

# **50 TIPS** **FOR BODYBUILDING SUCCESS**

**By Aaron Anderton**



**Photo of Phil Tyler in June 2005**

## **INTRODUCTION**

I have been training with weights for over 20 years now, for a variety of different reasons. Early on, my goal was to get bigger and stronger for football in High School. I was successful with that and grew from 160 pounds in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade to 215 my Senior year. During my 4 years in the Marine Corps, I became interested in the sport of Bodybuilding. I remember being motivated by the movie “Pumping Iron”, and trying to emulate the development of Arnold Schwarzenegger and Franco Columbo. When I completed my obligation to the Marine Corps and finally had more time to train, I stepped up my training and grew to 265 pounds.

Along the way, people kept asking me if I was a powerlifter because of the weights I was training with. It bothered me at the time that they would mistake me for anything but a bodybuilder. As time went on, I began to re-examine my training goals. What did I like about Bodybuilding? Well, I loved big muscles and training heavy. I loved to eat huge amounts of food. I loved watching the scale go up and up in the off-season and I always tried to lift more weight than the time before. What did I dislike about Bodybuilding? I hated to diet. I didn’t like tanning or shaving my body. I didn’t like trying to come up with a posing routine, and I didn’t like the subjective nature of judging bodybuilding contests.

What I came up with was that I would just train for size and strength and not compete. Eventually, I needed a competitive outlet and entered a bench press contest. I won my class and felt like I had found something I loved and could excel at. I have been competing in Powerlifting and Strongman ever since. I especially love Strongman because of the combination of athletic ability and strength that is required to do well. So, what does this have to do with Bodybuilding, you ask?

If there is one thing I know, it is how to build big strong muscles. I am very familiar with the training styles of Bodybuilders, Powerlifters, and Strongmen. I know what they have in common, what the differences are and why. I have had great success with training people to be successful in these areas, and I enjoy sharing that information.

This book was written to provide the reader with the understanding and the tools to reach their absolute potential in Bodybuilding. This book is not about fancy routines or fluff articles. This book explains to you how to build muscle in the most effective and efficient way. I hope you put these principles to use and reach your true potential.

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## **TRAINING**

## INTENSITY OF EFFORT

One of the most important things a bodybuilder can do to be successful is to train with intensity. When I refer to intensity, I mean intensity of effort. You need to put all your effort and concentration into your training, diet, recovery, posing routine and so on. I don't mean that everything you do in life should revolve around bodybuilding, in fact, I recommend having a balanced life for long-term success and happiness. What I do mean is that when you are training, give it all the effort you have to make sure you are doing the exercises properly, and that you are doing the best you can, the whole time. That may sound easy, but it requires a lot of discipline and toughness to go all out for a whole workout. That doesn't necessarily mean going to failure, just performing the exercises as perfectly as possible.

When talking about your diet, intensity of effort is demonstrated by taking the time to prepare an eating plan, and following it religiously. If you put the effort into doing things properly, and the best you can, you will notice dramatically improved results.

## CONSTANT TENSION

When you are lifting weights to increase muscle mass as your main goal, the difference is in how you lift the weight. More specifically, it is not enough to just move the weight through the range of motion. You must flex the muscle throughout the movement. Additionally, it is important to maintain that tension for around 45 seconds. Let's use the bench press to illustrate my point. Most people lower the weight under control, and simply push the weight back up. To stimulate your muscles to grow as quickly as possible, you need to keep tension on them by flexing through the entire movement. Momentum is your enemy in bodybuilding training! It is not good enough to do one repetition like this; you need to do it for 8 to 12 repetitions, or 45 seconds per set. It is true that lifting heavy weights explosively will increase your muscle mass, but it primarily increases your strength. Lifting with constant tension as I have described above will increase your strength, but it will increase your muscle mass even more. If you want to maximize the bodybuilding training effect, you need to train specifically for your goal. That is to say that if you want maximum muscle mass, you should train with constant tension.

## MASS TRAINING

Probably the most important thing to remember about mass training is how the growth process works. When you train, your muscles are broken down. You need to eat enough, specifically protein, to provide your body with the building blocks to rebuild your muscle bigger than before. You need to rest enough, including quality sleep, to allow your body to use those “building blocks” to rebuild your muscles bigger and stronger than before.

Mass training requires the use of compound movements for the major muscle groups. When you use compound movements, you can stimulate growth in several muscle groups at the same time. That saves time and recuperative energy. If you were to use several isolation exercises to stimulate those same muscle groups, you would spend a lot more time in the gym, and use up valuable energy that could be used to rebuild your muscles larger and stronger. That alone should be enough reason to focus on compound movements, but here’s another one. When you perform compound movements for the major muscle groups, it triggers your body’s mechanisms to create a state perfect for growing muscle and burning fat. Now if you can prime your body for growth, and still have the recuperative energy available, you will grow like a weed!

## ISOLATION TRAINING

Sometimes when I am doing preacher curls on a machine, I notice that one of my arms is working harder than the other. I try to compensate for it and flex the other one harder, but it doesn’t always work. This can happen with many different compound movements, and the best way to make sure that both limbs are working as hard as they should be is to perform isolation movements.

Using the biceps as an example again let me show you how to incorporate isolation training into your overall biceps workouts. First you will want to perform your heavy compound movements, such as Barbell Curls. When you are done with the heavy work, you can focus on the individual arms by performing Concentration Curls. The name says it all. Sit down; brace your arm against your leg, and with dumbbell in hand begin to curl the weight while squeezing and flexing your biceps as hard as you can. Hold it for a moment in the contracted position and continue to flex and squeeze while slowly lowering the weight to the starting position. Do this for every rep of every set for maximum effectiveness. You should perform around 3 sets of 8-10 reps for each arm for these isolation exercises.

I believe that the majority of your training time and energy should be spent on heavy compound movements to build the muscle. I also believe that you will need some isolation exercises to make sure that you are stimulating the muscles equally and completely. Spending too much time and energy on isolation exercises, however, will only

take away from your recovery and growth, and performing isolation exercises instead of compound movements will result in your physique going nowhere!

## STRETCHING

Many of you may be wondering what stretching has to do with Bodybuilding. I mean, what does stretching have to do with growing huge muscles that are ripped and vascular? The answer is EVERYTHING!

That's right, stretching can help you build bigger muscles that are strong and well shaped. When you finish a set of a weight lifting exercise, your muscles will be filled with blood. That same blood is what transports nutrients to those muscles to provide them the necessary building blocks for growth. What if there was a way to get more blood, and therefore more nutrients, into that muscle? That's what stretching can do.

I am not talking about your warm-up, or about stretching for hours until you can do the full-splits. Those things are not necessarily bad, but what I am talking about is stretching to maximize growth. To do that, you need to stretch the muscles you are training, between sets. When you take a muscle after completing a set, and that muscle is filling with blood, you can increase the flow and circulation of blood by stretching the muscle. Another very important thing that this kind of stretching does is to stretch the fascia around the muscle, making it easier for that muscle to grow larger.

If you have ever tried blowing up a hot water bottle, you know that it is very difficult because of the thickness and strength of the material. But if that hot water bottle has been blown up several times and is stretched out, it will be much easier. Imagine the fascia around your muscles as a hot water bottle. That strong, thick material is constricting your muscles and holding back their growth. If you can find a way to stretch it out, think how much easier it would be for your muscles to grow to their full potential. When your muscles are pumped up, the fascia is already stretched. If we then take that opportunity to stretch it even further, we can enhance the growth potential of the muscle, and that is the goal.

I will use the chest as an example of how to perform these stretches. After you do a set of Bench Presses, you will do a light stretch. If you have a training partner, He or She can stand behind you, take hold of your wrists, and pull them back and up behind you until the chest, shoulder and biceps muscles stretch. You can have them bring your wrists closer together to further enhance the stretch if you wish. If you are training alone, you can use a wall or other stationary object to achieve the same effect. Place your hand on the wall and turn away from it, making sure to get a good stretch of the chest, shoulders and biceps. Then switch and do the other side. The important thing to remember is that you want to start with an easy stretch, and then go a little farther, and a little harder each set.

When your muscles are fully pumped is the time to go for a hard stretch and maximize the stretch of the fascia. Remember, however, do not push so hard that you overstretch and injure yourself. You have to use some common sense and stretch the muscle, not tear it.

If you incorporate stretching into your workouts between sets, I know you will experience new and substantial growth.

### VARIETY OF EXERCISES

An important thing to remember is that our bodies quickly adapt to the stresses that we subject them to, or they quit on us. If the stress is within your body's capability, it will adapt, but if the stress is too severe, your body will break down. So how do we train so that our body will continue to grow more muscular? I mean, if our body adapts to the training, don't we have to train even harder to force it to adapt?

It is true that one must train sufficiently hard to stimulate muscle growth, but training too hard for too long will definitely result in a lack of results at best, and injury or illness at worst. So, if that is all true, what can someone do to keep growing?

By using a variety of exercises and changing them frequently, you can keep your body from stagnating and achieve better results. Using your Back as an example, let's say that you are doing seated low-pulley rows on your Back day. The next time you work your Back you can switch to bent rows. The next time do 1-arm rows, or pulldowns. When you have gone through several different workouts with different exercises, you can start the cycle over. If you are keeping a training log, you can see what you did the last time you did a certain exercise, which will give you an idea of what you can do, and a goal to exceed.

### VARIETY IN VOLUME

Variety in every aspect of training is something that I believe very strongly in. Our bodies adapt so quickly to what we do that we will hit a plateau in no time if we don't find a way to keep our body guessing. While some people believe that simply increasing the weight or the number of sets will solve the problem, they will soon find that they reach a point that their bodies can't take the abuse and begin to break down from the overtraining.

The trick to handling this aspect of training is to alter the training volume. That means that you need to change the number of sets that you perform for the exercise, the muscle group, and for the workout. Simply changing the amount of work you do every three

weeks will work pretty well, but if you want to maximize your progress, you need to have a plan.

If you can devise a plan in which each three-week period, or phase, builds upon the one before it you can grow muscle at an accelerated rate, and work toward a specific goal. Sure, you can grow by randomly changing the volume of your training, but a well thought out plan, done in the right way, can get you to your goal much faster, and is more reliable.

Let's say that you want bigger, stronger legs. We can start our training with a modest amount of volume by performing squats for 5 sets of 5 reps after a couple of warm-up sets. In this example, the volume for the other leg exercises will remain constant, although you may choose to play around with the volume for those later. After squats, we will perform stiff-legged deadlifts for 3 sets of 10 reps, leg extensions for 3 sets of 15 reps, and leg curls for 3 sets of 10 reps. We will finish the workout by supersetting standing calf raises for 4 sets of 15 reps with weighted crunches for 4 sets of 25 reps.

After 3 weeks of 5 sets of 5 repetitions in the squat, we will increase the volume by performing 6 sets of 8 reps for 3 weeks. This change will bring about a new round of muscle soreness, and some noticeable increase in size. However, just like any other change, if you keep doing the same thing for too long, your body will adapt and it will no longer work. That is why we will move on and increase the volume again after three weeks of this.

Now it is time to change the workout to 8 sets of 10 reps in the squat, with the other exercises still remaining the same as they were from the beginning. This will be difficult, but your muscles will respond according to the effort you put into it. Once you have done three weeks of this amount of volume, you will probably be ready to drop the volume, due to your body reaching a point of exhaustion and overtraining. If you increase the volume too much for too long, it will only result in overtraining, injury, or lack of progress. When you are approaching the point of overtraining, you must begin again with the lowest volume phase, which is 5 sets of 5 reps in this example. You will need to listen to your body to determine when you are beginning to feel tired and sore all the time. Hopefully you will know your body well enough to catch it before you reach this point. However, there will be some of you whose recovery systems are so good, that you can handle one more increase in volume before starting over. Here it is.

The final increase in volume for this example is to perform 7 sets of 15 reps in the squat, with all other exercises remaining the same. I suggest doing this for only 2 weeks before going back to 5 sets of 5 again.

An important thing to remember is that the increased volume will stimulate your muscles to grow by breaking down the muscle, but if your body can't recover, you won't grow. That means that doing more volume than your body can recover from is counterproductive. You will notice an increase in muscle size and strength when you start over at 5 sets of 5. Don't push it and do the 7 sets of 15 reps if you have any doubts about

your ability to recover from that much volume. Personally, I would probably never go up that high, and would start over after the 8 sets of 10 for three weeks. Almost everybody would be best served to do the same, but there will be a gifted few whose bodies can handle it.

In summary, adjusting the training volume in a controlled and well-planned manner can greatly accelerate your rate of muscle growth.

### VARIETY IN REPETITIONS

You will definitely see some similarities between this section, and the section on training volume. While you can use variety in repetitions to manipulate volume, you can also maintain volume and simply keep your body from adapting to the training. The advantage to doing this is that you don't have to worry about overdoing it, and it keeps things fresh, both physically and mentally.

While you would want to wait for about three weeks before adjusting training volume, with repetitions, you can change them each time you work the same body part. When you perform a chest workout you would do a certain amount of reps. The next time you do chest, the repetition number would be different. You would change it again on the next chest workout and so on.

An example of the variety in repetitions that I am referring to would begin with doing your exercises for sets of 15 repetitions. The next workout for that body part would be for sets of 12 reps. The following workout for the same body part would be sets of 10, going to 8 on the next and 5 for the final workout before going back to 15 again. Pretty simple right? The beauty of this is that you can increase the weight each workout until you go back to 15 reps. That can be very motivating! One other great benefit of this is that you can try to beat the weight for each set that you did the first time through this cycle.

Adjusting the number of repetitions that you use for your sets can keep you fresh and motivated, and that is always good for training results.

### REST BETWEEN SETS

Believe it or not, the amount of time that you rest between sets has an effect on your training results. When you are resting less than two minutes between your sets, you are using the lactic acid energy system. This is a medium duration energy source and is the primary energy source used in most bodybuilding workouts. If you rest longer than 3 minutes between sets, you are using more of the ATP-PC energy system. This is the most powerful energy system for short bursts of exercise. There is one more energy system

called the Aerobic Energy System. Generally, this energy system is used for long duration, low intensity exercise, but it does assist with bodybuilding workouts. There is no switch that turns off one of these systems and turns the next one on at the two or three minute mark. In fact, they work together, overlapping in their duties, to handle the workload that we give them.

An off-season bodybuilder trying to put on some serious muscle mass may choose to lift very heavy weights for sets of 6 to 8 reps to reach his goal. By resting for 3 or 4 minutes between heavy sets, the ATP-PC energy system will be able to almost completely replenish the energy in the muscles between sets, allowing this bodybuilder to lift this heavy weight for more sets and reps before running out of gas. If he were to try this same workout with only 90 seconds rest between each set, he would have to drop the weight sooner in the workout, and would not be able to lift that same weight for anywhere near the same number of sets and reps. The Lactic Acid Energy System is not able to replenish the muscles as quickly, but there is a good reason that it is the most commonly used energy system for bodybuilding workouts. By training with shorter rest periods during the workout, there will be increased levels of growth hormone in the blood afterwards. Another reason to use this system is that you can finish your workout in less time, and it has been shown that the body's natural testosterone levels take a noticeable dip after 45 minutes of training.

How does the Aerobic Energy System fit into the big picture for bodybuilding? The body does not switch from the Lactic Acid Energy System to the ATP-PC system at exactly 2 minutes rest between sets. For some people it will be sooner and for some it will be later. Either way, it is not a sudden change, but rather a gradual changing of the guard with the Aerobic Energy System helping to bridge the gap between the two.

So what is the best way to manipulate these energy systems for maximum muscle growth? The answer depends partly on your training goals, but generally speaking, bodybuilders should spend most of their training time using the Lactic Acid Energy System. A significant amount of time should be spent doing heavy weight training with 3 or 4 minutes rest to increase your strength, and the rest of the time (maybe 70 percent of your training) should be done with rest periods of 90 to 150 seconds between sets.

By training like this, you can build your strength levels during the heavy training with longer rest periods, and then use that new strength to lift more weight for more reps when you train using the Lactic Acid Energy System. This will maximize the benefits of each energy system and keep your body from adapting, which will result in amazing muscle growth!

## TRAINING SPLITS

When people start out in Bodybuilding, they often try to copy what the magazines say the top professional bodybuilders do. After all, who better to learn from than from the best, right? That is true, to a point, but there are some differences for beginners.

In the beginning of a person's weight training experience they will not be able to handle many sets for each muscle group. They will be able to train a muscle group more frequently though, because they are not able to give their muscles the tremendous workload that they will be able to give them later. For that reason, beginners can usually get some good results by training their whole body in one workout, three times a week. For these workouts, you should limit yourself to only 2 or 3 working sets per muscle group. For a beginner, learning the exercises and building a base of muscle is the main goal. Once you have completed 6 to 8 weeks of training like this, you are ready for a change to a more advanced training split.

The idea of a training split is to divide up your weight training into smaller groups so that you can do more exercises and sets for a muscle group without spending a lot more time in the gym. Since you are going to be increasing the workload for each muscle group quite a bit, those muscles will need a longer break before training the same ones again. The best way to do this is to divide up your training in a way that allows you to train each muscle group with the amount of work and at the frequency that works best for you. You can design your training split to meet your needs

There are many ways in which you can split up your training. The most important thing to consider is the goal of your training. Are you training for mass, for strength, or for definition? Take into consideration what your daily and weekly schedule is like. Factor in the hours that you work, your days off, and your other responsibilities. If you can only train three times a week, then there is no point in trying to schedule 5 workouts a week. Be realistic about it, because planning more workouts than you can possibly do will only cause you to miss some of them, and become discouraged. While there may be a split that would be really effective for your physique, if you had the time, you can get great results by training only 2 or 3 times a week if you have to. However, if you can train as often as you want, you can set up a training split that is catered specifically to your goals.

If you find that a three-day split is best for you, a good way to set up your training is to train your shoulders, biceps and triceps on Monday. Train your legs, lower back, and abs on Wednesday, and train your chest, back (lats), and arms on Friday.

A four-day split is an effective way to train for mass. You can train each body part twice a week, and even alternate heavy and light workouts for each muscle group. An example of this would be: Monday- Chest, Back and Arms. Tuesday- Legs, Calves, Abs, and Shoulders. Thursday- Back, Chest and Arms. Friday- Shoulders, Legs, Calves and Abs

## THE PUMP

The pump is a very important part of bodybuilding, but it is often misunderstood. Most people think that the pump is mainly a visual thing. You go in the gym, train for awhile, and the next thing you know your muscles have blown up like balloons and you look fantastic. That is definitely the most obvious effect, and the reason behind the name, but the other effects are even more exciting.

When you begin a weight lifting workout, your body sends extra blood to the muscles being worked. While that extra blood does give your muscles a great look, the reason behind it is the most important thing. Blood carries all of the ingredients that your muscles need to work properly, including oxygen. When all of this blood rushes into the muscle cells, they are able to work harder and longer.

The most important facet of the muscle pump is that all of this blood carries the proteins needed to repair those muscles that you have just worked so hard to tear down. All of the building blocks needed to build your muscles up larger and stronger, are shuttled in by the blood.

In summary, when you train with weights, blood rushes into the muscles and provides the oxygen and nutrients necessary to work harder and longer. While you are still working out, and long afterwards, the blood brings in all of the building blocks to rebuild those muscles bigger and stronger than ever. On top of all that, the blood fills the muscles until they feel as if they are going to burst, and you get to walk around looking huge and ripped!

The muscle pump is as important to bodybuilding success as just about anything else. Make sure you maximize your training results by training hard enough to stimulate muscle growth, and in a way to get the best and longest lasting pump you can. A great way to do this is to train heavier earlier in the workout, and increase the reps while decreasing the rest periods later on.

It should be noted that there are a number of great [Nitric Oxide supplements](#) that will greatly enhance your pump during your workouts and beyond.

## THE BURN

The build-up of lactic acid during exercise is widely referred to as “THE BURN.” Ammonia and other toxins that are by-products of intense exercise begin to accumulate in

the working muscles during a set, and eventually cause a burning sensation and inability to continue the set.

Arnold Schwarzenegger has often said that you must go through the pain for 3 or 4 more reps to truly stimulate growth. It is going that “extra mile” that pushes your muscles far enough past their comfort zone, so that you can force them to grow. For as long as anyone has been lifting weights, the bodybuilders who could push through the pain and get those extra reps, have been the ones who have built the bodies that the rest of us admire.

This very same lactic acid that causes the burn during training is what causes some of the muscle soreness you feel a day or two later. Many people take anti-oxidants to help rid the body of these toxins and minimize their effects.

Since we know that doing those 3 or 4 extra reps each set will increase the stress, and therefore better stimulate the muscles to grow, we should do our best to make that happen. What would you say about a proven way to delay the onset of lactic acid, and make those 3 or 4 reps less painful to complete? What if you could do a few more reps without pain, and then push through the pain barrier, too? You could really make some serious gains!

Well, there is a way. Many of you may have heard about a supplement called GAKIC from Muscle-Tech. Before any of you ask, I do not work for Muscle-Tech and although I sell supplements, I sell all kinds of brands. The reason I mention GAKIC is because I know from personal experience that it works so well to allow me those extra 3 or 4 reps, that I am setting personal records every workout!

What GAKIC does is to inhibit the production of lactic acid so that you can continue a set for more reps than you could do without it. Their studies say 28% more reps, but I usually get more than that. Do yourself a favor and try it out.

## MUSIC FOR TRAINING

I have noticed that many people choose to listen to their favorite style of music during a workout. Believe it or not, but this can be a big mistake. Music plays an important role in how we feel, and that is the purpose of listening to music during training. You want to control the way you feel to maximize your training intensity.

I like to listen to a variety of music, and most of the time I don't spend much time worrying about whether to listen to Heavy Metal, Rap, 90's Grunge, Hip Hop, Pop music, Ballads or anything else. I just listen to whatever I feel like at the time. But for my training, I take a much more disciplined approach. I want to make sure I maximize my training results, and listening to the right kind of music before, during and after is a big part of that.

When I am on my way to the gym to workout, I know that I will get my best results by listening to something fast or upbeat. You do have some leeway for personal preference, but just make sure the music gets your blood moving and makes you feel aggressive. That will warm up your body and get you mentally and physically ready to train hard and heavy.

During my workout, I prefer some Heavy Metal music because it makes me feel powerful and ready to attack the weights. I don't necessarily like a lot of the songs that might be on, but it doesn't matter because I usually don't pay attention to the words while I am in the gym. All the music needs is a hard, driving beat and I am ready for action.

I know many people don't like this kind of music, and would rather listen to something else, but for the best results you need to have music that really gets your blood boiling and makes you feel invincible. I used to go to this gym where they didn't have a stereo, but they did have a Television. I used to hate it when I would get there and find someone watching Country Music Videos, or just as bad, a TV drama. There would be a group of guys sitting around the TV just watching, and during a TV show I felt like I couldn't make any noise or I would be interrupting the show! That is no way to train for someone who actually wants to build muscle.

Cardio is a little different. You still want something upbeat so that you feel energetic, but it certainly does not need to make you feel aggressive. That opens your choices up to Country, Hip Hop, Pop music and much more. You may not want to use the same music for cardio that you use for weight training because you don't want to confuse your body and it's response to that music.

After the workout, the best thing to do is to stay away from fast and upbeat music. To improve your muscle recovery, you want your body and mind to relax and rest. That means you should listen to music that is slow, soft and soothing. Music choices can be ballads, classical or anything else that fits that description. Remember, the idea is to put your mind and body into a relaxed state, so that the recovery process can begin.

By managing your music you can improve your workouts, and speed up your recovery times so that you can reach your goals more quickly.

Do yourself a favor and get some [great workout music](#) and use it.

## LEARN YOUR BODY

Over the years I don't know if I can count the number of times that I have read or heard that bodybuilders should "learn their body" if they want to be their best. What does that mean? Well, as I have trained and competed over the years, I think I have finally reached an understanding. All of our bodies are different from each other, and because of that, the

way they respond to everything varies from person to person. There are basic fundamentals that are universal, but even within those parameters there are differences.

The differences are usually in how much training a person's body can handle and how long it will take them to recover from it. There are also differences in how big a person can grow, and lean they can become and so on. While you can't change what your natural limits are for size and body fat level, you can maximize them and reach that level more quickly by learning the optimum training for your body.

Let me give you an example. When I was preparing for a Powerlifting competition I was squatting on Mondays and Deadlifting on Fridays because that was what "everyone" said was best. It didn't take me long to realize that my lower back just couldn't take the beating it was receiving from that schedule. I began to space it out so that I would squat and then rest 5 days before deadlifting. I would rest another 5 days before squatting again, and so on and so forth. By doing this, my lower back was able to recover better, and I set personal bests in both the Squat and Deadlift at the contest I had been training for.



Since then, I have found that I do even better by training exercises that tax my lower back only once a week. I will train two exercises, such as squats, deadlifts, or power cleans, each week and rotate the exercises each workout. By doing that, my lower back gets to rest all week until the next workout, and I am always recovered and ready to go.

You may find that certain body parts can be trained more often and grow more quickly, while other body parts need more rest between workouts. You may find that some

exercises work great for you and others don't seem to work at all. Don't let someone else's opinion make you do something you know doesn't work. That being said, you should always keep an open mind, and try all reasonable things out before deciding whether or not something works.

When you have learned your body, you will be able to train more effectively with fewer setbacks. That means that you will be able to maximize your potential much sooner, and be able to enjoy the fruits of your labor for that much longer.

### KEEP A TRAINING LOG

Have you ever noticed that some people always seem to be writing something down in a notebook between sets at the gym? Do you know what they are doing, and if so, do you know why? These people are most likely writing down the exercises, weight used, sets and reps that they are doing. They may also be writing down comments about how the exercise felt, or how they felt during the workout. Why would they do that?

Some of you might think that there is no place for paperwork at the gym. It's time to get serious and do some hard, sweaty work, not time to write in your diary, right? You might be right in the short term, only because it might take away from your focus the first couple of times you do it. But the real value of keeping a training log is to find what works for you, giving you the best results, and to find out what doesn't work so that you can avoid repeating mistakes.

I have kept a training log since 1991 and I still go back and look at some of them for help when I hit a training plateau. If I am looking to increase muscle mass, I might go back to a time when I remember that I had been very successful at that. I can look at my training split, the exercises that worked for me, how much weight I used, and how many sets and reps I was doing. I can follow the training log through weeks and even months of a set routine, paying attention to the bodyweight gains I made, and the increase in weight used for specific exercises. At times I have also written down measurements of my arms, legs, calves, and waist periodically, so I can now look back and see how they changed with a certain workout as well.

One benefit I noticed from the very beginning was that I could plan ahead for the next workout in terms of how much weight to use. Instead of guessing each week, I could look at what I had done the last time, and choose the appropriate starting weight for the next workout. Of course, how much weight I added after the first set would depend on how strong I was feeling on that day. I would also look at what my top weight was, and try to beat it the next time, whenever possible.

A Training Log is very important and vital to your success as a Bodybuilder. As they say, "Failing to plan is planning to fail".

## HARD WORK

There is one thing that will always make a difference in your success, and that is hard work. If you are willing to give of your time, effort and abilities, you can achieve great things. If you are unwilling to work hard, you will never reach your potential. It's that simple.

The hardest working person does not always reach the top, due to factors beyond their control, but they have a much better chance to reach the top of their potential. You may know somebody who doesn't train that hard, but they are extremely strong, and huge. Or you may know someone who is always ripped, and they eat whatever they want. Well, that's not you, so if you want to look like that you are going to have to work harder. If you are one of those people who are huge, strong, and look great with very little effort, don't cheat yourself by taking it easy. You will never know how great you could have been if you would have worked harder.

Have you ever heard the saying, "Anything worth having, is worth working for"? There is a lot of truth to that statement. Number One, if you get something too easy, you won't appreciate it as much as if you had to work your butt off to get it. Would you be as careful with a \$500 Ford Pinto as you would with a brand new Cadillac Escalade? I believe most people would take better care of the Escalade because it cost them more. With our physique, consider your effort to be the equivalent of money. The more expensive something is to you, the more value you place on it. If you work extremely hard to reach a goal, it will be a very special moment for you when you do reach it.

Now, beyond all the philosophy of reaching potential, let's look at results. Have you ever been to a gym where there were guys who were sitting around just watching people work out or socializing for hours. They hardly do a set every 15 minutes, and even then you can tell it was easy for them. Afterward you hear them say, "I work out for 3 hours a day, but this weight just won't come off". I hope none of you are like this. Listen, being inside a gym is not magical. You can't stay there for a set amount of time and expect results. You have to earn them through hard work. It's kind of like running a marathon. If you just stand around at the starting line you will never be done. You have to actually put one leg in front of the other again and again until you reach the finish line. You cannot step inside a gym and expect to build a great physique without doing the work to get one.

I hope you get my point. If not, go try the marathon thing and see if you begin to understand.

## OFF SEASON

## DETERMINE WEAK POINTS

The off-season is the time to take a step back and evaluate your physique. If you have just done a contest, hopefully you had some pictures and video taken. Use this to look at your physique from all angles, and have a trusted and knowledgeable friend help you. Be honest with yourself, and determine the areas that you need to improve. Asking the judges after your contest can also give some insight, but make sure you look at the pictures and video and determine for yourself what needs to be improved.

After you have identified all of the areas that you need to work on, make a list of these areas, in order of importance. That is to say, put the most urgent area at the top of the list, and then the next important, and so on.

Once you have your list of areas that need to be improved, you are ready to devise a plan of attack. Step by step and one by one, look at the different areas and figure out what to do. You may have to schedule more work for lagging body parts. You can do this by adding sets or exercises to your workout, or training those body parts more frequently. You may need to choose different exercises for lagging body parts based on whether you need more mass or definition for an area. You will have to experiment and find out what works for you, but a good place to start is by finding out what has worked for other bodybuilders who used to have the same problem, and found a solution.

Read magazines, books or anything else you can get a hold of to find the right plan of attack. Another great source of bodybuilding information is my website, <http://www.nlpbodybuilding.com>.

## SYMMETRY

One of the basic criteria used for judging a bodybuilding contest is symmetry. What the judges are looking for is muscles that are equally developed on each side of the body. That means that your left and right biceps should be equally developed and look as similar as possible. The same goes for legs, calves, pecs, delts and everything else.

It is pretty obvious to me why that is important. I have heard some of the bigger guys complain that the smaller symmetrical guys should not win over larger more muscular guys. First of all, I hope they say that because they think symmetrical means “pretty” instead of equal. Personally, I don’t care if a bodybuilder has a 24 inch ripped right arm, if his left arm is 16 inches and undeveloped. Now, that is FREAKY, and not in the good way. So now you know that symmetry is not about being small, or having pleasing lines. It is about your left side looking the same as the right side and so on.

Most people will have pretty good symmetry with regular bodybuilding training, but for those who find one side growing faster or slower than its counterpart, you may need

specialized training to even them out. For example, if your left arm is an inch bigger than your right one, you will need to do some extra work on your right arm to bring it up to par. You may need to back off on the left arm training as well, in order to make them match.

In the end, you will place much better in bodybuilding contests by paying attention to your symmetry. You will also be able to go out in public without little children pointing and laughing at your disfigured body.

## BALANCE

The subject of balance always reminds me of the stereotypical bodybuilder at the beach. You know the guy with a huge upper body and little bird legs. If the general public notices the imbalance and it looks strange to them, imagine what the strict bodybuilding judges will think. Even if you don't plan on competing, balance should always be a priority.

By balancing your development of the muscles on both sides of a joint, you can minimize injuries as well. If your hamstrings are as strong as your quadriceps, you will have a healthier and safer knee joint, and that will allow you to train hard and consistently.

Balance has to do with proportion. How big is your back compared to your chest? Do you have huge, ripped legs but narrow shoulders? How about wide shoulders and lats, but when you turn to the side, you are so narrow you could hide behind a flag pole. These are the kinds of things you will want to avoid, whether you compete or not. An unbalanced physique will draw negative attention to it in a contest, and if it is bad enough you could find people laughing and snickering as you walk by. I'm pretty sure you don't want that. Just pay attention to your muscular development and work to bring up any lagging body parts by giving them a little more work. You will find more detailed information on this in the section on bringing up weak points.

## STRENGTH

I have always been fascinated with strength. I think there is something primitive about lifting heavy things, and it just feels right. I compete in strength sports, so obviously I consider obtaining great strength to be the most important effect of weight training. As a matter of fact, I think that strength is extremely important for all sports, Bodybuilding included. With that being said, your training needs to cater to the sport you are in. A sprinter can train all year long to improve his bench press, and even reach a lift of 500 pounds, but he won't be a better sprinter because of it. You must first consider what you

are trying to accomplish. In Bodybuilding strength is not measured, but muscle size, shape, symmetry, and definition are the deciding factors.

On the other side of the coin, I have heard many Bodybuilders say that they never lift heavy, because bodybuilding is not about lifting heavy weights. Personally, I think these guys are confused. They are correct that a record lift in the squat will not win the trophy in a Bodybuilding contest, but lifting light weights won't either.

It all boils down to this: You must challenge your muscles in order to make them grow. If you don't lift weights that are heavy for you, and if you don't push yourself with great effort, you will not reach your potential. Some guys will be able to lift more than others, but as long as you are pushing yourself to use progressively heavier weights in good form, you will be able to stimulate muscle growth. As you get stronger in your working sets, your muscles will get bigger.

I know that there are guys who have success by lifting weights that are light for them for high repetitions and loads of sets, but most people can't do that. Genetics are a factor for almost everything including strength and muscle size. Not everybody can achieve the same thing, but everyone can improve upon what they have. That is the only thing you can control, so focus on doing just that.

### GIVE IT ENOUGH TIME TO SEE IF IT WORKS

If you have spent so much time planning what needs to be fixed, and how to do it, it only makes sense to give your plan a chance to work. When you try something new, such as a new training program, a new diet, or a new supplement, you have to do it for awhile before you can know if it is effective or not. When trying a new training program, give it at least 6 weeks to determine how well it works. With nutrition, you can usually get a good idea within 3 weeks, but I suggest giving a supplement 4 to 6 weeks before you make your evaluation.

So often people expect instantaneous results, but things don't work that way. Most people probably think Bill Gates made his first million dollars immediately with his great ideas. It was closer to a decade! It seems pretty fast to those of us who weren't working the long hours and wondering if it would ever happen, but I will bet it seemed a lot longer to Mr. Gates.

By trying things out, testing, fixing and testing again, mixed with a lot of persistence, Bill Gates has more money than anybody could ever use. He didn't give up when it seemed like there was no progress, he just kept plugging away until he got results. He made changes, but not until he could be sure they were necessary. That is how you must approach bodybuilding. Take the time to make the right choices and have the persistence to see them through.

## RECOVERY

### RECOVERY

After you train your muscles and break them down to stimulate growth, you must provide them the time to rebuild. This is called Recovery. Just as muscles must be trained in order to grow, they must rest so that the body can rebuild them bigger and stronger. The food you eat provides the building blocks, and when you rest, your body uses them to rebuild your muscles. The quality of the food you eat can influence your recovery time, and how well your muscles can be built. Good quality protein, carbohydrates and fats, along with vitamins and minerals are used to repair the muscle tissue and prepare you for your next workout.

While you are sleeping is when the body is most efficient at repairing and rejuvenating, so it is vital to get plenty of quality sleep. There are also some other things you can do to improve your recovery, like massage, hot and cold showers or baths, and active recovery exercise.

### SLEEP

[Sleep](#) is one thing that your body absolutely cannot do without. Sure you can skip a night or two, or even go for a week with no more than a few hours of sleep a night. Most people who do this rely on some drug, legal or other, to stay alert and awake, and that can work for awhile. The thing about sleep is that sooner or later it has to happen. I work in a jail and so I have often seen someone come in who was on methamphetamine, and watched them stay up for days, pacing around and sweating. But eventually they run out of steam, and then they sleep for days. You see, the body must get sleep just to survive. Think of your body like a battery, and sleep is how you recharge. If you use it day after day without recharging, it will stop working completely. Sleeping every night is how your body recharges. Sometimes you don't let it get a full charge because you wanted to stay up and see a movie, or you had to get up early for work. Sometimes you do this for days on end. Maybe you use caffeine in the form of coffee or a pill to keep you going, but that doesn't recharge your battery for long. If you don't let yourself get fully charged, your body will break down.

When a person doesn't get enough sleep, their immune system weakens and they will get sick. A Bodybuilder who doesn't get enough sleep will soon become overtrained and progress will slow down and stop. Even worse, if he doesn't take the time to rest and recover, injury will soon follow.

Sleep is one of the three most important aspects of Bodybuilding progress, along with Training, and Nutrition. If any one of these three areas are neglected, your progress will be significantly hampered.

Most people need about 8 hours of sleep a night. A hard-training bodybuilder will probably need at least another hour, maybe more. I know it can be hard to find the time, with all of the things that have to be done in our busy lives, but if someone is serious about becoming bigger and more muscular, don't forget to sleep.

### MASSAGE

A good way to improve your recovery between workouts is through massage. A massage of the muscles that were trained can improve blood flow and circulation to the area. This can break up lactic acid and other toxins and allow them to be flushed from the area. The increased blood flow also provides more nutrients to the muscles so that they can be rebuilt more quickly.

### HOT AND COLD

Alternating between hot and cold water is a great way to help your body recover from your workouts more quickly. One way is to have a Jacuzzi next to a pool of cold water and switch from one to the other every minute for about 6 minutes. It is more realistic for most people is to alternate hot and cold water in the shower. Start with a warm, comfortable temperature and turn it up until it is hot, but not so hot that it hurts. Stand under the hot water for 30 seconds and then switch it to as cold as it goes for 30 seconds. Go back to hot water and repeat for 4 times. After that, you can finish your shower with normal temperatures and relax.

### ACTIVE RECOVERY

When you train with weights, often times you finish the workout with some lactic acid in the muscles, and that can slow down your recovery and cause muscle soreness. One of the best ways to minimize this soreness, and improve recovery is called "Active Recovery". This means doing some easy exercise that gets the blood flowing and your heart beating without overtaxing your body. The idea is to send blood coursing through the muscles, driving the lactic acid out, and the nutrients in. It is also important to

remember that you are doing this to enhance recovery, so you do not want to tax your body by pushing it too hard either.

You may choose to go to the gym and do some cardiovascular training, go for a walk, or play an easy game of basketball. It is important to remember that you should be working blood through the muscle groups that you worked in your previous weight training workout, so you may need to be creative for some of your upper body muscle groups.

Some light stretching along with the exercise will also help with your recovery and muscle growth, and should be included.

## **DIET**

There are three absolute requirements for muscle growth. 1- Training to stimulate muscle growth. 2- Resting to allow the muscles to repair themselves and rebuild bigger and stronger. 3- A proper diet that provides the "building blocks" for the body to use to build the muscles bigger and stronger. I have referred to this before, but it warrants another look. When you train with weights, the muscle breaks down. The body knows that it needs to rebuild, so it begins as soon as possible. Obviously, you can't build anything without the materials to do so, and that is where a proper diet comes in. When you eat, you provide the body with the materials for building your muscles, along with taking care of your other nutritional needs. Now that there is a need for your muscles to be rebuilt, and you have provided your body with the materials to build with, you need to create an environment for the work to take place. When your body is at rest, most of the rebuilding effort will take place. Your body repairs itself the fastest when you are sleeping, so make sure to get plenty of quality sleep, especially on training days.

As you can see, your diet is essential to your bodybuilding success. How much you eat, and what kind of foods you eat can make a dramatic difference in how you look, feel, and perform. Make sure to take the time to learn all you can about a proper bodybuilding diet, and use that information to help yourself reach your goals.

## **EAT CLEAN**

The ultimate goal of a bodybuilder is to have a huge muscular physique that is lean and ripped. To achieve that goal, you definitely have to train properly and get enough rest, but without a proper nutrition plan, you have no chance.

To provide your body with the nutrients it needs to build and maintain a large amount of muscle mass, you must eat plenty of quality proteins, carbohydrates, and just enough

healthy fats. You also need to consume a wide array of vitamins and minerals in amounts sufficient for the demands you put on your body.

The dietary requirements for gaining muscle mass are different than the requirements for getting ripped, but as you will see, they are not as different as you might think. The biggest difference in dietary requirements between the two is in the amount of calories consumed.

A nutrition program for gaining muscle mass requires that you consume enough quality protein, which means approximately 1.5 grams of protein per pound of bodyweight. Carbohydrate levels should be around 3 grams per pound of bodyweight, and fat should be limited to healthy fats, and kept to less than 20 percent of your total calories for the day. These amounts may vary from one individual to another, but they are a good starting point. The goal is to eat enough quality food to supply your body with the nutrients that it needs to build some more muscle, and even some extra nutrients just in case. What you don't want to do is eat so much extra that your body begins to lay down a lot of body fat which covers up the muscles, and that you will just have to take off later. That is not to say that you shouldn't gain any body fat during a mass cycle, but just that you should keep it to a minimum.

To make sure you can see all of that muscle you are building, you have to limit your calories enough to allow you to burn off all of the excess body fat between your skin and muscles. When you are trying to get lean and ripped, you do not want to waste any calories on junk food that will not help maintain your muscles while you are restricting your calories. You still need to provide your body with enough nutrients to maintain the muscle mass that you have worked so hard for, so you need to make sure your diet is as efficient as possible. You want to get the most bang for your buck, so to speak. That is one reason that meal replacement powders are so popular. You can get a fantastic amount of nutrients without any wasted calories. You do need to eat plenty of your calories in the form of whole foods, however, because they digest more slowly, and will provide your body with some things it needs, such as fiber.

The main point of this section is to show you how important it is to "eat clean". Why eat anything that won't help you gain muscle, and will cover up all of your hard work? I know junk food tastes good, but the more disciplined you can be with your diet, the more likely you are to build the body that you want.

## HYDRATION

Everyone has probably heard that our bodies are mostly made up of water. In fact, our bodies need water more than anything else but air. Without water, we would die in a very short time. Now, if you consider how important water is to our survival, doesn't it make sense that drinking enough water might make a significant difference in our appearance and performance as well? You can drink just enough water to survive, or you can drink enough to make sure your body runs at it's peak. Just like food, you can consume enough

for mere survival, or you can pay a little attention to it and help your body to function at optimum levels.

Muscles that are properly hydrated will contract more forcefully and be stronger, both through physiological differences and improved leverage. Our bodies have an easier time releasing body fat when we are properly hydrated, and our skin and hair is healthier, too.

Often, I read that everybody should shoot for 1 gallon of water a day, and that is a good goal. It is important to remember, however, that we are all a little different from each other, and we should pay attention to how our bodies react and adjust accordingly. Some people, especially smaller people, may not need a whole gallon of water everyday, although they will probably be close to that. Some bodybuilders have been known to consume 2 gallons of water a day, and some bigger people may have water needs closer to that amount. You should also take into consideration the climate and your activity levels. Start with 1 gallon a day, and experiment a little until you find the amount that is best for you.

## PROTEIN

[Protein](#) is the main building block for our muscles, and is essential to your bodybuilding progress. You should consume at least 1.5 grams of protein per pound of bodyweight every day. Not all proteins are created equal, however, so you may want to pay attention to the types of protein you consume.

The ideal types of protein for bodybuilders are chicken breasts, fish (including tuna), eggs, milk, beef, and protein powders. Depending on your current training goals (i.e. muscle mass increase, losing body fat), you will want to adjust the protein sources. Chicken breasts, fish, egg whites, and protein powders will provide you with quality protein without added fat and calories, and are great for a pre-contest diet. If you are trying to add some quality muscle, you may want to add plenty of beef, milk, and whole eggs, because although they have more fat and calories, they also have some important nutrients that are not found in the leaner sources of protein.

Typically, you will want to have your protein add up to 30% of your total calories in the off-season, or mass building phases. During a pre-contest or fat loss phase, protein will increase to about 50% of your calories, as your carbohydrate and fat levels decrease.

## VEGETABLES AND FIBER

Vegetables and the fiber they contain are essential to good health, and also to your bodybuilding success. They may not be as exciting to talk about as the newest supplement or diet craze, but they are invaluable. Besides the vitamins that vegetables provide, they keep your insides healthy. If your internal organs are not working properly, weight training will be the last thing on your mind, and you can't afford that.

When you eat vegetables, the fiber they contain slows down the digestion of all of the food in your digestive system, so that it will be released into the bloodstream in a more steady and consistent manner. This ensures that your insulin levels don't spike and cause your body to lay down extra fat. A steady release of nutrients into the blood stream is ideal for rebuilding muscles that have been broken down from hard training. Fiber also helps you feel full, which can be a great thing when you are restricting calories. That is why so many professional bodybuilders include plenty of vegetables in their pre-contest diets.

## CARBOHYDRATES

The main source of anaerobic energy, such as is used during weight training, is stored carbohydrates. For your muscles (not to mention your brain) to work at their peak levels, you need to consume plenty of quality carbohydrates. Stay away from sugars, refined flour and other processed foods. The carbohydrates that will help you are in their natural state. Grains, fruits, and vegetables should be the mainstay of your carbohydrate consumption.

Grains in the form of oatmeal, pasta, whole wheat flour and beans should comprise the majority of your carbohydrate intake, especially when you are trying to gain muscle mass. You may need to limit these foods and eat more vegetables and fiber during a definition diet. These foods should be eaten with every meal and should comprise between 50 and 60 percent of your calories for each whole food meal.

Fruits also have a place in your diet. They are full of vitamins and fiber, and they have fructose, which can be beneficial when consumed in moderation. I usually like to eat 2 or 3 pieces of fruit everyday, but you can adjust that based upon the needs of your physique and your goals.

## FATS

Generally speaking, fats have a bad reputation. In many senses, that reputation is deserved because of all of the health problems associated with eating too many of the "unhealthy" fats. Heart disease is the most common, and deadly side effect of excessive consumption of fat, and that should make everyone think twice about what they put into their bodies.

The other side of the story is that there are essential “healthy” fats that you absolutely should eat. These include fish oils and flax seed oils. These Essential Fatty Acids can help improve your cardiovascular health, and are necessary for many functions of your body, hence the word “essential” in their name. Some of the other functions of these “healthy” fats are to help your skin, hair and nails to be healthy and smooth.

The “unhealthy” fats include animal fats and many vegetable oils. While you will need to consume some of these while eating your protein, you should try to limit the fat as much as possible. The reasons for this are that the “unhealthy” fats will harm your health, and they also have 9 calories per gram compared to 4 calories in proteins and carbohydrates. Eating fats will increase your calorie intake and possible cause you to lay down some body fat.

Ideally, you should consume some fats each day in the form of fish or flax seed oils for your health, and limit all other fats.

## LEARN YOUR BODY- NUTRITION

You may notice a recurring theme in this book. Learning your body is essential for success in bodybuilding. There are many guidelines that are considered “rules” in weight training and bodybuilding. That being said, all of us respond a little differently to exercises, training volume and just about every aspect of training, diet and supplementation. When you add in the fact that many of us have different goals that we are working towards, you can see that one cookie cutter approach to training and nutrition cannot possibly work.

When it comes to nutrition, you should follow the basic guidelines that I have given you in this book until you have a good idea of what works well for you, and what does not. You can begin to experiment with slight variations after a few months, and fine tune your nutritional approach. Make sure to document everything you eat, especially when you are experimenting, so that you know whether or not it works. Eventually, you will have found a perfect nutritional approach, custom made for you!

## EATING FOR MASSIVE GROWTH

I can’t believe how often I hear someone tell me they want to gain weight, but can’t, even though they eat all the time. I have yet to meet anyone who actually does eat a lot, but can’t gain weight. I have finally figured out why this is, and the answer is the same as it is for the person who says they hardly eat a thing, but can’t lose weight; PERCEPTION.

Each of us has a different perception of reality as it relates to what is normal. This is based upon our own personal experiences. For example, the same neighborhood can be

viewed as “safe” or “dangerous” by different people, depending upon where they have lived. Someone from Compton, California might believe Portland, Oregon to be a safe place to raise a family, while someone from Twin Falls, Idaho might think it is a crime-ridden big city where they wouldn’t think of walking the streets at night. The same thing holds true for eating. I have always eaten a lot, just like the rest of my family. I don’t know if it was because we were really poor and often times didn’t have much to eat, but I do know that I ate as much as I could whenever I had an opportunity to do so. I have also met people who would tell me how they forgot to eat all day. Personally, I can’t even imagine forgetting to eat. As far back as I can remember, I looked forward to each meal of the day. From elementary school through high school, in the Marine Corps and even now, I plan my day around my meals. I am not saying that is normal, but to me and to others like me, it is.

I have a few specific examples of the right way and wrong way to eat for massive muscle growth, but first let me go over the reason that this is SO IMPORTANT. Let’s go back to the basics. When you train your muscles properly, you break them down and stimulate your body to rebuild them larger and stronger. When you eat you provide your body with the necessary supplies to rebuild those muscles. When you rest, and especially when you sleep, your body takes those supplies and does the work of rebuilding the muscles larger and stronger. If any of those three steps are missing, you will slow down, or prevent that muscle growth. This section is specifically about providing your body with the supplies necessary to build muscle.

Your body needs a lot of quality protein because that is the main building block your body uses for muscle. Your body needs a lot of quality carbohydrates to provide energy for training and to assist in the building of muscle. Your body needs quality fats to assist with energy, muscle building, and for good health. The better the quality of the food you eat, the less it needs to accomplish the job of building huge muscles, at least up to a point. The reality is that most people, even bodybuilders, don’t eat enough quality food to do this. You can still accomplish the goal by eating lower quality food, but it takes more of it. If the quality of the food is not very good, and you eat enough to build your muscles, you will probably gain more body fat than you want, but I will let you be the judge of that. At least you will be building massive and strong muscles, right!

Several years ago, I was training a man who wanted to get huge. He was about 5’ 10” tall and weighed 132 pounds. I showed him how to train, but he wasn’t gaining fast enough. I talked to him about eating more, and he told me that he ate huge amounts of food constantly, but just couldn’t gain weight. I decided to take him to a pizza buffet and show him what I meant. After a while, my friend stopped eating after only 6 slices. I thought he was kidding! I will probably get in trouble for writing this, but my wife can eat more than that, and she is a beautiful, petite woman. After I finished my 22<sup>nd</sup> piece, I told him that he did not eat a lot, and that is why he couldn’t grow. I know I ate too much, but I must have proved my point to him. Over the next four months, my friend gained 34 pounds, going from 132 to 166. Not only that, but he actually looked leaner, with well-defined abs and a great V-taper!

I have another friend who dreams of weighing over 200 pounds. He is well built but he wants to be bigger. He also tells me that he eats all the time and just isn't genetically capable of gaining weight. When I tell him that he should bring a gallon of whole milk with him to work to drink throughout the day, he says he could never do that. When he is hungry he goes and gets a pop-tart from the machine. I hope I can convince him to eat enough clean, quality food so that he can reach his goal, but it is up to him. If you don't take your eating as seriously as your training, you will not be as successful as you should be.

## **SUPPLEMENTATION**

You will often read that the most important part of proper nutrition for an athlete is to eat a properly balanced diet of whole foods. That statement is true, but I think that some people have taken that to mean that a properly balanced diet is all you need. That is where they are wrong. The balanced diet is the foundation for your success, but you must build upon that foundation before your building can be considered complete.

Assuming that your diet of whole foods provides you with most of nutrients you need to be healthy and have enough energy, you will need to add some things to it in order to give your body the tools it needs to perform at the highest level. That is what a good [supplementation program](#) can do for you. If you just want to be healthy and have some energy, a balanced diet of healthy whole foods and a multi-vitamin will probably do the trick for most people. But if you want to be the strongest, fastest athlete, or the best-built, then you will need a little more.

The first thing that an athlete will have to add to their diet is protein. Even if you are eating plenty of protein in the form of whole foods, you will also want to add some protein powder. Protein shakes made by adding water, milk, or juice to protein powder, are more easily digested and utilized by your body. They can be into the blood stream and your body can use them more quickly than whole food protein. You still need to eat the whole food sources of protein though, because they provide a slower, more steady flow of protein and help keep your insulin levels steady. Adding a protein powder is important for many reasons, not the least of which is that it is an easy and inexpensive way to boost your total protein intake. You can read more about the importance of protein powders in the next section.

An athlete looking to increase either muscle size, strength, speed, muscular endurance or all four will definitely benefit from the proper use of a creatine supplement. Creatine supplementation has been popular since the mid 1990's and for good reason. It was really the first supplement that gave noticeable results quickly. Athletes were able to lift more weight for more sets and reps within a week or two. Over the years, there have been a few negative side effects associated with creatine supplementation, although none of them serious, and all of them have been eliminated, either through education on the proper use, or a change in formulation. For more detailed information on the benefits, drawbacks and proper use of creatine supplements, read ahead to the [Creatine](#) section.

A new supplement on the scene that I personally believe is the best natural supplement to come along in my lifetime, is GAKIC. People generally tend to be skeptical about new supplements that make what appear to be outrageous claims, and for good reason. Most supplements are announced by their creators to be the next great thing, and they usually fall short of the claims at best, or don't work at all in many cases. Because GAKIC had some good research done over 7 years at the University of Florida, and because those studies had been published in credible medical journals, I gave it a try. Ever since the first workout with GAKIC my strength and size has skyrocketed. I have been training for over 20 years, and competing in Bodybuilding, Powerlifting, Highland Games and Strongman for over 10 of those. I began GAKIC when I was at my peak in strength, but I was still able to add more weight for more reps on at least one exercise every workout. I am sold on the benefits of this new supplement, but if you want to know more about how it works and why I am so excited about it, read ahead to the GAKIC section.

Testosterone boosters have been popular for about a decade now. Pro-hormones dominated this category until they were banned in January 2005. There are still several companies who market supplements designed to raise your natural testosterone levels, and these supplements are legal. The theory behind these supplements is that by raising your natural testosterone levels, your body will increase protein synthesis and build muscle at an accelerated rate, similar to what anabolic steroids do. While these supplements make some strong claims about their effectiveness, most of them do not measure up to those claims, in my opinion. To learn more about them, read ahead to the Testosterone Booster section.

How many of you have ever wanted to lose a little body fat to get ripped, or just to look good on the beach in summer? Do you know anybody else who has? Of course you do. Almost everybody wants to have the lean muscular look of a bodybuilder, even if they don't want all the muscle size. Most people who want this look do not know what it takes to achieve that look, and if they do know, they are not willing to do it. They would rather take a magic weight loss pill that will do all the work for them. The bad news is that there is no such thing. The good news is that there are supplements that will help your body to use more calories even at rest, encourage your body to use fat for energy, and give you energy to work out longer and harder. All of those things will help you reach your goal of a ripped body. If you combine the proper weight training program with the right nutrition plan, a good cardio schedule and an effective fat burner supplement, you can reach the goal of a lean muscular body. To learn more about fat burners, read ahead to the Fat Burner section.

A relatively new supplement on the scene is the nitric oxide supplement. The first to come out was NO2 by MRI. The formulation was patented so other companies could not copy it exactly. The supplement was so popular that many companies did their best to come up with the closest thing they could to the same formulation without violating the patent laws. Whether or not they did is up to the consumer to decide, I guess. I did use the original supplement, NO2 and felt that I did get better pumps and a little more endurance, although nothing compared to the claims the manufacturer made. For more information on these supplements including why I think some of them cannot possibly work properly, read on to the Nitric Oxide section.

I have been a fan of meal replacement powders ever since they first came out in the mid 1990's. These supplements are designed to provide the user with the best ratio of protein,

carbohydrates and fats in the right quantities for muscle growth. Many of them claim to give you the best quality as well, and a wide array of vitamins and minerals too. These supplements do this, and manage to keep the calories low so that you can build muscle without adding body fat. In fact, I have used them to lower body fat levels while building muscle at the same time. Another great quality of these supplements is that they are convenient. You can mix them up quickly and have a nutritious meal on the go. To learn more, read ahead to the Meal Replacements section.

Vitamins and minerals are essential to good health. I am sure every one has heard that. Many bodybuilders will say that they aren't concerned with good health; they just want to be huge and ripped. My answer to that is, how hard can you train when you are sick as a dog? Do you think your body can build muscle when it is using all of its resources to fight off a virus? Of course not! If you want to be at your best, you must stay healthy. When your body is functioning smoothly, it can focus all of its recovery abilities on building muscle, and that is the goal, isn't it? Obviously, vitamins and minerals do a lot more than help us fight off illness, and you can read about those things in the Vitamins and Minerals section.

## PROTEIN POWDER

Let's assume that you are a 250 pound bodybuilder in the off-season. You are taking in 40 grams of protein per meal for six meals a day through whole food sources. That is 240 grams of quality protein, or a little less than 1 gram per pound of bodyweight. You will do best with 1.5 to 2 grams of protein per pound of bodyweight, but your body may have difficulty digesting and using any more whole food protein sources than it already is. You can easily add 100 grams of protein in the form of protein powder mixed with water, milk or juice. This protein would be easily digestible, easy to prepare anywhere, and much less expensive than whole food sources of protein. You can use protein powders for up to half of your protein requirements with excellent results.

There are actually times when a protein powder is more effective and more desirable than any whole food source of protein. After a workout your body needs carbohydrates right away. It is also a good time to take your creatine supplement, but that will be discussed in the Creatine section. Approximately 45 minutes to an hour after your workout, your body is primed for some protein, so it can get to work rebuilding your muscles. Protein powders are absorbed the quickest, so they are the preferred protein source at that time. It is also a lot quicker and easier to mix up a protein shake than to cook some meat, especially when you are tired from a hard workout.

There are several different kinds of protein powders, ranging from 100% whey, to soy, casein, egg, and any combination of them. The best ones include plenty of whey protein with a decent contribution of casein and egg proteins. Many of them taste very good, and mix easily in water or milk. If you want to build plenty of muscle, you definitely want to include a good protein powder in your diet.

Some of the best products are Cytowhey, Designer Whey, Probiotic- SR, Muscle Milk, Precision Protein, and Ultramyosin.

## CREATINE

A [creatine supplement](#) can help you lift more weight, for more repetitions in each set. It can increase your lean body mass, giving you better leverage for lifting, and it helps put your muscles into position to grow larger and stronger.

Creatine supplementation increases the ATP in your muscle cells, giving them more energy for lifting weights. It also pulls large amounts of water into the muscle cells, which is why the muscles begin to feel so full and hard. This is also why so many people feel muscle cramps when they take a creatine supplement. If you don't drink enough water, you can become dehydrated because so much water gets pulled into the muscle cells. You must drink a lot of extra water, maybe a gallon or more a day, to make sure your muscles can completely fill up, and still have enough in your system to handle everything else your body needs the water for. If you do that, you should have good success with creatine.

Another aspect of creatine supplementation is that there are different kinds of creatine supplements. The most basic is a creatine monohydrate powder. If you mix 5 grams with water and take it 6 times a day for the first 5 days, and 3 times a day after that, you will experience all of the benefits of creatine, but only in a mild way. If you instead use grape juice to mix the creatine with, the insulin response to the grape juice will force more creatine into the muscle and improve your results. That was what we did in the early days of creatine use.

The next wave of creatine supplements provided a powder that had already mixed the creatine monohydrate with a sugar like maltodextrin, in the appropriate amounts to get an improved insulin reaction over the grape juice option. This class of creatine supplements worked pretty well, but they caused some stomach problems for many people.

There are now creatine supplements that have exchanged the sugar-laden formula for a glycogen-loading formula. This formula works even better at maximizing the strength and fullness of creatine supplementation, while eliminating the upset stomach problem.

Regardless of the form of creatine that you choose, you should definitely use a creatine supplement during hard training cycles when your goal is to add muscle mass and increase strength. Make sure you drink at least 1 gallon of water a day so that you don't experience muscle cramping, and to help prevent muscle pulls.

Some of the best products are Vitargo CGL, Cell Mass, Phosphagen HP, and Cell Tech.

## GAKIC

This is a new supplement and the name [GAKIC](#) actually stands for Glycine-l-arginine-alpha-ketoisocaproic acid calcium. Developed by researchers at the University of Florida, GAKIC is a powerful new performance enhancing supplement. Several studies were published in medical journals showing that GAKIC increased strength by an average of 10.5% and fatigue resistance by 28% even from the first workout! Many of you have probably already heard or read this somewhere and are well aware of the sales pitch. I mean, don't all supplements come out with similar claims? While it is true that many supplements make claims that are not factual, I can personally vouch for the effectiveness of GAKIC.

Before I go into my experiences, I must first tell you how it works, in layman's terms. Many people expect a big rush of energy when they hear that a supplement will increase their strength. That does not happen with GAKIC. It is not a stimulant, therefore you will enter the gym with the same energy level that you would have had without GAKIC. It will not increase motivation prior to the workout, other than knowing that you are about to set some personal records. What happens is that your body can continue lifting a weight for a few more reps than you have done before. If you normally bench press 315 pounds for 5 reps, you should get about 7 if you took GAKIC before the workout. If you can squat 405 for 10 reps, expect 13 or 14 this time. Think about how important it is to push past the lactic acid pain barrier and get a couple extra reps at the end of a set. Well, with GAKIC you push past that barrier before you start to feel the pain. Then, if you keep pushing past the pain, you end up with several more reps per set than you normally get. That is huge for inducing muscle mass and strength gains!

Let me use the bench press as an example of the effectiveness of GAKIC on my workouts. A few weeks before I had heard of GAKIC, I benched 405 for 3 reps in a workout. My all-time best was 405 for 5 reps, and I had done that earlier in the year at almost 10 pounds more bodyweight. With GAKIC, benched 365 for 10 reps one week, and then decided to see how many I could get with 405 the following week. When the time came for the 405, I was able to bench it for 6 good reps! I probably could have gotten 7, but because I usually train alone, I don't like to take chances in the bench press. To go from 3 reps to 6 reps with 405 in only a few weeks is huge! Remember, this was not regained strength, but beating a personal best that took me over 20 years to achieve! This is only one of many personal bests that I continue to make from workout to workout since beginning my use of GAKIC, but I know that I will continue using it. I would be crazy not to. I gained about 15 pounds of bodyweight in the first month of using this supplement and my arms grew to 22 inches! I expect more in the future.

Right now, Muscle Tech owns the rights to GAKIC and its patent, so they are the only ones that can sell it, but when that runs out, I am sure there will be many other brands to choose from. One more piece of information about it. GAKIC does not taste good. That being said, it works so well that you just take it anyway.

## PRE-WORKOUT ENERGIZERS

Years ago, the ephedrine/caffeine stack was very popular for giving you a lot of energy for your workouts. Obviously, with the ban on ephedrine, and the current legal status of that supplement in a state of flux, many people have looked elsewhere for a pre-workout energizer.

Many people still use caffeine in some form, because it is inexpensive and easily accessible. Most importantly, it actually works. Several supplement companies have worked to dramatically improve your choices by creating supplements that combine ingredients that work together to enhance your workouts.

Several supplements are now available that combine creatine with a nitric oxide type ingredient and caffeine. The theory behind this product is that you will get the blood flow increase that a nitric oxide product gives you, combined with the energy, strength and pump that creatine gives you, and the energy that caffeine gives you, all in one. [NO-Xplode](#) by BSN, and [Superpump](#) 250 by Gaspari nutrition fall under this category.

Many people love these supplements, and they probably do enhance your workout, but I am not sold on the combination of a nitric oxide supplement with caffeine. The nitric oxide supplement is supposed to expand your blood vessels so that you have more blood flowing freely through them and into the muscles. Caffeine, on the other hand, restricts the blood flow by constricting the blood vessels. It seems to me that the two counteract each other, at least to some extent. Either way, I am sure that these supplements do give you more energy, but I am not sure that they can deliver on all of the purported benefits.

Another pre-workout energizer that works really well is [H+ Blocker](#) by Isatori. This supplement is a “carnosine synthesizer”. H+ Blocker is supposed to make you stronger with more muscular endurance as well as give you plenty of energy. It has not been out long enough for me to verify whether or not there are long term muscle and strength gains with it, but I have personally heard several bodybuilders tell me about the fantastic rush of energy they got when they took it. One guy overheard me talking about H+ Blocker with a friend and asked if he could try just one serving. An hour later, he was raving about how much energy he had, and he just had to get into the gym and train. The next day he came down and bought a container for himself.

A pre-workout energizer can be beneficial for anybody who sometimes lacks the energy or motivation to work hard in the gym.

## TESTOSTERONE BOOSTERS

In this group I will include both supplements that claim to raise your natural testosterone levels, and supplements that claim to mimic testosterone. These supplements claim to help build muscle mass and strength, as well as improve your sex drive. These claims are based on the reputation of anabolic steroids doing those things. These supplements are allegedly the closest thing to anabolic steroids, while still being legal to possess and use.

In January of 2004, the federal government made it illegal to possess pro-hormones like Androstenedione and all of its relatives. In fact, it is a felony on the same level as possessing real anabolic steroids, heroin, or crack cocaine! Personally, I think this is silly for two reasons. Number one, nobody is getting physically addicted to Androstenedione, and if anybody was getting hurt by its use (and even that is questionable), it was only the user. The other reason is that, pro-hormones don't even do much to help you build muscle, in my opinion. Why would you risk prison time for something that hardly works?

Now, let me clarify my position about the effectiveness of these supplements. I have used some of the pro-hormones in the past and a couple of the cycles felt like I may have gained a little strength while losing some body fat. The thing is, the improvement was so slight that I don't know if the improvement was due to the supplement or if it was just the result of hard training. I also have some friends who believe they have gotten great results with certain pro-hormones, like MIT from Gaspari Nutrition. That supplement has since been banned, but they have a new one called Halodrol-50 that makes some pretty bold claims, like a noticeable increase in strength and muscle mass in 72 hours. I will watch my buddy try it and then we will see whether or not it lives up to those claims.

## FAT BURNERS

An extremely popular supplement group is the [Fat Burners](#). These supplements claim to increase your metabolism and the rate at which you use body fat for energy. Many of them also claim to increase your energy, too.

In the past, Ephedrine and Caffeine were combined in most of these, and they were effective at helping you burn body fat for energy, and they acted as a stimulant as well. Of course, many people abused them by overdosing, and some people got hurt and even died. Because of that, there was a ban on ephedrine. Even though that ban was challenged in court, and overturned, most supplement companies won't accept the liability to make and sell anything with ephedrine anymore.

Most of the current crop of fat burners contain caffeine as their main ingredient. Caffeine has been shown to increase fat metabolism and energy, although not as well as the ephedrine/ caffeine stack. Some Fat Burners have added synephrine, a cousin of Ephedrine, to the stack to help out. One of the best of these fat burners is [Lipo-6](#) by Nutrex.

There are some others who claim to have discovered new ingredients that are even more effective at eliminating body fat. The important thing to remember about these is that all companies will claim that their supplement works, but most of them don't. Pay attention to scientific studies, and even more importantly, pay attention to what seems to be working for other people. If an out of shape guy you met at the donut shop tells you he swears by supplement X, be skeptical. On the other hand, if a well-developed bodybuilder or athlete that you trust tells you that Supplement Y is fantastic, you should probably think about trying it.

Two fat-burning supplements that seem promising are Hot Rox and Fahrenheit by BioTest. They contain a new ingredient named "A7-E" and claim to burn fat more efficiently than ephedrine, without the buzz. I have been told by people using Hot Rox, that their appetite was significantly reduced, and that 5 pounds of weight lost in the first week is not uncommon. You may want to give these ones a try.

### NITRIC OXIDE

A few years ago, a new classification of supplements came on the scene, called nitric oxide. The trailblazer in this classification was NO2 by MRI. This supplement is supposed to dilate your blood vessels and increase blood flow dramatically. This is supposed to give you a constant pump, better endurance and improved muscle growth due to the improved transport of nutrients to the muscles. They patented the delivery system and claimed that the delivery system they used was the only way for these supplements to be rendered effective. Other companies soon came up with their own version, with different delivery systems, and many of them have become very popular as well.

I tried NO2 when it was relatively new, and I liked it. I felt that I got better pumps and could do a few more repetitions, although nothing like what happened when I used GAKIC. I only stopped using it because it was a little too expensive for me.

Many of the supplements that use nitric oxide now are pre-workout energizers that combine it with creatine and caffeine. Please refer to the section on Pre-Workout Energizers for information on them.

### MEAL REPLACEMENT POWDERS

Met-Rx and Myoplex are the big names in the meal replacement category. They have been around since the mid- 1990's and are still popular today. They provide you with plenty of high-quality protein, a good amount of clean carbs and minimal fat. They taste great, and I find the Met-Rx to be quite filling, too. Meal replacement powders are very convenient and easy to prepare. You just put them in 16 ounces of water or milk and mix them up in a shaker or blender. I like to mix mine in a blender with milk and some ice

cubes. They are great to take with you to work so that you can mix up a healthy meal in a hurry instead of grabbing some fast food on the go.

Meal replacement powders are usually very nutrient dense. That means that you get plenty of protein, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals with very few calories. Both Met-Rx and Myoplex have about 270 calories per serving when mixed with water. With 37 grams of high quality protein and so few calories, it is easy to provide your muscles with the nutrients they need and keep your calories low to stay lean at the same time. As a matter of fact, whenever I want to lose some body fat, the first change I make is to replace a couple of whole food meals with Met-Rx shakes. It is quick, easy and painless.

In my opinion, meal replacement powders are one of the best supplement innovations to ever come along. For anybody who ever broke their diet plan by eating out when they didn't have time to cook something healthy, these supplements are for you.

For great prices on supplements, go to [www.nlpbodybuilding.com/supplement-directory.html](http://www.nlpbodybuilding.com/supplement-directory.html)

## VITAMINS AND MINERALS

Countless books have been written about the importance and functions of various vitamins and minerals, so I won't try to duplicate the information that is available in every library around. I will explain why it is important to take the right amount of them for maximal health and performance.

Simply stated, most of us don't consume all of the vitamins and minerals we need from our whole food meals. Many people who take a Multi-vitamin with minerals are probably getting what they need. Now, here is the catch. If you only take one multi-vitamin, you will probably get what you need, but you won't get everything you need in the right amounts for optimum performance. On the other hand, if you take multiple doses of the same supplement each day, you may be taking too much of some of the vitamins and minerals, which can have adverse effects. So what is the solution?

There are certain vitamins that can be handled and are actually beneficial in super high doses, and vitamin C is one of those. There have been many studies done, over many decades, which have shown vitamin C to greatly assist in fighting off viruses and sickness in general. It is an antioxidant and helps you recover from your workouts, too. Staying healthy is the best thing you can do to get consistent gains in the gym.

I suggest taking 1 to 2 multi-vitamin and mineral doses a day. If you take two, take one in the morning and one at night. Take 4-8 additional grams of vitamin C per day, divided up into 4 separate doses throughout the day. Take one serving of a calcium/ magnesium supplement with your final dose of vitamin C right before going to sleep at night. If you

do this, you should be covered for all of your vitamin and mineral needs without overdosing on any of them.

## **MENTAL APPROACH**

One of the most important aspects of attaining any goal is your mental approach. Your mindset will determine how close you get to your potential. The proper mental approach will help you reach as high as the other factors such as genetics, health, and opportunity, will allow you to go. Without the proper mental approach, you are doomed to failure.

## **CONSISTENCY**

One of the things that will make a huge difference in your success is consistency. Remember the story about the tortoise and the hare? The slow and steady does win the race. I am not saying you have to take your time, but make sure you just keep going forward.

It is easy to become bored and lazy with your training, but you must have the discipline to keep at it if you want to reach your goals. You can use some variety in your training to keep things fresh, but don't give up.

I knew someone who would use anabolic steroids occasionally, and when he was on a cycle he would train hard, eat right and he was focused on his goals. When he was off cycle he would eat however he wanted and stop training, because felt like it wasn't worth it to work hard since his gains would slow down without the drugs. During the time that he stopped training, he would lose all of the muscle that he had built and end up looking like he had never trained in his life. Sooner or later he would begin training again, and start another cycle of anabolic steroids. Because of his lazy approach, he only looked good for the final few weeks of a cycle because it took him a couple of months to regain the size he had lost, and it faded again within a few weeks after the cycle was completed.

I am not advocating the use of anabolic steroids in any way. I am only using this true story to illustrate the importance of consistency. This individual has since stopped using anabolic steroids and rarely trains. He looks like he never lifted a weight in his life even though he had done several cycles of steroids and carried over 30 pounds more muscle on his frame at one time. In contrast, my brother Sam has never tried anabolic steroids and is naturally thin. Through consistent hard training over more than a decade he has gained over 120 pounds of fat-free muscle. Upon seeing his 6'4" 260 pound frame in person, you would never guess he started lifting as a skinny 135 pound teenager. His 700 pound deadlift with only a lifting belt for support may surprise you even more. This is the result of consistency in training, nutrition and supplementation.

## POSITIVE ATTITUDE

The way you feel about things has a direct and powerful effect on how you act. A student who dreads going to school and despises the teachers and books, will rarely perform at a satisfactory level, even if that student is extremely gifted. I have noticed this in my own life many times.

In my German Language class my Senior year of High School, I couldn't stand my teacher. I didn't like the way he treated us and talked down to us. Even though I had done well in German the previous year with a different instructor, I did not like the class with this teacher. I refused to do any school work in that class, and became quite disruptive. Obviously, I failed that class. What I did not realize, was that my bad attitude in that class was carrying over to my other classes. I began to doubt my intelligence as I began to struggle in all classes. I had a C average for the first semester, which was the lowest I had ever gotten.

I was scheduled to enter the United States Marine Corps after graduation, so when it was brought to my attention that I had to pass certain required classes in order to graduate, I decided to buckle down. By focusing on my classes, I was able to raise my final semester grade point average to a 3.0. I know that is nothing to brag about, but considering I was in danger of not graduating, it is not bad.

Near the end of my final semester, a friend of mine who was also joining the Marine Corps went with me to take our ASVAB test for the military. This test is given to all military recruits to find out what their intellectual abilities are and is used to determine eligibility for certain job classifications. After we had returned home, I got a call from my recruiter. He was shocked and falling all over himself because, according to him, I had "aced" the test! I didn't really, but I got 97 out of 99 possible points, which is pretty good. It basically meant I was qualified to do any job in the military. Of course that intelligence didn't keep me from being tricked into signing up for the very thing I had said I didn't want. I didn't find out until I was in Boot Camp and it was too late, but that's another story. By the way, the guy I took the test with was a good student, with only A's and B's, and he only got about 75 out of 99. That just goes to show how he worked hard with less potential, and outperformed me in school.

I love bodybuilding, powerlifting, strongman and just about everything else about lifting weights. Because of that passion, I have a very positive attitude about training for and competing in contests. When I perform well, that builds my confidence and improves my attitude even more. My attitude towards training has caused me to read and study everything I could get my hands on about lifting weights. I put into practice the things I had read and found out what worked. My positive attitude fueled my desire to learn, and

my desire to train. Positive results from training led to a desire to learn about and improve nutrition and supplement use, and so on.

Because of my positive attitude about bodybuilding, I have gained over 100 pounds of muscle and enough strength to set records in Powerlifting and earn a national ranking in Strongman. Those results speak for themselves. A positive attitude is a must for success in anything.

## DETERMINATION AND DEDICATION

When you want to be successful at something you need to make a decision to do it, and then follow through. It is not enough to say, "I want to have nice abs like bodybuilder X". You have to take a look at what you will have to do to attain that goal and make the decision whether or not you are willing to follow through and do it. Once you have made that decision, you must actually do what you have decided to do.

Determination is your desire and unbending will to accomplish something. Dedication is the discipline to do all of the day to day tasks required for success. When you put Determination and Dedication together, you have an unbeatable combination. That does not mean that you don't make changes to your training along the way, as long as those changes are designed to help you reach your original goal.

An example of determination in bodybuilding could be deciding that you want 20 inch arms. Depending on how big your arms are now, that could be a short-term or long-term goal. Either way, when you have figured out a plan of attack and made the decision to do it, you follow that plan of attack and don't give up until you achieve it. Dedication in this example would be manifested by never missing your workouts, and giving your all on every set and every rep. Following every aspect of your plan, including nutrition and supplementation without fail, is the kind of dedication that you will need.

If you put a good program together and follow it with determination and dedication as outlined above, you will reach any realistic goal in bodybuilding.

## KEEP IT FUN

In an earlier section I wrote about having a positive attitude. In the examples I used, the catalyst behind the two different attitudes I displayed was how I felt about those activities. People often ask me what exercises they should do. In many cases, these are people who don't normally work out, but they want to get in shape and lose some weight. I give them some choices, but the most important thing I tell them is that they need to find out which ones they enjoy the most. The reason for this is that most people won't do something for long if they don't like it. It sounds simple, but I can't overemphasize how important that it is.

As I stated earlier, I love lifting weights. As much as I love it though, I still sometimes get caught up in training a certain way that I don't enjoy, only because I believe it will help me succeed in my goals. That's okay for a little while, but eventually you can lose your passion for working out, and that leads down a long road of lackluster workouts at best. Your best option is to find effective workout strategies that you love to do, so that you look forward to every workout and give it your all. When you love what you are doing, it isn't work, it's just fun!

## **SUMMARY**

When you look at this book as a whole, I hope you will find that the answers to every aspect of training, nutrition, and supplementation for bodybuilding. There are not any specific training routines because I want you to be able to use the information here to create your own custom routines for continued success. If you understand the information here, and apply the principles, you should be able to reach all of your bodybuilding related goals, as long as they are realistic.

I want to add that this book is not just for competitive bodybuilders, but for everyone who trains with weights to gain muscle and strength, and to lose body fat. Athletes of all sports can benefit from these principles if they apply them.

I wish everyone the best with their training and I hope you have great success. If I am ever in the same place as any of you, feel free to come introduce yourself and tell me about your progress. I would love to hear about it.