly to 1 gram per kilogram of bodyweight. For

example, a person who weighs 70kg/154lbs would have to consume around 70 grams of protein each day to classify as healthy.

People who are more active and train super hard may require more – 0.8-1 grams per pound/1.7-2.2 grams per kg. The higher number [1 gram per lbs.] is for hardcore athletes and *steroid* users. A natural's needs rarely exceed 120 grams.

## **Extra Amino Acids vs. Extra Testosterone**

Testosterone boosts muscle mass directly by increasing the ability of the muscle cell to synthesize protein. In simple words, testosterone has a direct effect on the size of the building whereas amino acids are simply construction material. The *blueprint*, not the bricks, determines the scale. This is why extra testosterone results in extra growth whereas extra amino acids do not.

Of course, this doesn't mean that extra testosterone can support growth forever. Steroid users face genetic limitations too. Eventually, the androgen receptors and the internal organs wear out and stagnation occurs.

### **"But whey protein absorption this...whey protein absorption that."**

The industry relies on sexy terms to confuse you. "Protein absorption" is one of many. It's true that whey protein isolate is absorbed very fast, but who cares? Assimilation speed has no impact on the end result. French researchers did the following study: 26 y/o women were separated into two groups. One group took protein evenly throughout the day while the other consumed 80% in a single meal. There was no difference in nitrogen balance, whole body protein turnover, whole body protein synthesis, or protein breakdown.

Back in Arnold's era, there was no quickly absorbed whey. Most protein supplements were garbage. The only good tasting one was Reo Blair's Milk & Egg protein, but it was super expensive. Most bodybuilders were not even considering supplements other than vitamins. Yet they were exceptionally big. How? Genetics + steroids + training. Modern times aren't much different.

## Protein is Not So Pure

Protein is certainly very important, but high doses could be harmful. Here are some of the side effects associated with high protein consumption:

- excess protein is converted to glucose [sugar] and then fat; Excessive blood sugar levels feed pathogenic bacteria and fuel cancer growth
- high protein consumption results in nitrogen waste [nitrogen is a chemical element that occurs in amino acids] that puts stress on the kidneys
- money losses and mental pressure
- too much protein makes you lose water – protein acts as a diuretic because the kidneys have to clear the toxic waste. This is why drinking plenty of water is a must if you overload on protein.
- Protein supplements could be loaded with GMO

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# PART II

## Lifting

### Can heavy training open the gate to mass?

#### || The Rise of the Low Rep Gurus ||

The frustration of natties unable to grow despite mirroring the training of muscle champions began to intensify a decade ago. Many lifting humanoids started asking the wrong questions. To mute them, the elite resorted to one of its favorite power preserving methods – revolution a.k.a. *going full circle*. The old powerlifting dogmas were resurrected and natural selection gave us a remixed breed of experts – the low rep gurus.

The role of the new muscle professors was to condemn bodybuilders and hypertrophy wizards relying on the archaic Weider principles. The strategy worked, for it was based on classic divide and conquer axioms. The change of direction protected the crown of the industry and generated even more money. To be fair, some gurus participated in this scheme unknowingly, but the details don't change the outcome.

With the help of data manipulation and support from sleazy but crafty 5x5 marketers, low reps became the ultimate training method to generate mass and strength as a natural. This was the weapon on which the new age gurus relied to take over the minds of natties in muscle heat. Low rep training had to be the alternative to high volume pump routines supposedly working only for bodybuilders on high doses of steroids. As a consequence, the low rep gurus were quickly recognized as modern iron prophets whose mission on Earth is to save us from our natty misery. According to their teachings, the key to salvation and muscle rebirth is functional hypertrophy.

In theory, *functional hypertrophy* represents construction of "real" muscle mass acquired through "functional" movements, whereas nonfunctional hypertrophy is the mass you see on bodybuilders unworthy of air due to their high levels of narcissism.

The reality is different. There is no such thing as functional and nonfunctional hypertrophy. There's only hypertrophy. The idea that a bigger bicep acquired through pull-ups is more functional than a bigger bicep acquired through dumbbell or cable curls is laughable. A bigger bicep is simply a bigger bicep. It's true that many people often sacrifice their performance in the pursuit of muscle mass, but that does not render their hypertrophy nonfunctional. It's the style of training that makes a person less athletic – not the hypertrophy acquired through it. Besides, who decides what's functional and what isn't?

Every gram of muscle is welcomed when you are natural. As a natty, you cannot gain a lot of muscle mass regardless of the way you train. Even *mystery* routines can't fix this issue.

Here is a rhetorical question for the functional gurus – if getting big is the result of doing girly exercises for high reps, why don't you do it? Why don't you get huge like a bodybuilder instead of humping kettlebells and shaking ropes? Don't lie to me, gurus! I know what's in the password protected folder!!! Selfies of you flexing your arms like a desperate teen who has just suffered yet another rejection.

People talking bad about hypertrophy are nothing but liars. Everyone wants hypertrophy like a broken heart wants glue. As the famous quote goes – beware of the functional saints.

## **The Ego Loves Heavy Weights**

Our fame and muscle hungry egos catalyzed the low rep epidemics. The first time I deadlifted 3 plates I felt like a true baller. There was blood on my white socks, and I could sense an extreme respect coming from the Triceps Extensions Crew nearby. The cowardly carbon dioxide exhaled by those

insecure bitches wearing fingerless gloves revealed their profound fear of my mad skinny-boy strength. That gave me a one of a kind ego erection. I felt like a superhero among cowards and losers. Identical experiences quickly result in an addiction to heavy weights. We want to keep on adding plates because the experience makes us feel alive and in charge. Loading a heavy barbell while people are whispering: "But can he lift this." tops cocaine.

Eventually, heavy ego training destroyed my otherwise nice deadlift form. My greed for plates resulted in a very rounded upper back. I recorded my first 180kg/396lbs deadlift, and when I saw it, my life changed forever. It was disgusting. Ugly. A crime against my back. A disrespect. Many moons have passed since then, but I still wake up at night terrified from nightmares in which a video of that deadlift is looping on a big screen. I still don't know how I got away with lifting like a camel.

Nevertheless, I have to admit that technically low reps are not an issue. They are perfectly healthy. The only problem is that they encourage ego lifting that can break you if you don't slow down when you must.

## **Progression through Reps Is a Sin According to the Gurus**

Many wrongfully believe that progression through reps is a sin common for losers afraid of heavy weights. According to those people, you have to be adding weight to the bar all the time. While this is a legit way to train, it's not the only one. There are other options. ***Repetition increase*** is one of them.

Imagine that your squat is 300lbs/136kg for 2 reps. This means that you can probably squat 275lbs/125kg for 5-6 reps, 250lbs/112.5kg for 7-8 reps and 225lbs/102kg for 8-10 reps. What if you increase the times you can squat 225lbs from 8 to 15? Wouldn't that make you stronger? Of course, it would. Your 1RM will improve without lifting too heavy.

Nonetheless, a person focusing on high reps will need some time to convert effectively to low reps because the stress on the central nervous system is different. Performing 8 reps with a challenging weight is difficult and so is doing a 3-repetition maximum. People who train with high reps usually do a taper {gradual volume drop in conjunction with a gradual increase of intensity} before testing their max. This method cultivates your strength and prepares you for low rep work.

The opposite is also true. A person with a high one repetition maximum may be surprised how difficult high reps are. Projecting high levels of strength into rep training takes time.

## **The Negative Sides of Low Rep Training**

Regardless of what the mind controlled 5x5 propagators say, low rep work {everything under 5 reps} comes with some downsides:

### **Joint stress**

You don't need to be a Nobel laureate to see that heavier weights are harder on the joints. Injury can happen at any time, but it is more likely to occur when the body is fighting limit poundages. The power of the ego, which always kicks in during 1RM contests, amplifies this effect.

### **Overclocking of the central nervous system (CNS)**

I've done many different routines over the years, but without a doubt the hardest one was squatting three times a week while trying to add weight to the bar each session. I did that for about 4 months and got hit by an overuse injury stopping me from walking properly. People thought I was hiding a Pokémon in my pants.

My mind almost gave up before my hip. Every session was a battle. I remember looking at the other humanoids in the bus on my way to the gym and thinking:



"Those idiots don't know what I am about to do. They are just going to their gray cubicles to punch numbers and Facebook their way to 5pm while I fight a higher force. I am a true warrior. They are losers and bottom feeders."

The routine quickly started to fry my CNS, and I had to get myself super psyched before every workout. I used natural tricks such as pump music, ammonia, banana overload, ego masturbation, daydreaming...etc. It worked but only for a little while.

The number one reason why low reps crush your brain so fast is that each time you are performing close to the absolute limit. This gets old pretty quickly.

### **Poor form**

Admit it! You've never done a 1RM or even a 5RM with 100% perfect technique. Sacrificing form is the norm when lifting heavy. You can try to hide it and limit the deviation as much as you want. It's still there. The ghosts in the room can see it. Maybe your knee caved in just a little bit. It doesn't matter. Heavy weights always do similar tricks on you.

### **Low rep work kills your endurance**

Powerlifting hippos have the endurance of fat penguins in the desert. They always talk about how strong they are, but most can't walk for 40 minutes in the park or vacuum the floor without complaining. Natty lifters who sacrifice their conditioning and get fat to satisfy the fetish of the barbell gurus share the same destiny.

## **The Positive Sides of Low Rep Training**

### **Strength**

Low rep work gets you strong faster than other methods.

## **Mental toughness**

Low rep work builds mental toughness. Only a few can survive heavy training for a long time.

## **Efficiency**

Low rep training is efficient. For example, instead of doing hundreds of pull-ups, you can just add weight and decrease the number of repetitions.

## **Reduced fear of heavy weight**

The more often you face your enemy, the less scary he/she looks. In fact, he/she may even become your only friend after a little while.

**Bottom line:** Low rep training is not the door to extreme natural growth, but its proper integration is required for strength development.

# **Combining Low and High Rep Training into a Bazooka**

You can get stronger without constantly adding weight. All you have to do is boost the number of repetitions you can do with a load worth something. Inflation of the training volume will get you there.

At the beginning, you will be doing low rep work, but eventually, it will transform into high repetition/high volume madness. The benefit of this approach is that you get stronger without constantly overcharging your CNS to lift heavier weights.

Here is a *hypothetical* situation. Harry can do 4 weighted pull-ups with 20lbs/9kg. Our goal is to make him stronger by transforming those 4 reps into 10. One of the possible paths are *ladders* a.k.a. *reverse pyramids*. The main goal of ladder training is to increase volume while minimizing fatigue. Ladders look like this: 1,2,3,4,5,6 | 1,2,3,4,5 | 1,2,3,4...etc. You start with one repetition and add one more each set.

An example ladder workout for Harry would be: 1,2,3,4 | 1,2,3 | 1,2 | 1,2 = 22 total reps;

This is a lot more repetitions than 3x4, for example.

Eventually, Harry could reach an incredibly high volume with this type of training.

### **Example ladder training:**

1,2,3,4 | 1,2,3 | 1,2 | 1,2 | 1  
1,2,3,4 | 1,2,3 | 1,2 | 1,2 | **2**  
1,2,3,4 | 1,2,3 | 1,2 | 1,2 | **3**  
1,2,3,4 | 1,2,3 | 1,2 | 1,2,3 | **1**  
1,2,3,4 | 1,2,3 | 1,2 **3** | 1,2 | 3  
1,2,3,4 | 1,2,3 | 1,2,3 | 1,2,3 | **1**  
1,2,3,4 | 1,2,3 | 1,2,3 | 1,2,3 | **2**  
1,2,3,4 | 1,2,3 | 1,2,3 | 1,2,3 | **3** | 1  
1,2,3,4,**3** | 1,2,3 | 1,2,3 | 1,2,3,**3,2**  
1,2,3,4,**4** | 1,2,3 | 1,2,3 | 1,2,3,**3,3**  
1,2,3,4,**5** | 1,2,3 | 1,2,3 | 1,2,3,**3,4**  
...

As shown above, Harry is first adding extra reps to the final sets of the workout. In the course of time, extra reps and sets are inserted into the first and second ladder too.

Ladders work well but are not mandatory. Another option is to divide your max reps in a set by two and accumulate a lot of volume. In Harry's case, this equals sets of 2.

2,2,2,2,2,2,1

2,2,2,2,2,2,2,1

2,2,2,2,2,2,2,2

2,2,2,2,2,2,2,2,1

2,3,2,2,2,2,2,2,1

2,3,2,2,2,2,2,2,2

2,3,3,2,2,2,2,2,2,1

2,3,4,2,2,2,2,2,2,2,1

3,3,3,2,2,2,2,2,2,2,1

4,3,3,2,2,2,2,2,2,3,2

The principle is the same. You first add extra reps to the back. Then, you add reps to the front. Once the volume gets to 7-8 reps for the starting sets, Harry will have the endurance and strength to do more than 10 reps in a row.

Compressing the workout in a shorter time frame will increase the difficulty even more without extra weights. At the finish line, Harry will have super strength compared to the beginning of his journey. The downside of this method is that it takes longer to build absolute strength and is not practical for more than one exercise per training session.

## Switching from High to Low Reps

If Harry wants to go back to low rep work, he can do a *taper*.

The process is fairly simple. Harry will rest for a few days and then test his max number of repetitions in a set. Let's say that he maxes out at 12, but the last two reps are shaky. In that case, 10 repetitions will be a good starting point. The next step is to start increasing the load progressively. Over the course of many weeks, those 10 reps will drop down.

Each workout, Harry will be adding weight to his working set(s) after a proper, not to be confused with exhausting, warm-up. In the case of pull-ups, the additional load will be between 0.5-2.5kg (1-5lbs) because the lift is dependent on small muscles and joints.

If 1 or 2 working sets seem like too little, a back-off set with less weight could be performed too. In the end, Harry will reach a heavy weight lifted for 5 reps or less. That's it. The taper is over.

## **FAQ**

### **Do I need tapers?**

Some people skip this part and test their 1-5RM after training with reps for a long time. This method works, but since the CNS and the body need time to adapt to heavy loads, the lifted weight could be surprisingly low.

### **Does this training method work with bodyweight pull-ups?**

Yes. I know a "ninja" that can do 30 good pull-ups in a row. He swears that he got there solely through high rep work. His max weighted pull-up is 50 kg/110lbs at about 70 kg/154lbs personal bodyweight. Most people in the gym don't possess pull-up strength of this magnitude. Nonetheless, the method fails when the resistance is incredibly low. You cannot expect to squat 315lbs/143kg by lifting 100lbs/45kg for any number of reps.

### **Will I build more muscle mass with high repetition training?**

Yes, in theory. No, in real life. If high rep training had the ability to produce big muscles no matter what, I would be one of the biggest men on Earth. The reality is different. Hypertrophy is a chimera for the most part. People think and behave like they have a choice. As if someone is offering us big muscles if we just get a pump and eat a steak. Nothing could be further from the truth. If you were meant to grow, you will grow with or without high rep training.

**I find high reps (5+) harder on the CNS than low reps. I feel like I am about to explode once I reach rep number five. Is this because I am fast twitch dominant?**

I wouldn't go as far as saying that your ability to do high or low reps is solely a matter of fiber distribution. It's normal to find high repetition training difficult when you haven't acclimated to it. How do you expect to get good at high reps if you never do them? For example, don't act surprised if your number of bodyweight pull-ups in a set drops even though your weighted pull-up is improving. Lifters focusing exclusively on strength have reported similar results before.

**What about brutally high reps like 100 push-ups and 500 bodyweight squats?**

When the numbers are that high, we are talking about conditioning/cardio. A man doesn't need very strong legs to do 500 air squats. It's not easy, but it's not very difficult either because the intensity is low. This type of training is good cardio but won't make you stronger. The same is true for push-ups. 100 reps in a row are great for shoulder endurance, but you will build more pressing strength by adding weight or switching to the one arm version.

**Is it true that strength is the hardest to improve while endurance is the easiest?**

Yeah, it's "true". Make a fat powerlifter who can squat 800lbs/363kg run a marathon and tell me how fast and easy he crosses the finish line. Endurance is not easier to improve than strength regardless of what the 5x5 psychos say. Extra strength upgrades your endurance only up to a point. To augment your work capacity further, you will have to specialize. You may get to 20 bodyweight pull-ups through sets of 5 with extra weight, but to upgrade from 20 to 30 pull-ups, high rep work is in order. There is a reason why endurance athletes do more endurance work than strength training. They need it.

# Can Training Actually Make You Big?

We've been told that training is what separates the skinny from the muscular. If someone is small, it must be because he doesn't lift weights *appropriately*. I disagree. Training does not equal hypertrophy by default. Before all, lifting is a form of strength conditioning during which the body has to fight against resistance. The stress produced by a workout results in a physical and mental adaptation allowing more efficient force output and stability. The exotic question here is who told us that extreme muscle enlargement is on the list with extras? The answer is painful – the muscle traders did.

The ministers of muscle convinced the minions that by playing Iron Elevator anyone can become a muscular barbarian. The muscle-industrial complex needs us to believe that dancing with iron is behind every gram of extra muscle in the universe. The tacticians painted the following picture and screwed it in the cranium of the modern gym slave: *day after day a muscular bodybuilder gets in the gym, lifts iron biscuits until total exhaustion, ingests nutrients, and in the course of time, mutates into a muscular monstrosity on top of the food chain.*

Sounds nice, but the real world disagrees harshly. The goal of our physical bodies has always been to live another day. Therefore, the organism exploits every possible way to survive and accommodate. The subsequent adaptation does not always represent an increase in muscle size.

Training results in three main "mods" that help us fight gravity more efficiently:

- joint strengthening
- muscle strengthening
- improved efficiency of the CNS

## Joint Strengthening

The ligaments and tendons are crucial for strength enhancement. It doesn't matter how many people are pulling a rope if it's not strong enough. To preserve functionality, the connective tissues do not grow in size significantly, although they become thicker and more resilient.

On YouTube, there are people who can do planche push-ups on two fingers. There isn't a *visible* structural difference between my fingers and theirs, and yet mine will break if I try to copy. This proves that the joints can acclimate to incredible stress over time.

High-level joint conditioning can come only from training. If you don't train, you will never have it. Even steroids can't give it to you. That's why many people refer to joint strength as "true strength".

## Muscle Strengthening

A muscle doesn't have to grow tremendously in size to adapt to training. I know that this may break many fragile souls out there, but it's the truth. The body prefers hypertrophy free adaptation because it is more efficient and requires fewer resources. Unfortunately, or not, our physical system is not programmed to fulfill our desires. It does what it does best – survival.

## Improved CNS Efficiency

It doesn't matter how strong your body is when your mind is weak. Cats prove that every day by slapping dogs around. The CNS controls everything. To become strong, you have to overclock your body to amazing levels. The first step is convincing your mind that it is safe to proceed with the plan.

For instance, I probably have the power to do a backflip right now. I could jump out of the chair and flip, but something is stopping me – my brain cells. They are telling me that I have never done a backflip before, and falling on my head is a real possibility. My body is simply trying to prevent self-destruction.



But if I train for that back flip long enough, my CNS will let me do it one day. The same type of mental adaptation happens when you lift weights. You are slowly convincing your mind that it's safe to push further and further.

## **In conclusion**

A muscle can grow bigger as a result of resistance training, but muscular growth is neither the only one nor the main outcome. There are zero guarantees that training will produce hypertrophy. I doubt you will read that in the media, but it's true, nevertheless. Training is not a muscle factory. It's only meant to improve your performance, strength and endurance. Getting bigger is a side effect of the side effect.

## **Training – Feel like a Hero for Once in Your Life**

Our lives are not as adventurous as Facebook suggests. It hurts to admit it but most of our days are not spectacular. We just punch numbers in cubicles and move around as much as the system allows us to. We don't fight dragons every day. This is where lifting comes to save us.

Training is a peculiar realm where everyone is seemingly equal. 300 pounds are 300 pounds regardless of your bank account. Gravity is not racist and hates everyone equally. You have to earn your survival. You cannot count on anyone else to do your work. Ultimately, training becomes one of the only times when the modern humanoid gets to feel alive.

Watching a good movie is like taking a drug. The body produces happy substances, and you feel ecstatic the whole time. After the film, sorrow takes over because you are back to your pointless, colorless, empty life. Just like a movie, training produces happy substances too, but the crash at the end is not as hard. That's because you are active. Lifting happens in real life. It's not a dream. You are not hallucinating. You are alive and totally submerged in the present. You are part of the story. When the weight is heavy, everything but the current moment disappears. Even the condescending voice in your head keeps quiet for a few seconds. This makes training incredibly addictive.

# People Making Money from Their Physiques Are Injecting

Professional sports will remain "dirty" until the end of times regardless of what the corrupt media say. Even a single digit IQ reveals that performance-enhancing drugs are responsible for the vast majority of the modern records. It's also obvious that some athletes are aggressively tested while others are never tested. Yet we are supposed to believe that urine hungry anti-doping agents are ambushing athletes at every airport.

The inner circle is aware. The coaches, the staff, the trainers, the chiropractors... even the water boy knows, but the truth can never become official. The show must go on. No one wants to be burned for nothing.

The world is a business, my friends. And modern athletic games are not an exception.

The fans falsely associate sports with patriotism, bravery and overall awesomeness. Those notions exist under some form in sports, but the main driving forces are stardom and gold.

Why do the athletes play? For money and fame.

Why do the coaches coach? For money and fame.

Nobody does anything "for the country" or "for the team". Everyone does everything for glory and cash. That's why athletes leave when there's a more lucrative opportunity. They are hired employees like you and me. Do you do your job for the country? No. You do it for a salary.

**|| Big Dreams. Big Money. ||**

*The bigger the sensation, the bigger the attention, the bigger the remuneration.*

Abstract dreams packed in a marketable box are the best product to sell.

Therefore, to maximize income, the producers need a high-end spectacle.

In our case, it's called – The Grand Muscle Illusion.

The Grand Muscle Illusion is a carnival packed with muscular beasts in which we discover success rebels who know the path to ascension. They are our saviors.

The masters knew that ordinary imagery rarely captivates souls and resorted to the services of the underground lab – the place where monsters and superheroes come to life. The whole bodybuilding world was built there. Every pro remembers the intrusive lighting in the lab and the feeling of uncertainty right before the needle submerges into the flesh.

The physiques from the 70s served as an initial promotional material and founded the Grand Muscle Illusion. Steroids made bodybuilding possible, but most people don't know that because what happens in the lab stays in the lab.

And that, my friends, is why people who make big money from their bodies inject. You cannot be part of the muscle carnival as a mortal man. This would be the equivalent of a natural man winning the Olympics.

For the same reason, bodybuilding/physique icons who have millions of followers on Instagram cannot be natural. Nobody wants to follow ordinary people. It's like going to the movies to see someone shopping in the supermarket or working as a janitor. Similar experiences are not inspiring and do not produce dopamine.

"But what if the natty has insane genetics and trains really hard," says the dreamer.

No matter how brilliant a man is, he will never beat the fake natties with talent alone. Talent means nothing when you are competing against heavy steroid users. Besides, many pinners are also blessed with good genes, which they

amplify with the help of drugs and destroy the competition. The natty guy cannot win. The environment is too unfavorable.

## **Modern Natural Selection**

When you go to a job interview, you are competing against someone else. If your opponent can produce a better product than you, he gets the position. If he can do what you do for less money, he gets the position. If he can do what you do faster, he gets the position. This is how the world works. This is modern natural selection – one of the driving forces behind the steroid usage in the muscle world. If you are not willing to pin, someone else who is will be hired.

But even if somehow you manage to make a name for yourself while being natural, you will always be tempted to join the dark force and climb the ladder. I've seen YouTubers start as naturals, earn a little fame and then "roid up" to intensify the stream of cash even more.

This is hardly a surprise because people are willing to do a million times worse infractions for money. If we are honest with ourselves, we have to admit that fake natties are soft criminals. After all, steroids are harming only the body of the user.

### **Are there any exceptions?**

Yes, there is a small percentage of naturals who make money from their bodies, but they are rarely as famous as the big dudes. A good example would be the mercenaries from the bodyweight community. Most of them are natural and technically make money from their physiques. (Lean abs sell well.)

Somewhat ironically, the heavyweight athletes in the bodyweight community are not natural and have the largest fan base. They may be doing bodyweight push-ups and dips like their skinny brothers but possess bodybuilding physiques. Some of the bodyweight legends are even bigger than physique competitors and recreational bodybuilders. They call it heavyweight

calisthenics, which is funny because heavyweight and calisthenics are not words that belong in the same sentence. I think steroid calisthenics is a more appropriate term for this activity.

## **What about the females? Are they pinning?**

Fewer females are pinning because they don't have to. Women can produce hormone based hallucinations through other qualities such as tight tits and juicy butts. Some take drugs to get shredded, but most rely on their natural curves to attract a crowd and capitalize on it. Besides, modern ladies have other powerful weapons in the fight against imperfections – makeup and implants. Women can also fat-fraud to make themselves look juicier. I know this sounds funny, but it is a real phenomenon. Men cannot do that. They got us trapped.

# Training Cycles – The Only Training Method Proven to Work for Naturals

A training program means nothing by itself. Anyone can come up with a routine. A *progression mechanism* is what brings a lifting scheme to life. Without it, everything collapses. A routine with an unclear plan for the future is destined to fail hard.

## The Big Three Variables

There are three big variables in training – *volume, intensity and training frequency*. Together they operate like the bands of a music equalizer. The job of the lifter is to tweak them and come up with the best sound. This is how you get stronger and potentially bigger too.

### Volume and Intensity

Training volume represents the amount of work you are doing, which in the lifting world is expressed in *sets* and *reps*. In general, more work equals more progress, but only when it's the right kind of work. Cleaning your windows will not make you a better skier. Volume means nothing by itself. For example, I can take the bar and squat it 500 times, but I will get neither strong nor big because the intensity is too low. The weight is not challenging. As the famous quote says – If it doesn't challenge you, it doesn't change you. This is why we have to introduce another variable – ***intensity***.

What makes a moment intense? It is definitely not its length. A vicious dog running towards you will boost the intensity in your brain in milliseconds. The level of intensity is determined by the difficulty and the prize at stake.

When it comes to lifting, there are only a few mainstream ways to make a movement harder – add weight, add reps, decrease the leverage, increase the range of motion. Out of all, adding weight is the most straightforward method.

## How do you measure intensity?

Every degree of intensity represents a level of difficulty measured in percentages. In lifting, your 1RM (the maximum weight you can lift for a single repetition) is globally accepted as the ultimate intensity. However, percentages of your 3RM, 5RM or even 10RM could also represent different intensity "altitudes".

## Frequency

If you rest too long between your workouts, you risk regressing due to insufficient stimulation. If you rest too little, your body can't recover, your joints start hurting, and all progress dies. Proper training frequency acts as damage control.

## The Mechanism of Progress

The goal of every training program should be to get you closer to your full potential without hurting your body too much. The process is similar to filling a glass with water without spilling a drop. At first, you can let the water run at a faster and more intense pace because the walls of the glass are tall enough to prevent an overflow, but when the water gets closer to the top, you have to decrease the intensity of the stream. The closer you are to completion, the slower the stream has to be.

Improvement in the weightlifting room happens similarly. At first, the gains are quick, but eventually, the process slows down tremendously. One of the reasons for this outcome is the limited recovery of the human body – with or without the usage of anabolic steroids. Sooner or later, the weight gets too heavy. As a result, you either stagnate or get weaker. The only way to fix this problem is to *plan your failures*.

## Plan Your Failures If You Want to Win

Are we really in control of our lives? If you ask the positive thinkers frequently invited on TV talk shows, you'll hear that you can be anything you want. Well, I want to be a lion. Why can't I be a lion? The reality is that we don't have as much control over our lives as we like to think. Destiny is real! And I don't care what a sleazy motivational speaker has to say on the subject. Whoever you are, the master laws apply to you too. The only thing a man can do is modify his actions to receive suffering and joy closer to his liking under the dictation of those laws. Thankfully, lifting is a solo sport [just you and gravity] offering us a small isolated world where we can plan many elements in advance.

There are a few things certain in life, and one of them is that someday you will reach a weight that will crush you. Wise people realize this and plan accordingly. Stupid and naive people push through and suffer.

As a beginner, I started experiencing problems with my squat once I got close to three plates. I began missing reps and squatting with a shaky form. Since I wanted to reach three plates as fast as possible, I kept on pushing. The result was an injury that a proper training plan would have prevented.

A well-engineered routine accounts for the fact that on a long enough timeline we all fail. You can't keep adding weight forever. You have to plan your failures. Training cycles allow you to do just that. They are often overcomplicated by gurus and lifting wannabes, but in reality, the concept is incredibly simple. The mechanism of a training cycle can be summarized in a few words: ***three steps forward, two steps back, three steps forward.***



# Building a Basic Training Cycle

## Beginner

A beginner is too weak, inexperienced and untrained to use his current 1RM as a starting point. Therefore, a different approach is in order.

The way I see it, there is only one way to train as a complete newbie – linear progression. You choose an exercise, learn how to do it with proper form and add weight every workout.

In recent times, Mark Rippetoe popularized this method. And while I disagree with the claims that Rippetoe's pupils become "super muscular, useful human beings", linear progression remains very effective for beginners.

### Example linear progression:

You start squatting with just the *bar* for 3 sets of 8 reps two times a week. Each workout, 5lbs/2.5kg are added to the barbell. The goal is to increase the weight for as long as possible while preserving the sets & reps the same.

How long will that be? It depends on your bodyweight, genetics and will power. Let's say that in our case trouble begins at 200lbs/91kg. At this point, you can reduce the sets to five repetitions. Doing so will allow you to progress a little further. When you start missing reps again, it's time to step back (deload). This is the end of your linear progression but is not the end of your beginner gains. In this hypothetical case, I will use 225lbs/102.5kg as a final weight.

The next step is to determine the length of your new cycle, select a starting weight and plan a theoretical PR (personal record).

## The Length of a Cycle

The length of a cycle is measured in weeks or workouts if you are doing an exercise more often than once every seven days. When you are a beginner, you don't need long 16-week cycles common for professionals. 6 to 8 weeks or the equivalent in workouts will suffice to recover and reach a new personal record. At this point, a person is not advanced enough to need more recovery time.

In this illustration, I will choose *6 weeks*, which equal 12 workouts when the lifter is squatting twice a week.

## Selecting a Starting Weight

**One of the ways to determine the starting weight of a new training cycle is to use your current PR as a reference point. Usually, I select my current PR as a working weight a few workouts before the end of the new cycle.**

In this example, I will put 225lbs/102.5kg as a weight for **workout number 10** and work back by removing 5lbs/2.5 kg each workout/week.

Here is how the cycle looks like:

### Week 1

Workout 1: 180lbs – the starting weight;

Workout 2: 185lbs

### Week 2

Workout 3: 190lbs

Workout 4: 195lbs

### Week 3

Workout 5: 200lbs

Workout 6: 205lbs

### Week 4

Workout 7: 210lbs

Workout 8: 215lbs

### Week 5

Workout 9: 220lbs

Workout 10: **225lbs – the reference weight; work back to determine the weight for the previous workouts;**

## Week 6

Workout 11: **230lbs – PR**

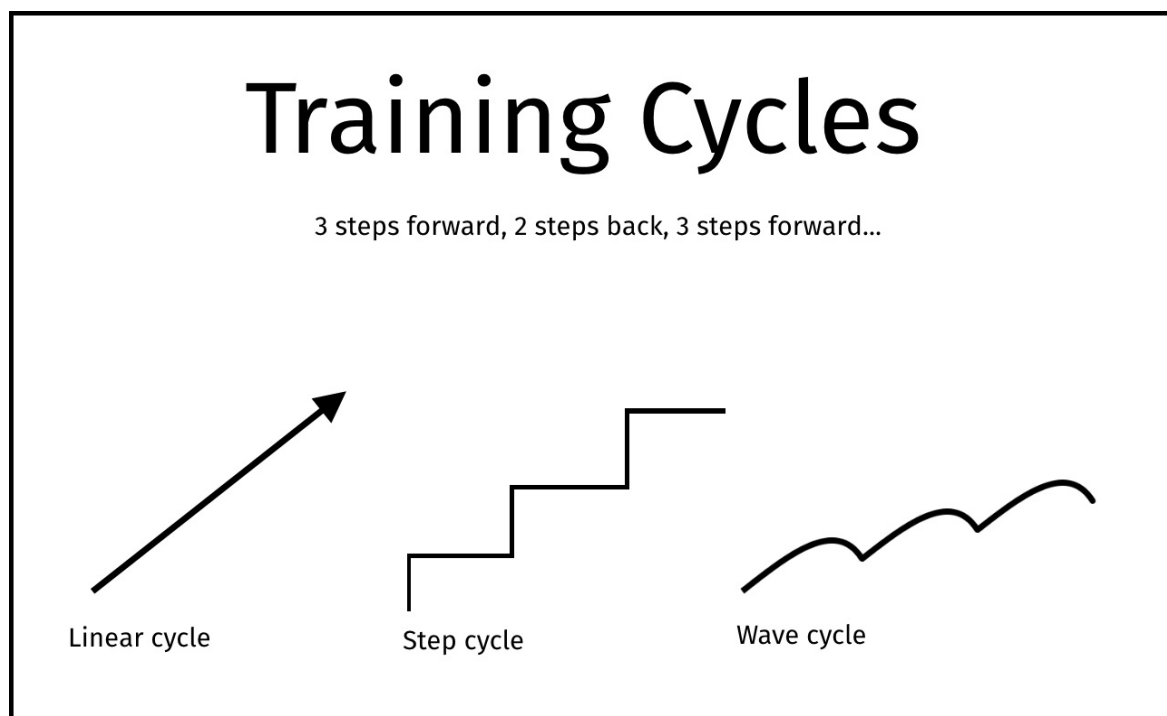
Workout 12: 235lbs – 1x5,1x4,1x3 – the weight is too heavy. End of the cycle.

Now you can start a new cycle with 230lbs/104kg or 235lbs/106kg as your *reference weight* and go for another PR.

One day, you will need longer cycles to recover effectively.

## Intermediate lifter

An intermediate lifter has already passed through the linear progression phase knowingly or unknowingly and could simply use his/her current numbers (1RM, 3RM or 5RM) as a reference weight. The goal is to hit a PR, or two, at the end of a reasonably long cycle.



# Types of Training Cycles

There are three main types of training cycles: **linear**, **step** and **wave**.

## Linear cycle

I used a linear cycle in the examples above. The principle is fairly simple – the weight increases from workout to workout until a peak is reached. There is no deload within the cycle. You only go up.

## The Step Cycle

The step cycle requires you to keep the weight the same for a few workouts.

Here is how a step cycle would look for someone who can deadlift 295lbs/135kg for 4-6 reps.

**Note:** Since step cycles use the same weight for two workouts in a row, you can start a little heavier in the beginning. There is no need to lift super light weights too many times.

**Week 1:** 245 x 5

**Week 2:** 245 x 5

**Week 3:** 260 x 5

**Week 4:** 260 x 5

**Week 5:** 275 x 5

**Week 6:** 275 x 5

**Week 7:** 290 x 5

**Week 8:** 290 x 5

**Week 9:** 300 x 5

**Week 10:** 300 x 5

When you are in PR territory [the last two workouts], repeating ends.

**Week 11: 310 x 3-4**

**Week 12: 320 x 3-4**

## The Wave Cycle

Wave cycles come with a built-in deload session. Here is how a wave cycle could look for someone who can deadlift 295lbs/134kg for 4-6 reps.

**Week 1: 265 x 5** – initial light workout

**Week 2: 275 x 5** – a 10lbs increase

**Week 3: 265 x 5** – return to the previous load from the most recent light workout

**Week 4: 275 x 5** – repeat the increase once more

**Week 5: 285 x 5** – add 10lbs again

**Week 6: 275 x 5**

**Week 7: 285 x 5**

**Week 8: 295 x 5**

**Week 9: 285 x 5**

**Week 10: 295 x 5** – no more waves; straight up – time for PRs;

**Week 11: 305 – 310 x 5**

**Week 12: 315 – 325 x 3-5**

**Note:** wave cycles are designed for fairly advanced lifters who need frequent deloads.

## FAQ

### How big should my jumps be?

In general, the jumps should be between 3-5% of the max weights you can currently lift.

This usually adds up to the following:

- deadlift/rack pulls: 10-15lbs / 5-7.5kg
- leg press: 10-15lbs / 5-7.5kg
- squat: 5-10lbs / 2.5-5kg
- bench press: 2-5lbs / 1-2.5kg
- overhead press: 1-5lbs / 0.5-2.5kg
- weighted pull-ups: 1-5lbs / 0.5-2.5kg
- weighted dips: 1-5lbs / 0.5-2.5kg;
- biceps curls: 1-5lbs / 0.5-2.5kg

### **You crazy? Where can I find 1lbs/0.5kg plates? Do you live on this planet?**

The usage of 1lbs/0.5kg weights is called micro-loading and is fairly common for upper body exercises that progress slowly. You can buy specialized micro plates, big washers, magnets or fill parts of a bike inner tube with sand to assemble your own micro plates.

Nevertheless, adding 1lbs or 0.5kg to a lift at the end of a cycle is not a success and means nothing especially for a bodyweight exercise (your bodyweight fluctuates). Always shoot for at least 5lbs/2.5kg personal records. This is the minimal wage.

Below is an eight-week training cycle that I used to get my weighted pull-ups from 27kg/59lbs to 30kg/66lbs for three reps.

#### **Week 1-3**

#### **2lbs/1kg jumps**

Week 1: 20kg×5

Week 2: 21kg×5

Week 3: 22kg×5

## **Week 4-8**

### **3.5lbs/1.5kg jumps**

Week 4: 23.5kg×3

Week 5: 25kg×3

Week 6: 26.5kg×3

Week 7: 28kg×3

Week 8: 30kg×3

**How many working sets?** I prefer to perform only one top set, but you can do more if you want to. Just remember that going over two working sets could be quite painful once you are stronger. One of the many options is to start with a high volume such as 10×3 or 5×5 and later switch to fewer working sets. The first few weeks of 10×3 or 5×5 will feel easy, but as the weight goes up, maintaining the volume while the intensity is climbing will start producing intolerable misery. At that point, you can simply reduce the working sets. The reduced volume will feel as a deload.

Below is an example cycle with gradually decreasing volume:

**Week 1:** 230lbs – 5×5

**Week 2:** 240lbs – 5×5

**Week 3:** 250lbs – 5×5

**Week 4:** 260lbs – 5×5 – I hate this world!?

**Week 5:** 270lbs – 5×5 – Am I dead?

**Week 6:** 280lbs – 5,4,2,1 – I must be dead!?

Switch to 2 working sets for 3 reps. It will feel like a *deload*.

**Week 7:** 290lbs 2×3

**Week 8:** 300lbs 2×3 – I am tired.

**Week 9:** 310lbs 2×3 – Seriously?

**Week 10:** 320lbs x 2 –This world is a scam.

# **Are Training Cycles the Ultimate Way to Train as a Natural?**

Training cycles are natty friendly and acknowledge the fact that steroid free lifters don't have the recovery proficiency of hormonized muscle soldiers. I've even read fairy tales suggesting that cyclic programming can allow natural powerlifters to reach the weights of enhanced lifters. I am optimistic, but not that much.

There isn't a training program or a technique that could allow a natty to beat a roided bro. Dedicated powerlifters on drugs also program their training methodically. Therefore, they have the same gun as you, except – theirs is loaded with steroid bullets. You can't win the battle as a natty.

Nevertheless, training cycles still beat the mainstream plug & pray programs. Even a nattie can evolve and build ferocious strength with an adequate plan and five trucks of patience.

## **Can I rely on cycles forever?**

Yes, but the gains will slow down significantly over time. Your first 6-week cycle may add 20lbs/9kg or more to a movement, but when you are an advanced barbell gamer, you will have to spend 12 weeks to add 5lbs/2.5kg to an upper body lift. Progress always gets slower as such is the wish of the universe. Nothing lasts forever, not even training cycles. One thing is certain, however. Training cycles will take you to your maximum potential.

## **Do training cycles work for "small exercises" like bicep curls?**

Training cycles work for "small exercises" too. Some arm wrestlers treat biceps curls like squats and program them religiously.



**Bro, you crazy? I don't even know what I will have for lunch today. How do you expect me to hit some made-up numbers for 10 weeks? I am NOT a robot! Sometimes I go to the gym, and the weight barely moves. WTF!?**

I understand that at first glance cycling could look like a plan for a robot, but it isn't. As long as you pick the right numbers and put your greed for heavier weights aside, you will finish most [not all] sets as planned. Anyone can have a bad day, but that doesn't mean that you shouldn't have a plan or a direction. Freestyle training is fine when you are advanced or retired, but it doesn't produce the greatest results. Sometimes our feelings have to be muted. Problems are solved with rationality, not screaming. If you disrespect this principle, you risk joining the camp of humanoids swimming in cancerous stagnation. Those would be the idiots lifting the same weight over and over again, hoping that a miracle will happen. Success does not have a good hearing. You have to scream at it if you want to be heard. And you cannot be heard when you are playing around like a baby in the sand. If you miss a weight, so be it. There are way bigger dramas in life. Just go back and build back up again.

## **Basic Training Principles That Every Natural Should Know**

### **Training the Biceps**

The bicep is the Mega Master Muscle [Triple M]. Lifters have been worshiping it since the very beginning of the lifting religion. This will never change. The arm bicep will remain the highest-ranking deity in the muscle realm *forever*.

When we say that we want big arms, most of us are lying. People don't really want big arms. We want big biceps because this is the show & passport

muscle. The fame, sex appeal and PR connections of the biceps are behind the incredible variety of arm exercises in this world. There isn't another muscle group that enjoys as much attention and love from the muscle industry as the arm flexors.

## **Behind the Curtains**

Bald gurus on steroids want you to believe that training the biceps is a serious business and a very complicated subject. The "hypertrophy experts" say that you have to train the lower biceps, the mid-biceps and the peak with special exercises. Moreover, you have to do the right amount of sets, reps and supersets to submit your arm flexors into unseen extraterrestrial growth. If we put away the deceptions and lunacy, it becomes clear that training the biceps is a fairly simple process.

To build your biceps to their full potential, you need isolation exercises and compound movements placing significant stress on the muscle (e.g. close grip chin-ups). The number of isolation biceps exercises is endless. You can do curls on hundreds of machines. And believers do it! They see a video of a pro training arms and copy everything. That's unnecessary. Mainstream muscle videos are an illusion, a show for the camera. Bodybuilders don't train that way in real life.

### **Q: What is the best isolation exercise for the biceps?**

**The best isolation exercise for the biceps is the one that does not hurt your joints.**

Most of the time, this means that the straight bar curl has to go because it forces the wrists to twist too much. There are three ways to deal with the situation besides quitting. The first one would be to use a **wider grip** for your straight bar barbell curls. The wide grip reduces the stress on the wrists. The second option is to find an EZ curl bar and marry it.

However, for some people, even the EZ curl bar could be problematic. If the pain persists, you can either train through it, hoping that your body will adapt,

or switch to dumbbells exclusively and forget about the issue altogether. Dumbbells let the wrist rotate according to its current flexibility and rarely cause pain.

One of the best dumbbell curl variations is the standing biceps curl that starts as a hammer curl and gradually transforms in a regular curl. This movement trains all arm flexors equally unlike the regular curl, which focuses primarily on the biceps.

### **I need variation, right?**

No. You don't need variation. You just think you do due to the massive pressure coming from the muscle media. The reality is that one isolation exercise is enough for your biceps to grow to their full potential. You don't need fancy Scott curls, spider curls and other nonsense. Those make for a great arm training article targeted at fetishists but are not required.

### **The Biceps Are a Delicate Muscle Group**

There are many arm exercises that put unnecessary stress on the lower part of the biceps and respectively the tendons attached to the forearm. This has to be taken into consideration before subscribing to a crazy arm routine. When your biceps are hurt, your entire training plan suffers because the arm participates in every major pulling and pushing movement. Even your squat will take a hit since holding and stabilizing the bar will be difficult. You have to respect your limitations and back off when needed instead of trying to satisfy the made-up requirements of self-proclaimed muscle magicians and lifters on steroids who don't even train like the article about them says.

### **Maxing Out on Isolation Exercises Is Pointless**

Unless you are a powerlifter competing in a curling event, your 1RM curl is relevant only in the wet dreams of other men in the gym. It means nothing. Low reps are technically not that scary, but going heavy on every movement will cannibalize your central nervous system (CNS) which has to stay fresh for

exercises of a higher priority. 5 to 10 reps are a good repetition range for isolation movements.

## **Building the Biceps with Compound Exercises**

One of the better compound biceps exercises is the ring pull-up/chin-up.

Since the chin-up on a bar puts too much stress on the wrists, and the pull-up on a bar often hits the elbows, sometimes gymnastic rings or a homemade suspension system could be implemented in the training session.

At the same time, the pull-up is still a better biceps exercise than the row because it ends with complete elbow flexion. When you are rowing, on the other hand, there are always a few degrees of flexion left.

Moreover, the pull-up leads to one of the most advanced biceps exercises – the *one arm* pull-up. The one arm pull-up hits your arm flexors and lats like a mad ninja. Most people can't do even one negative repetition slowly let alone a positive rep.

The downside of the one arm pull-up is that it demands long specialization and could be very stressful on the elbow, the rear deltoid and the upper insertion of the latissimus dorsi. For some people, it's just not worth the trouble. In that case, your best bet would be the weighted chin-up, which gives you an opportunity to progress slowly and methodically *forever*. When you can do a chin-up with 85-90% of your bodyweight, you will have enough strength to do a one-arm pull-up *after* mastering the technique.

## **FAQ**

**A gun to your head. What would you do to build the biggest biceps you can?**

I would do curls and weighted chin-ups on rings. I will program each exercise as if it's a power lift. I would have a dedicated day for weighted pull-ups and another day for heavy curls. The volume will be as high as my body would

allow. I will also reduce the exercises for other body parts to a minimum. If the gun is loaded, I will inject too.

**Can you explain biceps pre-exhaustion to me? Is it effective?**

Some people do the following trick. First, they kill their biceps with isolation exercises and then perform a compound movement like the close grip chin-up. You can do the same if you want, but there is nothing special about this method. You are essentially fatiguing the biceps and subsequently turning them into the main hurting unit during chin-ups. There's no extra growth benefit to this method whatsoever. It's not more effective than doing chin-ups first and then curls.

**What about Yates rows? Are they a brutal biceps builder?**

The Yates row sucks exceptionally because the range of motion is very short, and there's too much stress on the bicep tendon since your palms are pointing away from you. Since the back can lift a lot of weight, placing the biceps in an overexposed position could lead to a tendon or muscle tear. I already told you – the biceps are a drama queen!

**Example Biceps Routine**

Exercise	Sets & Reps
<b>Weighted Pull-ups/Chin-ups</b>	2-3 sets of 5 bodyweight chin-ups 2-5 reps with 50% of your working weight 2-3 reps with 70% of your working weight <b>2-5 work sets consisting of 3-8 reps</b>  Optional: 1-2 back-off sets with a light weight that allows you to perform 6-12 reps

	Here you can insert a pushing or a leg exercise so that the pulling system can recover.
<b>Biceps curls</b>	2-4 work sets of 5 reps + 3 sets of 8-12 reps with a lighter weight

**Q: I don't want to do chin-ups. Can I replace them with another exercise?**

Yes. If big biceps are your only goal, you can simply wreak havoc on them with more curls instead of chin-ups. Alternatively, you can also do close grip lat pulldowns.

**Q: I heard that the biceps work intensely during pushing exercises. Correct?**

Yes. The bicep participates in pushing too, especially when the grip is wide. One the ways to feel this is to do wide grip push-ups and imagine that your biceps are an extension of your chest. This will give you a huge pump in the biceps and the pecs. However, the technique is not very practical, and pushing cannot replace dedicated pulling and arm work.

## Training the Triceps

Unlike the biceps, the triceps is a tough, fearless bad boy capable of moving very heavy weights.

The highest priority during triceps training is avoiding angles stressing the elbow joint excessively. The exercises that cause the most trouble are the classic isolation movements performed by steroid junkies in thongs in every muscle related video.

Isolation exercises are fine, but when you are a beginner, they often cause pain. There are many reasons for that. First, you are not in tune with your body yet. You can't hear its cues. Experienced lifters have an easier time decoding messages. As a noob, you are more likely to do single joint exercises fast, with poor form and through pain. In addition, newbies are yet to develop the so-called mind-muscle connection, which may be an overrated notion in general, but it does have some value when the goal is to diminish the stress on a specific portion of a body part. Another reason to avoid isolation exercises in the beginning of your career is that they are far easier to perform once you have a base.

A beginner with a history of dips and close grip push-ups is at a much better spot than a newbie mindlessly getting a hardcore pump with a series of French triceps extensions and various forms of pushdowns. Postponing the introduction of similar exercises is a legit strategy, albeit not a requirement.

Unfortunately, even after the introductory phase, some lifters will still experience pain during triceps isolation. You have three options – quit, focus on exercises that don't hurt or train through the pain and hope that the body will adapt eventually.

**Q: Are there any joint friendly triceps isolation exercises?** Yes – overhead triceps extensions on an *incline bench* with an EZ Curl Bar or a dumbbell. The overhead triceps extension on an incline bench comes with a different center of gravity compared to the flat bench and consequently decreases the stress on the elbow. In addition, the exercise keeps constant tension on the triceps.

## **The Best Compound Triceps Exercises**

Isolation exercises are fine, but nothing beats compound movements when it comes to triceps training. There are three lifts that always work – *dips*, close grip *push-ups* and close grip *bench presses*. You can do all of them or just one. It doesn't matter as long as you are progressing. Let's analyze each.

## Dips

The dip can make your triceps really strong if you add weight and progress with the help of training cycles. The movement has a few major downsides, nonetheless. Before all, your shoulders may not be suited for dips.

One option would be to focus on different exercises such as deep push-ups and then come back to the dip when you are stronger.

A decade ago, I thought that my shoulders are not designed for dips, but in reality, I was just too weak to do them. Today, I have an endless amount of sets with weighted dips behind my back with zero shoulder issues so far.

Another negative side of the dip is that it places too much strain on the sternum and the clavicle region. I am no stranger to pain under the clavicles and around the neck from marathon dip sessions. The stretch at the bottom could be too intense for people predisposed to sternum and/or clavicular problems.

## Close grip push-ups

The close grip push-up is an underrated exercise that can build very strong triceps. The catch is that you will have to elevate your feet and do the exercise with extra weight at one point if you aspire to reach the next level. You can't do the regular version forever and expect extraordinary results. When you reach 20 close grip push-ups, it's time to elevate your feet and/or add weight.

The weighted push-up can be programmed as a main lift just like any other movement, but since the bench press and the dip overshadow the push-up, this strategy is rarely chosen.

The main benefit of push-ups is that they don't require a lot of equipment and place less stress on your shoulders in comparison to dips and bench presses.

**Note:** When you perform close grip push-ups, pay extra attention to your form. Don't let your hips drop and keep your elbows close to the body.



## Close grip bench presses

Most people consider the close grip bench press the King of Triceps Exercises because it murders the muscle and is very friendly to methodical programming. The close grip bench press is simply a classic that works. Make sure that your grip is not too close to avoid unnecessary elbows stress.

## What about the long head of the triceps?

The long head of the triceps does not work extremely hard during basic pushing exercises. As a result, it's always the least developed and requires a different angle of attack.

I have three favorite exercises for the long head of the triceps

- weighted pull-ups
- strict bar muscle-ups
- pullovers/front lever

People give you a weird look when you tell them that the triceps work hard during pull-ups, but it's true nonetheless. The long head attaches to the shoulder and brings your arm close to the body. As a consequence, it's not uncommon to feel profound soreness in the triceps after a day of heavy weighted pull-ups.

The next exercise on the list is the *strict bar muscle-up* – an extremely triceps dominant movement. No fiber in your triceps sleeps when you perform this exercise. The slow bar muscle-up represents a triceps crusher of the highest order.

First, what's a strict muscle-up? I guess many of you have seen the muscle-ups of Kali Muscle on YouTube. Those are not strict muscle-ups. Strict muscle-ups do not include kipping. Your legs should be either in an L-position the whole time or hanging towards the ground. Both are legit variations, but the L-

position makes the exercise a little easier. When your legs are in front of you, they act as a counterweight. Furthermore, the exercise should always begin from a complete dead hang position. Starting with bent arms is not proper form.

The first part of the muscle-up is a pull-up. Then, your shoulders move slightly forward and up while the arms perform a movement similar to a triceps push-down. Once you are over the bar, you finish with a straight bar dip.

At the start, the muscle-up requires a forceful contraction of the long head (pulling). During the transition, the elbow is in flexion, and the triceps have to exert a great force to extend the joint and get you over the bar. The fun does not end here, however. The final portion is a straight bar dip making the triceps work hard again.

The downside of the strict muscle-up is that it has a long learning curve and places a significant stress on the wrists and elbows.

When I began learning the muscle-up, I was already capable of doing pull-ups and dips with 95lbs/43kg added to me, and yet I couldn't finish a single rep. I had the power to do an explosive pull-up and get over the bar with some leg movement, but blasting through the middle phase does not count. A proper strict muscle-up requires you to fight hard during the transition. Kipping and humping pull-ups are not allowed.

I worked my way to a strict muscle-up with negatives, but to be frank, I am not sure that's the best approach because negatives place massive stress on your joints. My wrists and elbows were often aching after just a few sets of negative muscle-ups. The second I could do one positive rep, I stopped all negatives because they were causing too much pain.

The strict muscle-up is an option recommended only to lighter guys who want to learn the movement. It's not a mandatory exercise – just a fun option that involves a skill that's fashionable nowadays.

Finally, we arrive at the *pull-over*. The pull-over is a simple exercise that does not require as much skill as the strict muscle-up. You can do it with a dumbbell, a cable or a machine. It doesn't matter. The long head will be working hard as a puller anyway.

For those more interested in bodyweight training, there is another option – the front lever. The front lever is a very difficult gymnastic exercise dependent primarily on your *latissimus dorsi*, *triceps* and *rear deltoids*. The whole triceps is working intensely to keep you elevated off the ground. It's not uncommon to experience triceps cramps during front levers.

**Example triceps routine**

Exercise	Sets & Reps
<b>Weighted dips</b>	2-3 sets of bodyweight dips for warm-up 2-3 sets with 30-50% of the work weight 1-2 sets with 50-70% of the work weight <b>1-5 work sets</b>  Optional: 1-2 back-off sets with a light weight that allows you to perform 8-12 reps
<b>Pull-overs or Incline triceps extensions</b>	3 sets of 8-12 reps
<b>Close grip push-ups</b>	You can perform them in a ladder format such as the one below: 1,2,3,4,5,6, 1,2,3,4,5,6, 1,2,3,4,5,6

This routine may not look as advanced as something you would see in the mainstream muscle media, but done correctly – it's brutal. When the workout is over, your triceps will be in agony.

**Q: Is it true that the triceps contains mainly fast twitch fibers and therefore adore low reps?** Yes. The triceps are made of about 70% fast twitch fibers and love heavy training, but going above 10 reps does not make you a sinner.

## Shoulder Training

I am just going to say it. The ultimate shoulder exercise is the strict, standing barbell overhead press.

It offers a large list of benefits:

### 1. Straightforward programming

One of the greatest properties of barbell training is that you always know how much you are lifting – an information that allows you to program your training very methodically.

Bodyweight training, for example, does not come with similar benefits.

### 2. Joint-friendly

Unless you have structural joint problems, the overhead press is not a dangerous movement for the shoulder girdle. I would even go as far as saying that the overhead press, and some of its variations, are the most shoulder-friendly exercises one can do.

It's more shoulder-friendly than the bench press, the dip, and even the push-up (including the handstand version).

Why? Because it works all the small muscle of the shoulder (rotator cuff) and the upper back. Another great benefit of the overhead press is that it keeps your shoulder girdle flexible.

Technically, the handstand push-up mimics the overhead but it has some serious downside – long learning curve, high balance demands, wrist stress, increase head pressure. The handstand push-up is obviously a great exercise, but the overhead press is the better exercise when it comes to training the shoulders.

However, there are individuals with joint issues who won't be able to press overhead. For example, I know a motorcyclist who suffered a trauma and can't extend one of his arms overhead at all.

But for the average person with relatively healthy shoulders, the overhead press will work.

### 3. Short learning curve

The overhead press is not a very complicated lift. Anyone can learn it in a week with proper instructions. This makes the exercises incredibly friendly and approachable.

### 4. No need for a spotter

You don't need a spotter for your overhead presses if you do them standing, which is advisable if you want to avoid lower back issues. Contrary to popular belief, the seated overhead press is more likely to cause lower back pain than the standing because your glutes cannot flex to protect the spine.

If you can't lift the weight, you can safely lower it to the starting position or drop it on the floor, if you have Olympic weightlifting plates (bumpers).

### 5. Core strength

The overhead press should never be turned into a standing incline because you will simply hurt your lower back while making the front deltoids do all the work. To avoid that, you have to flex your abs, quads and glutes incredibly hard. It's not uncommon to have leg cramps during standing overhead presses.

**Bottom line:** If one of your biggest goals is to have a very strong and healthy shoulder girdle, the standing barbell overhead press is one of the preferred movements.

### FAQ

**Can I use dumbbells?** You could, of course. The problem with dumbbells is that getting into position is less comfortable. Moreover, the stabilizing requirements are too high. Yes, there is a thing as too much stabilization. When your goal is to work the primary movers, you need to limit the balance demands. For that very reason, the squat and the leg press are better mass builders than lunges.

Another benefit of the barbell is that it is more convenient when it comes to progressive overload. The gap between most dumbbells is too high. One way to fix that is to add magnets. However, the barbell is still more comfortable because you take directly from the rack.

**Is it true that the overhead press works all three deltoids?** Yes, especially when you flare your elbows once the barbell has cleared your face. This will usually happen naturally for most people. It's impossible to do an overhead press properly without some elbow flare.

Of course, the anterior deltoid is still the primary mover and does most of the work, but the lateral and rear heads are definitely getting hit.

**What about behind the neck presses?** I don't see the point, honestly. For most people, behind the neck presses just cause pain. Furthermore, if you are flaring the elbows during your overhead press, you are essentially getting all the benefits from behind the neck pressing without actually doing it.

**Should I do lateral raises if I overhead press?** It's not mandatory, but it could be beneficial for the side deltoids. Use a relatively light weight. Perform a lot of repetitions.

**Execution tip:** Instead of thinking about lifting the dumbbells (or bands) up, imagine that the walls to your side are pulling your arms. This will reduce the stress on the traps and turn the mid-delts into the primary movers.

**If I overhead press, should I do all those silly rotator cuff exercises with the pink dumbbells?** You could use them as a warm-up if you want, but the overhead press works the rotator cuff pretty hard by itself. Also, those exercises could be good for injury rehabilitation. If you are healthy, however, skipping them is not the end of the world.

## Shoulder Training without Overhead Pressing

Every exercise is replaceable. The overhead press is not an exception. There are other ways to get your shoulder stronger. The catch is that you will have to do more exercises to get the same effect.

**Example exercise selection:**

**Bench press/dips/push-ups + side laterals + band pull-aparts variations**

The pushing exercise will work your front deltoids. The side laterals will hit your middle deltoids. The band pull-aparts will work the rear deltoid and the small muscles of the rotator cuff.

**Note:** It goes without saying, that your rear deltoids will also get plenty of work from exercises such as weighted chin-ups, rows and even deadlifts.

### FAQ

**Do I have to train my shoulders? Isn't pressing and pulling enough?**

No, you don't have to. It's true that your shoulders will get plenty of work from pushing and pulling. If you want to train this way, you may consider adding a couple sets of side laterals on your push day and/or pull day, but even that is not mandatory.

Ironically, for the past two years, I've done only 2 upper body exercises – weighted dips on V-bars and weighted pull-ups on rings. My shoulders are just fine. I didn't get injured and never experienced discomfort.

However, if you want to have the best shoulders you can have (naturally or unnaturally), dedicated work is absolutely mandatory.

**What about kettlebell overhead presses?** They will get the job done. The downside is that...you need kettlebells, which are not exactly cheap. Moreover, almost any gym has barbells and a rack whereas kettlebells are still less common. The main benefit of overhead kettlebell pressing is that for some people it's more joint friendly.

Example shoulder routine:

Exercise	Sets & Reps
Overhead press	2 work sets between 5-7 reps + 1-2 back-off sets of 8-10 reps
Side laterals	3 works sets between 12-20 reps
Wide grip rows	3 works sets between 8-12 reps

## Chest Training

The chest is one of the few muscle groups that naturals can develop and showcase with pride. Even a natty can have big boobs. They will never look like the pecs of pro builders or fitness competitors but could still be miles ahead of the pectoral development common for the modern humanoid whose physical activity is limited to searching for apps and Pokémon's.

### The Chest Loves Medium Weights and Relatively High Volume

A few years ago, I used to pass by a crew of men doing *dips*, *push-ups* and *pull-ups* at a local playground equipped with parallel bars. I thought that all of them were basically idiots because a few steps away there was a gym where "real men" were doing "real training" *a.k.a.* lifting weights.

When the summer came, the bodyweight warriors started training half-naked. They all had developed chests solely from push-ups and dips. At that moment,

I realized something very important – the chest loves medium weights and relatively high volume.

Many heavy benchers rely on a narrower grip and keep their elbows close to the body. The goal is to reduce the stress on the outer pecs and the rotator cuff. This shifts the tension to the triceps and front deltoids. While this technique is fine in itself, it will not develop your chest as much as possible. You need to use exercises that allow you to target the muscle with more focus.

## **The Best Exercises for the Chest**

In my opinion, the best exercises for the chest are **dips, push-ups** and **incline dumbbell/barbell presses**.

**Dips** absolutely murder the chest due to the deep stretch at the bottom. You will never meet a gymnast or a dip bro with poor lower chest development. You can't be good at dips without having a strong chest. The downside of the dip is that it could be very stressful on the sternum and does not stimulate the chest fibers near the clavicles as much.

The next chest exercise that fits the bill is the almighty push-up. The most brutal variation is the **ring push-up**. The day after my first ring push-up workout, I experienced the most intense chest soreness in history. I felt like someone had shot me in the chest with a magnum. The explanation is simple – during ring push-ups the chest has to work constantly. Honestly, it's brutality, especially if you use a wide grip. Enjoy the pain.

Finally, we arrive at the **incline dumbbell/barbell press**. The goal is clear – to work the upper chest. If you don't like this exercise, or you don't have access to a gym, you can replicate it by elevating your feet during push-ups.

## **What about the barbell bench press?**

The flat barbell bench press is a great chest exercise, but in my opinion, bodyweight training and incline pressing come with a serious advantage – your ego is not stimulated as much. When lifters focus on flat benching



exclusively, eventually, they start an unhealthy competition with other guys in the gym resulting in bad form and shoulder pain.

### You Need to Lower Your Body Fat

Thinking of my first bulk makes me laugh hysterically every time. I remember trying to flex my "moobs" in the mirror while doing mental acrobatics to convince myself that it was all muscle. The same happens to many boys who overeat. Yes, it's true that the added fat will make your chest look bigger when you wear clothes, but once you remove them, the man boobs will reveal their full grandeur and magnificence. This leads me to an important rhetorical question – what do you want to be pushing your T-shirt forward – your gut or your chest?

When you are lean, your actual chest measurement drops, but who cares? You will look bigger without clothes, and your V-taper will improve dramatically. If your goal is to appear impressive with your clothes on – natural bodybuilding is not your game.

### Example chest routines

#### Routine A

Exercise	Set & Reps
Dips	3-4 sets of as many as you can do with perfect form  Add weight when you can do 15-20 reps per set.

<b>Push-ups with your feet elevated</b>	3-4 sets of as many as you can do with good form  Add weight when you can do 15-20 reps per set.
<b>Wide grip push- ups</b>	3-4 sets of as many as you can do with good form  Add weight when you can do 15-20 reps per set.

### Routine B

<b>Exercise</b>	<b>Set &amp; Reps</b>
<b>Ring push-ups</b>	3-4 sets of as many as you can do with perfect form  Add weight when you can do 15-20 reps per set.
<b>Push-ups (elevated)</b>	3-4 sets of as many as you can do with good form  Add weight when you can do 15-20 reps per set.
<b>Wide grip push- ups</b>	3-4 sets of as many as you can do with good form  Add weight when you can do 15-20 reps per set.

# Leg Training

As a teen, I looked malnourished. I was a skinny skateboarder living on 800-1000 calories a day. In 9<sup>th</sup> grade, I grew up in height quickly and ended up weighing 135lbs/61kg at 6'1"/185cm. They called me Starving Chicken Legs. This insecurity was behind my desire to build a set of "tree trunk" legs as an adult. I never succeeded, but my journey told me a lot about leg training.

## **Low Bar Squats – The Best Glute Builder**

When I began my quest for big legs, I got engaged to the low bar back squat because it was presented as a highly superior leg exercise. The squat-heroine hit me hard, and I became obsessed with squatting. I wanted to squat three plates in three months or less. It didn't work. Once I reached 250lbs/113kg, I started to miss reps. At 295lbs/134kg, I reported bankruptcy.

My unhealthy obsession resulted in a very irritating hip injury around the upper hamstrings. At one point, even walking was painful. "Who cares," I said and continued training through the pain until I started losing strength. I even went to a therapist to "release my IT Band", hoping to receive relief. Nothing happened. It turned out that getting your butt squeezed cannot fix overuse. At the highlight of this madness, my hip was shaking uncontrollably at the bottom of each rep. The result of my squat obsession besides the injury was a huge hip musculature. "I didn't sign for this," I screamed.

This is when the obvious hit me – the low bar squat is not really a leg exercise. It is a hip exercise with an incredible amount of forward lean. The more you bend forward during a squat, the more your posterior chain gets involved. If your goal is to build your legs (quads and hamstrings), the low bar squat is not really your friend.

The primary purpose of the low bar squat is to allow powerlifters to lift more weight. This is the only reason for the existence of the low bar squat version. If there was no powerlifting, there wouldn't be a low bar squat either.

Powerlifters don't get points for good looking bodies, although many lifters have amazing physiques. The goal of powerlifters is to lift more weight and impress others. The low bar squat fits the bill perfectly.

This is why I don't recommend the low bar back squat as a leg exercise. Its older brother, the high bar squat, is a much better way to train your legs. It calls for an upright posture and focuses on the quads. Don't worry – the hips are still working, albeit not enough to satisfy the posterior chain activists.

## **The Front Squat – The Talented Guy Who Never Delivered**

Theoretically, the front squat should be the best quad builder on Earth. It forces you to stay upright while the knees travel forward more compared to the back squat, which makes the exercise quad dominant. Unfortunately, it's not so simple. There's still a weak link in the chain – the back. Since the weight is in front of you, the back has to work hard to keep you upright.

This creates two major issues. First, the front squat is difficult to perform for high repetitions without severe form deterioration. This is problematic because the quads love high reps. Second, the back reports bankruptcy earlier than the legs.

The first problem has an easy solution. You can get a ton of volume from triples. Just do 10x3 or 8x3. The second problem, however, is impossible to fix. Even if you do a high-volume routine such as 10x3 (this will take a lot of time), the back will remain the weaker unit and will go out of juice first.

If bigger quads are your goal, the front squat will get you closer, but it may be wise to add another leg exercise not limited by the strength and endurance of your back. The first that comes to mind is the evil leg press.

## **The Leg Press**

The leg press is a fine movement thrown in the mud by the functional crowd consisting of insecure fanboys who need to put others down to make their methods seem superior.

Yes, the leg press is not as athletic as the squat.  
Yes, the leg press is boring.  
Yes, a heavy leg press is not as sexy as a clean.  
Yes, stupid bodybuilders do the leg press.  
Yes, the leg press can hurt your back.  
Yes, the leg press is unnatural, technically speaking.  
But you know what?  
It never pretended to be special.

If you want to hit your legs without limitations coming from weaker body parts, the leg press beats everything. It is a scalable compound movement with a great focus on the quadriceps.

Another way to remove the weak links is the **hip belt squat**.

The hip belt squat is just that – a squat with a weight attached to a belt. Since the weight is hanging between your legs, the exercise has to be done on two platforms to increase the range of motion.

The main benefit of this movement is the reduced back stress and the upright posture. Weightlifters with injured or overworked backs are the godfathers of this exercise.

### **What about leg extensions?**

Many people are scared of leg extensions and consider them a devil eating knees. Maybe this is true for some individuals with specific injuries, but it is rarely the case for the average person.

The main problem with leg extensions is that humanoids do them mindlessly while sexting. Proper execution requires slow precise movement with a focus on the quads. It is very important to avoid jerky motions and swinging. The weight is irrelevant. Nevertheless, it is true that leg extensions aren't a serious exercise. They are a therapeutic movement. Nothing more. Nothing less.

## **Can I build my quads with bodyweight only?**

You can build insane endurance, but strength and size? No.

One of the most praised bodyweight leg exercises is the pistol squat, and to be honest, it is not a very difficult movement from a strength perspective.

Ultimately, you have to do weighted brutality to reach your leg potential. Expecting to build big quads by jogging and air squatting is the equivalent of trying to build big biceps by baking cakes.

## **The Hamstrings**

The hamstrings work during back squats but need more ~~love~~ hate to evolve to their highest level. Squats are not enough to reach your hamstring potential. The most hamstring dominant squat would be the low bar, but even this variation does not give you as much control and focus on the muscle as a pull from the floor.

A good way to train your hamstrings is to combine a power exercise with an isolation movement. The most straightforward hamstring exercises are deadlifts, kettlebell/T-handle swings, cable pull-throughs, sprints and leg curls.

The hamstrings contain a high concentration of fast twitch fibers and classify as a power muscle. As a consequence, many people advocate heavy training instead of high rep pump routines. On the grounds of this idea, one of the best ways to train your hamstrings is to perform heavy Romanian deadlifts (5-7 reps) with perfect form followed by an isolation exercise like the leg curl.

I know that many gurus love to hate the leg curl, but it is a fine movement. It focuses on knee flexion, which is beneficial for injury prevention.

## **The Glutes**

I doubt that many males truly care about amplifying their glutes, but if this is your goal, achieving it is not an enigma. Almost any hip dominant exercise will

build your glutes to immense grandeur – back squats, front squats, deadlifts, lunges, leg presses, split squats, sprints...etc. The good news for the posterior chain lovers is that if you want glutes, you can have them relatively fast.

## **Calves**

Calves are a great example of limitations imposed by genetics. Everyone knows a guy who doesn't train at all and has pro level calves. I've seen old ladies with calves that would make bodybuilders cry.

There are many articles written on calf training and yet no program works if you don't have the right insertions for growth (long muscle bellies). Not even drugs can fix this problem as proven by the large number of professional bodybuilders with lacking calves.

Like most ectomorphs, I have calf muscles with high insertions (long Achilles tendons). As a result, my lower legs and ankles have always looked skinny.

We may cry until the Earth opens, but our tears will not change anything. The facts are clear – calf growth is mostly genetic. Long tendons kill all hypertrophy plans.

### **What about fat people? They told me that if I get fat as hell, my calves will get monstrous?**

If you have calves with high insertions and thin ankles, your fatness is irrelevant. Even if you get to 30% body fat with extreme overeating, your calves will remain small as far as actual muscle size is concerned. The only reward that you will gain is one big fat gut. The circumference of your calves will, in fact, increase too, but water and fat do not count.

It's true that there are many fat people with enormous lower legs, but in every single case, those individuals also have low insertions and thick bones.

## **Does this mean that I should give up on my dream to have huge calves?**

You could do anything you want, but if they are puny because of genetics, they will remain small forever.

I used to do about 10 sets on the standing calf machine followed by 10 sets on the seated calf machine. I implemented every possible technique – pauses, extreme stretching at the bottom, holds at the top, holds in the middle, holds at the bottom, prayers...etc. Nothing happened. My father still has calves three times the size of mine without training at all. What is the secret behind his calf size? Better insertions and bigger ankles.

The only exception I have ever seen is the pro bodybuilder Michael Lockett. He has well developed high calves. But even in his case, they are relatively weak compared to the rest of him.

## **Arnold says that I need to work on my calves for 500 hours before complaining!**

Oh, brother! Don't say! I know the story. Arnold had bad calves, took river photos to hide them, trained under the wing of Reg Park and returned with watermelons. The truth, however, is as follows – Arnold never had truly weak calves. They have decent insertions and responded well once he started to manhandle them hard.



## Example leg routine

Exercise	Set & Reps
<b>Back squat or another squat variation</b>	2x5-8 work sets + 2x8 back-off sets <b>Note:</b> If you are doing front squats, a different rep scheme such as 10x3, 8x3 or 6x3 is in order.
<b>Leg press</b>	3 sets of 10-15 reps
<b>Romanian deadlift</b>	2x5-8 work sets + 2x8 back off sets
<b>Leg curl</b>	2x8
<b>Calf raises</b>	3 sets of 20-100 reps

## How Strong Do I Have to Become to Reach My Genetic Potential

When I was a young lifter, I thought that more strength always equals more size. After all, this is what the professors on Internet forums have been saying for a long time. I followed the path and increased my lifts. I began squatting and deadlifting with 95lbs/42.5kg. In less than six months, my squat and deadlift were respectively 290lbs/132kg and 395lbs/180kg. I did the lifts in a bulked-up state weighing about 190lbs/86 kg at 23-25% body fat. Those are not impressive numbers, but I did get stronger, didn't I?

Very little of the weight I gained (about 40lbs/18kg) was actual muscle. Most was fat and water. In the course of time, I increased my lifts even further while

weighing less, and yet I was still visibly lacking muscle mass. My best deadlift is about 440lbs/200kg for 2 singles with 30 seconds in between. The day I did it, I looked like a pro chess player who likes vanilla ice cream.

The theory that past a certain point strength does not equal mass was proven to me once again when I got my pull-up from 4 bodyweight reps to a solid single with 95lbs/43kg. I didn't add an ounce of muscle to my biceps or back despite the strength boost. During the same period, I increased my dips from 6 bodyweight reps to 20 reps with 26.5 kg/58lbs, and yet my triceps did not increase in size either.

Undoubtedly, some of the "enlightened" lifters, carrying brains infected by wishful thinking and mainstream deception, will say that I have to lift twice as much to add an appreciable amount of muscle. I would like this to be true, but the facts disagree. There are skinny boys on YouTube doing weighted chin-ups with 70kg/154lbs without looking impressive at all.

The truth is that once the introductory phase known as newbie gains has ended, muscle construction slows down and eventually comes to an end even if you increase your strength levels. That's a fact that many people do not want to recognize and admit. I am talking about the wannabe strength gurus and their followers who always say: "Just add 50lbs/22kg to your lifts and everything will be fine." Dream on, bulking soldiers.

There are two main reasons why even strength gains fail to add mass.

## **Number 1**

It's true that a bigger muscle is potentially a stronger muscle, but since hypertrophy is not a process that can go on forever, the body finds other ways to continue adapting and getting stronger.

Strength is not dependent solely on muscle size. The connective tissue and the central nervous system play a very important role in force output. Having strong joints and a conditioned nervous system is essential for heavy lifting.

## Number 2

You can lift as much as you want – the circumference of your bones will not increase. The bones will become denser, but there won't be a visual difference. Moreover, strength has no significant impact on the body chemistry responsible for growth. A minuscule amount of testosterone and growth hormone may be synthesized as a result of savagery in the gym, but the quantity is not sufficient to produce steroid-like results.

### **What about the bench, squat and dead? How heavy should I go to reach my potential?**

First, forget about precise numbers. That doesn't work at all. You have to focus on specific percentages of your own bodyweight. For example, in many gyms a 225lbs/100 kg bench is considered a joke because it's "just two plates" and "everyone's doing it". Well, what if you weigh 150lbs/68 kg? In that case, a 2-plate bench press would be close to 1.5 times your bodyweight, which is decent. It is better to think in terms of percentages instead of absolute strength.

Below are some basic guidelines

**Squat** – anything above 1.7BW for a few reps is respectable for a natural. People with short legs may reach significantly higher whereas lifters with unfavorable squat genetics may find themselves stuck at 1.7 BW for a long time.

**Deadlift** – a number above 2.5BW for a few reps is honorable. People with gorilla arms and robust spines could do better. Some naturals may even reach over 3 times their bodyweight. For those with short arms, however, getting significantly higher than 2.5BW will be a challenge of the highest order.

**Bench** – anything above 1.5BW for a few reps is great for lifters free of injections. Obviously, people with short arms are favored in this lift. Ectomorphs with long limbs will always hate the bench.

**Weighted pull-ups/chin-up** – a few reps with 50-70% of your bodyweight

**Weighted dips** – a few reps with 60-80% of your bodyweight

**Note:** Sometimes you find what you are looking for in the middle of the journey. You will probably reach your muscular potential before hitting the milestones above.

# Basic Training Programs

## Generic Routines

Below you will find basic routines designed to hit the whole body without focusing on a specific area. They are simple but work well from beginner to super advanced.

### Routine I: Two Times a Week

<b>Day1</b>  Legs + Push	<b>Squat:</b> 1-2 work sets + 1-2 back-off sets <b>Bench press/Weighted dips or push-ups:</b> 1-2 work sets + 1-2 back-off sets <b>Romanian deadlift:</b> 1-2 work sets + 1-2 back-off sets <b>Incline dumbbell bench press or another assistance <i>pushing</i> exercise:</b> 2-3 sets for 8-10 reps <b>Bodyweight pull-ups:</b> 3 sets of as many as you can with good form <b>Standing calf raises:</b> 3 sets of 20-50
<b>Day 2&amp;3</b>	<b>Rest</b>
<b>Day4</b>  Legs and Back	<b>Squat:</b> 1-2 work sets + 1-2 back-off sets <b>Leg press:</b> 3-5 sets of 10-15 reps <b>Barbell Rows, Weighted Chin-ups or Weighted Bodyweight Rows:</b> 2-3 working sets +1-2 back-off sets <b>Dumbbell Rows:</b> 2 sets of 8-12 reps <b>Shrugs:</b> 3 sets of 5 + 2 sets of 15 reps with a lighter weight <b>Bodyweight dips:</b> 3 sets of as many as you can with good form <b>Standing calf raises:</b> 3 sets of 20-50
<b>Day 5,6,7</b>	<b>Rest</b>

## Additional Notes

### Day 1: Legs + Push

A weighted squat of any kind except the Zercher is in order. The reason to avoid the Zercher squat is that it fatigues the biceps. We need them fresh for later. Build up to 1 or 2 work sets and finish with 1 or 2 back-off sets.

Example: Let's say that your work set is 200lbs/90kg for 8 reps. In that case, the squat workout could look like this:

#### Warm-up sets

Set 1: 45lbs/bar for 2 sets of 10

Set 2: 90lbs/40kg for 1 sets of 8

Set 3: 135lbs/60kg for 1 set of 5

Set 4: 150lbs/70kg for 1 set of 3

Set 5: 170lbs/77.5kg for 1 set of 2-3

Set 6: 190lbs/85kg for 1 set of 1

Work sets: **200lbs/90kg x 8; 200lbs x 6-8;**

Back-off set: **160-180lbs (72.5kg-80kg) for 12**

#### Bench press/Weighted dips/Weighted push-ups

The squat strategy from above applies here too. Below is an example workout for someone who can do weighted dips with 18kg/40lbs.

Set 1: 2 sets of 8-10 reps without added weight

Set 2: 10lbs/5kg for 1 set of 5

Set 3: 20lbs/10kg for 1 set of 3

Set 4: 30lbs/15kg for 1 set of 2

Work sets – **2x6-8 with 40lbs/18kg**

Back-off sets – **2x10-12 with 15lbs/7kg**

## **Romanian deadlift**

The Romanian deadlift is chosen over the regular deadlift because it is less stressful on the CNS. Deadlifting and squatting heavy in the same day is a difficult task. It is possible. I have done it myself, but I don't think you gain much from such torture.

**Incline dumbbell bench press or another pushing exercise:** The goal is to hit the upper chest and increase the workload of the pushing musculature for the week.

**Bodyweight pull-ups:** The purpose of this exercise is to increase the workload of the back for the week.

**Standing calf raises:** Work-up to 3 sets of 50 with perfect form (no bouncing) and then start adding weight.

**Day 2&3:** Rest

**Day 4: Legs + Back**

**Squat + Leg press**

This day starts with leg training too. You can make it a lighter or a medium day if the work is too much. The goal is simply to increase the weekly volume.

**Barbell Rows, Weighted Chin-ups or Weighted Horizontal Rows:** This is your first back exercise. Choose the one you like and perform 2-3 work sets. Finish with 1-2 back-off sets.

**Dumbbell Rows:** Go for a medium number of reps (between 8 – 12 reps) and perform 2 work sets.

**Heavy shrugs:** I prefer cable shrugs with the low part of the pulley system, but any variation would work just fine.

**Bodyweight dips:** This exercise is added to increase the workload of the pushing musculature for the week.

**Standing calf raises** – 3 sets of 50

**Day 5:** Rest

**Day 6:** Rest

## **Routine II: Once a Week**

Training once a week is not optimal, but something is always better than nothing.

The popular powerlifter Dave Jacoby did all three lifts (bench press, squat, deadlift) in a single day once a week because he was a truck driver and always on the road. He was a champion regardless.

Here's an example one time a week routine

### **Day 1: Everything**

**Squat** – work-up to 2 working sets

**Bench press/Weighted dips** – work up to 2 working sets

**Deadlift** – work up to 1 working set

**Standing calf raises** – 3 set of 50

**Bodyweight Pull-ups** – At this point you will probably be very tired and weighted pull-ups could be problematic. You can do the pull-ups later or on another day. You don't need much equipment to do pull-ups anyway.

### **Day 2-7 – Rest or Flexibility + Mobility work**



## Routine III: Three Times a Week

<b>Day 1</b> Legs + Arms	<b>Squat:</b> 1-2 working sets + 2 back-off sets <b>Leg press:</b> 2-5 working sets – 8-10 reps <b>Romanian deadlift:</b> 1-2 working sets + 2 back-off sets <b>Pull-throughs:</b> 2-3 working sets of 6-12 reps <b>Standing calf raises:</b> 3 sets of 20-50 <b>Biceps exercise of choice:</b> 3-5 working sets of 6-12 reps <b>Note:</b> The triceps is not trained here to keep it fresh for push day.
<b>Day 2</b>	<b>Rest</b>
<b>Day 3</b> Push	<b>Barbell press/Weighted Dips/Push-ups:</b> 2 working sets + 2 back-off sets <b>Overhead press:</b> 1-2 working sets+ 1-2 back-off sets <b>Side lateral raises:</b> 3 working sets between 10 and 25 reps <b>Triceps</b> exercise of choice: 3 working sets between 5-10 reps
<b>Day 4</b>	<b>Rest</b>
<b>Day 5</b> Full Body	<b>Deadlift or rack pulls:</b> 1 work set <b>Note:</b> Rack pulls are for advanced lifters. The goal of the rack pull is to eliminate the first part of the deadlift, which is quad dominant, and focus on the back. <b>Dips or a hard push-up variation</b> without weight: 3 sets of as many as you can with good form <b>Weighted chin-ups or lat pulldowns:</b> 1-2 workings sets + 1-2 back-off sets <b>Standing calf raises:</b> 3 sets of 20-50 reps
<b>Day 6 &amp; 7</b>	<b>Rest</b>

## Routine IV: 4 Times a Week

<b>Day 1</b> Legs	<b>Squat:</b> 1-2 working sets + 1-2 back-off sets <b>Leg press:</b> 3-5 sets of 10-15 reps <b>Romanian deadlift:</b> 1-2 working sets + 1-2 back-off sets <b>Pull-throughs:</b> 3x6-12 <b>Standing calf raises:</b> 3x20-50
<b>Day 2</b> Push Focus	<b>Barbell press/Weighted dips/Weighted push-ups:</b> 2 working sets + 2 back-off sets <b>Bodyweight or dumbbell rows:</b> 3 sets of 10-15 reps <b>Incline dumbbell press/Push-ups with feet elevated</b> – 3 sets of 6-10 reps
<b>Day 3</b>	<b>Rest</b>
<b>Day 4</b>  Back Focus	<b>Deadlifts/Weighted chin-ups/Barbell rows</b> – select one as your main back exercise  If you are going to deadlift, perform <u>one working set</u> . If you decide to do chin-ups or rows, perform 2 working sets + 2 back-off sets.  <b>Barbell rows/Lat pull downs/Pull-ups</b> If you want the weighted pull-up to be your main exercise, you should follow it with a row. If your choice is the deadlift or the row, follow with a vertical pulling exercise.  <b>Note:</b> Never deadlift after pull-ups or rows. The deadlift always deserves respect and should be done first.  <b>Shrugs:</b> 3x6-12 <b>Back hyperextensions:</b> 3x20 <b>Note:</b> Do this only if you don't want to deadlift. <b>Standing calf raises:</b> 3x20-50

<b>Day 5</b> Abs, Neck, Shoulders	<b>Overhead press</b> – 2-3 working sets + 1-2 back off sets <b>2 abdominal exercises</b> of your choice <b>Lateral raises</b> – 3 sets of 10-20 <b>Neck</b> and <b>Grip/Forearm</b> training
<b>Day 6 &amp; 7</b>	<b>Rest</b>

## Ultra-Minimalistic Routines

### 4-5 Exercises

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Squat Weighted chin-ups Bodyweight dips/Bench Press	Off	Off	Deadlift Weighted dips/Bench Press Bodyweight chins-ups	Off	Off	Off

### 3 Exercises

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Squat Weighted chin-ups Bodyweight dips	Off	Off	Squat Weighted dips Bodyweight pull-ups	Off	Off	Off

## 2 Exercises

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Squat/Deadlift Muscle-ups	Off	Off	Squat/Deadlift Muscle-ups	Off	Off	Off

## Once a Week in the Gym Routine

### Day 1: Legs

Monday is the perfect day to train your legs because the world is benching and curling like there is no tomorrow. This is good news for us – all leg equipment will be lonely and waiting for you. A classic leg routine would look like this:

Variation A	Variation B	Variation C
Squats	Deadlift	Front squat
Leg presses	Leg presses	Leg presses
Romanian deadlifts	Hack squats	Romanian deadlift
Leg Curls	Calf Raises	Calf Raises
Calf Raises		

### Day 2: Rest

### Day 3: Chest

Weighted dips/Weighted push-ups  
Incline dumbbell presses or push-ups with elevated feet

### Day 4: Rest

### Day 5: Back

*Weighted pull-ups* or a difficult pull-up variation that forces you to stay in the lower rep range.

Bodyweight rows

### **Day 6&7: Rest**

**Note:** Besides the leg day, this routine can be done at home with minimal equipment. Alternatively, you can also go to the local monkey bars to do your pull-ups and dips.

## **The Lie That Beginners Shouldn't Do Specialization**

The Gatekeepers of the Muscle Realm have engraved on the minds of many muscle constructors the idea that every beginner should focus on the "basics" before engaging in specialized training dedicated to a specific body part and/or exercises/movements.

Some muscle scholars even compare beginner lifters to young medical students who spend the first few years of their education learning basic medicine before specializing.

Unfortunately, I have to inform the muscle heads that this comparison is not entirely correct. Medical students cannot specialize before learning the basics because this would be the equivalent of becoming a writer who can't read. And while lifting shares a few common points with this philosophy, it's different enough to jump out of the rule's bracket.

**Q: What do the experts mean by "learning the basics" and "paying your dues"?**

According to the infested minds of the gurus who supposedly transform paper boys into men of steel for a living, "learning the basics" and "paying your

dues" means – squatting, benching and deadlifting until a set of arbitrary numbers is a reality.

What if I told you that this is specialization in itself? Say what you want, but focusing on squats and deadlifts makes you a hip/glute specialist, my friend. Virtually every 5x5 routine represents powerlifting worship sold to the masses as "fundamentals" and an alternative to the "evil" bodybuilding routines.

Another interesting question is what are you supposed to specialize in after you have reached the required numbers? What do the graduates from the Starting Strength Online College do after exhausting their linear progression? Most become local powerlifters and permanent members of the global fatso society.

But what if I don't want to be a powerlifter? What if I don't care about the squat, the bench and the deadlift? What if I want to specialize in the weighted dip or the one arm pull-up? What if I want shredded six-pack abs? Do I lose my right to call myself a lifter? Do I lose my right to step in a gym?

Truth be told, there is no such thing as a real lifter, just like there is no such thing as a "real" job.

## **The Actual Basics**

The real basics consist in learning how the industry operates and what it actually takes to reach your goals. A large part of the process requires you to read material written by men who have fought the dragons you are about to face. But since this world is full of lies and crooked claims, you always have to pass the information you receive through a critical filter.

The first step is to ask yourself – what is my biggest goal? Which is my favorite body part? Which is my favorite exercise? Which is my highest priority? The answer to this question has to be as specific (honest) as possible. This is the quickest way to finding the path you are looking for. Once you know the answer – commit.

## **Beginners Can Actually Do Specialization Safely**

I no longer believe in carryover from one exercise to another. There is some, obviously, but if you want something, you have to go for it. The more specific you are, the better. And if your goal is not helped by the squat, the bench press and the deadlift, there is zero point in devoting yourself to those exercises other than to learn how to do them correctly, but even that is not mandatory unless you want to be a powerlifter or a personal trainer.

Here's a logical question for the experts – if my goal is to build the biggest arms how are squats, deadlifts, power cleans and Olympic lifts helping me? They are not. Out of the big three, the bench press is the only exercise that works the arm, but even the bench could be replaced by something else if the individual needs it.

At this point, many will jump and say that a beginner should not have similar goals due to some made-up moral standards circulating in the gym sphere. I don't agree with this notion. The demon of motivation is the same for everybody. All people start lifting to acquire confidence and satisfy the ego through muscle construction. If you think that you are an exception, think again. The only difference is how this desire is expressed. Some call themselves "aesthetic" and curl all day while others call themselves "real men" and squat all day. What's the difference? The body part. The drive is always the same. I assure you.

Therefore, it makes perfect sense to choose your poison.

If you want big arms, focus on building big arms.

If you want big legs, squat and leg press until you look like a centaur.

If your goal is to have shredded six-pack abs, diet like your life depends on it and perform heavy core exercises.

If you want to have a huge chest focus on bench presses, push-ups and dips.

If you want a big back, focus on the pull-up, row and deadlift. You get the idea.

**"But can't I have everything," asks the dreamer.**

No, you can't have everything, especially when you are natural. You have two choices – focus on something and make it stand out or focus on everything and remain balanced but flat.

The same law rules other segments of life too. To reach the highest realm in a niche, you need to put everything else in the background. You have to become obsessed and imbalanced.

### **What if specialization is actually very important for beginners?**

People hate being called "noobs". We want to be good immediately, but mastery takes years of work and obsession (specialization). This is why it is so hard to start something new as you grow older. Being a beginner is painful. You have a long road ahead of you, and no one is taking you seriously.

However, the lifting realm does not operate the exact same way. Yes, when you first enter a gym, people will give you weird looks, but this is a minor annoyance. The important part is that most of your gains will happen during the "launch" period. This is the time when your muscles are eager to grow. And since the natural body is very limited in its ability to carry extra mass, you have to focus on the body parts that you love the most.

On the grounds of this, I don't see a problem with specializing even if you are a beginner as long as you have realistic expectations and follow a routine that is not likely to hurt you.

Also, I wouldn't care about having an "imbalanced" physique. This is a concern only for bodybuilders which most people aren't. I am not scared of muscle imbalances either. First, it's not that easy to develop a muscular imbalance that will cause real problems. Second, specialization does not mean complete abandonment. When I say focus on your arms, if that's what you want, my goal is not to make people stop training their legs completely.



## **Always Be Honest with Yourself**

Others will lie to you, but you should never lie to yourself. Be honest and admit what you want. Don't feel ashamed. There's nobody there – just you.

I lost a lot of valuable time and effort lying to myself and looking for special shortcuts. This was a big mistake. Always attack your goal at its heart and do the things designed to take you the closest to it even if they are not approved by self-righteous gurus (me included) who want you to satisfy their idea why and how one should train.

## **The Rules of Specialization**

Specialization represents a focused effort in a direction of your choice. Think of it as a punch with the power of your whole body behind it. There's no wasted effort, and therefore, the damage done to the target could be significant compared to an unfocused attack.

To make specialization work, you have to give up something in one area to gain a lot more in another. For example, if you want to become good at squats, you have to squat a lot at the expense of other exercises. Meanwhile, if you want to become a push-up master, squats are irrelevant.

### **Rule 1: Specialize in 1-2 elements only**

Focusing on ten different things is not specialization. Each element that you focus on should receive a priority status, and when everything is a priority, nothing is a priority.

For example, specializing in sprinting and squats at the same time would be quite difficult. You can do both in your routine, but you cannot focus on both. One will have to take the back seat.

## **Rule 2: Do what you specialize in first**

The first exercise done in a workout holds the highest priority. You can't specialize in pull-ups, for example, and do them as your 10th back exercise. If it's important to you, do it first.

## **Rule 3: Back-off**

Technically, you can specialize in something until the end of times, but since many specialized routines come with a lot of volume, it is very likely to experience overtraining of the joints and insertions involved in the movement. One of the ways to avoid this problem is to back-off for a while and then restart.

## **Q: Will specialized training add more mass to a lagging muscle group?**

Yes and no. Hitting a specific muscle group repeatedly will make the area stronger and potentially bigger, but you cannot overcome your limitations through specialization. No amount of biceps curls will give you arms beyond what you were meant to have naturally. However, you are definitely increasing your chances to gain extra in the area you are specializing in.

# Example Specialization Routines

## Back Specialization Routine

<b>Day 1</b>	<b>Front squat</b> – 8x3 <b>Bench/Weighted Dips/Weighted push-ups</b> – 3x6-8 work sets + 2x8-10 back-off sets  <b>Note:</b> You have to choose one of the three (bench, dips or push-ups)  <b>Romanian deadlifts</b> – 2x6-8 work sets + 2x10 back-off sets <b>Shrugs</b> – 3x8 work sets + 2x15 back-off sets  Optional <b>Leg curl</b> – 2x6-8; <b>Calf raises</b> - 3x50
<b>Day 2</b>	<b>Rest</b>
<b>Day 3</b>	<b>Weighted Chin-ups</b> – 3x6-8 work sets + 2x8-10 back-off sets <b>Lat pull-downs</b> – 3x6-8 work sets + 2x15 back-off sets <b>Pull-overs</b> 3x8-10
<b>Day 4</b>	<b>Rest</b>
<b>Day 5</b>	<b>Barbell Rows</b> – 3x6-8 work sets + 1x8 [wide grip] <b>Hammer Strength rows</b> – 3x6-8 work sets + 2x10-12 back-off sets <b>One arm dumbbell rows</b> – 3x6-8 work sets + 2x10-12 back-off sets  Optional:  <b>Standing Dumbbell Curls</b> – 3x6-8 work sets + 2x8-10 back-off sets <b>Overhead triceps extensions on an incline bench</b> – 3x6-8 work sets + 2x8-10 back-off sets
<b>Day 6&amp;7</b>	<b>Rest</b>

## Arm Specialization Routine

<b>Day 1</b>	<p><b>Close grip bench /weighted dips/weighted close grip push-ups:</b> 3x5-7 work sets + 2x8-10 back-off sets</p> <p><b>Note:</b> You have to choose one of the three (bench, dips or push-ups)</p> <p><b>Barbell curl</b> – 3x6-8 work sets + 2x8-10 back-off sets</p> <p><b>Overhead triceps extension</b> – 3x6-8 + 2x8-10 back-off sets</p> <p><b>Hammer curls</b> – 2x6-8 + 2x10-12</p> <p><b>Wrist curls</b> – 3x8-10 work sets + 2x20 back-off sets</p> <p><b>Reverse wrist curls</b> – 3x8-10 work sets + 2x20 back-off sets</p> <p><b>Note:</b> You can use a standing wrist roller instead of doing wrist curls. Make sure to roll in both directions for a couple of rounds.</p>
<b>Day 2</b>	Rest
<b>Day 3</b>	<p><b>Squat</b> – 3x5</p> <p><b>Leg press</b> – 3x10-12</p> <p><b>Leg curl</b> – 2x6-8 + 1x10</p> <p><b>Calf raises</b> - 3x50</p>
<b>Day 4</b>	Rest
<b>Day 5</b>	<p><b>Close grip bench /weighted dips/weighted close grip push-ups:</b> 3x5-7 work sets + 2x8-10 back-off sets</p> <p><b>Weighted chin-ups/Lat pull downs:</b> 3x6-7 work sets + 2x8-10 back-off sets</p> <p><b>Pullovers</b> – 3x8-12</p> <p><b>Barbell curl</b> – 3x6-8 work sets + 2x8-10 back-off sets</p> <p><b>Hammer curls</b> – 3x6-8 + 2x10-12</p> <p><b>Wrist curls</b> – 3x8-10 work sets + 2x20 back-off sets</p> <p><b>Reverse wrist curls</b> – 3x8-10 work sets + 2x20 back-off sets</p> <p>You can use a standing wrist roller instead of doing wrist curls. Make sure to roll in both directions for a couple of rounds.</p>

	<p><b>Note:</b> If you are still a <i>beginner</i> doing <u>linear progression</u>, you can simply add weight on Day 5. If you are not a beginner anymore, use 70% of the weights you lifted on Day1. For example, if you work set for the bench press on Day 1 was 70kg/154lbs, lift 50kg/107lbs on Day 5.</p>
<b>Day 6&amp;7</b>	<b>Rest</b>

## Leg Specialization Routine

<b>Day 1</b>	<p><b>Squat</b> – 2x5-7 work sets + 2x8-10 back-off sets</p> <p><b>Leg press</b> – 5x10</p> <p><b>Romanian deadlift</b> – 2x6-8 works sets + 2x8 back-off sets</p> <p><b>Leg curl</b> – 2x6-8 work sets + 2x8-10 back off sets</p> <p><b>Calf raises</b> – 3x20-50</p>
<b>Day 2</b>	<b>Rest</b>
<b>Day 3</b>	<p><b>Weighted Dips/Push-ups/Bench</b> - 3x5-7 work sets + 2x8-10 back-off sets</p> <p><b>Weighted pull-ups</b> – 3x5-7 work sets + 2x8-10 back-off sets</p> <p><b>Wide grip Rows</b> – 3x8-10</p>
<b>Day 4</b>	<b>Rest</b>
<b>Day 5</b>	<p><b>Squat</b> – 2x5-7 work sets + 2x8-10 back-off sets</p> <p><b>Leg press</b> – 5x10</p> <p><b>Romanian deadlift</b> – 2x6-8 works sets + 2x8 back-off sets</p> <p><b>Leg curl</b> – 2x6-8 work sets + 2x8-10 back off sets</p> <p><b>Calf raises</b> – 3x20-50</p> <p><b>Note:</b> If you are still a <i>beginner</i> doing <u>linear progression</u>, you can simply add weight on Day 5. If you are not a beginner anymore, use 70% of the weights you lifted on Day1. For example, if you work set for the squat on Day 1 was 100kg/220lbs, lift 70kg/155lbs on Day 5.</p>

<b>Day 6&amp;7</b>	<b>Rest</b>
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## Chest + Arm Specialization Routine [Bro Routine]

<b>Day 1</b>	<b>Bench/weighted dips/weighted push-ups:</b> 3x5-7 work sets + 2x8-10 back-off sets <b>Note:</b> You have to choose one of the three (bench, dips or push-ups) <b>Incline dumbbell press</b> – 3x6-8 works sets + 2x8-10 back-off sets <b>Wide grip push-ups without weight</b> – 3 sets of as many as you can with perfect form <b>Barbell curl</b> – 3x6-8 work sets + 2x8-10 back-off sets <b>Overhead triceps extensions</b> – 3x6-8 + 2x8-10 back-off sets
<b>Day 2</b>	<b>Rest</b>
<b>Day 3</b>	<b>Squat</b> – 3x5 <b>Leg press</b> – 3x10-12 <b>Leg curl</b> – 2x6-8 + 1x10 <b>Calf raises</b> - 3x50
<b>Day 4</b>	<b>Rest</b>
<b>Day 5</b>	<b>Bench /weighted dips/weighted push-ups:</b> 3x5-7 work sets + 2x8-10 back-off sets  <b>Note:</b> You have to choose one of the three (bench, dips or push-ups)  <b>Incline dumbbell press</b> – 3x6-8 works sets + 2x8-10 back-off sets <b>Wide grip push-ups without weight</b> – 3 sets of as many as you can with perfect form Note: You can skip the bodyweight push-ups if you feel too tired. <b>Barbell curl</b> – 3x6-8 work sets + 2x8-10 back-off sets <b>Overhead triceps extension</b> – 3x6-8 work sets + 2x8-10 back-off sets <b>Note:</b> If you are still a <i>beginner</i> doing <u>linear progression</u> , you can simply add weight on Day 5. If you are not a beginner anymore, use 70% of the

	weights you lifted on Day1. For example, if you work set for the bench press on Day 1 was 70kg/154lbs, lift 50kg/107lbs on Day 5.
<b>Day 6&amp;7</b>	<b>Rest</b>

## Weighted Pull-ups Focus

<b>Day 1</b>	<p><b>Weighted pull-ups</b> – Work up to 2 heavy work sets consisting of 3-8 reps. Follow them with 2-3 back-off sets with a weight that allows you to perform 6 to 8 reps. Bodyweight only pull-ups work fine as back-off sets too.</p> <p><b>Squat:</b> 1-2 works sets + 1-2 back-off sets</p> <p><b>Calf raises:</b> 3x50</p>
<b>Day 2</b>	<b>Rest</b>
<b>Day 3</b>	<p><b>Bodyweight pull-ups: 5x5 [light pull-up day]</b></p> <p>The goal of this day is to facilitate recovery. Perform 5 sets of 5 reps with as little rest as possible. Make sure that every repetition is perfect and explosive. As you get stronger, add 10% of the weight you are using for your working sets on Day 1. For example, if you are using 20kg/45lbs, add 2kg/5lbs.</p> <p><b>Weighted dips:</b> 1-2 works sets + 1-2 back-off sets</p> <p><b>Overhead press:</b> 1-2 works sets + 1-2 back-off sets</p>
<b>Day 4</b>	<b>Rest</b>
<b>Day 5</b>	<p><b>Squat:</b> 1-2 works sets + 1-2 back-off sets</p> <p><b>Romanian deadlift:</b> 2 works sets of 6-8 reps + 2 back-off sets</p> <p><b>Weighted pull-ups [medium day]</b></p> <p>Perform 3 sets of 5-8 reps with 70-80% of the weight used on Day 1. No back-off sets</p>

<b>Day 6&amp;7</b>	<b>Rest</b>
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## Six Facts to Consider When Selecting Exercises

### 1. Your goals are your compass

The first step towards proper exercise selection is setting a goal. Your purpose dictates your strategy and determines whether your actions are a waste of time or a respectable effort towards a dream.

If your main goal is growth, there is only one thing that matters – resistance. The exercises you select are almost irrelevant as long as they target the muscle you want to build, and you can do them without joint pain.

If your goal is to develop strength and skills, you have to perform the movements you want to excel at the most.

Example: A man who wants bigger biceps should train differently than a man whose main aim is to perform one arm pull-ups. In the first case, there are 10+ exercises that can do the job. In the second, specialization reigns supreme. You can't expect to get to a one arm pull-up by doing Scott curls.

### 2. They said some exercises are more anabolic than others. They lied?

They lied.

There aren't mysterious exercises that can trigger colossal growth. It's true that the squat builds more muscle mass than the leg extension, but that's because the movement works more muscle groups in the first place. The meager leg extension is hitting primarily the quadriceps whereas the squat



works 10 more muscles. But if you compare the squat to the leg press, the level of stimulation and anabolic power is not all that different.

The main reason why beginners keep saying that the squat gives them more leg growth than anything else is that their squat obsession often coincides with higher levels of motivation and dedication. The new gains are not a direct result of squatting. You get more because you are doing more. It's that simple. If the same amount of effort is invested in a different movement stressing the same muscles, results of an equal magnitude will manifest themselves.

Back in the day, a random guy I met at the local parallel bar station told me that the front lever had given him more biceps growth than the dumbbell curl. Today, I find similar statements laughable. More than likely that extra growth was a direct result of better programming rather than front lever superiority. Had he treated the curl with an equal amount of respect, he would have experienced similar results. In addition, I don't think the front lever is a good biceps exercise in the first place. This leads me to believe that some of the growth reported by Mr. Biceps came from assistance exercises such as tuck front lever pull-ups.

### **3. Don't Expect Extreme Carryover from One Exercise to Another**

There are many ways to acquire general strength, but if you want to become a master at one exercise/movement/skill, there is no replacement for the original. Even if the two exercises are fairly similar, like the front and back squat, the carryover is not as extreme as one might think. For instance, the manual says that your back squat should always be higher than your front squat, but this happens only if you do both. If you focus exclusively on the front squat, there may come a time when you can't back squat even 80% of your front squat.

Many people expect to become good deadlifters solely by squatting. This is not going to happen. The squat may be enough to build a base, but to reach the high deadlift numbers, you need to introduce the deadlift in your routine.

We seek carryover because we are running from something we don't want to face.

Not that long ago, I decided to do weighted back hyperextensions and expected that they will catapult my deadlift strength on their own. I stopped deadlifting and got my hyperextensions to a little over bodyweight (I was holding the plates in my arms) for 5 reps. A couple of personal trainers who appeared to be extracted from a Men's Health magazine were often staring at me as if I was about to break in two parts. I didn't care. In my mind, I was building a super strong lower back designed for deadlift fame. The first time I deadlifted after the back-hyperextension phase even 135lbs/62.5kg felt heavy. My body was not used to the movement and somewhere between 275lbs/125kg and 140kg/308lbs I heard my lower back crack. This was my first deadlift injury ever.

Was my lower back weak? Yes, if you are talking about "deadlift strength". No, if you are talking about general strength.

#### **4. Your body type has a tremendous influence**

The length of your bones could make it easier or harder to play the game known as Human Crane. In general, most exercises favor men with shorter limbs, which is why powerlifting and weightlifting competitions often seem like a reunion of manlets. The only exercise out of the powerlifts that favors long arms is the deadlift.

Technically, a man with an "inferior" structure can still do all exercises, but the results in terms of lifted weight won't be the same.

#### **5. You don't need many exercises to prevent muscle imbalances**

The lifting literature I stumbled upon during the beginning of my journey installed a peculiar fear in my head. I was super afraid of muscle imbalances and believed that the guys who do more pushing than pulling are owners of evaporating brains. The mainstream muscle media will do that to you. If you tune to the actual frequency of reality, you will see that there is not much to

be afraid of. It takes a really long time to develop a muscle imbalance that can create problems, and you don't need an army of exercises to prevent such a scenario.

## **6. Every guru is a promoter of exercises**

Gurus take great pride in promoting different exercises and become overly defensive when someone dares to criticize their choices and promos. The common denominator between all experts is that they promise you growth.

Rippetoe promised mass to naturals through low bar squats.

Christopher Sommer promised mass to naturals through bodyweight training.

T-Nation promised mass to naturals through perfectly calculated routines designed by leading fitness sensei.

All experts treat their methods, and the exercises in them, as a brand. In other words, they are promoting and selling those exercises to you. By subscribing to their ideologies, you become a potential client. And while there is nothing bad about being a client, the path to becoming a cult member is short. If you find yourself in this situation, check your compass (goals) and adjust your direction.

# How to Reach Your Chest and Lat Potential with Weighted Dips, Push-ups and Pull-ups

Three conditions are required to amplify a muscle to its maximal potential. First, the targeted area has to become subject to *tension* powerful enough to trigger muscle *protein synthesis*. The implementation of mechanically sound exercises and progressive overload achieves this goal.

The next step is to supply the organism with nutrients and let the affected region and the central nervous system repair themselves.

The final part is repetition/cycling. A lifter has to repeat the process described above many times to reach the maximum amount of extra muscle filaments that his/hers genetics can produce.

Dips, pull-ups and push-ups are canonical upper body exercises. If you can do them safely, you could reach your chest and lat potential without touching a barbell. The catch is that you will have to *add weight* to keep the muscle under high-intensity pressure.

## Step 1: Foundation

If you can't drive a car, climbing on a truck is a suicide mission. You need a foundation. Developing *proficiency* in bodyweight dips, push-ups and pull-ups is a must. Bodyweight mastery solidifies your form and conditions your joints for the next step.

## Basic Requirements Prior to Adding Weight

**Bodyweight dips** – 18-20 reps in a set

**Bodyweight pull-ups** – 12-15 reps in a set

**Bodyweight push-ups with the feet elevated** (slightly) – 20-25 reps in a set

When the numbers above are part of your reality, you can start adding weight with the help of a belt. The requirements may look high to beginners, but you can reach them faster than you think.

Two major factors determine how much time you'll spend at this stage – your current level of conditioning and dedication to the mission. If you are a male over 16% body fat, you will benefit greatly from dropping down to 10-14%.

## **Step 2: Linear progression**

Once you have a foundation, it's time to begin a *linear* progression by adding a little weight every workout. Prior to that, however, you will have to choose your main pressing exercise – dips or push-ups.

I prefer dips, but people who have shoulder or sternum problems may have to refrain from the exercise, especially the weighted version. If dips are not an option, push-ups with the feet slightly elevated could become the main focus. Later, if the joints of the lifter permit, bodyweight dips could serve as a *supplemental* movement. This leaves us with two workout variations.

### **Version A**

Weighted Dips

Weighted Pull-ups

Push-ups with the feet elevated [no added weight]

### **Version B**

Weighted push-ups

**Note:** If you decide to rely on push-ups as your main lift, stick either to the classic version, the ring push-up or elevate your feet slightly [a regular chair may be too high to maintain proper form].

Weighted pull-ups

Bodyweight dips

# Step-by-Step: Linear Progression

## 1. Select a rep range and frequency

At first, you could train two times a week. Later, when recovery becomes problematic, you can reduce the frequency to one workout every 5<sup>th</sup> day.

The initial rep range should be high – 2 working sets of 8 reps is a decent choice. The reason to start with higher reps is to build-up gradually instead of shocking your body with a hefty load right away.

The opening weight should be low – a number between 5kg/11lbs and 15kg/33lbs is a common choice. Below you will find an example workout.

### **Exercise 1: Weighted dips**

Warm-up: 1x10 + 1x5-8 without weight

Working sets: 2x8 with 10kg/22lbs

### **Exercise 2: Weighted pull-ups**

Warm-up: 1x8 + 1x5-6 without weight

Working sets: 2x8 with 8kgs/18lbs

**Push-ups** – 3x10-12

Every consecutive workout, you should add a little weight [1kg/2lbs] while keeping the number of sets & reps the same. This linear process has to continue for as long as possible. When you cannot complete all reps with good form, it's time to reduce the working sets from 8 to 5 repetitions. This will prolong the linear progression even more. Once you start missing reps again, you can deload and begin a new cycle or reduce the working sets to 3 repetitions. I don't recommend going below 3 reps, especially on dips, although I have done it. It's much better to deload and write a new cycle.

**Note:** If your main pressing movement is the weighted *ring* push-up, don't go below 5-6 reps because the set-up for the exercise is too difficult, and the stress on the pectoral tie-in and the shoulder is high.

## Starting a New Cycle

Let's say that your linear progression with dips has ended at **25kg/55lbs** for 5 reps. A realistic goal for the next training phase would be **27.5kg/60lbs** for the same number of reps. Below is a hypothetical cycle consisting of nine workouts.

1. 15kg/33lbs – 2x8 - The first workout should be easy so that the body and the CNS can recover.
2. 20kg/44lbs – 2x5-7
3. 21kg/46lbs – 2x5-7
4. 22kg/48lbs – 2x5-6
5. 23kg/50lbs – 2x5
6. 24kg/52lbs – 2x5
7. 25kg/55lbs - 2x5
8. 26kg/57lbs - 2x5
9. **27.5kg/60lbs – 1x5**, 1x3 [the weight is too heavy to complete all five reps]

The next step is to *deload*, begin a new cycle and finish with an even heavier weight. This process can continue for a long time. Sooner or later, however, setting personal records will become quite difficult, and the length of the cycles will increase. Initially, you may add 5kg/11lbs to a lift in 5-6 weeks, but soon, you will need 10-15 weeks to acquire a similar result. Adding weight to pull-ups and dips is a very slow process.

The ultimate goal is to reach the following stats:

### **Dips with 50-70%+ of your bodyweight for 4-5 reps**

For example, if you weigh 150lbs/68kg, you will have to do dips with 75lbs/34kg to 105lbs/48kg.

### **Pull-ups with 50-60%+ of your bodyweight for 4-5 reps**

**Push-ups [if that's your main lift] with 50-70% of your bodyweight for 5 reps**

Once you are in those ranges, you are touching the borders of your genetic potential muscle wise. Even if you get significantly stronger, there won't be extraordinary muscle gains because you are already at the point of diminishing returns.

## FAQ

**When should I do the supplementary dips or push-ups?** Perform 3-4 sets between 5-12 reps at the end of the workout. Don't go to failure.

**Why do you recommend push-ups with the feet slightly elevated?** The goal is to make the exercise a little harder and hit the upper chest more. Elevating your feet too high often results in poor form and lower back strain.

**Will there be a lagging muscle group as a result of this training?** Your chest, arms and lats will be strong, but the spinal erectors and the neck require different exercises. Dips and pull-ups do not hit them sufficiently.

**I do weighted dips as my main exercise. Can I remove the supplementary push-ups?** Technically, yes but focusing only on dips will leave your upper chest lagging. I am a prime example of this and recommend keeping the push-ups.

**Can I substitute weighted pull-ups with one arm pull-up training?** You could, but weighted pull-ups are a good way to condition the elbows for dedicated one arm pull-up work.

**What dip variation should I do – chest or triceps?** You have to choose the variation that feels the most comfortable to your joints. Besides, the difference between chest and triceps dips is blown out of proportions. You can isolate neither the triceps nor the chest during dips.



# How to Maintain Your Strength with as Little Effort as Possible

"I will never quit. I will always train just as hard," is what everyone says while the first successful workout is filling the body with adrenaline and hope for a future of aesthetics, size and before all – muscle induced respect. Remember that day, my friend, because the feeling doesn't last forever.

The euphoria you get from fighting gravity and setting personal records (PRs) will start to gradually leave your system until one day you question yourself whether playing online chess is not more productive than sharing oxygen with sweaty dudes praying to the needle and flirting with iron.

Unfortunately, or not, when you are natural, and sometimes even unnatural, your desire to train could easily subside if you don't get the results you expect. When that happens, your yearning to squeeze iron will begin to drop like the passion of a concert pianist who loves music but never gets paid for his gigs.

At that point, many people will be tempted to quit. This is especially true for black or white thinkers who don't believe that a man can do two things effectively at the same time. This was me not so long ago. I am a notorious quitter. Making sudden turns and starting from square one was my thing. I used to engage in different activities for a couple of years before leaving everything I have built to pursue a new goal – one of the biggest mistakes in my life.

Sometimes, however, you have no choice but to sacrifice the old in the name of the new because there is not enough time in the day to be both a clown and a chef. Lifting is not one of those things. There are ways to reduce your training time to a minimum and maintain your gains or even progress further while dedicating the rest of your resources to something else. All you have to do is learn how to hibernate.

# The Rules of Hibernation Mode

The goal is to do just enough work to progress or at the very least preserve your current gains while spending very little time in the dungeon. This is what I call *hibernation mode*. To make it work, you have to respect the following rules.

## Rule 1: Cut the Volume

Forget about high volume madness. You don't need it. You want to be out of the gym as fast as humanly possible. Cut the volume to a bare minimum – warm-up, 1 to 2 workings and maybe a back-off set depending on how you feel. The volume junkies in the gym will give you puzzled looks, but a truly *demotivated* person who wants to be a minimalist wouldn't care. You have to do what you have to do. Don't worry. There are plenty of people on this planet who will gladly sacrifice themselves in the name of iron while you are absent from the gym.

## Rule 2: Keep the Intensity High

Since the volume is low, you have to keep the intensity high by lifting heavy weights. Otherwise, you will lose strength. We don't want that. Luckily, you don't need to perform many sets to remain at the same strength level or trigger progress. One or two working sets per exercise every week are enough to preserve your current gains and even reach new territory. I have done it myself. I got to a 95lbs/43kg weighted chin-up by performing one working set once a week. This was my only back exercise for months. It doesn't get any more minimal than that, does it?

## Rule 3: Be a Racist and Stick to Your Favorite Exercises

This is not the time to flirt with multiple girls. You don't have the money to support them. Select 1-2 exercises per body part and set the rest on fire.

Obviously, it's better to perform classic compound movements, but isolation is fine too. Just make sure that the exercises you choose are well accepted by your current physical state, and you can perform them with proper form.

Ignore stupid notions such as "you have to hit the muscle from all angles". Let the idiots hit their heads from different angles. You are busy. You have more important stuff to do than argue with brainwashed humanoids. They will remain stuck in their ways forever. Mute them in your heart and mind.

#### **Rule 4: Keep Programming Your Workouts**

Training like a minimalist does not give you the right to freestyle every time you hit the gym. You still have to cycle your weights. Otherwise, you cannot expect to progress. Gains do not come to life without the proper climate.

#### **Rule 5: Keep the Frequency Low**

"The more you practice, the better you will get," they say. I guess they are right...if they are talking about painting or learning a new language. Lifting is different. Resting more is not necessarily a bad thing because your performance is highly dependent on your recovery. Furthermore, it takes significantly less time to learn how to do dips than to perfect your backhand technique. I know that many people want to consider lifting as technical as gymnastics, but it isn't. Progress is definitely possible even with infrequent training.

In addition, low frequency keeps you hungry for more whereas high frequency can make you hate anything you have ever loved. Just look at married people who sit at the table without talking or even looking at each other. I bet they were crazy in love once upon a time, but even sweethearts get tired of seeing the same movie over and over again. To love something, you have to miss it from time to time.

#### **Rule 6: Try to Mute Your OCD**

It's not uncommon to start hearing OCD voices once you adjust your routine.

"What are you thinking, noob? You have to lift until your brain explodes if you want to preserve your gains," says the demon of fear.

It's not true. You won't lose any muscle mass except the one that exists only in your head. If your strength doesn't drop, it is extremely unlikely that you are losing muscle mass.

## **7 False Principles Promoted by the Functional Coaches**

Have you ever wondered what is the destiny of a man disappointed by FLEX magazine and Men's Health?

The instinctive reaction is to type "*training for real naturals*" in Google and stumble upon material written by the "functional" hypertrophy scientists who never miss an opportunity to ridicule the "bro splits" and promote their pristine 5x5 strength routines that could make even the biggest hard-gainer in the universe "grow like a weed".

"You can't get big and strong with those silly routines. They are designed solely for bodybuilders on steroids. Come to me, soldier. I will show you have to activate your glutes for proper squatting. I will also teach you how to get big by training like powerlifters who are as we all know ultra-natural and owe their size to heavy barbells," declares bravely Captain Functional with a touch of peculiarity in his voice suggesting a slight but very real ego erection in progress.

I wish claims like that were true. I wish heavy weights and powerlifting were the cure for natural bodybuilding. I really do, but unfortunately, it's just a spin-off.

The functional gurus are supposed to present an alternative to the mainstream pseudoscience and yet very often they rely on the same mechanisms to attract clients, supporters and fans.

Just like the popular sources of muscle info, the "pure" strength focused coaches promise extraterritorial growth that never comes to fruition.

On this occasion, I present you 10 false principles promoted by the functional strength coaches.

## **1. Powerlifters are natural or at the very least do not use as many drugs as bodybuilders**

Before powerlifters, men are men, and therefore, subject to the same natural laws. If a man carries as much mass as a bodybuilder on steroids, he is on steroids too regardless of his hobbies and profession.

The evidence is everywhere. Powerlifters tired of being called fatso swines get shredded and look like bodybuilders. Bodybuilders who miss pizza too much hang up the thong and focus on strength sports.

Yet we are supposed to believe that abbreviated strength routines can help us become extra big naturally. False! The only difference between deceived bodybuilding fans and the powerlifting fanboys is that the former worship leaner men, whereas the latter like men with curves.

In both cases, the source of strength and growth beyond the natural limits is the same – drugs.

## **2. The functional gurus don't offer many before and after pictures, do they?**

The books of Mark Rippetoe, Pavel Tsatsouline, Stuart McRobert and other popular authors of literature designed for men who are not fans of glute injections have thousands of positive reviews and yet close to zero before and after photos.

This leads me to a very interesting question.

## **Where is the muscle?**

Where are the natural humans who supposedly get so big from their affair with heavy barbells that people accuse them of injecting steroids? If millions of men have bought those books, presenting before and after photos shouldn't be a problem, right? We are living in the era of the front facing cameras after all.

The explanation is surprisingly simple – the individuals who follow the principles get stronger since the programming in the books is sometimes intelligent, but the extra "natty" mass that we all dream of does not manifest itself.

### **3. Past a certain point adding weight to the bar does not result in extra growth**

Let's see if you remember the answer to this question.

Who has bigger legs? The man squatting 315lbs or the man squatting 405lbs? It's simple – the guy with the better genetics for growth.

### **4. Bulking does not equal more muscle mass**

Many programs considered "destroyers" of mainstream bodybuilding promote high food intake for recovery and supreme growth. One could only wonder how many boys have become lactose intolerant and fat as hell as a result of GOMAD.

The sad reality is that bulking never works unless you are on drugs. Even if you are one of those mythical ectomorphs who supposedly need to consume 5k calories every day to remain on the planet, you can still get very fat. There isn't a scenario, besides drug use, where extreme food quantities result in massive muscle growth. Why? Because the nutrients found in food do not have the power to alter the process of protein synthesis whereas hormones do.

As a result, your bulking drama does not result in anything other than fat gains regardless of how heavy you train. Even if you do two simultaneous Smolov cycles (one in the evening and in the morning), you will still get fat if you consume an extreme amount of calories over your daily needs.

Sadly, many lifters force themselves to believe that the lard they have gained as a result of bulking is indeed muscle mass, but it isn't.

You weigh 200lbs? Good for you. But, please, tell me... who is the fat boy in the mirror?

## **5. All roads lead to your genetic potential as long as you keep walking**

You can reach your genetic potential by following Ronnie Coleman's split routine if you cycle your weights and persevere long enough.

Ultimately, the only major difference between the various routines out there is how they shape you. A bro routine will make you top heavy whereas a powerlifting routine will make...well...a centaur. The amount of overall lean body mass will not be significantly different. I assure you.

## **6. The goal of functional routines is to make your feel superior... you are not**

The designers of functional routines make their pupils feel superior for being "real men" who lift "heavy". Since we love feeling special, we accept the urban legends as truth and fall in love with the program, for it gives us a way to nourish our egos. I am sorry, but in its core, functional training is not superior to biceps curls. Ultimately, it's another form of mind games.

## **7. Strength obsession comes with injuries**

Many beginners jeopardize their form in order to satisfy the fetish of self-proclaimed gurus who for some reason consider themselves worthy of saying who is a real man and who isn't. Technically, no guru promotes bad form, but it often comes as a side effect of strength obsession.

# Part III

## Outro

### How to Protect Yourself from the Mainstream Media

Professional liars dress their lies in truths whereas amateurs focus on the false, and even the air in the room can sense when they are lying. The truthful facts surrounding a lie have a dual function. Their role is to penetrate your firewall and calm the heartbeat of the liar by allowing him to sound authentic.

The mainstream media follows the exact same principle to support its money printer and propaganda press. The big budgets and access to skillful PR experts make the spectacle even more powerful and dangerous. Nonetheless, the fact that we are spectators of an infected show does not mean that there's absolutely no value in it. If the acid is neutralized, even mainstream media can offer useful information. The first step is to become aware of the deception mechanism.

#### **What is the main goal of the mainstream media?**

The ultimate purpose of the mainstream media is not to inform the public but to construct a specific world view on the basis of real or made-up events interpreted in a way supporting the current political agenda and level of consciousness within the human race.

Every motion picture emitted by the screen is injected with beliefs meant to create a reality for you. Very often the propaganda is subtle, but it's always there. Even something as harmless as a comedy show can be loaded with ingeniously positioned venom. One could only wonder how many people have been raised by series such as *Friends*, *Family Guy*, *The Big Bang Theory*, *How I*



*Met Your Mother, Two and a Half Men* and many more. While we are laughing at the jokes, carefully selected concepts infiltrate our value system and change our idea how we are supposed to live.

The men running the propaganda machine are aware that humans are easily programmable and treat our minds as hard drives that ought to be occupied with infected data. And once the hard drives are full, it becomes almost impossible to change since there's no space for new ideas, and deleting old files is a very painful and slow process. As a consequence, most humans run an operating system known as Humanoid.

## **How to Avoid Being Taken by the Mainstream Muscle Media**

Below you will find a guide that can save you from the whirlpool of mainstream muscle media feeding off innocent ponies unaware how cruel this world is.

### **1. Remember that no man with colossal exposure deserves complete trust**

No one enjoying *significant* popularity can be fully trusted because the men permitting such exposure always try to steer the public in a specific direction and mental state.

Before a man can sit on the catapult of the media, he has to agree to produce content 100% on par with the program. Everyone on the covers passes through the filter. Most don't care because they are getting paid and receive support from the crowd hypnotized by Photoshopped images and pumped up words.

### **2. Remember that everything worthwhile is either inherited or very hard to acquire**

Forget about easy gains, hacks and other forms of shortcuts. All good things in life come to you either in the form of genes or you work for them day after day.

Every single routine, supplement or nutrition plan offering gains beyond the believable is a product of a marketing scheme playing with the natural human desire to cheat and receive the present a little earlier than promised.

### **3. Remember that every media has an army of brainwashed warriors ready to die for it**

The media relies on an army of disinfo agents to protect itself on the digital front. Comments and posts are deleted when they could be hurtful to the primary political views of the site/channel.

I have been banned from many popular websites dedicated to muscle construction. Undoubtedly, I deserved some of my bans for my inappropriate behavior, but more often than not, the admins were just mad at me for disagreeing with the founding ideology of the media. It's completely pointless to criticize the enemy on his territory. Your comments will be removed, and the army of conscious and unconscious trolls defending the doctrine of the cult will unleash its massive wrath upon you. If you want to expose certain flaws, you have to do it elsewhere. As a consequence, you cannot put all your faith in one block. Always listen to both sides before making a decision.

### **4. Remember that 99% of the men promoted by the media are not natural**

I am sorry, but if a guy is heavily promoted by a mainstream source, the chances of him being a "full natty brah" are practically zero. The media does not promote naturals because natties are unappealing and cannot stimulate the dream centers of the brain. No one gets inspired from every day stories. People want larger than life experiences.

The 1% of natural men found in the diaries of popular muscle media are usually celebrities who have lost weight. However, the celebrities serving as an example of a developed musculature are usually at least on TRT.

### **5. Routines, diet plans and supplements backed solely by the words of big boys are injected with poison**

A lot of pillar ideas taken for granted are backed solely by the words of big guys. The logic is simple – he's big and therefore knows his stuff. It's true that a big guy knows what it takes to get as big as him, but since the secret is not politically correct, and it's way more profitable to keep up with the main program, he tells you about the "power" of creatine.

### **6. The mainstream media must please it's advertisers**

No media is completely independent because it always has to please its advertisers and come up with products to sell. "Nothing wrong in making money," you say. You are correct but only up to a point. If people truly know what they are buying, it would be fine to sell them almost anything. This is rarely the case, however. The majority of the money in the industry comes from unaware teens and young adults trying to hack life by building ticker muscle fibers.

### **7. Every media presents its con artists in the best possible light**

If a man makes it to the cover, he is always presented as a superhuman able to overcome extreme obstacles. The media has the power to transform ordinary men into elite superheroes. The ugly photos are deleted. The pretty ones undergo Photoshop surgery. Every question consolidates the authority of the interviewed subject. The haters in the comments are muted. Facts are made-up and/or significantly modified.

### **8. Reduce your expectations to at least 1/3 of the promised results**

If a program is meant to give you 2 whole inches of arm growth in 3 months, reduce the number to 0.6 and accept that this is what you are going to gain in

the best-case scenario. I know it's a little harsh, but there's nothing you can do about it.

If a program is promising you 20lbs/9kg of muscle mass in 6 months, reduce the number to 6.5lbs/3kg.

## **15 Irrational Arguments Used by Dreamers to Prove That Someone Is Natural**

### **1. It took him a long time**

The intoxicated advocates of fake naturals often rely on the length of a transformation to prove the "innocence" of their favorite muscle hero. According to their unsophisticated logic, a prolonged metamorphosis equals natural status by default. In their minds, muscle hypertrophy is a never-ending linear process, and therefore, naturals can become really big if they train for decades patiently.

There are major problems with similar claims. First, hypertrophy is not a never-ending linear process. It ends faster than you think. Second, how does one determine the starting point? Can you really take the words of the defendant as facts? Anyone, including IFBB pros, could dig out a dusty photo from their youth, place it next to a current image and assemble a before and after collage showcasing a large contrast over a lengthy period of time.

People have to learn that even men on steroids have a limited potential for growth and undergo a long journey. It takes years to transform from a testosterone only guy into a full-blown bodybuilder on grams of different gear.

In addition, you can't grow forever by just upping the dose. All steroid users peak too. At some point, the androgen receptors and the internal organs "burn out", and the movie stops being fun.

In brief, the length of a transformation proves nothing. If a man looks like he's on steroids, he is on steroids even if there are 20 years in-between the before and after photos.

## **2. Where are the signs?**

"But there are no signs of steroid use or abuse! He has a full head of hair, no gynecomastia, no acne or flushed skin, no bloat, no excessive trap development..." writes the dreaming natural and proceeds to googling "test boosting herbs".

Kid, there is only one sign that matters – muscle mass. That's it. If a man is carrying extraterrestrial slabs of meat, he isn't natural even if there are no other signs. Look at the professional bodybuilders. They are all walking pharmacies, and yet many don't display the classic signs of steroid abuse, except for the trap development.

The absence of classic indicators of steroid use/abuse does not prove "innocence". The factors that determine how your body reacts to steroids are too many to expect everyone to experience the same results and/or side effects. Some men get severe problems from low doses while others take steroids for 20-30 years without seeing a hospital except for blood results.

## **3. But he is not too big... he must be natty.**

He is not big? Where does your idea of big come from? It comes from YouTube, mainstream websites and magazines. They are telling you what is big and what is small. Just because your favorite pro is on the smaller side, it doesn't mean he is natural. It just means that he is either using less "product" or has a worse drug response in comparison to his rivals. If the quality of the muscle mass looks unreal, the size is almost irrelevant.

## **4. He is a very nice guy. It can't be true.**

You have to be joking. Politeness does not make anyone natural. Besides, nobody says that steroid users are rude people.

The fact that you like someone does not make him natural. You just want him to be. Activation of the left brain can help in similar situations.

### **5. But he squats and follows an ultra-scientific powerlifting routine.**

Exactly. He follows an ultra-scientific powerlifting routine. You follow an ultra-scientific powerlifting routine too. Yet you don't look like him. Why?

"Because he has the better routine – the one containing the right exercises and the perfect rep range," screams the dreamer.

Not really. The key to growth is not a specific exercise. Every movement is replaceable. It's true that a well-designed routine can give you strength results and more thickness, but training cannot recreate the overall mass that steroids produce.

### **6. He has a perfect diet.**

Here we go again. Bodybuilders and fitness models rarely follow a strict diet. Most eat "normally" and some even rely exclusively on junk food regardless of what they say in front of the camera. The actual intense dieting happens one or two months before a competition.

But even if they were on a perfect diet, whatever that is, nutrition does not have the ability to boost your hormones into the orbit. Therefore, the fact that your favorite bodybuilding autistic records every gram of food entering his body does not make him natural in the slightest.

### **7. He has kids.**

Steroids can undoubtedly do a number on your fertility power, but there are plenty of hardcore bodybuilders who have been making babies for decades despite the grams of drugs that have passed through their bodies. One of them is Ronnie Coleman. By now, his house probably looks like a kindergarten.

Somewhat ironically, children could motivate their fathers to pin even harder. Allow me to explain. Men on steroids set the standards of the industry. Without the mass and thickness produced by the drugs, the current mechanism will wear out because ordinary people who want to look like the big guys will no longer have a valid reason to purchase the powders. If you want to be a pro and make enough money to provide for your family, you have to keep playing the game. If you refuse to inject, you won't be competitive, and your bodybuilding candle will burn out quickly.

## **8. He is too old.**

The older you are, the more you benefit from steroids. When a young healthy male introduces steroids to his developing body, he basically shuts down his testosterone producing system while adding 5-10 years to his face. Meanwhile, beaten old men experience a form of reincarnation once the doctor prescribes frequent import of testosterone. Past a certain age, roids make you feel younger. The possibility of side effects remains, but the potential losses are diminishing, for you are already inhabiting the history books.

Under the right supervision, one can take steroids for a long time without adverse consequences. Many old men presented as examples of sound health in the later stages of life are on TRT (testosterone replacement therapy). Yet only a few will admit it. Just like the younger guys, they will fill your head with hallucinations about the perfect diet and training routine.

Imagine the following situation. You are a 45-year-old man with children. Your testosterone factory is already experiencing shortages and does not plan on expanding naturally. Your hair is history, and you are not afraid of premature facial aging because past a certain point, steroids do not age your face, at least not significantly. Men in a similar situation are prime candidates for an external administration of hormones and can easily get a prescription for high-quality testosterone, which is another incentive to become a needle samurai. Can we really judge the men who choose this route?

I met a guy like that in a dirty powerlifting gym where I spent two years. He had two children already, no hair and was openly talking about his affair with testosterone. The man had one of the biggest chests in the gym despite benching just a plate and a quarter most of the time. As a bonus, he did only partial reps without locking his elbows.

Steroids are also very common in the circle of retired bodybuilders whose egos desperately want to hold on to the past. Whenever you cross paths with an old man whose soul is dressed in a body that puts 20-year-old naturals to shame, know that he is praying to the Lord of the Needles.

### **9. He doesn't look 3D.**

The bodies on the covers and in YouTube videos with millions of views are not a result of a single steroid. You can't simply buy cheap testosterone from China, inject and transform into one of the muscle-mafia boys. It's not that easy. It takes more to build a physique inhabiting dreams and controlling minds.

The 3D look is hard to achieve with testosterone alone. It's certainly possible to come close with perfect dieting, but even then, the glow provided by the rest of the elixirs will be missing. If anything, testosterone comes with water retention, especially when you are on a high-carb diet. For that very reason, some muscle warriors drop testosterone completely before a photo shoot.

The need to take different drugs to assemble the modern look explains why there are many men who don't exhibit the detail and muscle quality common for fitness models, and yet their size is enough to know that they are not 100% natural.

### **10. He simply has great genetics.**

Oh, really? You gotta love the genetic inspectors. How did you figure out that he has great genetics? Yes, when it comes to the frame, it's rather obvious, but what about the rest?



Very often, the "genetic wonder" card serves as a cover-up for drug use.

### **11. He competes in drug tested federations.**

There are zero incentives for natural federations to test their competitors effectively.

Random tests, which is what is required to catch drug users, are too expensive. Bodybuilding, and especially its lower leagues, do not have the funds to test every competitor.

As a result, they either don't test or announce the dates in advance, which allows the users to clear their systems.

### **12. Steroids are illegal where he lives.**

Cocaine, weed, ecstasy, LSD and escorts are illegal too and yet present in every major city. If something is in large demand, there's always a supplier.

The fact that steroids are banned for recreational purposes complicates the process but does not terminate it.

### **13. He is too poor to afford steroids.**

I don't care how poor a man is – if he looks like he is on steroids, he is on steroids. If someone plays the piano like a pro, he has trained like a pro even if today he/she is living on the street. When an end result cannot manifest without a specific cause, that cause is always present even if you refuse to see it. No one wakes up in the body of a champion without having walked the path first.

### **14. He is my roommate. We share everything...**

We can be incredibly sneaky and inventive when we desperately want to hide something. This is especially true for introverts with an eye for the detail. I worked with a girl whose father had another daughter that he kept a secret for

18 years. I don't imply that all people lie, but similar surprise situations are not that uncommon. If humans want to hide something, they find a way.

### **15. He travels a lot. Where does he hide his steroids?**

It's true that many popular bodybuilders travel all over the world, which makes cycling more complicated. But why would you think that makes them natural? A dedicated bodybuilder supports his/her steroid journey at all costs.

For example, some bodybuilders tour strictly in the off-season or after a show. That way their main steroid cycles during the building phase remain uninterrupted.

Another common practice is to mail your steroids to the place you are visiting before arriving there.

# **How to Cope with The Fact That You May Not Have the Best Genetics in Town**

Once you are fully synthesized and breathing, the world begins to create a reality for you. For some it's a fairy tale, for others, it's a nightmare. In both cases, however, your concepts are a chemical reaction between the external beliefs pouring into your mind and the conclusions you reach from your personal dialogue with the universe. The entire process is catalyzed by the ultimate fuel for humans – hoping and coping.

The world is always trying to con us one way or another, but very often, we do most of the work. The system installs the seed; we grow it.

The ego loves alcohol and hates water. Convincing a drunk that the bench in the park is not the king's bed could be troublesome. The castle of serfdom sees truth as an acid. Thus, most people remain drunk throughout their whole lives.

There are two kinds of bullets that can kill a dream or a desire – inaction and impossibility. The manifestation of every wish requires specific physical conditions without which the abyss eats the yearning for better or worse. This is the part of the movie where humans get to vote, at least at first glance. If you don't work for what you want, you won't get it. Personal greatness requires personal sacrifice. If you are not the one hurting after a fight in the weight room, you are not the one getting stronger.

But work and dedication are limited. Just like the eyes cannot see through mountains, human effort cannot always bridge the gap separating you from your desires. What you want has to be real, but not just for the world – it has to be real for you – the man in the mirror. Every person is living a personal reality predetermined by the laws of the universe and an element called

genetic makeup. Everything produced by your efforts always falls within those two hard walls.

Words like that stab the deepest layers of the ego. Nobody wants to hear that his desires were destined to fail from the very beginning. At the same time, successful people refuse to admit that a large part of their accomplishments has the characteristics of a gift. Refusal to agree with the court acts as a self-preservation mechanism designed to protect you from a nihilistic infection.

Delusions are a tricky partner. A man carrying a spirit unaware of limitations will either crash into an invisible barrier or pass through it without knowing. The most probable scenario is the first one.

The older I get the more I realize how delusional we actually are. As humans, we often refuse to see our shortcomings as well as the external limitations imposed on us by the world. The ego just doesn't allow it.

One time, a girl I worked with desk to desk started talking about some exceptionally handsome guy she'd met on a dating app. "You gotta see him," she said, and before she'd even finished the last word, all women from the office gathered around her chair and stared at her iPhone. Their eyes looked hungry and yet filled with an overflowing mixture of jealousy, fear and curiosity. The pixels on the screen had to be magical because seconds later the women started raving about the guy as if their blood was replaced with euphoria.

What surprised me the most was that their rapture was encapsulated in sincerity. It seemed like the beauty of the guy was strong enough to extract only honesty from them. This got me seriously curious. I had to know who this "banderas" was, and why he was showing interest in my extremely flat, borderline ugly, colleague. I looked too.

His facial genes were obviously movie star material, but what got the most of my attention was his professional photo. My scam radar activated. To be sure, I found his Facebook profile and did a reverse image search on Google. It

turned out that the guy is a professional Brazilian model. Obviously, someone else was hiding behind his photos to attract women.

This story confirmed to me one more time that the human ego will slice the Earth in two pieces to satisfy itself. Somehow, the mind of my colleague had gotten possessed by delusions strong enough to make her believe that a top tier guy will resort to dating apps, and of all girls – talk to her. I am not saying this to be mean. It's just the reality of life. Money goes to money. Beauty is attracted by beauty, at least most of the time. Besides, we are talking about online dating – a realm where looks matter even more since your profile picture is doing all the talking. Furthermore, I took great pride in ending this farce. She still hates me, though.

Another example of delusions running wild that I really love happened after a game of Starcraft. In short, I lost and decided to rage at my executor with sarcastic comments.

"You have really good map awareness and decision making. You should move to Korea and train to become a pro," I wrote thinking the exact opposite.

"Nice of you to say it. I am actually trying. I am 34 and have 2 kids, but I practice a lot. I hope there's still hope for me," he replied.

The guy was serious.

I shook my head in disbelief. The man was dreaming of becoming a pro gamer at 34 even though most retire well before 30. On top of that, he wasn't even good. My level has always been mediocre at best, and he barely won. Yet his ego was so drunk that he built a house with bricks of sarcasm.

Undoubtedly, I've been extremely delusional throughout my life too. When I was a teen, I wanted to become a professional skater even though I had neither the talent nor the joints for such an achievement.

When I started reading about muscle, I thought that only the cheaters need to take steroids.

When I started looking for a girl, I thought that everyone will see my best qualities and accept some of my defects. Just lol... The exact opposite happened. Every single weakness that I have was amplified until it started to overshadow all else.

The journey to ego sobriety involves many difficult stages and requires you to admit that you and/or your circumstances are inferior and incapable of producing the desired results. Most people fail miserably, for it's a lot easier to live with your ego when you are constantly bathing it in alcohol. Often one delusion is replaced by another of equal magnitude.

To get out, you need to admit the truth and find a new direction. You have to stop running against the wind and join forces with it instead. As long as you bet on your built-in weaknesses instead of developing your natural strengths, reality will keep slapping you year after year.

There is no other way to move past genetically based failures. What wasn't meant to be will never be because the source code doesn't allow it. As I already told you – real progress happens when you learn what you cannot have and go for what's available.

The qualities that mark your life the most have already been decided for you by whoever writes destiny. Height, race, gender, facial features, character, country of origin, nationality, family and the rest of your genetic makeup are found at the base of every accomplishment or failure.

Many of the men that this world worships are not special in the slightest. They were just born at the right place at the right time and passed through the right conditioning. The environment made them special. Their intrinsic value is not higher than anyone else's. It's not just about hard work, kid. Hard work is futile unless it's placed in a position of power. Factory workers work more than any tennis player, and yet no one cares.

One of the only ways to compensate for inferior genetic makeup is to place yourself in a situation where action can seemingly overshadow talent. When people say that you can't escape from yourself wherever you go, they actually mean that you can't escape from your genes and the consequences they catalyze or prevent.

Unfortunately, for many of us, bodybuilding is not a world where hard work can beat talent and genetics no matter what the barbell samurai say. Once you have maximized your genetics, it's basically game over. Past that point, all extra effort transforms into conditioning and doesn't stimulate growth.

The professional bodybuilding stage proves this principle. People like Branch Warren don't have the genetics to place any higher no matter how hard they lift or inject. There are other bodybuilders with superior structure who overshadow them easily. Set and reps don't build genetics. Neither do steroids.

Naturally, this makes most people sad because a dream is dead. I understand. It made me sad too, but we have to keep moving unless you want to be eaten by stagnation. Don't lead your whole army in a battle with a predetermined outcome.

Initially, you will feel like a junky separated from his sweet medicine. The pain will be real, but no one around you will understand. They will just label you as a weak person worthy of suffering. It happened to me when I was 17 years old. For some peculiar reason, at that stage of my life, I decided to try for a local football team – a move which in my mind was going to catapult me into fame. I bought the necessary equipment and felt like a king once I had it on me. I looked in the mirror and saw a future star. "If I can't be a skater, I will be a footballer," I thought. During the very first session, the hand of reality felt like the slap my grandfather donated to my face when he caught me cutting his passport with scissors when I was 5.

"How old are you, boy," asked the coach.

"17," I said knowing that I am a granddaddy because the other players on the team looked like recent kindergarten graduates. Yet I was still dreaming.

"You are a little old for my team," but let's see what you can do.

The following 50 minutes were humiliating. I made a ton of mistakes and felt like a man playing piano on his smartphone next to concert pianists. "It's not going to happen, son," said the coach while trying to be as soft as possible. There was no need for him to tell me that. I already knew that the only pro football I was going to see was on TV. I felt furious and absolutely devastated inside.

I returned home, put the equipment in a box and went to a local park. I found a deserted place and started ranting. My only listeners were the dark clouds over my head and my bleeding ego. It felt like the world had ended even though I was just a 17-year-old boy with his whole life ahead of him. Today, I laugh so hard at this story that the neighbors call the police. What was I thinking? Haha.

The fact that one door is closed doesn't mean that it's all over. It only means that you have to go to the next room, which could very well be a lot more interesting and welcoming than the first one. The period in-between is the hardest because it's a transition and as such, it comes with the destruction of old habits and the creation of new.

Only a few survive the adaptation stage. This explains why most people never change for the better. But if you are strong enough to endure the transition phase, one day you will look back and laugh at your old self too.



# How to Inject Life Juice, Ascend and Win as a Natty

My journey in the land of muscle construction began with a simple Google search. I typed "exercises for poor posture" in the bar with my indecisive ecto-fingers and felt like a mad genius about to crack a secret code. Prior to this moment, I was convinced that lifting is a shallow activity designed for insecure low IQ wannabes, but that day, my desire to do better won the fight against the prejudice inhabiting my head.

Poor posture represents weakness, fear of life, lack of confidence and before all an inability to appreciate and love yourself. This is what I have been fighting for a long time.

I have a torn black and white photo of me as a 5-year-old. In it, I am running on the beach, weighed down by a back stolen from a baby camel. Nonetheless, there has never been anything wrong with my back physically. My mind, infected with weakness and cowardice, has always been the faulty part. Lifting had to be the cure.

Once the muscle game has absorbed you fully, you enter a peculiar realm. You think you know everything because there are signs everywhere, but you don't. You can't. You are too young and unaware. Knowing the truth requires experience. You have to fall to the bottom and climb to the top... your top.

The process is long and bipolar. You go to bed satisfied only to wake up in the middle of the night feeling empty, desperate, lonely, regretful and scared. Then, the morning comes. Work and TV shows overshadow the void, and you begin to call yourself normal again. The next evening, it's the opposite. You go to bed heartbroken only to wake up energized and ready to fight.

In this chapter, I will present you the oscillating natty journey in its entirety. I will show you the stages of madness, desperation, pain, obsession, failure,

hard work and success. I will remind you why we lead this war in the first place. But before all, I will show you how to survive and win.

## **The Game has loaded...**

### **Level Zero**

Video games don't start at level one. They start at level zero, which you enter once the entertainment industry has finished installing a craving for games in your head. It's the same with lifting. During the first phase, you receive an injection filling your system with desire and red-blooded motivation to lift heavy objects.

Why do we sign the contract? We do it because in lifting weights we discover a way to solve the equation called life. We see a way to win.

### **Level One**

Level I is the movie intro that gets you glued to the screen. It begins when you lift a weight for the first time. At this phase, you are a complete beginner still learning the control buttons. You make silly mistakes, but luckily, the industry is there to guide you through the process because she loves you and wants to give you what you want. Colossal rewards like beastly biceps are waiting for you. All you have to do destroy the final boss.

At that moment, the hand of the industry has you trapped. You are taking all the blue pills in the pharmacy and then some. Malicious suggestions are constantly entering your cranium while the gullible part of your brain is working overtime and absorbing everything.

They got you. You move when they want you to move and believe what they want you to believe. Once the software is in your head, you fall into the weight room where you have to earn your muscles by lifting weights "the right way". Many men spend their entire lifting career playing level one without realizing it. Every year is the same as the one before. Every workout is a copy of the previous one. But you don't ask why because you still believe in mainstream

dogmas. You are ready for the next level only when you wake up screaming while the vicious knife of depression is digging into your insides.

## **Level Two: Infatuation, Grief, Break-Up**

Level Two is exceptionally similar to a postponed and yet unavoidable break-up.

A few years ago, a guy I knew broke up with his wife because she was cheating on him with some nasty bro from their social circle. "Really! That fat pig," exclaimed the *cheated* man when he learned who had been dick-injecting his wife for quite some time.

The poor guy did never-ending compromises to preserve the relationship alive even though his woman was a bitch of the highest order and deserved a murderous slap across her powdered face. She left him right when his salary entered the abyss. Yet he kept on chasing her.

Before the divorce had even begun, she was already uploading pics of her in the fat arms of the new lover. The reaction of my buddy? The idiot liked the pictures. One time he even called her on the phone to tell her how pretty she was in one of the photos. Yes, he is one of those beta-males willing to hold the arm of "their" girl while she is giving birth to someone else's twins.

His story reminds me of a natty fiercely searching for a way to experience the muscle dream. During this stage, we brainwash ourselves constantly because we want the miracle to be true. We want to believe that she [the industry] still loves us, but she doesn't. She never did. The only thing she wanted was validation, worship and money. Nevertheless, we continue to buy powder, creatine, BCAA, glutamine, testosterone boosters, caffeine, pre-workouts, vitamins, fish oil and other magical cures in a hopeless attempt to make a corpse come to life. Sorry. It's dead and will remain dead forever.

This is a very hard level to pass because you are not operating *normally* let alone in an *optimal* mode. You are infatuated, and your brain is feeding you infected thoughts keeping you on the ground. You are a boot looping

smartphone. To fix yourself, you have to wipe out the cache [*the emotional baggage and clutter clouding your judgment*] and repair the start-up engine.

Once the brain fog has cleared, you will realize that something is wrong, extract the blue pill of false emotions out of your system and scream: "I don't need you, bitch."

Unfortunately, few men have the strength to do this. Most stay in a perpetual loop repeating level 1 and 2.

The next step is not for everyone. It is for the crazy. It is for those who have the courage to look in the mirror and admit defeat. It is for those who can call themselves losers and move on to bigger & better things. Few are this brave.

### **Level Three: The Other Side**

Fat people get skinny. Skinny people get fat. Losers transform into winners. Winners transform into losers. Savers transform into gamblers. Gamblers transform into savers. Going from one extreme to the other is not complicated or uncommon. You already know what took you to the far left or right. To reach the other side, you just have to do the opposite. If you have the power to self-destruct, the power to self-construct is also within you.

Maybe, you lost a skill or failed because you didn't prepare. The fix is easy. All you have to do is work hard when you were resting before. One end replaces the other.

I relied on this principle to transform into a good student in less than a year. I know that it may be hard to comprehend, but I was neither the smartest kid on the block nor the best in school. I had a very poor attention span and working habits. In 8<sup>th</sup> grade, something clicked. I wanted to do better. I wanted to prove others that I was worth more. A questionable motivation, but an intent never holds the utmost importance. What matters the most is the outcome.

To get there, I put my life in reverse. Instead of playing, I was studying. Instead of watching TV, I was reading. Before you know it, I transformed into a full-blown nerd with amazing grades. An enormous disbelief started eating those who knew me from before: "How is this even possible," were saying the grimaces on their faces while I was acing every test. Honestly, it wasn't even that hard. I just did the opposite. People prone to extremes have an easier time swinging from the far left to the far right and vice versa due to the incredible amount of tension stored in one direction.

If you want to reach the next level, you have to use that tension too. You have to catapult yourself to the other side of the bridge. You have to transform from a protein powder hungry boy into a red pill warrior laughing at the low IQ attempts of the industry to sell you muscles in a box.

The beginning will be tough. You will want to crawl back to mommy [the industry] and ask her to take you back in her arms of deception. You will reread the magazines, the books, the blue pill forums and try again. But eventually, the voice in your head saying: "Wake up!" will overpower the desire to keep hitting the snooze button.

After a few reruns of the same cycle, you will find yourself on the other side of the bridge. There you will see a very small group or no one at all. You will be lonely and misunderstood. The feeling is similar to being Facebook-less when your friends have been posting daily selfies since 2010. The pain of isolation will be your biggest enemy.

"But, sir, you cannot get that big naturally," you will say to other lifters in the gym, hoping to be heard, but nobody will listen. Not even those in your league. Everyone will be shaking their heads in disbelief. You will quickly become the "loser", "the hater", "the moron", "the naysayer". You will start to question whether your existence is not just an error in the code. But you will pass through this stage too. All you have to do is endure for a while. One day, you will wake up and everything will be clear. At that very moment – you are ready to enter Level Four.

## Level Four: The Final Frontier

Level IV begins a lot like Level III, and yet there is a major difference – your naivete is dead. You sliced it, and it's been bleeding. The black is black again, and the white is white. There isn't hesitation, only clarity.

On the outside, everything will look unchanged. People will still see you as a bitter hater trying to bring others into the land of mediocrity. Only men with deep vision may detect your transformation. But these people are a rarity. Don't expect an apology or congratulations. Nobody cares about you. You are alone.

Being informed is just the beginning. Awareness is not enough. It's important, but information means nothing without an end game. You need a new path.

The opportunities are endless. You are getting out of a relationship. One person is dead to you, but a sea is waiting. The catch is that I am not talking about an abundance of options connected to muscle construction. I am talking about the hundreds of other activities that you can do once you are free from the obnoxious chains of the industry.

When you know the truth, you can invest in other assets while still developing your physical qualities. You are no longer a slave eating chicken breast around the clock. You are no longer a little boy asking for protein powder and creatine with a high-pitched insecure voice. You are no longer the guy getting sore eyes from nights of analysis. That guy is in the past and therefore dead. You are now free to do whatever you want.

A long time ago, I read a post on [bodybuilding.com](http://bodybuilding.com) that resonated with me. It was written by a frustrated natty unable to make it happen. The poster wrote: "If I had invested the same time in music, I would have become a maestro by now." I felt the same way. The time and mental energy that go in this muscle game stop returning dividends way earlier than people think.

Does this mean that you have to quit? No. Even if you wanted to, you can't stop training forever. Lifting is an infection that never leaves the body.

Medicine may suppress it, but it's always there. The flame may dwindle, but it never dies.

When people say "I hate this unfair natty game. I am giving up.", I laugh because I know that giving up is impossible. There is no such thing as a former training addict. Quitting just doesn't work. What works is setting realistic priorities and achieving them.

What can a natty achieve in the weight room?

The first option is strength. Natties can develop mad strength for their bodyweight and size. It will take years, but one day you will become so strong that the general population will consider you a superhuman.

Imagine that you can do a one arm pull-up. A movement that takes most untrained people 2-3 years to achieve. Yes, there are many individuals on YouTube who can do one arm pull-ups, but you don't live in YouTube. You live where you live. I don't know where that is, but I am certain that there aren't many humans who can do 10 pull-ups in a row let alone a one arm pull-up. You will be exceptional compared to them.

The next on the list are mobility and flexibility. Steroids can't make you mobile or flexible. Only training can do that for you. Big or small, you have to train to become the flexible baby you once were.

In the past, I looked at flexibility and mobility as a complete waste of time. I saw them as a consolation prize given to natties and Rambo wannabes to play with. I don't like consolation prizes. I don't like coping either, but I know it's necessary. Once I introduced flexibility and mobility work to my schedule, I felt better. My body was healthier.

The next physical element that natties can focus on is skill. Once you know that muscle growth isn't happening for you the natty way, you can redirect your training towards the development of skills. Do whatever you want – boxing, running, climbing. The activity is irrelevant. What's important is that the more you train, the more results you are going to see, which is not the

case with natural bodybuilding. After a year or two, natural bodybuilding transforms into one ungrateful bitch. You do everything for her, and yet she behaves like a tree.

The final and most important reason to keep lifting is health. Natural or not, training enhances your system better than pills. Even just climbing the stairs puts you ahead of the rest. And yet no one's motivation to start lifting is health. Health is not sexy. Nobody wants to be healthy. People want to be YOLO. Healthy? That's for the retired boring old dudes. That's why I often replace the word health with "optimal condition". Cool, you don't want to reach 80. I don't want either, at least right now. But since we are here anyway, we might just as well try to optimize our existence.

And while some admirable physical qualities can be acquired through natural training, nothing compares to the life lessons of the muscle war.

Lifting taught me more about the world than my TV and parents did. When I first entered a gym, I was still a delusional boy carrying a soul filled with false hopes. In the weight room, I didn't meet the coldness of the universe for the first time, but I felt its ruthlessness more than ever. It didn't care about my feelings. It told me to shut up and obey. And that's what I did.

On the outside, the process did not look special – just a skinny kid lifting weights due to insecurities. But nothing is ever that simple. The journey showed me truths I had never thought of. I saw the real colors. I learned that I was wrong about most things. I had to pass through a labyrinth of hysteria and failures to acknowledge my life illiteracy, but this was exactly what I deserved.

I was a phone with a faulty chip that had to enter the oven to resurrect.

Allow me to explain.

A few years ago, I read that putting the motherboard of a defective phone in the oven can make the device start again by moving around the underfill in the chip. At first, I thought that everyone on the forum was trolling, but a



deeper research revealed that this has been a common method to fix malfunctioning electronics.

The muscle game does something similar to you. It takes your motherboard out and heats it up with weights. If you survive, you come back stronger and more resilient. A catch? Of course, there is one. The method doesn't work *forever*. Sooner or later, the chip becomes a brick again. The good news is that unlike electronics we are alive and therefore adaptable to more and more heat. Therefore, the oven trick lasts longer on us.

### **Every Problem is a Weight**

Exceptional strength can be acquired if you endure, survive and learn. The stronger you are, the better, for every problem is a weight, and almost every weight can be lifted...as long as you are strong enough.

Some people live lives that would bury most but make it through thanks to strength. Others go full seppuku because the pony is the wrong color. Training fixes this. Weights could turn paper boys afraid of the dentist into modern day warriors. Of course, that could only happen if you want it and let the process take place on a deeper level.

Unfortunately, regardless of how strong you, more weight can always be added to the bar. Everyone has a breaking point. Anyone can get crushed...even the strongest man on Earth. Life represents gravity of the highest order.

Does this make the fight pointless? Maybe, but do we have anything better left to do anyway?

## **Disclaimer**

Always consult your physician before beginning any exercise program. If you experience any pain or difficulty with these exercises, stop and consult your healthcare provider. NattyOrNot.com is not responsible for any injuries that can occur during your training.

## **Credits**

Book cover by [Pantelis Politakos](#)

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