



The Aggressive Strength Solution For Size And Strength



By Mike Mahler

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The exercises and advice contained within this manual may be too difficult or dangerous for some people, and the reader(s) should consult a physician before engaging in them.

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Introduction

It's hard to believe that less than five years ago I was Director of Business Development for a northern VA Internet company. While I was taking home a nice paycheck, I was miserable; I hated the job. It was as boring as hell and I didn't like the people with whom I worked. Then, in March 2002, a miracle occurred: I got fired, and there was no turning back; I'd had enough of working for other people and doing jobs which offered no fulfillment.

I've been into strength training for fifteen years and had always wanted to be a part of the business; whenever my friends heard me talking about training, they'd always wonder why I wasn't in the business, since I was so enthusiastic about training research and working out. It was time to finally let my calling in and take charge of my life; thus, in April of 2002, I started my strength training business, and the last several years have been a blast.

I'd gotten certified in kettlebell training from top trainer Pavel Tsatsouline just a month before getting fired from my last job--talk about perfect timing. While my knowledge base was much larger than simply kettlebell training, I decided teaching kettlebells would be my main focus; nevertheless, I decided to write articles on a variety of training subjects to ensure that I wasn't labeled just a kettlebell guy.

I went on to build a very successful business and have done over seventy kettlebell workshops across the U.S. and overseas; I've also made three best selling DVD's and a kettlebell workshop manual. I've written over one hundred articles and, frankly, have lost count on what the exact number is. I've designed hundreds of programs for clients around the world via my personalized program design services. It was time to take the next step and write a book; however, not a kettlebell-focused book, but a more mainstream book that everyone could benefit from. Sure, kettlebells would be a part of it, but not the main focus; this book is finally here and I'm very excited that you have it in front of you.

This book is based on all of my training experience--both personal and though training others--the feedback from my articles, and the results that my online clients have achieved with my various programs. The programs in this book flat-out work, and, in addition to talking about training, I cover the importance of optimizing sex hormones and why blood work is so important for training progress. I go over what nutritional supplements are worth taking, and what you can do to increase your recovery abilities. This book covers the common mistakes you're probably making with your training program--and what to do about it. It ends with a comprehensive Q&A section that will, no doubt, cover the majority--if not all--of your questions; you'll be referring to it often.

This book is based on many of the articles I've written over the years: I took my best size and strength articles and expanded them even further. Moreover, I've added some new topics, such as how to stay in shape as a busy executive, and how to add kettlebells to your training program--there's something for everyone in this book. Many of the programs have options for the gym, kettlebell-focused options, and options for road warriors.

I've worked hard to make this book as fluff-free as possible; it is content-dense and won't insult your intelligence. Thank you, again, for your business, and I look forward to your feedback. Thanks for helping make my career dreams come true--and may the same happen to you.

Live Life Aggressively!

Mike Mahler



Critical Factors for Training Program Success

Many trainees make the mistake of looking for the perfect program: they go from one program to another hoping to hit the jackpot. The reality is that no *one* program is perfect and no *one* program will work forever; in addition to knowing exactly what you're training for, you have to know a great deal about yourself. One of the reasons why many generic programs don't work for individuals is that generic programs don't take the individual--you--into account: your stress levels, sleeping patterns, nutrition, physiology and drive are not part of the equation. Let's talk about goals first.

Following a training regimen without a specific goal in mind is like taking a road trip without a map or directions: you may end up at your destination, but, chances are, it'll take a lot longer to get there; there's also a good chance you'll never get there--you're leaving too much to chance without having a specific plan. Vague goals, such as *I want to get leaner, build muscle, and get faster* are not going to cut it; you have to be far more specific than that. For example, having a goal of losing twenty pounds, getting your body fat down to 10%, and doing twenty pull-ups, are specific and measurable goals: you know exactly what the target is and can devise a specific plan to get there. Next, you have to pick a deadline to provide a sense of urgency; otherwise, the goal will just go to the end of your procrastination list. To make it a reality, set a target date.

Second, what are you prepared to do? What are you prepared to give up in achieving these goals? No worthy goal is achieved without sacrifice. You may have to give up hanging around negative people who'd like you to end up a loser like them. You may have to give up eating out for several months. You may have to get rid of the TV to ensure you get eight hours of sleep every night. You can't have it all, all of the time. With any worthwhile goal in life, the application of sacrifice is a necessity; frankly, this is one of the main reasons most people are unsuccessful in life. It's time to relinquish your spoiled brat nature and take responsibility for your life and your goals.

Third, what do you know about yourself? Your physiology plays a significant role in your training progress. Not having information about your physiology is like driving a car without knowing the gas, air pressure, or oil levels; hopefully, nothing will break down, but why leave it to chance? To avoid car problems, you take your car in for a check-up--your body needs a check-up as well. What you don't know about yourself will hurt you eventually; it's not a question of *if*—it's a question of when. For example, if your Growth Hormone levels are low, forget about body composition goals and intense training: intense training with low GH levels will just further deplete you. Moreover, your training could be the *cause* of the low GH levels, which means you need to make a serious mid-course correction. Getting stronger and putting on solid muscle will be much more difficult if your testosterone levels are low, and if your thyroid levels are low, fat loss will be far more difficult. The only way to know for sure what your levels are is to have your doctor run some blood work. Have your doctor test your testosterone levels (free and total), DHT, estradiol, DHEA, cortisol, IGF-1, and thyroid function. Look for a holistic doctor in your area who can give you some meaningful feedback on what you can do. Here's a directory: [Holistic Doctor Directory](#)

Sex hormones are only one of many important areas to examine. When was the last time you went a chiropractor or Active Release Technique practitioner ([ART](#))? These professionals can tell you what imbalances you have and can help you avoid injuries--before they occur. You take your car in for a tune-up and should do the same with your body; a training program may do more damage than good depending on what state your body is in.

Mental health is another area you need to examine: are you depressed--if yes, why? Do you have a great deal of stress in your life? If yes, what's going on, and what do you need to do to get back on top of things?

Fourth, it's very important you keep a training journal to track your progress. Not keeping a training journal is similar to running a business and not keeping records: money's coming in and it's going out and *hopefully* you're ahead each month—doesn't sound very promising. Moreover, how are you supposed to improve if you don't even know where you are? Training journals keep you accountable: if you've had a poor month of training you can look in your journal and see why. In addition to recording each workout, record the sleep quality of the night before, what you ate before training, what you ate after training, your energy levels, and so forth.

The more detailed the training journal, the better, but don't feel a need to turn your training journal into an epic novel; you don't need to include your sexual fantasies in it, and, if you do, keep it to yourself.

In this book I'm going to cover many of my favorite programs for building size and strength; there's something for everyone here and, no doubt, you'll find at least one--if not several--programs for achieving your physique goals. Yes, the programs are generic and you'll have to personalize them to your needs; regardless, these programs are a great place to start and I'm sure you'll enjoy this book. Before we get into the programs let's spend some time on common mistakes trainees often make--more than likely you're making many of the mistakes. Read on!

Ten Common Training Mistakes You're Probably Making

Mistake #1: Not Keeping a Training Journal

Imagine running a business without keeping any records: you just keep working and hoping you're making more than you're spending. You've no way of knowing for sure if you're even making a profit and no way of knowing for sure if you're improving each month. Without proper accounting, a business is doomed; training is no different. When you keep a training journal you keep yourself accountable: you learn what works and what doesn't work; you learn how lack of sleep affects training and how the stress in your life affects training. An honest training journal allows you to avoid the illusion you're making progress when you're not making any progress at all. Don't just write down what you did at each workout--write down the other things going on in your life. If you had a great workout, think about what happened to result in a great workout that day. Did you sleep well the night before? What did you eat before the session? Were you in a good mood that day? Did you take a new pre-workout supplement? The more you know, the more you are likely to repeat the same feeling at another workout. On the other hand, if you had a terrible workout, think about the factors that may have contributed to it so you can avoid them in the future.

Another reason to keep a training journal is this: there's a natural human drive *to want to improve*. If you know what the number *is*, you'll want to beat it at the next workout. If you've no idea what you're doing at each workout, how will you know if you're moving forward or not?

You can't just rely on how you feel: you can feel great after a workout and think you're stronger, then look in your training journal and realize that you're weaker than your last workout--or that you've shown no improvement at all. Let's use the example of teaching training seminars to

illustrate this point: let's say you made \$2000 profit at a seminar in NYC, then generated \$5000 revenue at another, second, seminar. On paper, it looks like the second seminar was more profitable; however, let's say the expenses that went along with the second seminar amounted to \$3000. Thus, your profit is \$2000 again, which means there was no improvement in profit between the seminars. If you didn't keep track of expenses you wouldn't know this valuable information; training is the same. Run your workouts like a business and you'll stay on track and increase your likelihood of making progress. How many of you are going to keep a journal as a result of reading this? I doubt more than 10%. Since a journal is easy to keep it is also easy to *not* do and most of you won't bother with it. Oh well, I did my part.

Mistake #2: Training for the Stimulus Rather Than for Results

Go to any gym and you'll see trainees who've been doing the same workout for many years: they're doing the same exercises, the same weights, the same workout order--and enjoying the same lack of results. As the saying goes, *expecting different results from the same actions is a form of insanity*. Many trainees become process-oriented in which they just go through the motions at each workout. Now, don't get me wrong, going through the motions is better than doing nothing at all--unless you're doing Richard Simmons' "Sweating to the Oldies". Moreover, training for the stimulus isn't necessarily a bad thing: if the stimulus of training makes you feel better, then your time is never wasted completely at a workout; however, if you want to make progress, you have to be results-oriented rather than process-oriented, or, attached to the stimulus. Your discipline will be rewarded with progress in training rather than stagnation in training.

To use an analogy from business: *you want to be focused on making money rather than acquiring praise*. Of course, acquiring praise and feeling good about what you do are important--and nice—perks; however, if your business isn't making any money, then these perks don't really matter. Like it or not: money is a measurement that allows you to know if your business is improving or not improving. Getting more reps in a workout, using more weight, and getting more done in less time, are all forms of training progress measurement; use these tools, or, feel free to avoid making progress and keep wasting time in the gym or wherever you train.

In addition to being focused on the results, you want to be focused on the most efficient path *to* the result. If you can achieve a goal in three weeks

with three workouts per week instead of six, why do six? Why do more, if you're not going to get improved results? Sure, the extra work is worth applying for an improved outcome, but not for the same outcome or, worse yet, an inferior outcome. If you just focus on being process-oriented when you run a business, you'll have the illusion you are improving but won't have the results for it; focus on achieving results and measuring your work and you'll have no doubt when you're moving forward.

Mistake #3: Lack of Focus

Ever get excited about one thing, and then, two minutes later, forget about it and get excited about something else? Sure, all of us have at some point; regardless, to get good at something you have to put in some time. People who get bored easily are, most likely, people who fail often. Staying on course takes focus, discipline, and the ability to manage boredom; I think failing at everything is far more boring than getting good at a few things.

Now, when it comes to training programs, there are a lot of options and it can be difficult to pick just one; however, it's critical you do exactly that and stick with just one program for at least three weeks. Do make sure you've a clear idea of what the program you've picked entails: if you're going to start a high-volume training regimen, make sure you do it at a time in your life when you're eating and sleeping well and able to take time to train consistently. If you have a lot of stress in your life, and an erratic schedule, pick a program more appropriate for your situation. Once you get started, stick with the program for a while: pick one goal, accomplish it and then move on. You should know exactly what you're going to do at 90% of your workouts--and what the end result will be. Going to a job and punching in hours might work for nine-to-fivers, but won't work for training. Don't start a workout without knowing what you're trying to accomplish; don't start a set without knowing how many reps you are going for.

Remember, lack of *focus* and lack of *discipline* will equal lack of *results*. Imagine opening a bike shop and then closing it the next day and deciding to sell lampshades instead; then, a week later, deciding you want to be a personal trainer. Chances are high you'll fail at everything you try, if you don't have the focus and discipline to finish what you start. If you change your mind every two minutes in business, you'll inevitably go under; training isn't any different. Know the target and go after it until it is achieved; then, switch gears. Remember, it's easy to start a project and much

harder to finish. “I shall finish the game,”--great advice from Billy the Kid in the movie *Young Guns*.

Mistake #4: Assuming training has to be complicated to be effective

Strength training is not rocket science: your program doesn't have to involve what's the equivalent of a calculus equation to be effective. In fact, the more complicated a program is, the more likely it is to fail. Especially when you're a novice to strength training; it's always amusing to see men with twelve-inch guns doing twelve sets of bicep curls, ten sets of dumbbell flys--and no leg work. Hmm, I wonder whey they look like crap and never make progress...

Develop a strong foundation in the basics and focus on exercises that'll give you the most bang for your buck. Forget about tons of exercises for your arms when you can only bench press 185 and squat 155. Forget about bicep specialization programs when you can't even do a pull-up. I often get emails from trainees who are beginners training six days per week in which they designate one day for each body part. Such programs may be fine for experienced trainees who've a solid foundation; however, for beginners, it's far from the best path. Full body workouts, with a focus on compound exercises such as Deadlifts, Barbell Squats, Bench Presses, Military Presses, Bent-over Rows, and Pull-ups are a great place to start. Get your bench press up to 300lbs, Military Press up to 200lbs and Deadlift up to 400lbs before you think about complicated routines.

Mistake #5: Training with maximum intensity too often

No doubt, productive weight training takes lots of hard work; regardless--with the exception of money and sex--too much of anything isn't always the most productive path: too-frequent training with maximum intensity will fry your central nervous system. Once this happens, you'll become sluggish mentally and your physical body will follow accordingly. In other words: everything will feel heavy in the gym and your body will feel out of sync. The harder you train, the less frequently you *can* train; however, training infrequently isn't ideal either. Training is a skill, and, like playing the piano or learning a new language, it has to be practiced often. The more you do something without burning out the better you'll get and the more efficient you'll become. If you're on a program wherein you do the Military Press once every two weeks and aren't doing any other exercises similar to the

Military Press between each session, each time you execute the Military Press it'll feel like you're doing it for the first time. Take some advice from top strength coach Pavel Tsatsouline, and treat the majority of your workouts as practices. Every so often--such as every 10-14 days--do a maximum effort to see how you're progressing and to keep you excited about training.

Mistake #6: Only working what you can see in the mirror

Man, this one is a classic: how many trainees work bench presses and never touch bent-over rows? How many trainees work the lower back, mid back, and hamstrings? Not enough, that's for sure. Training has to be balanced in order to be effective, thus, if you do a press, you must do a pull. If you do an exercise for the quads such as squats, you must do an exercise for the hamstrings such as the Romanian Deadlift. Many male trainees make the mistake of doing tons of bench pressing, curls...and then a half-hour on the exercise bike for legs; this is not going to cut it. Remember to work your body in balance to avoid injuries and strength plateaus—you're only as strong as your weakest link.

Mistake #7: Spending too much time on pet lifts

We all have our favorite exercises and it's all too easy to gravitate towards what we enjoy and forget about what else needs to be done. Chances are the exercises you hate are the very ones you need to do: if you love the Clean and Press, you probably aren't doing enough pull-ups and bent-over rows; if you love squats, you're probably not doing enough hamstring work. You're headed on the road to *Imbalanced Land*--and it's not a fun place to be; muscle pain and overuse injuries are sure to follow. Try doing the exercises you *don't* enjoy at the beginning of your workouts; get them over with and move on to the fun stuff.

Mistake #8: Poor nutrition program

These days, the *in* thing is to know more about nutrition supplements than proper training and diet. I talk to people all the time who take every supplement under the sun and can explain the difference between every version of creatine, yet they have pathetic physiques and poor strength to match. Sure, there are nutrition supplements which can make a difference in your training program--in fact, my friend Dr. William Wong and I are

working on a sports nutrition book--regardless, no supplement will make a difference if your diet sucks! Get 1 gram of protein per 2 pounds of body weight--you may need more--however, most people overdo protein, which is only good for bubbly urine and a noxious gas that can reduce the population of a small country. Start with 1 gram per 2 pounds of body weight and go from there. Have at least 30% of your daily protein intake after your workouts--this is the time in which your body is starving for protein; thus, if you're taking in 100 grams of protein per day, have 30 grams after your workouts. Make sure you get a good amount of healthy fat in as well: flaxseed, hempseed, olive, and fish oils are all good options. Finally, get the majority of your carbohydrates from low-glycemic fruits and veggies. Some good examples are berries, apples, pears, tomatoes, squash, spinach, broccoli, cauliflower, eggplant, and red bell peppers. Make sure you check out John Berardi's site for some great nutrition info at [click here](#)

To pack on size, take your body weight and multiply it by fifteen; thus, if you weigh 200lbs, take in 3000 calories per day. Yes, many trainers recommend 5000--or more--calories and no doubt you'll gain weight, but unfortunately most of it will be fat--hardly the goal you're targeting. Focus on increasing weight slowly: five pounds a year sounds like nothing, but in five years it's 25lbs of muscle. Get into training for the long haul and give your body time to adapt to the weight increase. Giving yourself time to put on weight will ensure you keep it on.

As far as how the macronutrient profile should look, that's an individual thing: some people do well on 30% protein, 40% carbs and 30% fat while others will prefer 20% protein, 60% carbs and 20% fat. Experiment with different ratios and see which one works best for you--just have protein, carbs and fat at every meal.

Mistake #9: Not spending enough time on restoration

No training program will be effective without adequate restoration: we live in a sleep-deprived culture wherein our adrenals are working over time and thus, we hold the illusion we can get by with four hours of sleep and a high-stress lifestyle--as long as the adrenals are working overtime, we feel as if we're top of things. Unfortunately, the adrenals will eventually shut down and then you're in big trouble: you'll hit the wall like a Mack truck and feel *terrible*. Get ready for depression, no energy nor any desire to get out of bed. The more stress you have in your life the more rest you need. Yes, you need

eight hours of deep sleep every night; yes, you need to take some days off from training and relax. Do yourself a favor and get a sports massage every two weeks--can't afford it? Get rid of your TV and cable bills and free up that cash for restoration options. Take a twenty-minute nap after workouts and learn how to handle stress. Meditate and/or take walks daily to clear your head.

Mistake #10: Not having a life outside of training

Real strength goes far beyond what you can do physically: if someone can bench press 500lbs but is mentally and morally weak, this person doesn't have complete strength. One of the greatest benefits of physical training is how the confidence and strength you build can be carried over to other areas of your life; the confidence you build with productive strength training *should* be carried over to other areas of your life. If the gym is the only place where you feel comfortable and confident, then you've missed out on the major benefits of training.

Conclusion

A good part of the solution of any problem is admitting you *have* a problem; make sure you address the above seven points if you expect to ever actually make training progress. In the next chapter, we're going to discuss the importance of optimizing hormones, e.g. if your testosterone and IGF-1 levels are low, forget about getting bigger and stronger. Building strength and size is far more complicated than just working out and eating a ton--let's move on.

The Secret Relationship Between Sex Hormones and Size and Strength Training

I'll get right to the point: if you don't have a high sex drive, you're not healthy and you're not maximizing the benefits of training and if you don't feel strong and powerful after any workout, you probably did more damage than good with regard to your health. Instead of optimizing your anabolic hormones (also known as sex hormones), you've depleted them. Depleting your anabolic hormones places you in an aging state that is counter-productive to recovery. Fail to recover several times and you'll get weaker and weaker at each workout. While getting blood work is very important (and I'll cover which tests you should have done in this article) there are a few *free* ways to determine whether your training is optimizing anabolic hormones. Now, before I go further, let me state clearly that I am not a doctor and I am not providing medical advice: the goal of this article is to get you to take charge of your health and work with a qualified M.D.--that said, let's get started.

First, let's talk about the two main hormones most important to training: testosterone and Growth Hormone. Let's start with testosterone.

Testosterone is largely responsible for strength and size. Men's T levels often peak around age 25 and then start dropping steadily after age 30; thus, every man should have his levels checked at age 25 as a marker of what his ideal levels are.

According to Dr. William Wong, by the time a man is in his fifties, he often has *half* the T levels that he had in his twenties and often has greater estrogen levels than his wife! Without adequate testosterone levels, muscle building won't happen. Testosterone is also important for bone health, mental health, sexual health, and heart health. Basically, without adequate levels of testosterone, you'll feel like crap, look like crap, and have no sex

drive. Still think not having a blood test to determine what your testosterone levels are isn't important? Think again.

In her excellent book on bio-identical hormones, Ageless, Suzanne Somers writes the following are common symptoms of low testosterone:

- Shrinking muscles
- Weight loss (muscle not fat)
- Decreases Stamina
- Weaker erections
- Fatigue
- Depression
- Irritability
- Gallbladder problems
- Enlarged breasts (otherwise known as “bitch tits”)

Not a very appealing list, still most men make the mistake of waiting until they have the above symptoms before doing anything about it. Many continue to suffer in silence with low testosterone levels, as so few want to admit they're not feeling their best--big mistake. Again: if your testosterone levels are low, forget about ever being really strong or--more importantly--feeling good about life. One more time, symptoms of low testosterone are: low sex drive, low confidence, increased body fat, and a poor outlook on life. In other words, if your testosterone levels are low, you won't feel like having sex, you'll let people push you around, you'll be overweight, and you'll probably think life is lame; I'd rather jump off a cliff than live like that. Forget about Prozac and other ways to cover the symptoms: get to the root cause, which could very well be low T levels.

One study I read about online conveyed the importance of high testosterone levels with regards to building muscle and strength: a study was done in which one group worked out and received testosterone replacement therapy; a second group worked out but didn't receive testosterone replacement therapy, and finally, a third group received testosterone replacement therapy but didn't work out. Guess which group had the best results? Obviously, the group that received testosterone replacement therapy and worked out achieved the best results; however, what's interesting is the group that got testosterone replacement therapy and did *not* work out achieved better results than the group that worked out but didn't get testosterone replacement therapy.

Of course, the training program that they were on could have been really lame--no doubt that's a possible factor; however, that doesn't even come close to eclipsing the fact that the group that didn't work out actually got stronger and bigger with testosterone replacement therapy. Now, I'm not telling you this to encourage you to take testosterone; while that may be the only option you have to get your levels back up, that's between you and your doctor. I'm telling you this to clearly demonstrate how important optimal testosterone levels are to training.

The optimal range for T is 600-900ng/dl for total and 100-400 ng/dl for free levels (this is how efficient your are at using what you are producing). Normal for total is considered 200-900ng/dl; however, this is a very broad range and normal doesn't necessarily mean ideal. I'd rather be closer to 900ng/dl than 200ng/dl and if you care about being strong and virile then you should, too. Do keep in mind that free levels of testosterone are more important than the total levels: you can have high *total* levels and still feel like crap do to low *free* levels. On the other hand, you can have low total levels but very high free levels and feel great.

Now, let's talk about Growth Hormone: without normal levels of GH, you won't reach normal development as a human being. That's the extreme, and an example would be midgets (or "little people" if we're trying to be PC, which I'm not, since I deplore PC with every bone in my body.) Okay, back to GH, GH is primarily produced in the pituitary gland and the benefits of optimal levels of GH are*:

- Controls chronic inflammation
- Beneficial to organ systems, including the heart and brain
- Protects immunity
- Increases aerobic capacity
- Protects bone
- Regulates body composition by decreasing body fat and enhancing muscle tone
- Provides energy and endurance
- Lowers blood pressure
- Improves memory
- Improves vision
- Enhances the ability to deal with stress
- Enhances sleep

- Responsible for growth

*from the book Ageless, by Suzanne Somers

As you can see, GH is very important for energy, workout recovery, body composition, and a ton of other things. Most people probably fall anywhere from 125ng/dl to as high as 425ng/dl. A decent range is from 175ng/dl to an outstanding 425ng/dl; however, once again, I don't care about what's normal--I want to know what's ideal. According to an anti-aging doctor I go to, over 250ng/dl is good, while over 300ng/dl is great and over 400 ng/dl is exceptional. Why care about GH? Without optimal levels of GH your body composition will be far from ideal, your recovery from workouts will be poor, your sex drive will likely be low, and your sleep, mood, and energy will be low. You'll have that dragging feeling throughout the day and probably need lots of coffee just to make it through. Once again, I'm not recommending GH shots—that, again, is between you and your doctor. Personally, I think hormone replacement therapy should be a last resort option rather than a first line of defense; get your sleep in order, avoid overtraining, and eat a balance of protein, fat, and carbs at every meal to keep insulin at bay. Insulin and GH have an inverse relationship: as insulin spikes up, GH plummets; thus, keep insulin levels under control for optimal GH levels.

Now that we understand the importance of T and GH let's talk about how to optimize both with training. One illusion to get over is the one that you can raise testosterone and GH dramatically by working out--the opposite is more often true. Many professional athletes have poor T and GH from overtraining and stress; too much training without enough rest and restoration will lower T and GH. My 65-year-old father has better T levels than many of my online clients who are half his age and are workout enthusiasts. My father doesn't work out and his diet is far from great; regardless, he manages stress very well and gets a good night's sleep just about every night.

The goal of training should be to avoid lowering GH and T rather than raising both. Sure, the right workout will raise both GH and T for a while

after the workout; however, it won't be long enough to have any profound benefits. Staying in shape and keeping your body fat low will help keep estrogen levels low; however, that doesn't mean your T and GH levels will be high.

Of course, I'm not saying you shouldn't workout--what I am saying is you should avoid overtraining like the plague. Avoid training to failure, most of the time, and keep your workouts to 45 minutes or less, most of the time.

If you feel strong and powerful after a strength-training workout, you're training in a way that optimizes T. Also, for men, if you have a morning erection the day after your workout, then your T levels are doing well. According to Dr. William Wong, a morning erection is a sign that your body produced testosterone during the night. If you fail to have a morning erection, then your body didn't produce testosterone, which is a sign that your T levels were lowered from the workout. Not a sure-fire test, but a pretty good indicator.

Morning erections should be a daily event if your T levels are optimal. If it only happens a few times per week, then your levels are probably okay. Once a week means your levels are bad and, if less than that, you're probably not even a man anymore. Regardless, the only way to know for sure if your levels are optimal is to have blood work done, otherwise it's all guesswork.

Moving on, let's talk about training for GH. High-intensity cardio is great for increasing GH, assuming you don't do too much. An example would be The Tabata protocol, HOC, PHA, or the Descending sets program (BTW, don't ask me what these programs are. I've written about all of them; do some research and find out). However, if you're a minimalist like me, try adding a finisher to your strength workouts: for example, end a workout with 100 Hindu Squats as fast as possible or 3x15 on one-arm kettlebell snatches or five 50-yard sprints with one-minute breaks between each sprint.

Okay, so heavy weight training for T and high-intensity cardio for GH. What exercises should you pick? Lots of curls and triceps pushdowns right? Hell no! The best exercises to pick are compound drills that'll give you the most bang for your buck.; this is relevant for both T and GH. High rep squats, for example, are great for GH while low rep deadlifts are great for T. I don't have to convince you of either: if you've ever done either--you know what I

mean. If you haven't, then don't bother commenting. Here's a sample program to optimize both hormones:

Monday

A-1: Barbell Clean and Military Press 3x3

A-2: Weighted Pull-up 3x3

Take 90 second breaks between A-1 and A-2. Go back and forth between the two drills until all of the designated sets are done. When you can do five reps on the last set, increase the weight by five pounds.

Barbell Deadlift 3x3 (two-to-three minute breaks, and, when three sets becomes easy, do four sets. Work up to five sets and then increase the weight by five to ten pounds and go back to three sets per exercise)

Finisher: 100 Bodyweight squats as fast as possible, or 20 one-arm kettlebells snatches l, r. Go as heavy as possible but don't train to failure. As Pavel recommends, leave a rep or two in the bank.

Wednesday

A-1: Medium Grip Floor Press 3x3

A-2: Barbell Bent-over Row 3x3

Barbell Squat 1x20 (Start with 50% of your one rep max and work on doing 20 reps without stopping. You want the lactic acid build up to optimize GH) Double Kettlebell Front Squats are also a great alternative.

Friday

A-1: Weighted Dips 3x3

A-2: Underhand Lat Pulldown or Weighted Chin-up 3x3

Double Kettlebell Swing 1x15-20 (Do all reps as fast as possible and get a nice lactic acid build up in your hamstrings. Double Kettlebell Snatches (no pun intended) are also good if you have the technique down)

Now, obviously training has to be personalized *to you* to get the optimal results. The above is just a sample program. Your lifestyle, the quality and quantity of your sleep, nutrition, supplement program, and individual physiology are all very important parts of the equation and need to be taken into account; stress management is also very important. Also, keep in mind that the increases of T and GH which result from training don't last all day. At best, your T and GH go up for an hour or so after training--hardly long enough to produce super benefits; thus, the goal of training should be to avoid *lowering* T and GH. If your levels go up after a workout, it was a productive workout. If your levels go down, it was an unproductive workout. Keeping body fat low is also important as the more body fat you have, the more estrogen receptors you have. Thus, stop going to Krispy Kreme and otherwise eating junk.

While productive strength training doesn't have to be complicated, optimizing the results of training is, and most people are far too lazy to bother; that's fine with me. Good luck with training and keep doing what you're doing; however, if you want to maximize your training, the more you know about yourself, the better. What you don't know will hurt you--it's not a question of *if*, it's a question of *when*. One final tip: low carb diets are a great way to keep GH levels high, since they keep insulin levels low; thus, go low carb during the day and high carb after working out for the best of both worlds. Good amounts of healthy fat are critical for optimal testosterone levels; low fat equals low T, which is why people on low fat diets look terrible. Yes, I'm a vegetarian, which is often low fat and low protein; however, I eat like a meat eater, meaning I consume high levels of protein and healthy fat and get most of my carbs from low glycemic fruits and veggies.

Okay, here's the blood work you should have done:

Testosterone: (free and total)

DHT

Estradiol

PSA

DHEA

Cortisol

SGBH

Dopamine

What about nutrition supplements for increasing Testosterone and IGF-1? Some people find Tribulus extracts and Maca useful for increasing T. According to Dr. William Wong in his excellent book, The Care and Feeding of a Penis, *in cases where the problem is low LH then providing the body with a source of LH (such as the herbs) will increase T levels. When the problem is non production by the testes then there is no recourse but to supplement testosterone exogenously (from outside)*. Thus, give the herbal products a shot for a few months; if you don't notice any benefits, you may have to look into other options with your doctor.

With GH, some people have noticed benefits with ZMA (a mineral product), and a product called Ageless Growth--they are worth a shot. Take both for a few months, having your IGF-1 levels measured before and after.

My personal opinion is that, at best, nutritional supplements will provide a small boost; however, I'm skeptical that anything miraculous will occur. If such miracles happened, the products wouldn't last long on the shelves, if you know what I mean. Anyway, here are some good options and brands to check out:

Recommended Supplements For Optimal Testosterone Levels:

[Doctor's Testosterone Gel](#)

[Libido Lift](#)

[Maca Powder](#)

[Zinc](#)

[Strength Energy Cream](#)

Recommended Supplements For Controlling Estrogen:

[Myomin](#)

[DIM](#)

Recommended Supplements For IGF-1

[Ageless Growth](#)

[ZMAI](#)

[Arginine](#)

Recommended Supplements for lowering cortisol:

[PS](#)

[Ester-C](#)

Recommended Resources For Testosterone Research:

Dr. William Wong's [Care And Feeding of a Penis](#)

Dr Eugene Shippen's [The Testosterone Syndrome](#)

Suzanne Somers' [Ageless](#)

Conclusion

While training and diet don't have to be too complicated, your physiology is *very* complicated and there are no simple answers. You have to take charge of your health and treat the one body you have with care and value; do the necessary research and make it an ongoing learning experience.

In the next chapter, we're going to talk about the 80/20 rule: as in business, 20% of what you do with training will account for 80% of your gains; thus, let's make sure we know the right 20%.

The 80/20 Rule for Incredible Gains

While there are literally hundreds of strength training exercises to choose from, very few are actually worth doing. The few exercises worth doing are the exercises which provide the most bang for your buck. In other words, the few exercises worth doing are your ticket to massive increases in strength, size, and/or muscular conditioning--depending on what your goals are and how the exercises are implemented. I like to refer to these exercises as the "20% Club."

In the business world there's a phrase that 80% of business comes from 20% of your clients or customers. As a result, smart companies keep the 20% members happy. Unfortunately many companies make the mistake of showing more concern for potential customers rather than current customers. More often than not, these companies don't last too long. Many companies with sales teams also realize that 80% of sales are produced by 20% of their sales teams; thus, it's smart to keep the 20% people happy and incorporate incentive plans to get them to stick around. A similar philosophy can be applied to productive strength training. Trainees who ignore the 20% exercises which provide the most bang for the buck are the same trainees who never make any meaningful progress; they're neglecting the exercises that provide the greatest benefit--big mistake! They fail to realize that the "20% Club" exercises will produce 80% of their gains; actually, they may even provide 100% of your gains.

I get a ton of emails from people who are incredulous about the benefits of training programs emphasizing compound exercises. Compound exercises work several muscles at a time; some great examples are: the Clean and Press, Pull-ups, Squats, and Deadlifts. Many men don't believe they can get big, well-developed arms without doing any isolation exercises. On the other hand, many women don't believe they can tone up without focusing on

isolation exercises for the glutes, inner thighs, and midsection. Of course, the reality is much different: kettlebell swings, for example will do much more for solid glutes than leg extensions. Just ask Senior RKC Brett Jones, who has his glutes squeezed by his male and female clients on a daily basis (mainly male ;-). Fitness star Pauline Norden swears by deadlifts for building rock hard glutes and hamstrings and she certainly has the results to back it up--pun intended! Weighted Pull-ups will do much more for building big biceps than barbell curls, and Military Presses are much more effective at blasting the triceps than triceps pushdowns. Regardless, of the prevalence of information highlighting the benefits of compound exercises, I continue to get bombarded with emails from trainees who want to know the secrets for well-developed arms. They're often shocked when I state I don't do any bicep and triceps isolation work and spend 100% of my time on compound exercises; moreover, I rarely include isolation work in my client's online programs. Instead, I focus on exercises that provide more value; not only is this extremely effective, it's also a time efficient. You can get a full body workout with three exercises or less and have more free time to enjoy other activities--great news for people who have a life outside of training, and bad news for stimulus-addicted trainees who've no life outside of training. Here are some of the 20% exercises that will provide 80% to 100% of your gains:

Barbell Deadlift: This exercise is so powerful that top strength coach Pavel Tsatsouline wrote an entire book about it, the classic Power to the People. The Deadlift works every muscle in the lower body and a ton of muscles in the upper body. It's a powerful exercise, and an exercise all men who train with barbells should be doing. Yes, ladies, you should be doing it as well, as no other exercise will work your posterior chain as effectively as the Barbell Deadlift. Since I train primarily with kettlebells, I like doing high rep Kettlebell Deadlift sets with my 105lb bells. I do 2-3 sets of 20 or one set of 40 as a finisher at the end of my strength workouts. Kettlebell Exercises such as heavy Double Swings, Double Snatches, and Double Cleans also offer many of the benefits of the Barbell Deadlift, and are acceptable alternatives.

Barbell Squat: No other exercise will do more for building powerful legs and overall size than the barbell squat. Why do so many trainees avoid them? Because Barbell Squats are brutal and most people are lazy and lack mental toughness. You can do sets of curls all day long without breaking a sweat; however, one high rep set of Barbell Squats with body weight on the bar will leave most trainees smoked and begging for mercy. The payoff for

this suffering? Massive gains in size and strength. What about ladies who don't care about strength and don't want size? Well every lady I know wants a great pair of legs, and no exercise will get you there faster than the Barbell Squat, or at least some version of the squat. Ballet dancers do tons of body weight squats and have incredible legs.

At this point, you may be wondering where are all the upper body exercises? Let's drive an important point home before moving forward: the majority of your body is not in your upper body. According to Dr. Al Sears author of The Doctor's Heart Cure: *"your upper body only contains about 15 percent of your body's total muscle mass. If your increased their size by 200 percent, you would not notice a measurable difference in your body's total muscle mass."* Dr. Sears goes on to write that working the quadriceps and hamstrings are the keys to building substantial muscle mass. Yes, men, I hate to tell you this, but doing twenty sets of curls and fifty sets of triceps pushdowns are not the secrets to building a powerful body. In fact, for most trainees, doing any isolation work is a waste of time. Focus the majority of efforts on Barbell Squats and Barbell Deadlifts. Yes, ladies, this advice applies to all of you as well. One exercise that falls within the 20% club and provides the best of both worlds is the Clean and Press. The Clean and Press is so effective you can build an entire program around this exercise. In other words, just do the Clean and Press with heavy weights two to five times per week; again, the frequency and intensity depend upon your goals, individual recovery abilities, and several other factors my online clients know.

Barbell Clean And Press: I love this exercise and, as many of your know, I do most of my weight training with kettlebells; thus, I do the Double Kettlebell Clean and Press a great deal. In fact, on days which I'm really busy, I just do Double Clean and Presses though out the day (Pavel's GTG program). For example, I'll do five sets of four on the Double Clean and Press with 88lb kettlebells during the day. I just leave 30 minutes to an hour between each set and do 5-6 sets total. In fact, I'm going to do a set right now and will be back in a minute...okay, I'm back after a great set and a nice CNS boost. The Clean and Press works the legs, core, back, shoulders, and triceps. Push your hips forward and look up at the barbell as it goes up and you'll bring the chest in as well. Recently, bodybuilding legend Franco Columbu told me he and Arnold used to treat standing Barbell Presses as an upper chest exercise. Franco stated that it's one of the best exercises for well-developed pecs. I'm not a bodybuilder--as strength is my main focus--but I do agree with Franco that the Press is a great drill for pecs. In fact, I

rarely ever do floor presses or bench presses and spend most of my pressing time on some version of the overhead press. Many of the old-time strongmen used high rep Clean and Presses with heavy weights as an overall body builder or what I like to call a "man maker." How come no one does high rep clean and presses anymore? For the same reasons most trainees don't do barbell squats—they're damn hard. Of course, once again, the pay off is incredible gains in strength and, depending on how you train and eat, size as well.

Moving on, let's look at some of the upper body exercises that are members of the "20% Club."

Weighted Pull-up: Lat pulldowns are okay, but the real money is on weighted pull-ups. If you're into getting bigger, no exercise will provide more benefit for the lats than the weighted pull-up. In addition to working the lats, the weighted pull-up incorporates the biceps tremendously. Now, if you couldn't care less about getting bigger, no problem. Do several sets of low reps and avoid the negative (lowering phase). You will build a tremendous amount of strength that has real world application. This is a great exercise to work in with Clean and Presses for balanced development.

Weighted Dip: The weighted dip is often referred to as the upper body squat--and for good reason: it's a powerful upper body developer and will blow up your triceps and shoulders. Lean into it on each rep and the pecs come into play in a big way as well. As much as I like the weighted dip, it's not for everyone; it can stress the shoulders if you use a full range of motion, so ease into this one. If you already have a pre-existing shoulder injury you will most likely need to avoid the dips or decrease the range of motion. If you can do dips you're in luck and this is sure to become one of your favorite exercises.

Barbell Bent-over Row: Many trainees, especially male trainees, avoid working the muscles they can't see in the mirror. As a result, incredible exercises such as the Barbell Bent-over Row are left out in exchange for more focus on the bench press--big mistake! Even if you couldn't care less about building a strong back--if you want an impressive bench press you need a *back* to press off of. The Barbell Bent-over Row is the perfect exercise to pair up with the Bench Press or Floor Press. In addition to working the mid back and lats, Bent-over Rows are great for the biceps.

Similar exercises for variety include: Alternating Kettlebell Rows, Renegade Rows (Kettlebells or Dumbbells).

Floor Press: While I prefer to focus on overhead presses, the Floor Press is a great exercise for trainees who have breast envy, or have breasts and want to focus on that area. The Floor press is a great triceps builder and because it doesn't take you through an extreme range of motion, it's easy on the rotator cuffs. A complete upper body workout can be as simple as combining the Floor Press with the Bent-over Row on one day and combining the Clean and Press with the Weighted Pull-up on another day; regardless, I rarely do floor presses and choose to focus instead on the Clean and Press and other overhead variations. I don't find having big pecs desirable; I'd rather have strong and well-developed shoulders.

Okay, what's next, Mike? Well, that's about it. Seven exercises? You got it! I realize most trainees need variety, so here are some variations you can add to your program:

Squat: choose from: Dumbbell Squats, Barbell Squats, Barbell Front Squat, Kettlebell Front Squat, Kettlebell Overhead Squat, Barbell Overhead Squat, Sandbag Overhead Squat, One-legged Squat.

Deadlift: Barbell Deadlift, Romanian Deadlift, Dumbbell Deadlift, Sandbag Deadlift, Kettlebell Deadlift, Double Kettlebell Swing, One-legged Kettlebell Deadlift.

Press: Clean and Press, See-saw Press, Alternating Military Press, Sots Press, Seated Press, Floor Press, Incline Press, One-arm Dumbbell Floor Press, One-arm Dumbbell Or Kettlebell Military Press, TNT Cable Military press, Power-pushup 2 pushups, Alternating Kettlebell Floor Press, Guard Attack.

Pull: Barbell Bent-over Row, Renegade Row, Alternating Kettlebell Row, Weighted Pull-up, Sandbag Bent-over Row, Lat Pulldown, Double Kettlebell Bent-over Row.

80% or more of your training time should be spent on the above four categories. You can easily spend 100% of your time on the above categories and have incredible training success; most trainees should be taking exercises out of their regimens rather than adding more in. You can only focus on a few things successfully, so when in doubt, leave it out. If you

have trouble on all four categories, strip it down further. For example, do the Clean and Press and Squat and that's it for a month. Then, switch to the Floor Press and Deadlift for a month. If you can handle all four categories, feel free to add in some core work such as weighted sit-ups, hanging leg raises, Turkish Get-ups, or Windmills.

If you have a firm footing in *Compound Training Land*, you can add a few sets of some isolation work to address a weak link; however, this is only beneficial for advanced trainees. Work on putting up some great numbers on the 20% club before you even think of this. For example, get your Floor press up to 300lbs, Clean and Press up to 200lbs, Squat up to 400lbs and Deadlift up to 500lbs. Once you've done that, you might benefit from some isolation work; otherwise, isolation work is generally a waste of time. Think you're the exception to the rule? You are not--so repeat this: *I am not an exception to the 20% club* as many times as necessary to get it down.

High Frequency Training: More Frequency Equals Faster Results

I do not know about you, but I am tired of training programs that tell you that the keys to getting bigger and stronger are to keep workouts infrequent so that you avoid over-training at all costs. Some trainers even recommend taking up to twenty-one days off between each workout for adequate recovery. Basically the idea is that training should become like a haircut in which you only need to hit the weights once a month.

I am sure that many people would love the idea of only having to workout once a month to get bigger and stronger. Hell, most people would like the idea of only having to work once a week to make more money. However, back here on planet Earth jobs and training programs that are extremely infrequent will fail for most people. Like any other skill, training takes practice. You have to get good at the exercises that you are using in order to maximize progress.

Only naïve trainees think that exercises like deadlifts, squats and overhead presses are easy to learn. Sure, they are easy to learn incorrectly. However, perfecting the latter drills takes time and lots of practice. There are many details involved in maximizing the benefits of each exercise that can be learned only via experience. Until you get really good at executing the exercises in your regimen your progress will be average at best. The more often you practice without burning out the better you get at something. In the context of strength training, getting better at lifting weights equals being able to lift more weight. Add some calories to the mix and the size will follow.

It is time to forget about training by working until you drop and then taking a week off. It is time to view training as a practice. Most people cannot afford to be unable to walk for three days after a heavy squatting workout. Fortunately, masochistic training is not required for maximizing training

progress. Lets get into what high frequency training (HFT) is all about and how to use it to maximize the benefits of training.

First, let me start off by saying that I do not think that High Intensity Training is garbage. Training to your limit and taking the appropriate time off to recover works for about 3-6 weeks at a time. After that you have to switch to something else to continue to make progress. Failing to do so will fry your central nervous system. How do you know when your CNS is fried? When everything feels heavy and you are working harder to lift weights that should feel easier you know that you are on the wrong track. To really maximize the benefits of a HIT training you have to be really good at the exercises that you are doing. Otherwise your form will get sloppy and the inevitable injuries will follow. Thus, try doing HFT for six weeks before doing a six-week program of HIT and I think that you will be happy with the results. Okay without further adieu lets talk about HFT.

According to Steve Justa, author of “Rock Iron Steel, The Book Of Strength”, many of the old time strongmen used to do daily training in order to get stronger rapidly. Here is what Steve said about the benefits of daily training: “The great thing about this type of training is that you will build strength without ever making yourself tired, because the body is adjusting naturally and rhythmically.” Now the key with frequent training is to pick the right intensity level. You cannot train to your limit or close to it daily. You will be hitting the same exercises several times a week. Training with the right intensity level will turn every workout into an active recovery session in which each session helps you recover from the last one. However, training with the wrong intensity level will hamper recovery from the last workout and you will be putting the brakes on your progress with each successive workout.

The hardest part of frequent training is actually believing that it works. Most of us are used to training with intensity and using soreness the next day as a measurement of how effective the workout is. Finishing a workout and feeling fresh and energetic is blasphemy to most serious trainees and takes a while to get used to. However, the point of training is to make progress, not to go for the stimulus of training. Save the losers at your gym that have been bench pressing 185 for singles for the last ten years. The goal that we are after is maximum proficiency and efficiency to get the most out of our training.

Rather than digging a hole into your recovery abilities HFT will improve your recovery abilities. How is that possible? Your body adapts to what you subject it to as long as it is done gradually. If you are trying to get a tan it is much better to subject yourself to a small amount of sunlight daily than a large amount on one day. The large amount will cause you to get burned. The gradual amount will cause your body to adapt without getting burned. The more frequently you can do something without burning out the better you will get at it and the more progress you will make. You will adapt to what you subject yourself to (within reason of course). Once your body and CNS realize that you are training frequently adaption will occur as long as the proper stimulus is used. If you get yourself used to taking a week off between each training session then you will adapt to that. However, what is more efficient: applying frequency and adapting sooner or taking long breaks and taking longer to adapt? I would go with the former. The more often that you can hit a muscle group and recover the faster you will make progress.

Next, HFT training works because you improve at the actual skill of lifting weights. When you are trying to learn a new skill such as driving a car or playing the guitar the more often that you practice it the better you will get. Think back to a time when you were learning a new skill such as riding a bike. Did you practice riding a bike once a week or once a month? If once a month then it probably took you a long time to learn the skill. However, most kids who picked up the skill of riding a bike rapidly practiced daily. Many years ago when I learned how to snowboard I sucked for the first three days. However, by the forth day my body started adapting and by day six and seven I really started making progress. If I had quit after the first day and tried again a week or more later, it would have been like starting all over again.

As hard as it may be for you to believe, lifting weights is a skill just like anything else. The reason why novice trainees make so much progress is due to the fact that they are learning the skill of training. The first time a trainee tries a bench press, he or she does not have the skill set of moving the bar from point A to point B in the most efficient manner possible. As a result the bar is all over the place. Watch a professional powerlifter bench press 500lbs and look at the bar's path. Notice how control is maintained throughout the entire duration of the move. Only an ignorant trainee would say that there is not that much to doing a bench press. All that you are doing is pressing a weight from your chest to lockout right? Wrong, if bench

pressing were that easy, then everyone could get good at it and put up some heavy weights. If you want to be able to move some heavy weights around you have to master the skill of executing each exercise. Until the skill is mastered you will never be as good as you could potentially be.

Lets get into how to put HFT into action. HFT involves doing five full body workouts per week. The program that I am going to reveal here is based on the 5x5x5 program that I learned from top strength coach Pavel Tsatsouline. Check out his excellent book [Beyond Bodybuilding](#)

The program that I have here involves more volume and is designed for rapid increases in size and strength rather than just strength. Let's get into it. I recommend that you train Monday through Friday and then take the weekend off. However, feel free to pick the days that work best for your schedule. Just make sure that you take two days off. How about doing a workout everyday? This is possible and could work very well. However, I think that taking two days off per week is good for a mental break. Waking up every morning and realizing that you have to train that day will get old fast and start to wear on you.

Now it would be a mistake to go from infrequent training right into frequent training. Thus, there needs to be a gradual break-in period. Instead of starting off with five full body workouts per week do three workouts the first week. Thus an example of week one would be:

Monday-Wednesday-Friday

Deadlift or Squat

Bench Press or Overhead Press

Bent Over Row or weighted pull-up

Side Bend or weighted sit-up

The first thing you will notice is there are not too many exercises in the program. When training frequently you have to be a minimalist. You will have to prioritize on a few exercises that you want to get really good at. What exercises should you pick? Pick exercises that address your weaknesses. If you have a strong bench press but a weak overhead press, pick the overhead press for your pressing move. Your bench press will not

get weaker and most likely it will be stronger when you bring it back into your regimen. If you are great at doing bent over rows but horrible at weighted pull-ups, then pick weighted pull-ups for your pulling move. Both the squat and the deadlift work a lot of muscles in the lower body so it would not be wise to do both daily. Again, pick the exercise that requires the most improvement.

Use your seven-rep max on each exercise and do one set of five repetitions. Take a one-minute break between each exercise. This workout will feel easy and that is exactly how it should feel. It will take a lot of willpower for most trainees to stop at five reps and move on to the next exercise. You will literally feel like you are wasting your time as this approach to training is like something that people would do in “bizarre-o” land. Nevertheless, your patience and willpower will pay off if you follow the plan and stay on course.

In week two, add another full-body workout on Tuesday. Thus, now you are doing a full-body workout Monday through Wednesday and then taking Thursday off. Proceed to Friday’s workout and then take the weekend off. Again, use the same weights that you used in week one.

In week three, add another full body workout on Thursday. Now you are doing five full body workouts per week. Due to the fact that you are not training to failure or close to it you will not be over-training. If you are over-training and feeling weaker from workout to workout, then you did not follow my directions. This style of training takes some getting used to and if you are too myopic to try something different than what the masses tell you to do then give up and go home. For everyone else, lets move on to week four.

In week four you are going to add another set to each exercise so now you are doing two sets of five per exercise. Take three-minute breaks between each set and one-minute breaks between each exercise. Use the same weights that you used for each exercise in week three on both sets.

In week five you are going to add one more set for a total of three sets. Again use the same weights that you used in week four on all three sets. Take three-minute breaks between each set and one-minute breaks between each exercise.

Now in week six it is time to increase the weight and reduce the volume. Add five pounds to all of the upper body exercises and ten pounds to the lower body exercises and start over with one set per day done five days per week. Cycle your way back up to three sets per day and then add some more weight.

Well there you have it, a training regimen that goes against everything that you have learned. Sometimes you have to unlearn what you have learned to continue to improve. Give this program a shot for six weeks and draw your own conclusions.

Additional HFT Programs

Kettlebell HFT Program

Option 1:

Monday-Friday

Double Clean and Mil Press

Alternating Renegade Row

Double Front Squat

Double Swing

One-arm Side Bend l,r (left and right)

Option 2: The Variety Approach

Monday

Alternating Hang Clean and Press

Double Bent-over Row

Double Suitcase Squat

One-arm Snatch l,r

Slow and controlled sit-up (2 seconds up and 4 seconds down)

Tuesday

Double Clean and Mil Press

Alternating Bent-over Row

Double Front Squat

Double Snatch

Wednesday

Alternating Mil Press

Alternating Bent-over Row

Double Lunge

One-arm Swing 1,r

Slow and controlled sit-up (2 seconds up and 4 seconds down)

Thursday

One-arm Clean and Mil Press 1,r

One-arm Bent-over Row 1,r

One-arm Front Squat 1,r

Double Clean

Friday

Double Hang Clean and Mil Press

Renegade Row 1,r

Double Suitcase Squat

One-arm Snatch 1,r

Slow and controlled sit-up (2 seconds up and 4 seconds down)

HFT For The Road Warrior

Monday-Friday

Handstand Pushup

Doorway Pull-up

One-legged Squat l,r

Knee Jump

Slow and controlled Sit-up

Lifeline HFT Program For The Road Warrior

TNT Military press (shoulders)

TNT Lat Pulldown (lats)

Portable Power Jumper Squat (quads)

TNT Cable Pull Through (hamstrings)

TNT Cable Russian Twist (abs)

You can purchase the TNT Cable and Portable Power Jumper at: [TNT Cable](#)

3x3 Program For Incredible Gains In Size Or Strength

I am a big fan of programs that focus on doing a few things very well. Complicated programs are rarely built to last and few trainees benefit from them. One of my favorite programs is the 3x3 program. Why 3x3? The 3x3 program allows you to focus on heavy weights and low reps. You do three sets of three reps at each session with varying intensities. The volume is fairly low so high frequency is a viable option. The 3x3 program is also great for size and strength goals or just sheer strength goals. It all depends on what exercises you pick and how the workout weeks are structured. The 3x3 protocol is also a great prelude to the 5x5 program. Why? The 3x3 program will get you very strong and the stronger you are the more effective the 5x5 program will be.

10 Benefits of the 3x3 Protocol

1. Calls for heavy loads which leads to serious increases in strength
2. Low volume and few reps allow greater focus
3. CNS will be stimulated and you will feel strong and powerful after each workout
4. Can be used for pure strength or strength and size
5. Can be done frequently (3-5 times per week)
6. Does not take long if you focus on compound exercises
7. Easier to execute with perfect form on low rep and low set workouts

8. Can be used to increase speed and explosive power as well
9. Is safe as the more reps you do the more likely you are to do one rep wrong
10. Great for building dense hard muscles that are as strong as they look

Let's talk about how to use the 3x3 program for strength and size or just strength alone. If you want to pack on some size with the 3x3 program, jack up the calories and focus on exercises that provide the most return for your efforts. The usual suspects include: Deadlifts, Squats, Bent-over Rows, Military Presses, Bench Presses and Weighted Pull-ups. Workout four times per week. Two upper-body days and two lower-body days. For a strength focus apply a higher frequency and focus on Deadlifts, Military Presses and Weighted Pull-ups. Do three to five workouts per week. If three workouts, do one heavy workout, one medium workout and one light workout. If five workouts per week, do one heavy workout, two medium workouts and two light workouts. For example, 90% of your three rep max on one day, 80% of your three-rep max on two days and 70% of your three-rep max on two days.

Here are two sample 3x3 programs. The strength focus workout will build hard dense muscles without adding bulk and the strength and size workout will get you bigger and stronger rather than just bigger.

3x3 for Strength Only

Monday (Heavy Day: 90% of three rep max)

Barbell Clean and Military Press

Dumbbell Renegade Row l,r

Barbell Deadlift

Wednesday (Medium Day 80% of three rep max)

One-arm Dumbbell Clean and Military Press l,r (left and right)

Weighted Pull-up

Barbell Deadlift

Friday (Light Day 70% of three rep max)

Double Dumbbell Clean and Press

Barbell Bent-over Row

Barbell Deadlift

Rotate the exercises every week. For example, in week two the Barbell Clean And Press is moved to the medium day and the Double Dumbbell Clean and Press is moved to the heavy day. This way every exercise gets to have a day in the spotlight. Can you do the same exercises every time? You could, but doing different but similar exercises will be more effective and decrease the likelihood of overuse injuries. Why is the heavy day on Monday? Generally you will be stronger at the beginning of the week and your strength will taper off as the week goes on. Thus, it makes sense for the workouts to become easier as the week progresses. Take three-minute breaks between each set.

3x3 For Size And Strength

Monday: Upper Body (90% of three rep max)

A-1: Incline Barbell Press

A-2: Weighted Pull-up

Do A-1 and A-2 back-to-back. In other words, do a set of A-1, rest for 90 seconds and then do a set of A-2 and rest for 90 seconds. Continue until all three sets have been completed.

Tuesday: Lower Body (90% of three rep max)

B-1: Barbell Squat

B-2: Stiff Legged Deadlift

Do B-1 and B-2 back-to-back. In other words, do a set of B-1, rest for 90 seconds and then do a set of B-2 and rest for 90 seconds. Continue until all three sets have been completed.

Thursday: Upper Body (80% of three rep max)

A-1: Weighted Dip

A-2: Weighted Pull-up

Do A-1 and A-2 back-to-back. In other words, do a set of A-1, rest for 90 seconds and then do a set of A-2 and rest for 90 seconds. Continue until all three sets have been completed.

Friday: Lower Body (80% of three rep max)

B-1: Barbell Front Squat

B-2: Glute-ham Raise or One-arm Dumbbell Swing 1,r (left and right)

Do B-1 and B-2 back-to-back. In other words, do a set of B-1, rest for 90 seconds and then do a set of B-2 and rest for 90 seconds. Continue until all three sets have been completed.

Again, rotate the exercises each week. When you can do five reps on the last set for each exercise on the heavy day add five pounds. Adjust the lighter days as your strength increases.

What about cardio? On the strength focus workouts do some moderate cardio sessions on Tuesday and Thursday. For example do five rounds of 25 pushups, 35 Bodyweight Squats, 25 sit-ups and 35 Jumping jacks. Do each exercise in circuit fashion and take a one-minute break at the end of each round. Repeat 4-5 times per workout. For the size focus workout, do 2-3 rounds on two off days. These muscular endurance workouts are also great for active recovery, so get them in.

3x3 for Kettlebells?

Can the 3x3 program be applied to kettlebell training? Sure, just focus on challenging exercises that make low reps difficult. Here are two sample programs using the example of a trainee that can do five side presses with an 88lb bell and five Double Swings with 88lb bells. Adjust the weights accordingly to your current strength levels.

Monday (Heavy Day)

Kettlebell Side Press l,r (88lb bell)

Double Swing (chest level) (88lb bells)

Wednesday (Medium Day)

Double Kettlebell Clean and Press (70lb bells)

Weighted Pull-up (70lb bells)

Double Snatch (70lb bells)

Friday (Light Day)

One-arm Seated Mil Press l,r (53lb bell)

Renegade Row (53lb bells)

Double Hang Snatch (53lb bells)

Rotate the exercises every week. For example, in week two the Side Press is moved to the medium day and the One-arm Seated Mil Press is moved to the heavy day.

3x3 Kettlebell Program For Size and Strength

Here is a sample program using the example of a trainee that can Clean and Press two 88lb bells five times and Double Front Squat two 105lb bells five times. Again, adjust the program to your strength levels.

Monday: Upper Body (heavy day)

A-1: Double Kettlebell Clean And Press (88s)

A-2: Weighted Pull-up (88lb bell)

Do A-1 and A-2 back-to-back. In other words, do a set of A-1, rest for 90 seconds and then do a set of A-2 and rest for 90 seconds. Continue until all three sets have been completed.

Tuesday: Lower Body (heavy day)

B-1: Double Front Squat (105s)

B-2: Double Swing (88s)

Do B-1 and B-2 back-to-back. In other words, do a set of B-1, rest for 90 seconds and then do a set of B-2 and rest for 90 seconds. Continue until all three sets have been completed.

Thursday: Upper Body (heavy day)

A-1: Double Floor Press (105s)

A-2: Renegade Row (105s) l,r

Do A-1 and A-2 back-to-back. In other words, do a set of A-1, rest for 90 seconds and then do a set of A-2 and rest for 90 seconds. Continue until all three sets have been completed.

Tuesday: Lower Body (heavy day)

B-1: Double Front Squat (105s)

B-2: One-arm Snatch (105) l,r

Do B-1 and B-2 back-to-back. In other words, do a set of B-1, rest for 90 seconds and then do a set of B-2 and rest for 90 seconds. Continue until all three sets have been completed.

Again, rotate the exercises each week. For cardio with kettlebells do 3-5 sets of one-arm swings (10-15 reps per arm) with a moderate kettlebell on two off days.

More 3x3 Programs

Monday: Upper Body (90% of three rep max)

A-1: Barbell Military Press

A-2: Barbell Bent-over Row

Do A-1 and A-2 back-to-back. In other words, do a set of A-1, rest for 90 seconds and then do a set of A-2 and rest for 90 seconds. Continue until all three sets have been completed.

Tuesday: Lower Body (90% of three rep max)

B-1: Dumbbell Lunge

B-2: One-arm Dumbbell Swing

Do B-1 and B-2 back-to-back. In other words, do a set of B-1, rest for 90 seconds and then do a set of B-2 and rest for 90 seconds. Continue until all three sets have been completed.

Thursday: Upper Body (80% of three rep max)

A-1: One-arm Dumbbell Bench Press

A-2: Lat Pulldown

Do A-1 and A-2 back-to-back. In other words, do a set of A-1, rest for 90 seconds and then do a set of A-2 and rest for 90 seconds. Continue until all three sets have been completed.

Friday: Lower Body (80% of three rep max)

B-1: Suitcase Squat

B-2: Dumbbell Clean

Do B-1 and B-2 back-to-back. In other words, do a set of B-1, rest for 90 seconds and then do a set of B-2 and rest for 90 seconds. Continue until all three sets have been completed.

Dumbbell Focused 3x3 Program

Monday: Upper Body (Start with 5 rep max)

A-1: Dumbbell Clean and Press

A-2: Dumbbell Renegade Row

Do A-1 and A-2 back-to-back. In other words, do a set of A-1, rest for 90 seconds and then do a set of A-2 and rest for 90 seconds. Continue until all three sets have been completed.

Tuesday: Lower Body (start with 5 rep max)

B-1: Dumbbell Lunge

B-2: One-arm Dumbbell Swing

Do B-1 and B-2 back-to-back. In other words, do a set of B-1, rest for 90 seconds and then do a set of B-2 and rest for 90 seconds. Continue until all three sets have been completed.

Thursday: Upper Body (start with 7 rep max)

A-1: One-arm Dumbbell Bench Press

A-2: One-arm Dumbbell Row

Do A-1 and A-2 back-to-back. In other words, do a set of A-1, rest for 90 seconds and then do a set of A-2 and rest for 90 seconds. Continue until all three sets have been completed.

Friday: Lower Body (Start with 7 rep max)

B-1: Dumbbell Squat

B-2: Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift

Do B-1 and B-2 back-to-back. In other words, do a set of B-1, rest for 90 seconds and then do a set of B-2 and rest for 90 seconds. Continue until all three Dumbbell Focused 3x3 Program.

3x3 For The Road Warrior

Monday: Upper Body (Start with 5 rep max)

A-1: Lifeline USA's TNT Cable Military Press

A-2: TNT Cable Lat Pulldown

Do A-1 and A-2 back-to-back. In other words, do a set of A-1, rest for 90 seconds and then do a set of A-2 and rest for 90 seconds. Continue until all three sets have been completed.

Tuesday: Lower Body (start with 5 rep max)

B-1: Lifeline Portable Power Jumper Squat

B-2: Knee Jump

Do B-1 and B-2 back-to-back. In other words, do a set of B-1, rest for 90 seconds and then do a set of B-2 and rest for 90 seconds. Continue until all three sets have been completed.

Thursday: Upper Body (start with 7 rep max)

A-1: Power Push-up 2 Pushups

A-2: Bent-over Row with Power Push-up 2

Do A-1 and A-2 back-to-back. In other words, do a set of A-1, rest for 90 seconds and then do a set of A-2 and rest for 90 seconds. Continue until all three sets have been completed.

Friday: Lower Body (Start with 7 rep max)

B-1: Lifeline Portable Power Jumper Squat

B-2: Knee Jump

Do B-1 and B-2 back-to-back. In other words, do a set of B-1, rest for 90 seconds and then do a set of B-2 and rest for 90 seconds. Continue until all three sets have been completed.

Super-Charging The 5x5 Program For Massive Gains In Size And Strength

Over the years training has become more and more complicated. Show the average modern day trainee a simple and effective training regimen and they will look at you like you are dumb enough to buy a time-share. They just cannot believe that simple training programs work. They want to believe that training is a complicated process in which they must spend more time planning workouts than doing workouts. Many people tend to complicate everything in life these days so it is not surprising that the masses feel complicated training regimens are a necessity. The bottom line is standard training regimens that have been tried and tested over the years are hard to beat.

One such program is the well-known 5x5 (five sets of five) program. It was the favorite of Reg Park, who just happens to be one of Arnold's (no not Gary Coleman) idols for a very simple reason. The program rocks and when applied correctly builds a tremendous amount of size and strength. With all of the thousands of training regimens to choose from the 5x5 program remains as one of the most effective programs for packing on size and strength. It has just the right amount of intensity and volume to build strength and size without inducing burnout and over-training.

I am going to go over what the 5x5 program is and how to apply it. Then, I am going to go over several ways to take the intensity up a notch for further gains in size and strength. If you are tired of complicated programs that take more time to plan than to execute then you are going to love the 5x5 protocol. Let's get started.

What is 5x5?

The 5x5 program calls for doing five sets of five reps per exercise. To illustrate, let's use the barbell deadlift as an example. Do two warm-up sets to get the groove down. Then load the bar up to your working weight and do five sets. When you can do five reps on all five sets increase the weight by five pounds. For a focus on strength take three-minute breaks between each set. For a focus on size try ninety-second breaks between each set. Finally, for the middle path try two-minute breaks between each set.

To design a 5x5 program you can either do a split routine in which you do the upper body one day and lower body the next training session. Or you can do a full-body workout 2-3 times per week. It will take some experimenting to determine which option is best for you. Regardless of which option you choose, focus on compound exercises for each workout such as bench presses, squats, deadlifts, weighted dips, barbell rows, etc. Some isolation work is acceptable but do not get carried away. Focus on exercises that give you the most bang for your buck.

Now you could do the same exercises frequently such as bench presses three times a week 5x5 style. Or you could try Louie Simmons' conjugate approach to switch things up. For example, do bench presses on Monday, weighted dips on Wednesday and incline presses on Friday. You will avoid overuse injuries and the exercises are similar enough that you will make progress on all three and build overall strength. Here are two sample 5x5 programs:

Option One (Full Body Routine)

Monday

A-1: Barbell Bench Press

A-2: Bent Over Row

B-1: Barbell Squat

B-2: Romanian Deadlift

Turkish Get-up 2x5 l,r (left and right) (Optional)

Wednesday

A-1: Weighted Dips

A-2: Weighted Chin-ups

Barbell Deadlift

Hanging Leg Raise 2x5 (optional)

Friday

A-1: Incline Press

A-2: Renegade Row

B-1: Front Squat

B-2: Glute/ham Raise

Saxon Side Bend 2x5 (optional)

Do each pair back-to-back. For example, do one set of A-1, wait ninety seconds, and then do a set of A-2 and wait ninety seconds before going back to A-1. Keep going back and forth until you have completed all of the sets and reps. For the midsection work, take two-minute breaks between each set. Do not get carried away with core work as the core gets hit with all of the major exercises. When in doubt cut the core work out.

Option 2: Kettlebell Focused Full Body Routine

Monday

A-1: Double Clean and Press

A-2: Double Bent Over Row

B-1: Double Front Squat

B-2: Double Swing

Turkish Get-up 2x5 l,r (left and right) (optional)

Wednesday

A-1: Double Floor Press

A-2: Renegade Row

Double Snatch

One-arm Side Bend 2x5 l,r (optional)

Friday

A-1: Alternating Hang Clean and Press

A-2: Alternating Bent-over Row

B-1: Suitcase Squat

B-2: One-arm Snatch l,r

One-arm Windmill 2x5 l,r (optional)

Do each pair back-to-back. For example, do one set of A-1, wait ninety seconds, and then do a set of A-2 and wait ninety seconds before going back to A-1. Keep going back and forth until you have completed all of the sets and reps. For the midsection work, take two-minute breaks between each set.

Option 3: 5x5 For the Road Warrior

Monday

A-1: Handstand Pushup

A-2: Doorway Pull-up

B-1: One-legged Squat l,r

B-2: Knee Jump or High Jump

Slow and controlled Sit-ups (4 seconds up and 4 seconds down) (optional)

Wednesday

A-1: One-arm Pushup 1,r

A-2: Lifeline TNT Cable Lat Pulldown

Lifeline Portable Power Jumper Squat

Friday

A-1: Lifeline TNT Cable Mil Press

A-2: Doorway Pull-up

B-1: One-legged Squat

B-2: Knee Jump or High Jump

Reverse Sit-up (4 seconds back and 4 seconds forward) (optional)

Do each pair back-to-back. For example, do one set of A-1, wait ninety seconds, and then do a set of A-2 and wait ninety seconds before going back to A-1. Keep going back and forth until you have completed all of the sets and reps. For the midsection work take two-minute breaks between each set.

Split Routines

Monday and Thursday

A-1: Barbell Bench Press

A-2: Bent Over Row

B-1: Barbell Curl 2x5

B-2: Skull Crusher or Jump stretch Triceps Pushdown 2x5

Tuesday And Friday

B-1: Barbell Squat

B-2: Glute/ham Raise

Seated Calf raise 2x5

Turkish Get-up 2x5 l,r (left and right)

Do each pair back-to-back. For example, do one set of A-1, wait ninety seconds, and then do a set of A-2 and wait ninety seconds before going back to A-1. Keep going back and forth until you have completed all of the sets and reps. For the midsection work, take two-minute breaks between each set and for the arm work take one-minute breaks between each set.

Option 2: Kettlebell Focused Program

Monday and Thursday

A-1: Double Clean And Press

A-2: Alternating Bent-over Row

Tuesday And Friday

B-1: Double Front Squat

B-2: Double Swing

Turkish Get-up 2x5 l,r (left and right)

Option 3: Road Warrior Program

A-1: Handstand Pushup

A-2: Doorway Pull-up

Tuesday And Friday

B-1: Portable Power Jumper Squat or One-legged Squat

B-2: Keen Jump or High Jump

Slow and Controlled Sit-up (4 seconds up and 4 seconds down)

Do each pair back-to-back. For example, do one set of A-1, wait ninety seconds, and then do a set of A-2 and wait ninety seconds before going back

to A-1. Keep going back and forth until you have completed all of the sets and reps. For the midsection work, take two-minute breaks between each set and for the arm work take one-minute breaks between each set.

Variations of 5x5 For Accelerated Increases in Size And Strength

Now once you have gone through a few cycles of a standard 5x5 regimen there are several things to manipulate to intensify the program and to fine-tune it for various goals.

Different Exercise Breaks At Each Session

Lets say that strength and size is your goal. One thing you could do is apply variations to the exercise breaks. For example, one day take one-minute breaks to focus on hypertrophy. At the next session, take two-minute breaks to focus on strength. The breaks would be applied to antagonistic sets. Thus, you are essentially getting two-minute breaks on the first option and four-minute breaks on the second option. Here is an example of such a program:

Monday (two minute breaks between each set)

A-1: Bottom Position Barbell Bench Press

A-2: Dumbbell Row

B-1: Barbell Squat

B-2: Glute/Ham Raise

Turkish Get-up 2x5 l,r (left and right)

Wednesday (one-minute break between each set)

A-1: Weighted Dips

A-2: Weighted Chin-ups

Barbell Deadlift

Hanging Leg Raise 2x5

Friday (thirty second breaks between each set)

A-1: Floor Press

A-2: Renegade Row

B-1: Front Squat

B-2: Glute/ham Raise

Decrease The Exercise Breaks To Increase The Intensity

Another option is to change the breaks at each session as a way to increase the intensity. For example, do five sets of five on barbell squats with three-minute breaks. Instead of increasing the weight at the next session, decrease the breaks to two-minutes and thirty seconds. Once you can complete five sets again go down to two-minute breaks. Once you nail five sets again go down to ninety seconds. When you get down to one-minute breaks increase the weight by five pounds and start at three-minute breaks again. Using this format you start with a strength focus on gradually shift gears to a hypertrophy focus as the exercise breaks decrease. Then you shift gears once again back to a strength focus. This is a great way to cycle training intensity and keep training fresh and challenging.

5x5 On Steroids: Enter “Cluster Training”

No, I am not talking about using steroids on the five times five program. However applying a concept called “cluster training” to the 5x5 regimen is like adding rocket fuel to a car. I learned about “Cluster Training” in Charles Poliquin’s excellent book “Modern Trends In Strength Training.” Cluster training is essentially a combination of “rest pause training” and standard training. Here is how it works. Take 90% of your one-rep max and do one rep. Wait ten seconds, and do another rep. Keep going until you have completed five reps in “rest pause” fashion. Once you have completed all five reps, take a three- minute break and then execute another “cluster” set. Each sequence of repetitions equals one set. To apply this concept to the 5x5 protocol, you would do five sets of five “rest pause” sets.

What is the advantage of applying cluster training? For one, you get to train at a significantly higher intensity. If strength is your primary goal, you will love cluster training. Regardless, the volume is the same as a regular 5x5

program making the 5x5 “cluster training” program an excellent option for hypertrophy training as well. To further induce hypertrophy just decrease the breaks between each cluster. For example, instead of taking three-minute breaks, take two-minute breaks between each cluster. As effective as “cluster training” is, it takes some time to break into it. If you have never done rest pause training before then check out the “rest pause” article that I wrote for t-nation.com a few years ago and start with the program in the article. Once you are comfortable with both 5x5 and rest pause training try marrying the two and apply “cluster training” 5x5 style.

Cluster training is very intense and three full body workouts will be too much for most trainees. Try doing two full-body workouts per week with at least two days off between each session. Or split up the upper body and lower body days and try four workouts per week. Upper body on day one, take a day off, and then lower body on day two. Take another day off and do the upper body workout again etc. Also, I would recommend that you choose exercises for cluster training that do not require a lot of set-up time. For example, Floor presses in a power rack are better than regular bench presses in which you have to rack the bar after each rep. Here is a sample “Cluster training” 5x5 program:

Day 1 and 3

Floor Press

Weighted Pull-up

Barbell Curl

Day 2:

Bottom Position Squat

Glute-ham Raise (regular 5x5 style)

Calf raise

Turkish get-up 2x5 (regular rep style)

Day 4

Barbell Deadlift

One-legged Squat

Seated Calf Raise

Dumbbell Windmill 2x5 (regular rep style)

Take three-minute breaks between each “cluster” set and two-minute breaks between each exercise. Stick with “cluster training” for four to six weeks and then cycle back to a regular 5x5 regimen.

Adapting to High Volume Training: Start with 5x5

Finally, you can use the 5x5 protocol as a platform to build up to high-volume training. Once you can complete five sets stay at the same weight and add another set. Once you can complete six sets add another set. Keep going until you are doing 10x5. Once you can complete ten sets increase the weight by five pounds and start back at 5x5. This is an excellent method for working up to high-volume training and cycling high-volume training. More importantly, you build confidence for high-volume training. If you have never done ten sets before then you are not conditioned to handle the volume. By increasing the volume gradually you prepare your mind and body for the hard work ahead in a systematic manner. You cannot beat that.

Wrap-Up

Like many things in life it is much easier to get excited about doing something than it is to get off your ass and do it. What are you prepared to do? Are you going to test drive the 5x5 program and get bigger and stronger or continue with complicated training regimens that take two hours to complete and require exceptional genetics and buckets of steroids to achieve results? Start with a standard 5x5 regimen and then apply some of the intensity enhancers to stay on the road to “gainsville.”

Need Variety? No You Need To Make Progress! Do the 54321 Program

I believe firmly that you do not need training variety in order to make incredible progress. Stick with a steady diet of the basics and you are all set. Get really good at the skills of a few exercises and you will be way ahead of a trainee that is mediocre at a variety of drills. Truth be told, the only time when trainees get bored with the basics is when they are not making progress. I have never heard anyone say, "Man I am sick of getting stronger at every workout. Every time I hit the bench press, I am putting up more weight and reps. I am sick of getting stronger! I need some variety." I have never heard anyone say, "I am sick of losing fat every week and having more energy than I know what to do with. Screw progress, I need some variety." Maybe such scenes would occur on fantasy island where "little people" like to shout out "The plane, the plane" but not in the world that you and I live in.

Nine times out of ten people want training variety because they are not making progress. One of the problems with training variety is it can give the illusion you are making progress. Pick an exercise you have never done before and you will not be very good at it. After a few sessions your CNS will be firing more effectively and you will get better at the exercise. However, did you get stronger? If you go back to an exercise you had a plateau with and are stronger the answer is yes. If not, the answer is no. Most likely the answer is no.

People that need variety at every workout are never going to be people that are exceptional at the skill of strength. Do football players play baseball for variety? Do basketball players go bowling for several months for variety? Of course not. Why not? They would be all over the place and would never

get good at the actual skill. Professional athletes stick to the basics and work on refining everything over and over again. This is what makes them professionals.

Realizing that the world is not perfect and that many trainees need variety, the "54321" program is just the ticket for a combination of sticking to the basics and applying enough variety to keep things interesting. While the "54321" program focuses on the basic exercises that provide the most bang for the buck (see the 20% club chapter) the program changes every week. This allows stimulus-addicted trainees enough variety to stay the course. It is also a great strength-training program or a great size and strength program if you consume enough calories.

Here is how the program breaks down over ten weeks:

Week 1: 5x5 (five sets of five)

Week 2: 5x4 (five sets of four)

Week 3: 5x3 (you get the idea)

Week 4: 5x2

Week 5: 5x1

Week 6: 5x5

week 7: 5x4

Week 8: 5x3

Week 9: 5x2

Week 10: 5x1

The program starts off with a strength and size focus (assuming you are eating enough) and scales down to a strength-only focus and then ramps back up to a strength and size focus again. Add five pounds every week. As the reps go down the weights go up. When you get to week 6 start with five pounds more than at the 5x5 workout in week one. Here is a sample program:

Monday

A-1: Barbell Clean and Military Press

A-2: Weighted Pull-up

Take 90-second breaks between each set. Do a set of A-1, wait 90 seconds and do a set of A-2. Wait another 90 seconds and do A-1 again. Continue until you have completed five sets per exercise.

B-1: Barbell Full Squat

B-2: Romanian Deadlift

Take 90-second breaks between each set. Do a set of B-1, wait 90 seconds and do a set of A-2. Wait another 90 seconds and do B-2 again. Continue until you have completed five sets per exercise.

Wednesday

A-1: Floor Press

A-2: Barbell Bent-over Row

Take 90-second breaks between each set. Do a set of A-1, wait 90 seconds and do a set of A-2. Wait another 90 seconds and do A-1 again. Continue until you have completed five sets per exercise.

Barbell Deadlift (two-minute breaks)

Friday

A-1: See-saw Dumbbell Press

A-2: Dumbbell Renegade Rows

Take 90-second breaks between each set. Do a set of A-1, wait 90 seconds and do a set of A-2. Wait another 90 seconds and do A-1 again. Continue until you have completed five sets per exercise

B-1: Bottom Position Barbell Squat

B-2: Double Dumbbell Swing

Take 90-second breaks between each set. Do a set of B-1, wait 90 seconds and do a set of B-2. Wait another 90 seconds and do B-1 again. Continue until you have completed five sets per exercise.

Kettlebell Focused Option

Monday

A-1: Double Kettlebell Clean and Press

A-2: Double Bent-over Row

Take 90-second breaks between each set. Do a set of A-1, wait 90 seconds and do a set of A-2. Wait another 90 seconds and do A-1 again. Continue until you have completed five sets per exercise.

B-1: Double Front Squat

B-2: Double Swing

Take 90-second breaks between each set. Do a set of B-1, wait 90 seconds and do a set of A-2. Wait another 90 seconds and do B-2 again. Continue until you have completed five sets per exercise.

Wednesday

A-1: Double Floor Press

A-2: Alternating Renegade Row

Take 90-second breaks between each set. Do a set of A-1, wait 90 seconds and do a set of A-2. Wait another 90 seconds and do A-1 again. Continue until you have completed five sets per exercise.

Double Snatch (two-minute breaks)

Friday

A-1: Alternating Clean And Press

A-2: Alternating Bent-over Row

Take 90-second breaks between each set. Do a set of A-1, wait 90 seconds and do a set of A-2. Wait another 90 seconds and do A-1 again. Continue until you have completed five sets per exercise

B-1: Double Lunge

B-2: One-arm Kettlebell Snatch l,r

Take 90-second breaks between each set. Do a set of B-1, wait 90 seconds and do a set of B-2. Wait another 90 seconds and do B-1 again. Continue until you have completed five sets per exercise.

Road Warrior Option

Monday

A-1: Handstand Pushup

A-2: Doorway Pull-up

Take 90-second breaks between each set. Do a set of A-1, wait 90 seconds and do a set of A-2. Wait another 90 seconds and do A-1 again. Continue until you have completed five sets per exercise.

B-1: One-legged Squat

B-2: Knee Jump

Take 90-second breaks between each set. Do a set of B-1, wait 90 seconds and do a set of A-2. Wait another 90 seconds and do B-2 again. Continue until you have completed five sets per exercise.

Wednesday

A-1: Explosive Pushup (hands and feet of the floor on each rep)

A-2: Lifeline Power Push-up 2 Bent-over Row

Take 90-second breaks between each set. Do a set of A-1, wait 90 seconds and do a set of A-2. Wait another 90 seconds and do A-1 again. Continue until you have completed five sets per exercise.

Portable Power Jumper Squat (90 second breaks)

Friday

A-1: TNT Cable Military Press

A-2: TNT Cable Lat Pulldown

Take 90-second breaks between each set. Do a set of A-1, wait 90 seconds and do a set of A-2. Wait another 90 seconds and do A-1 again. Continue until you have completed five sets per exercise

B-1: Explosive Lunge (jump up in the air and land in a lunge)

B-2: Knee Jump

Take 90-second breaks between each set. Do a set of B-1, wait 90 seconds and do a set of B-2. Wait another 90 seconds and do B-1 again. Continue until you have completed five sets per exercise.

Rules Of the Game

- Use the same weight on all five sets
- The fifth set should be hard. However, you should be able to complete the reps without training to failure.
- If you cannot get all five sets with the same weight stay at the same weight for the following week. Thus, you will be doing fewer reps with the same weight and will increase the likelihood of success.
- Feel free to do some moderate cardio workouts on Tuesday and Thursday. Take the weekends off.
- Do not add any other exercises to the workout. Do not worry about your core. It is getting hit with every exercise.
- What about fat loss? Fat loss is 70% diet so put the fork down and practice pushing your self away from the table more often.

- I do not want to get too big. Do you worry about making too much money as well? Worrying about getting too big is the least of your worries. It is not something that happens by accident.

3-5 Gradual High-Volume Program For Incredible Gains In Size And Strength

When it comes to getting bigger and stronger I love high-volume training. However, high-volume training is only effective when executed properly. It has to be cycled and worked into gradually. One of the most popular high volume programs is "German Volume Training." The program calls for doing ten sets of ten on a few major exercises. While the program is effective for size, it is not very effective for strength. The intensity is far too low and many trainees notice strength decreases after several months of GVT. Not exactly desirable results. Moreover, starting with ten sets for someone that is not used to high-volume training can lead to over-training with the quickness. It has to be worked into gradually, applied for a short period at an intense level and then cycled down again. Starting with five sets instead of ten is smart move and working with reps in the 3-5 range is a big step in the right direction.

Similar to all of my other programs, the "3-5 Program" focuses on compound exercises that provide the most bang for the buck. Isolation exercises are out and the following are in:

The Exercises

Barbell Clean and Press

Barbell Bent-over Row

Weighed Pull-up

Weighted Dips

Barbell Squat

Front Squat

Deadlift

The 3-5 12 Week Plan

Here is how the program breaks down:

Week 1: 5x3 (five sets of three)

Week 2: 5x4 (five sets of four)

Week 3: 5x5 (five sets of five)

Week 4: 6x3 (six sets of three)

Week 5: 6x4 (six sets of four)

Week 6: 6x5 (six sets of five)

Week 7: 7x3 (seven sets of three)

Week 8: 7x4 (seven sets of four)

Week 9: 7x5 (seven sets of five)

Week 10: 8x3 (eight sets of three)

Week 11: 8x4 (eight sets of four)

Week 12: 8x5 (eight sets of five)

Week 13-17: low volume training 2x3 (two sets of three)

Week 18: start over again.

The Split

In order to avoid over-training and burning out you are going to do two high-volume workouts per week and two low-volume workouts per week. Rotate the exercises each week to balance the high-volume workouts for each exercise. Here is an example:

Week 1:

Monday:

A-1: Barbell Clean and Press 5x3

A-2: Barbell Bent-over Row 5x3

Do A-1 and A-2 back-to-back. Do a set of A-1, rest for a minute, then do a set of A-2, rest for a minute and repeat A-1 again. Continue until all five sets are completed.

Tuesday:

B-1: Front Squat 5x3

B-2: Stiff-legged Deadlift 5x3

Do B-1 and B-2 back-to-back. Do a set of B-1, rest for a minute, then do a set of B-2, rest for a minute and repeat B-1 again. Continue until all five sets are completed.

Thursday:

A-1: Weighted Dips 2x3

A-2: Weighted Pull-up 2x3

Do A-1 and A-2 back-to-back. Do a set of A-1, rest for a minute, then do a set of A-2, rest for a minute and repeat A-1 again. Continue until two sets are completed per exercise.

Friday:

Barbell Deadlift 3x3 (two-minute breaks)

Week 2:

Monday:

A-1: Weighted Dips 5x4

A-2: Weighted Pull-up 5x4

Do A-1 and A-2 back-to-back. Do a set of A-1, rest for a minute, then do a set of A-2, rest for a minute and repeat A-1 again. Continue until all five sets are complete.

Tuesday:

Barbell Deadlift 5x4 (two-minute breaks)

Thursday:

A-1: Barbell Clean and Press 2x3

A-2: Barbell Bent-over Row 2x3

Do A-1 and A-2 back-to-back. Do a set of A-1, rest for a minute, then do a set of A-2, rest for a minute and repeat A-1 again. Continue until two sets are completed per exercise.

Friday:

B-1: Front Squat 2x3

B-2: Stiff-legged Deadlift 3x3

Do B-1 and B-2 back-to-back. Do a set of B-1, rest for a minute, then do a set of B-2, rest for a minute and repeat B-1 again. Continue until two sets are completed per exercise.

Kettlebell Training Option

Week 1:

Monday:

A-1: Double Clean and Press 5x3

A-2: Alternating Renegade Row 5x3

Do A-1 and A-2 back-to-back. Do a set of A-1, rest for a minute, then do a set of A-2, rest for a minute and repeat A-1 again. Continue until all five sets are completed.

Tuesday:

B-1: Double Front Squat 5x3

B-2: Double Snatch 5x3

Do B-1 and B-2 back-to-back. Do a set of B-1, rest for a minute, then do a set of B-2, rest for a minute and repeat B-1 again. Continue until all five sets are completed.

Thursday:

A-1: Double Floor Press 2x3

A-2: Double Bent-over Row 2x3

Do A-1 and A-2 back-to-back. Do a set of A-1, rest for a minute, then do a set of A-2, rest for a minute and repeat A-1 again. Continue until two sets are completed per exercise.

Friday:

Double Swing 3x3 (two-minute breaks)

Week 2:**Monday:**

A-1: Double Floor Press 5x4

A-2: Double Bent-over Row 5x4

Do A-1 and A-2 back-to-back. Do a set of A-1, rest for a minute, then do a set of A-2, rest for a minute and repeat A-1 again. Continue until all five sets are complete.

Tuesday:

Double Snatch 5x4 (two-minute breaks)

Thursday:

A-1: Double Clean and Press 2x3

A-2: Alternating Renegade Row 2x3

Do A-1 and A-2 back-to-back. Do a set of A-1, rest for a minute, then do a set of A-2, rest for a minute and repeat A-1 again. Continue until two sets are completed per exercise.

Friday:

B-1: Double Front Squat 2x3

B-2: Double Snatch 2x3

Do B-1 and B-2 back-to-back. Do a set of B-1, rest for a minute, then do a set of B-2, rest for a minute.

Road Warrior Option

Week 1:

Monday:

A-1: Handstand Pushup 5x3

A-2: Doorway Pull-up 5x3

Do A-1 and A-2 back-to-back. Do a set of A-1, rest for a minute, then do a set of A-2, rest for a minute and repeat A-1 again. Continue until all five sets are completed.

Tuesday:

B-1: One-legged Squat 5x3

B-2: Knee Jump 5x3

Do B-1 and B-2 back-to-back. Do a set of B-1, rest for a minute, then do a set of B-2, rest for a minute and repeat B-1 again. Continue until all five sets are completed.

Thursday:

A-1: One-arm Pushup 2x3 l,r

A-2: Power Pushup 2 Bent-over Row 2x3

Do A-1 and A-2 back-to-back. Do a set of A-1, rest for a minute, then do a set of A-2, rest for a minute and repeat A-1 again. Continue until two sets are completed per exercise.

Friday:

Portable Power Jumper Squat 3x3 (two-minute breaks)

Week 2:

Monday:

A-1: One-arm Push-up 5x4 l,r

A-2: Power Pushup 2 Bent-over Row 5x4

Do A-1 and A-2 back-to-back. Do a set of A-1, rest for a minute, then do a set of A-2, rest for a minute and repeat A-1 again. Continue until all five sets are complete.

Tuesday:

Portable Power Jumper Squat 5x4 (two-minute breaks)

Thursday:

A-1: Handstand Pushup 2x3

A-2: Doorway Pull-up 2x3

Do A-1 and A-2 back-to-back. Do a set of A-1, rest for a minute, then do a set of A-2, rest for a minute and repeat A-1 again. Continue until two sets are completed per exercise.

Friday:

B-1: One-legged Squat 2x3

B-2: Knee Jump 3x3

Do B-1 and B-2 back-to-back. Do a set of B-1, rest for a minute, then do a set of B-2, rest for a minute and repeat B-1 again. Continue until two sets are completed per exercise.

As you can see the exercises are rotated each week so that everyone gets a chance to play with some high volume. The program has a built-in cycling mechanism every week and over the long haul. Thus, this is a great program to break into high-volume training while avoiding the pitfalls of transitioning too rapidly.

Accelerate Size and Strength Gains with Rest Pause Training

Over the last fifteen years I have come across a wide variety of training programs that work tremendously well for increasing size and strength. For example, Randall Strossum's "Super Squats" program is very effective if you can handle the nausea and brutality of the program. Legendary bodybuilder Reg Park loved the 5x5 program that thousands of trainees have used to pack on size and strength. Top strength coach Charles Poliquin brought the extremely effective "German Volume Training" program to the mainstream and many trainees have used it effectively to increase size and strength. Regardless, to be the best trainee that you can be and to continue on the path to massive gains in size and strength you have to think outside the box and sometimes unlearn what you have learned. For example, does one rep always have to come immediately after another? Most trainees would say of course. However, this form of training does not allow you to use maximum loads to stimulate the largest increases in size and strength. What if there was a training system that allowed you to use maximal loads on every rep of every set? Imagine the new increases in size and strength that you would achieve. Fortunately there is and it is called Rest Pause training.

Rest-pause training is not for the faint of heart and takes a lot of mental toughness and hard work. Of course nothing worth having in life comes easy, and rest pause training is no exception. With rest pause training you take very short 10-15 second breaks between each rep of a given exercise. Yes, you read that right, breaks between each rep, not each set. Let's use the bench press to illustrate how a rest pause set would look. Instead of cranking out five reps straight on the bench press you will rack the bar after each rep to give your muscles 10-15 seconds to recover before doing the

next rep. Using this rep scheme will allow you to handle much heavier loads than you normally use during regular rep schemes. Using the heavier weights alone will shock your body into getting stronger and in turn adding on some muscle. After all, which one do you think is going to generate more muscle growth, a set of five reps straight in the bench press with 250lbs or five rest pause reps with 300lbs on the bench press? There is no doubt that the heavier load will result in more muscle growth. Now do not make the mistake of thinking that this is some kind of powerlifting program. Sure, powerlifters often train with lots of singles with as much weight as they can handle. However, they take three to five minute breaks between each set to ensure that they can handle the most weight per set and to avoid hypertrophy. With rest pause training you use heavy training loads with super short breaks. The combination hits the muscles hard and results in increases in size and strength. Also, if you are a pump addict, don't worry, you will get major pumps with rest pause training and not the kind where you inflate your muscles like a balloon. No my friend, I am talking about super dense pumps in which your muscles will feel as hard as a rock.

How effective is rest pause training? Here is what legendary bodybuilder Mike Mentzer said about it: "Doing four reps, with the 10-second rest-pause, I increased every single exercise at least 20lbs per workout until I finally had improved 66% on each one. My size of course increased also. " (pg 95) Pretty impressive results from such an experienced trainee. However, it does not stop there. My friend and strength coach Matt Wiggins, author of a book which is based on the concept of rest pause training called "Singles and Doubles: How The Ordinary Become Extraordinary," had this to say about training with heavy weights and short breaks: "Utilizing rest-pause style singles training is virtually perfect for getting stronger and gaining size. Because you are only performing one rep per set, you are able to use maximal loads. In addition, because you are performing the same movement for multiple sets in fairly rapid succession, you are training your central nervous system to become proficient in that movement. This leads to amazing gains in strength. Rest-pause style singles also allow you to use a fairly high overall volume - much higher than you would normally use when training with near maximal loads. By using a higher volume, the muscles are under a long TUL (Time Under Load), and when combined with a caloric surplus diet, this leads to increased muscle growth." Matt has had hundred of testimonials from people that have used his brand of rest pause training that have not only gotten stronger and bigger,

but have also increased muscular endurance. What is great about rest pause training is that every rep is with a maximum load. With traditional rep schemes, the first several reps are only done to get to the last few reps, which produce the most growth. With rest pause training, we eliminate the foreplay and get right to the growth-producing reps over and over again. This explains why Brooks Kubik, author of "Dinosaur Training" loves training with heavy singles. Brooks stated that "heavy singles made me bigger and stronger than any other combination of sets and reps I ever tried." (Pg 85). There you go, three people with varied backgrounds and goals that experienced the full power of rest pause training.

There is no doubt that rest pause training is effective for blasting through plateaus and adding size and strength. However, because it is so intense and different than standard bodybuilding programs it is not an easy training program for most bodybuilders to break into and must be tried with caution. After all, going from sets of 10-15 reps per set to 5-10 brutal rest pause reps will be a tremendous shock to your body and mind. Of course, we want to shock the body but not at the expense of over-training. Fortunately for you, I have found a much more "enjoyable" method to adapt gradually to the brutal rest pause training world. Here is how it is done. Take your three-rep max on a given exercise. For example, let's say that your three rep max on barbell squats is 315lbs. Do five rest pause reps with 315lbs on barbell squats with one-minute breaks between each rep. Do one rep with 315lbs, rack the weight and wait a minute before doing the next rep and so forth. It goes without saying that you should do exercises such as barbell squats and bench presses in a squat rack, especially if you are training alone. Once you can do five singles with 315lbs with one minute breaks, add another rest pause rep to the workout for a total of six rest pause reps. Work your way up to a total of ten rest pause reps. At that point, decrease the rest periods to forty-five seconds per set. Once you can complete ten singles at forty five seconds, go to thirty seconds. Keep dropping the rest periods until you can do all ten reps with ten second breaks. Once you can do that, increase the training weight by 10lbs and start back at five rest pause reps and one minute breaks. Work your way up the ladder again before increasing the weight by another 10lbs. Eventually you will get to a point in which 10lb increases are not possible. No problem, just increase the training load by five pounds or stay at ten rest pause reps with a given weight for two to three workouts to allow your mind and body to adapt.

Another major tip for maximizing the benefits of rest pause training is the importance of using the same weight for each rest pause set. This is not only vital for your body, but for your psyche as well. Some trainers recommend starting off with your one rep max and when you cannot complete a rep with that weight, drop down 10lbs to a lighter weight and proceed. I do not recommend this form of rest pause training for two reasons. First, it will quickly lead to burnout for most trainees. Second, it is not good for you psychologically to start heavy and have to drop weight on each set to continue. You leave the gym feeling beat up and defeated. Doing several rest pause reps with a given weight will build confidence and allow you to get stronger faster. Telling yourself that you cannot handle heavy weights and having to drop down with each set is not building a pattern of success. You want to complete each rest pause workout exhilarated, not burned out and exhausted. You read that right. You should be ready to conquer the world like a king after each rest pause workout rather than feeling like Homer Simpson after he gets home from a hard day's work. Breaking into rest pause training in the manner that I have outlined will allow you to make steady increases in strength and size by training for success and avoiding over-training. When executed properly, rest pause training stimulates the central nervous system and gives you a mental boost. Many trainees feel invincible after a rest pause workout and feel perked up for hours afterwards.

The Rest Pause Training Program

Many trainees like to do one major muscle group per day. For example, chest on Monday, back on Tuesday and so forth. While many trainees have used such programs effectively, I think that it is much more efficient to work antagonistic muscles in the same workout. Chest and lats are examples of two antagonistic muscle groups. Another example of antagonistic muscle groups is biceps and triceps. In addition to saving time, working antagonistic muscles sends blood back and forth between the muscles. You will find that one warms up the other and that you will be stronger on both as a result of working both muscle groups in the same workout. Here is a sample RPT program that you can use to jump into action:

Monday/Friday (Upper body)

Barbell Incline Press

Bent-over barbell rows

Wednesday/Sunday (Lower Body)

Bottom position Squats

(Do these in a power rack. Put the pins down low and begin the squat from the parallel position of the squat).

Hanging Leg Raise 3x5 (one-minute breaks)

Monday/Friday (Upper body)

Barbell Clean and Military press

Weighted Chin-ups

Wednesday/Sunday (Lower Body)

Deadlifts

Hanging Leg raises 3x5 (regular rep style)

Kettlebell RPT Option

Monday/Friday (Upper body)

Double Clean and Press

Renegade Row

Wednesday/Sunday (Lower Body)

Double Front Squat or Suitcase Squat

One-arm Windmill 2x5 l,r (one-minute breaks)

Monday/Friday (Upper body)

One-arm Clean and Mil Press l,r

One-arm Bent-over Row l,r

Wednesday/Sunday (Lower Body)

Double Swing or Double Snatch 3x3 (KB ballistics are not great for one rep max sets)

Turkish Get-up 2x5 l,r

Road Warrior RPT Option

Monday/Friday (Upper body)

Handstand Pushup (four second pause at the bottom)

Doorway Pull-up (four second hold at the top)

Wednesday/Sunday (Lower Body)

One-legged Squat l,r (four second hold at the bottom)

Monday/Friday (Upper body)

Lifeline TNT Cable Military Press

Lifeline TNT Cable Lat Pulldown

Wednesday/Sunday (Lower Body)

Lifeline Portable Power Jumper Squat

Wrap-up

Stick with the rest pause-training program for a minimum of five weeks. While you are doing rest pause training don't think about other training programs or what you are going to do after you have completed a five-week rest pause-training program. One of the biggest mistakes that I see many trainees make is changing their training regimens every week. They get excited about one program and after a week, get excited about another program and so forth. They never achieve consistency and ultimately get discouraged with their meager results. Don't fall into this category. Stay focused and stick with rest pause training for a month. After the first week I have a feeling that you will be hooked as the CNS boost is enough to get most people excited about their rest pause workouts. Once your strength jumps within two weeks and the increases in dense muscle arrive you will be happy that you took the rest pause challenge and thought outside the box.

For more info on Matt Wiggins' book, go to www.working_class_fitness.com

For more info on Brooks Kubick's "Dinosaur Training" go to
[Dinosaur training](#)

Maximizing Training with Heavy Duty GTG

Americans are an all-or-nothing people. Moderation does not appear to be in our vocabulary. We either go all out and eventually burn out or apply no effort and of course accomplish nothing. This phenomenon can be seen in the work place, gym and probably even in the bedroom (fortunately not mine in regards to the nothing part). Going to extremes is not always bad and there is a place for both. Sometimes we need to work super hard and other times we are better off doing nothing at all and relaxing. However, when it comes to training, the combination of frequent practice with moderate training loads and infrequent max efforts will serve you very well on your quest to might and power. In this article I am going to go over how to modify Mike Mentzer's controversial "Heavy Duty" program and mix it with two other controversial programs for a perfect mix for strength and size or just strength if that is your goal. What are the other controversial programs? Well, you are just going to have to read this article to find out.

Many years ago a famous bodybuilder named Mike Mentzer realized that the super-high-volume, high-frequency, and high-intensity programs that his peers were following were not the best way to go. Unless you had superior genetics and chemical assistance you did not stand a chance on these programs. After meeting with the innovative and eccentric Arthur Jones, Mike became convinced that brief and frequent high-intensity training was the way to go.

HIT entailed doing one set to failure on several exercises three times per week. The program worked very well for Mike and he was back on the road to progress. Some time down the road, Mentzer concluded that high-intensity training in which you take an exercise to muscle failure had a tremendous stress on the body and could not be done frequently. He started doing infrequent high-intensity workouts and started making progress again.

Mike called this new program "Heavy Duty." Basically, Mike advocated doing one set to failure and then taking several days to over a week off. For example, pick a weight you can do on the bench press and do as many reps as possible. Do the set one time and then wait several days before doing the bench press again. In theory the "Heavy Duty" Program sounds great. Hit training hard and then rest up before doing another session. However, in

practice the program did not work too well for most trainees. Sure, many people had great results the first month they tried HD (as you will with just about any program). However, after a month or so, the trainee adapts to the stimulus or in the case of HD, lack of stimulus and progress stops. The trainees that really benefited from HD were trainees that were severely over-trained. Mentzer would have trainees take two weeks off from training before starting the HD program which certainly gave them some much needed recovery time. This alone is enough to allow trainees to get back on the road to progress. Following up with infrequent training allowed the stimulus-addicted trainees a chance to give their CNS some recovery time as well. So far HD sounds great right? Unfortunately it has some flaws that need to be addressed.

One of the main reasons why the HD program did not work well for many trainees is not the fact that it called for training to failure (although that can be problematic), but the fact that the workouts were far too infrequent. Mentzer recommended that trainees take 7-14 days off between each exercise to maximize recovery. To illustrate further, if you do the Military Press on November 1, you will wait until up to November 14 before doing it again. Imagine applying this concept to playing the piano or gymnastics. At best you would maintain your skill level. However, most likely your skill level would decline. I know what you are thinking: what does playing the piano or doing gymnastics have to do with productive strength training? Far more than you may realize. Similar to playing the piano, strength training is a skill that requires practice. The more practice you get without burning out, the more efficient you will become, and the faster you will make progress.

The problem with the HD program is that it did not take into account the fact that lifting weights is a skill. Don't agree? Think that doing an exercise such as the Military Press is as simple as pressing a weight from your chest to the lockout position? Then how come you have not been able to press your bodyweight after ten years of training? Back in the day two hundred pound standing Military Presses were common, now they are as rare as women in Los Angeles without breast implants (not that I have a problem with that). But I digress.

Think about a time when you had to take several months off from training. Remember, the first workout back in the gym. Remember how everything just felt off? The main reason why this occurred is not because the muscles got weaker, but because your CNS had not been engaged for a while. In

some countries if you do not have sex for a long time, you are considered a virgin again. Well, to your CNS, if you do not hit a certain exercise for a long time, when you do finally hit it, your CNS is like a virgin again, no pun intended. Fortunately, it does not take too long to get back into synch. Regardless, the best way to get back into synch is to practice the skill of strength training.

One more time: strength training is a skill. The more you practice the skill of strength training, the more you refine your form and the more efficient you get. Translation? You get stronger. The key is to practice the skill of strength training without burning out. As Vladimir Zatsiorsky states in “The Science And Practice Of Strength Training” “practice as often as possible while staying as fresh as possible.”

One major thing Mike Mentzer was correct about was the fact that maximum effort sessions should be infrequent. Maximum efforts do take a big toll on your central nervous system and cannot be executed frequently. Only average people are at their strength peak daily. Serious strength athletes only peak a few times a year if even that. What Mentzer was wrong on was the notion that all training should be very infrequent.

Training infrequently will make you feel like you have never done the exercise before. Each time you do an exercise you will have trouble getting into the groove. Thus, how can we make HD effective? Simple, practice the skill of strength frequently with moderate training loads and avoidance of training to failure. Then once a month, ramp up training intensity and go all out. By combining the concept of training frequently with the concept of doing maximum efforts infrequently, we have a superior version of HD that will work very well.

One of the strongest proponents of the concept of treating strength training as a practice is top strength coach Pavel Tsatsouline, author of “Beyond Bodybuilding.” Pavel refers to practicing strength training as “greasing the groove.” Here is how it works, take your 70% max on an exercise and do several low rep sets through out the day. For example, do a few sets of the Military Press in the morning, afternoon, and evening. Avoid training to failure. In fact do not even come close to training to failure. You should feel fresh and strong after each set. Another way to look at it is to take your six-rep max on an exercise and do sets of three several times a day five to six times per week.

Of course, unless you work in a gym or work at home, it will not be easy to get in several sets through out the day. Not a problem. Just do two to three sets of three to five, five times per week and take two days off. Once a month take a dose of Heavy Duty and go all out on each exercise. Then take five days off and adjust your practice sets accordingly. Focus on compound exercises that will provide the most bang for you buck. Cut out or at least reduce all isolation work. Here are some sample programs that you can follow:

Option 1(strength focus):

Barbell Military Press 2x3
Weighted Pull-up 2x3
Bottom Position Barbell Squat 2x3
Stiff Legged Deadlift 2x3

Kettlebell Focus

Double Clean and Press 2x3
Alternating Renegade Row 2x5
Double Front Squat 2x5
Double Swing 2x5

Road Warrior Focus

Handstand Pushup 2x5
Doorway Pull-ups 2x5
Portable Power Jumper Squat 2x5 or One-legged Squat 2x5 l,r
Knee Jump 2x5

Take three-minute breaks between each set and one-minute breaks between each exercise. What about ab work? Take a tip from legendary bodybuilder Franco Columbu and simply contract your abs as hard as possible when doing each exercise. This is something that you should be doing anyway and will help make your midsection hard as a rock. If you have to do something, then do two sets of five on hanging leg raises or slow and controlled sit-ups.

Option 2 (Size Focus):

Incline Barbell Military Press 2x6
Barbell Bent Over Row 2x6
Barbell Squat 2x6
Glute/ham Raise 2x6

Kettlebell Option

Double Clean And Press 2x6
Double Bent-over Row 2x6
Double Front Squat 2x6
Double Swing 2x6

Road Warrior Focus

Lifeline TNT Cable Mil Press 2x6
Doorway Pull-ups 2x6
Portable Power Jumper Squat 2x6
Knee Jump 2x6

Use your eight reps max on each exercise for your practice sets. Again, take three-minute breaks between each set and one-minute breaks between each exercise. Once a month, test your six-rep max and adjust your practice loads accordingly.

Next, at the risk of having too many concepts at the table, we are going to apply one more. To avoid training boredom and, more importantly, training plateaus due to burning out pathways by doing the same exercises over and over again, we are going to apply top powerlifting coach Louie Simmons' "Conjugate Approach" to the mix. Louie has his athletes rotate exercises every few weeks. They work up to a max on a given exercise and then rotate it with another drill. For example, work up to a max set on board bench presses, and then switch to Floor Presses. In addition to being a lot of fun, the Conjugate Approach is very effective and certainly worth taking advantage of. Thus after, two months of applying GTG and HD to the same

exercises, rotate them out for a while with some other effective selections. For example, instead of doing Barbell Military Presses, do Lifeline TNT Cable Presses. Replace Bent Over Barbell Rows with Dumbbell Renegade Rows. Replace Barbell Squats with Front Squats. You get the idea. Stick with the new exercises for a month and after you do your monthly max set, incorporate some new drills in.

Enough reading, time to practice the art of strength training often and go all out once a month.

For more HFT info, check out Chat Waterbury's articles at [T-Nation](#)

Condense Time And Get Bigger And Stronger Faster!

When I was in the sales world, I realized quickly that I didn't get paid for simply showing up or pretending to work. Most people get paid for working eight hours a day. However, how much work is actually being done in those eight hours? From what I saw, not too much. At least half of the day was wasted on gossip, doing tasks inefficiently, wasting time in unnecessary meetings, and talking about things instead of taking action. Just pretend for a minute that you are in sales and imagine what you would do if your boss makes you the following offer: do the required amount of sales for the day and you can go home anytime you want. Moreover, if you meet your monthly quota in two weeks, take the rest of the month off. What would you do? Personally, I would find a way to get the job done efficiently so I would not have to waste time. After all, the more I achieve in less time the more money I make. If it takes 2 hours to make \$500.00, I am making \$250 an hour. If it takes eight hours to make \$500.00, I am only making \$62.50 an hour. If you have half a brain the former will sound more appealing than the latter.

The way that you approach bodybuilding should not be any different. You do not get bigger and stronger the longer you stay in the gym, you get bigger and stronger based on how efficient you are in the gym. I rather spend one solid hour in the gym and maximize every minute then mess around for several unfocused hours.

I am going to reveal two training protocols that you can cycle between indefinitely to keep the fast and furious gains coming! The combination of these two workouts will allow you to condense time and maximize training. Thus, you will achieve more in less time. I call this combination "condensed training."

The first super-effective training protocol for maximizing your training time is EDT (Escalating Density Training). EDT is the brain child of top strength

coach Charles Staley, author of “The Ultimate Guide To Massive Arms: Escalating Density Training.” A few years ago Charles realized that the key to getting bigger and stronger lies in doing more work in the same amount of time. Things such as rep speed and feeling the muscle are really not important. The key to packing on size is to progressively increase the intensity, volume, and density in each training session.

Here is how EDT works. Take two exercises that work antagonistic muscles. For example, the bench press for working the chest and the bent over row for working the lats. Take your ten-rep max on each exercise and do as many reps of five as you can of each exercise in a designated time period. Coach Staley refers to this time period as a “PR (Personal Record) Zone.” To illustrate, let’s say the PR Zone is twenty minutes. Set a stopwatch for twenty minutes and do as many reps as possible on the bench press and bent over row. Do the exercises back-to-back. In other words, do one set on the bench press, wait thirty seconds, do a set on the bent over row, wait thirty seconds and do another set on the bench press etc. Once the twenty-minute period is up, the PR Zone is over. Record the total number of reps for each exercise. Lets say you completed thirty-five reps with 225lbs on the bench press. Your goal at the next workout is to complete a minimum of thirty-six reps. As long as you are doing more reps in the same amount of time; you are increasing the intensity, volume, and density and will pack on some meat. When you can increase the total number of reps by 20%, increase the training load by 5%. For example, lets say that you do twenty-five total reps on the bent over row with 200lbs at your first EDT workout. When you can complete thirty reps, increase the training load to 210lbs. Make sure you use solid form at all times. Do not cheat in order to get more reps.

I tried EDT around three years ago and was amazed with how well it worked. Before using EDT my previous best on the Military Press with two 70lb kettlebells was six reps. After only two weeks of EDT I nailed nine reps. I had been stuck at a plateau for months before that and was elated to say the least. Moreover, I got several comments from people that my shoulders were looking much bigger.

I liked EDT so much that I bought the company! Just kidding. However, I placed several of my online consulting clients on EDT programs. As the feedback started rolling in, there was no doubt in my mind that EDT was

effective. Here is what my client Patt Drawe said about the EDT program that I designed for him: "I'm in my fourth week of EDT and I'm happy to report that in one month I have made more progress than in the previous three months! It works, and the feeling of accomplishment is a great motivational boost as well. I don't max out much, but my working weight on the bench has increased by about 20lbs in the four weeks." Keep in mind that Patt is an experienced trainee. When was the last time you saw an experienced natural trainee pack on 20lbs on his or her bench press in four weeks? That's more than most trainees pack on in a year. Patt was definitely not the only client of mine that benefited from EDT. My client Mike Brown went from barely pressing two 70lb kettlebells for two reps, to twelve sets of three in just a few weeks. A few months later, Mike military pressed two 88lb kettlebells for ten reps!

Okay, lets get into how to design an EDT program for maximum increase in size and strength. Now if your number one goal is to increase the size of your arms, get Coach Staley's book (Get his book regardless of what your goals are; it is excellent) by going to www.edtsecrets.com I am not going to cover any specialization programs. Instead, I am going to go over a full-body program that dozens of my clients have used successfully.

Workout 1: Upper Body (Monday and Friday)

PR Zone 1: Chest/Lats (20 minutes)

A-1: Bottom Position Floor Press

A-2: Bent over Barbell Row

Wait five minutes and then do:

PR Zone 2: Triceps/ Biceps

A-1: Standing Military Press from the nose

A-2: Weighted Chin-up

Workout 2: Lower Body (Wednesday and Saturday)

PR Zone 1: Hamstrings/Quads (20 minutes)

A-1: Bottom Position Barbell Squat

A-2: Stiff-Legged Deadlift

Wait five minutes and then do

PR Zone 2: Calves/abs (10 minutes)

A-1 Seated Calf Raises

A-2: Weighted Sit-ups

Let's go over some key points on the exercise selection here. First, why do bottom position Floor presses and squats? Two reasons. First, they are much harder than regular bench presses and squats. You have to generate a great deal of power to move a heavy weight from the bottom position and you will be amazed how much weaker you are when you try this drill. Second, it is safer. EDT is hard work and you move at a rapid pace. The bottom position floor press and squat in a power rack will allow you to bench press and squat safely. They also provide the convenience of not relying on a spotter.

Next, antagonist exercises are paired up in each PR Zone. The barbell bent over row is an antagonistic exercise to the bench press. While you are working one, you are warming up the opposite muscles. This will provide the benefit of being much stronger on each exercise and will build balanced muscles. Just as the barbell bent over row is antagonistic to the bench press, the stiff legged deadlift is an antagonist exercise to the barbell squat. The stiff legged deadlift will add mass to your hamstrings, while the Squat primarily focuses on the quads. Both are proven mass makers that will provide a one-two punch to your physique. Workout efficiency is another reason why antagonistic exercises are used. More can be done in less time with antagonistic exercises than by doing each exercise separately.

Next, instead of doing isolation exercises such as the triceps pushdown and

the triceps extension, I am going to have you do the military presses from the nose. This is a power move that will blast your triceps into the stratosphere. Again, use a power rack and set the pins at nose level. The weighted chin-up is an excellent antagonist exercise for the nose-level Military Press. Unlike bicep curls, the chin-up forces you to work with your bodyweight, which will pay off with major dividends. If you are not strong enough to do weighted chin-ups, start off with your bodyweight.

Finally, with calves, there really are not any antagonistic exercises. No big deal; this makes for a convenient area to add some stomach work. The weighted sit-up will get the job done. Just hold a barbell plate on your chest and you are ready to go.

Regarding breaks between sets: start off by taking thirty-second breaks between each exercise. Make sure to do the exercises in each PR Zone in super set fashion. In other words, do a set of bench presses, wait thirty seconds, do a set of bent over rows, wait thirty seconds, do another set of bench presses, etc. As fatigue kicks in, increase the breaks to one minute. Also, do not go to failure or compromise form to get five reps on each set. If you get to the point where you can no longer complete five reps with solid form, decrease the reps. The goal with EDT is total reps completed, not reps per set. Do what you have to, to keep the reps accumulating from workout to workout. In many of my EDT workouts, the final sets in each PR zone were reduced to doubles and singles.

Make sure to take a day off between each EDT session. For example, do workout one on Monday and then take Tuesday off. Proceed to workout two on Wednesday and then take Thursday off. EDT is super hard work so expect to be sore after the first few workouts. You will adapt, though, and in addition to building some major mass and size you will acquire killer conditioning as well. For those if you that love using kettlebells for training or travel a great deal, here is a kettlebell option and a road warrior option:

Kettlebell EDT Workout

Workout 1: Upper Body (Monday and Friday)

PR Zone 1: Uppdal Body (25 minute PR Zone)

A-1: Double Clean and Military Press

A-2: Double Bent-over Row

Workout 2: Lower Body (Wednesday and Saturday)

PR Zone 1: Hamstrings/Quads (25 minutes)

A-1: Double Front Squat

A-2: Double Swing

Yes there is much less volume with the kettlebells. For one thing, kettlebells work the stabilizers a great deal and two PR zones per workout is overkill. Feel free to try to prove me wrong and enjoy the severe over training. In addition, it is highly unlikely that you are looking to build a bodybuilder's physique with a kettlebell only routine so there is no need for lots of isolation work.

Road Warrior EDT Program

Workout 1: Upper Body (Monday and Friday)

PR Zone 1: Upper Body (25 minute PR Zone)

A-1: Lifeline TNT Cable Mil Press or Handstand Pushup

A-2: Doorway Pull-up or TNT Cable Lat Pulldown

Workout 2: Lower Body (Wednesday and Saturday)

PR Zone 1: Hamstrings/Quads (25 minutes)

A-1: Lifeline Portable Power Jumper Squat

A-2: TNT Cable Pull through

As effective as EDT is, four to six weeks is pretty much the limit of what most trainees can tolerate before burnout kicks in. I recommend that trainees switch to a lower-volume program for four weeks for every four weeks of EDT. Top strength coach Pavel Tsatsouline's PTP (Power to the People) program is just the ticket to transition to after four weeks of EDT work, instead of just going into maintenance mode for a month. Pavel's PTP program will allow you to continue to get bigger and stronger. PTP is another example of condensing time and making workouts far more efficient.

With PTP, Pavel recommends two primary exercises. Number one is the deadlift. Pavel states that the deadlift is one of the best exercises for packing on strength and size as it works more muscles than any other drill. Next, Pavel recommends either the barbell side press or the floor press as the upper body exercises of choice. In addition to only concentrating on two exercises, Pavel recommends no more than two sets of five per day for strength training. The first set is a heavy one and the second set is completed with 90% of first set. Finally, you train five days a week on the PTP program.

Now at this point I know what you are saying. How can you possibly get bigger and stronger with only two sets of two exercises per workout? First, training has to do with quality not quantity. Remember the analogy that I used at the beginning of this article. It is not how long you are at work, but what you do at work. A few sets done right are much better than a dozen sets done wrong. Also in Pavel's excellent book "Power To The People", Pavel reveals several tips for recruiting as many muscles as possible in each exercise to maximize strength and make your muscles hard as rock. For more info on Pavel, go to www.powerbypavel.com.

Second, due to the frequency of PTP training the weekly volume is hardly low. Each week you are doing a total of ten sets. Instead of doing ten sets on one day and taking seven days off, you are breaking the ten sets over five

days. The frequency of Pavel's program will shock your body into new levels of growth. The more frequently that you can hit a muscle with adequate recovery, the faster it will grow.

Now I like the program that Pavel outlines in his book for people that want to get strong without adding any weight. However, for bodybuilders I recommend a few more exercises to induce hypertrophy and for training variety. What are the exercises? Let's add the weighted chin-up, the dumbbell press, the bent over row, the squat, and the Military Press to the deadlift. Also, instead of doing the same exercises every day, let's do some alternating throughout the training week. Here is an example of a five-day schedule:

Mon-Wed-Fri

Military Press

Weighted chin-up

Deadlift

Tuesday-Thursday

Dumbbell Press

Bent-Over Row

Squat

Kettlebell Option

Mon-Wed-Fri

Double Clean And Press

Alternating Renegade Row

Double Swing

Tuesday-Thursday

Double Floor Press

Double Bent-over Row

Double Front Squat

Road Warrior Option

Mon-Wed-Fri

Handstand Pushup

Doorway Pull-up

Portable Power Squat

Tuesday-Thursday

One-arm Pushup

TNT Cable Pulldown

One-legged Squat

Pavel recommends taking five-minute breaks between each set to maximize

strength. Since we want to focus on building big muscles, I am going to have you take two-minute breaks between each set. Similar to EDT the exercises will be done in antagonistic fashion.

Here is how the sets will break down. Do five reps on the first set. Even if you can do more, stop at five. On the second set shoot for seven reps. When you can nail seven reps on the second set, increase the weight by 5% at the next workout. Otherwise, stay at the same weight until you complete seven reps on set number two. Do not worry if the prospect of only doing a few sets at each workout sounds unappealing. After a month of EDT, you will welcome the lower-volume workouts. What you like does not really matter anyway. Serious trainees want results and the back-to-back combo of EDT-PTP will deliver just that! Stick with PTP for four to six weeks. At that point it will be time to ramp up the volume and intensity again and plug into another EDT workout.

By combining EDT and PTP into an eight- to ten-week training cycle, you are taking advantage of one of the most effective training concepts in the world: periodization. The concept of periodization was popularized by top strength coach Tudor Bompá. Basically, with periodization you breakdown the entire year into training quarters. For example, an athlete might spend four months working on muscular endurance by working in the 12-15 rep range. Then spend another four months on hypertrophy, by working in the 6-8 rep range. Then finally spend the last four months of the year working on brute strength in the 1-3 rep range. Looks great on paper. However, there are two major drawbacks. One, four months is a long time to spend on one area of training. For many trainees four months of 12-15 reps per exercise will get old real fast. Number two, your body will adapt to what you subject it to. In four months of doing endurance work you will become very good at endurance work. However, after four months of doing brute strength work you will probably lose the benefits of the endurance work that you did earlier in the year. Thus, instead of breaking training down over the course of several month, condense the periods and do much smaller cycles such as four weeks. That is precisely what we are doing with the EDT-PTP.

You will not lose any of the results that you achieve with EDT during the PTP cycle. In fact, the opposite will occur. You will be stronger, bigger and more refreshed for another EDT cycle. Vice-versa as well. After each EDT

cycle you will have more high-quality muscle mass to maximize your strength for PTP. You will still get bigger with PTP, but that is not the emphasis. Further, studies show that your body generally adapts to a given workout regimen after three to four weeks. With the EDT/PTP combo you stay one step ahead of plateaus that may occur by constantly switching gears. In addition to keeping workouts fun and fresh, your hard work will be rewarded month after month. Now stop wasting time reading this article; you have work to do!

The Westside Solution For Size And Strength

Louie Simmons is one of the best strength coaches in the business and a legend in the powerlifting community. He has produced some of the strongest men and women in the world with his innovative and unconventional methods. One of the foundations for Louie's "Westside" program is the emphasis on speed. Louie states that if you are fast he can make you strong.

While powerlifting looks like a slow sport, the intent is to move the weights as fast as possible. Your fast-twitch muscle fibers are what make you strong and thus incorporating some speed training is very important. As a result, Louie has a few training days each week that are focused on speed training. For example, he will have an athlete take 50-60% of his one rep max on the bench press and do several sets of three as fast as possible with short breaks. The speed that is developed from such training carries over well to heavy training. The faster you can move a heavy weight, the less time you are under tension and the less likely you are to fail. Also the heavier the weights you use with solid form the more real muscle you will build. Thus, get faster so you can get stronger and bigger.

Seventy-two hours after doing some speed work, it is time to have a maximum effort day to apply your new skill set. Focus on one exercise for a few weeks and build up to a new PR (personal record). Then switch to another exercise that is similar and repeat. For example, in month one, focus on the standing Military press. In month two, focus on the Incline Barbell Press.

To emphasize the size component of the Westside style of training we are going to have you do the 5x5 program on the maximum strength day. Start with 80% of your five-rep max and add five pounds whenever you can do all five sets with the same weight.

With this program you are going to get faster and stronger on the speed day and then you are going to build some strong and dense muscles on the maximum strength day. Use 60% of your one-rep max on the speed day. Here is a sample program:

Monday: (Upper Body Speed Day)

Standing Barbell Military Press 6x3 (six sets of three with one-minute breaks. Use 60% of one rep max)

Weighted Pull-up 6x3 (one-minute breaks)

Do each set as fast as possible with solid form. Do not increase the weight every week. Once a month do a one-rep max and then reset your working weights based on your new max.

Tuesday: (Lower Body Speed Day)

Barbell Squat 6x3

Glute-ham raise Or Double Kettlebell Swing 6x3

Do each set as fast as possible with solid form. Do not increase the weight every week. Once a month do a one-rep max and then re-set your working weights based on your new max.

Dumbbell Side Bend 3x6 l,r (three sets of six left and right and one-minute breaks)

Thursday: (Upper Body 5x5)

A-1: Barbell Incline Press

A-2: Barbell Bent-over Row

Do a set of A-1, wait ninety seconds and then do a set of A-2 and wait ninety seconds before going back to A-1. Keep going back and forth until you have completed all of the sets. When you can do five reps with the same weight, add five pounds.

Friday: (Lower Body 5x5)

Barbell Deadlift

Hanging Leg-raise 3x6 (three sets of six and one-minute breaks)

Sample #2

Monday: (Upper Body Speed Day)

Explosive Push-up** 6x3

Weighted Pull-up 6x3 (one-minute breaks)

Do each set as fast as possible with solid form. Do not increase the weight every week. Once a month do a one-rep max and then reset your working weights based on your new max.

** get airborne as high as possible one each rep. Your feet and hands should be off of the floor on each rep. Wear a weigh-vest if you need more resistance.

Tuesday: (Lower Body Speed Day)

Dumbbell Squat 6x3

One-arm Dumbbell Snatch 1,r 6x3

Do each set as fast as possible with solid form. Do not increase the weight every week. Once a month do a one-rep max and then reset your working weights based on your new max.

Ab Wheel Roll-out 3x6

Thursday: (Upper Body 5x5)

A-1: Barbell Military Press

A-2: Dumbbell Renegade Row

Do a set of A-1, wait ninety seconds, and then do a set of A-2 and wait ninety seconds before going back to A-1. Keep going back and forth until you have completed all of the sets. When you can do five reps with the same weight, add five pounds.

Friday: (Lower Body 5x5)

B-1: Barbell Squat

B-2: Double Kettlebell Swing

Do a set of B-1, wait ninety seconds, and then do a set of A-2 and wait ninety seconds before going back to B-2. Keep going back and forth until you have completed all of the sets. When you can do five reps with the same weight, add five pounds.

Kettlebell Focused Option

Monday: (Upper Body Focus: Speed Day)

Clean and Speed Press 6x3 (six sets of three and one-minute breaks between each set)

Weighted Pull-up 6x3

For the kettlebell work, start with a bells that you can do ten reps with.

Tuesday (Lower Body Focus: Speed Day)

Explosive Lunge 6x3

One-arm Snatch 6x3 1,r (left and right)

For the kettlebell work, start with a bells that you can do ten reps with. This does not apply to the Turkish Get-up.

Turkish Get-up 2x3 1,r (two sets of three and one-minute breaks)

Thursday (Upper Body Focus: 5x5)

A-1: Double Military Press 5x5

A-2: Double Bent Over Row 5x5

Do A-1 and A-2 back-to-back. In other words do a set of A-1, rest for ninety seconds and then do a set of A-2 and rest for ninety seconds. Keep going back and forth until you have completed 5x5 on both exercises. Use heavy

kettlebells. The last set should be very difficult and a maximum effort should be applied. When you can do 5x5 with 90-second breaks, take the breaks down to 60 seconds.

Double Windmill 3x5 l,r (left and right and one-minute breaks)

Friday (Lower Body Focus: 5x5)

A-1: Double Front Squat 5x5

A-2: Double Swing 5x5

Do A-1 and A-2 back-to-back. In other words do a set of A-1, rest for ninety seconds and then do a set of A-2 and rest for ninety seconds. Keep going back and forth until you have completed 5x5 for both exercises. Use heavy kettlebells. The last set should be very difficult and a maximum effort should be applied. When you can do 5x5 with 90-second breaks, take the breaks down to 60 seconds.

Kettlebell and Lifeline Cable Option

Monday: (Upper Body Focus: Speed Day)

TNT Cable Mil Press 6x3 (six sets of three and one-minute breaks in between each set)

TNT Cable Lat Pulldown 6x3

Start with resistance that you can do six to seven reps with.

Tuesday (Lower Body Focus: Speed Day)

Portable Power Jumper Squat 6x3

One-arm Snatch 6x3 l,r (left and right)

For the kettlebell and cable work, start with resistance that you can do eight to ten reps with. This does not apply to the Turkish Get-up.

Turkish Get-up 2x3 l,r (two sets of three and one-minute breaks)

Thursday (Upper Body Focus: 5x5)

A-1: Double Clean and Military Press 5x5

A-2: Alternating Renegade Row 5x5 each side

Do A-1 and A-2 back-to-back. In other words do a set of A-1, rest for ninety seconds and then do a set of A-2 and rest for ninety seconds. Keep going back and forth until you have completed 5x5 on both exercises. Use heavy kettlebells. The last set should be very difficult and a maximum effort should be applied. When you can do 5x5 with 90-second breaks, take the breaks down to 60 seconds.

Double Windmill 3x5 l,r (left and right and one-minute breaks)

Friday (Lower Body Focus: 5x5)

A-1: One-legged Kettlebell Squat 5x5 l,r (left and right)

A-2: One-legged Kettlebell Deadlift 5x5 l,r

Do A-1 and A-2 back-to-back. In other words do a set of A-1, rest for ninety seconds and then do a set of A-2 and rest for ninety seconds. Keep going back and forth until you have completed 5x5 for both exercises. Use heavy kettlebells. The last set should be very difficult and a maximum effort should be applied. When you can do 5x5 with 90-second breaks, take the breaks down to 60 seconds.

Whatever option you go with you are going to love the results you get with the Westside approach to size and strength. Remember, in order to get stronger you have to get faster and in order to build real quality muscle you must get stronger. Personally, I would not have it any other way.

For more info on Louie Simmons and Westside, go to [Westside Barbell](#)

The Compound Solution Program For Puny Arms

Ah the eternal quest for big guns. Ask any new male trainee what their training goals are and chances are strong you will hear about the desire for a decent pair of pipes. The desire for bigger arms is so strong among male trainees that there are tons of books and hundreds of articles on how to get bigger arms. While many of these books and articles are good, the truth is that doing tons of isolation work for your arms will only take you so far. The body has to be worked as a complete package for individual parts to grow significantly. Moreover, it makes sense to focus on areas that will produce the most overall benefit. Enter the “Compound Solution Program.” I am going to go over a different but super-effective approach to getting much bigger and stronger. The side-effect of this program will be a pair of guns that you can be proud of.

According to strength coach Charles Poliquin, trainees need to add twenty pounds of muscle in order to add one inch to their arms. Sounds like pretty depressing news right? Not if you want a balanced physique rather than a “California bodybuilder look.” Of course that brings up a good question. How come many male trainees have big arms and small legs. Doesn’t this mean you can get big arms without having big legs? Perhaps, but your arms and upper body will never be as big as they could be with a well developed lower body. Moreover, why would you want to have a weak foundation when you can have the entire package? Finally, if you have any athletic desires, forget about being effective on the field without some strong wheels. If you have to gain twenty pounds of muscle to pack on an inch to your arms it makes sense to focus your training regime around exercises that will build the most overall size. This means that isolation exercises are out and old-fashioned compound exercises are in.

It is time to stop using the squat rack for ten sets of barbell curls. Yes, you are going to have to leave the ez-curl bars alone for a while and forget about triceps pushdowns and skull crushers. It is time to get back to the basics and focus on some proven compound lifts that will help you pack on some size on your entire body including your arms. Lets go over seven super-effective exercises to get the job done.

The Majestic Seven!

Bench Press: Of course no training program would be complete without the bench press. In addition to being a great chest exercise, the bench press is a great triceps builder. Actually, I think the Military Press is the best overall pressing movement for the upper body. However, I am already depriving you of curls and do not want you to go through further withdrawal symptoms by depriving you of the bench press. Regardless, I am going to have you do the bench press in a way that might be new to you. Instead of doing the bench press the traditional way, try doing bottom-position bench presses with a medium width grip (Medium being just an inch wider than shoulder width). Bottom position bench presses are much harder than regular bench presses. It takes a lot of power and strength to lift a heavy barbell off of your chest without the benefit of doing the eccentric phase of the lift. Make sure that you use a power rack and place the safety bars at chest level. When you initiate the lift, take a tip from top strength coach Louie Simmons and imagine that you are trying to push yourself through the floor. Do not be surprised if you have to reduce the weight by 25% from what you normally use for the bench press. Pause for a second on the safety pins at the start of each repetition. If you have rotator cuff problems or find the bottom position bench press stressful to your shoulders, use the bottom position floor press instead.

Barbell Row: A mistake that many trainees make is focusing too much on the bench press and not enough on the antagonistic muscles. This is where the bent over row comes in. In addition to building up your back and lats, the bent over row will build up your biceps tremendously. Try to keep your body as stable as possible when doing the bent over row. Keep your back flat and look straight ahead at all times. Pull the bar to your stomach rather than straight up. Before you even pull the bar off of the floor, flex your lats and legs as hard as possible. This will give you the stability you need to pull some heavy weight.

Military Press: According to Brooks Kubik, author of “Dinosaur Training,” years ago trainees used to look at the standing Military Press the way that trainees look at the bench press now. A 200lb overhead press is what separated the men from the boys. I doubt that you will see more than two to three people at most gyms today that can do a standing military press with 200lbs. This is a shame as the Military Press is one of the best exercises for building up the triceps, shoulders, and upper-body. Use a power rack and place a bar at chest level. Breathe in as you take the bar off of the rack and start your set. Focus on flexing your legs, stomach, lats, and arms as hard as possible to press the maximum amount of weight.

Weighted Pull-up: Forget about the lat pulldown. If you want a respectable pair of lats and some killer biceps to go with it, get to know the weighted pull-up on a first name basis. You can purchase an excellent weight belt at www.ironmind.com. Another option is to place a dumbbell between your feet, but that is not too practical once the weight gets past fifty pounds. Thus, do yourself a favor and invest in a weighted belt. If you cannot do any pull-ups yet, then make that your first goal. Do some negative reps off of the bar and have your training partner help you with the concentric portion of the lift. Do static hold in the top position as well and flex the lats as hard as possible.

Weighted Dip: The weighted dip is referred to by many as the upper body squat. Once you try it you will see why it has this distinguished title. The weighted dip is the best exercise to build up your triceps. If you lean into it, it is also a killer exercise for the chest as well. In addition, the weighted dip requires a great deal of stabilization. Much more so than the bench press. If the weighted dip does not build up your triceps nothing will. To complete a rep, lower yourself slowly to the bottom position. Pause for a second and then drive out of the hole. Pause at the top for a second before doing the next repetition. We will be using the weighted dip as a chest exercise so make sure that your arms go out when you do the dip rather than keeping them close to the body. Don't worry your triceps will still get a lot of work.

If you find full range dips to be too stressful on your shoulders, limit the range of motion.

Barbell Squat: When it comes to building a strong pair of legs, the barbell squat is king. There is really no way around it. If you want big strong legs,

you need to squat! Forget about the leg press and leg extension. All the leg press does is compress your spine and place tremendous stress on your knees. Instead of doing quarter squats, or parallel squats, focus on using a complete range of motion. In other words, go as deep as you can. Pause at the bottom for a second and power out of it. By using a full range of motion you take the pressure off of the knees. When you go to parallel, your knees have to put on the breaks. If you find that you do not have the flexibility for full range squats, work within your limits and gradually focus on increasing the range of motion.

Stiff-Legged Deadlift: The Stiff-legged deadlift is basically the bicep curl for your legs. It will build up your hamstrings and even out all of the quad development that you get from doing barbell squats. You might be asking why I picked the stiff-legged deadlift over the regular deadlift. I will let top strength coach Ken Leistner answer that question: “The stiff-legged deadlift gives the spinal erectors and biceps femoris more direct work than the regular deadlift.” In addition to building up your hamstrings and spine, the stiff-legged deadlift will help build up your biceps as well. In addition, since the stiff legged deadlift requires you to hold on to a heavy weight, expect your forearms to get stronger and bigger as well. Do not execute the stiff-legged deadlift with locked out legs. Bend your knees slightly and sit back as if you are trying to sit in a chair behind you.

Finishers

I like to have my clients end each workout with a “finisher.” A “finisher” is an exercise that is done for high repetitions (25-50) at the end of a workout to increase nutrient uptake into the worked muscles. Translation: “finishers” will help you recover from workouts faster, which means more growth.

While there are a lot of fancy things that we could use for “finishers”, I am going to keep it simple and pick two basic exercises: Pushups and bodyweight squats. At the end of each upper body workout, do one set of 25-50 pushups and at the end of each lower body workout, do 50-100 bodyweight squats.

The Program

Here is a sixteen-week training regimen that will have you ready to purchase a new wardrobe in no time. The sixteen-week program is comprised of four

four-week programs. Each four-week phase is a micro cycle in which training is very focused. The program changes every four weeks in order to avoid adaptation and plateaus. This also keeps training interesting and challenging which are two important keys to training longevity.

Phase 1: The Break In

Phase one involves a full body workout that is done three times a week in order to bring you up to speed with all of the exercises and to hit the muscles hard. The more often you do something and recover, the stronger and bigger you will get. Also, practice makes perfect and this phase will give you a chance to practice each exercise frequently.

Day 1: Mass Day

A-1: Bottom Position Bench Press 3x5

A-2: Bent Over Row 3x5

B-1: Barbell Squat 3x6

B-2: Stiff Legged Deadlift 3x6

C-1: Military Press 2x5

C-2: Weighted Pull-up 2x5

Finisher

Pushups: 25 reps

Bodyweight Squat: 50 reps

In order to save time and make each workout more effective, the exercises are paired up in antagonistic fashion. In other words, exercises that work opposite muscles are paired up into modified super sets. Here is how it works: do one set of A-1, wait a minute and then do a set of A-2. Again wait a minute before doing another set of A-1. Go back and forth until you have completed all of the sets and reps. Once you have completed one pair

move on to the next pair. Use the same weight on all of the working sets. Once you can complete all of the sets and reps, increase the weight by 5-10lbs at the next workout.

Day 2: Power Day

A-1: Weighted Dips 3x3

A-2: Bent Over Row 3x3

B-1: Barbell Squat 3x3

B-2: Stiff Legged Deadlift 3x3

C-1: Military Press 2x3

C-2: Weighted Pull-up 2x3

Finisher

Pushups: 25 reps

Bodyweight Squat: 50 reps

Same instructions as Day 1 with this workout.

Day 3: Rest Pause Strength Day

Military Press 6x1

Weighted Pull-up 6x1

Stiff Legged Deadlift 6x1

Barbell Squat 6x1

Bent Over Row 4x1

Bottom Position Bench press 4x1

Finisher

Pushups: 25 reps

Bodyweight Squat: 50 reps

In this workout, you are going to apply a super-effective training method called Rest Pause Training (RPT). Legendary bodybuilders such as Mike Mentzer and Dorian Yates used this intense training method to blast through training plateaus and pack on size and strength. Here is how it works. Pick a weight that you can do three times with excellent form. Do one rep, wait 10-15 seconds and then do another rep and wait 10-15 seconds. Keep going until you have completed all six sets. If you manage to nail six sets, increase the weight by 5-10lbs at the next workout. This is an intense training method that will stimulate your CNS (central nervous system) tremendously. Rather than feel fatigued after a rest pause workout you will feel energized.

One thing that you have probably noticed with this program is that the legwork is always in the middle. Barbell Squats and stiff-legged deadlift workouts take the most amount of energy. Thus, doing them first might make you too fatigued to finish your workout. On the other hand, if you wait until the end of your workouts, you might be too fatigued to hit the exercises properly. Thus, we are going to take a lesson from the Buddha here and take the middle road.

Phase Two: The 5x5 Method

Now that you have a good foundation, it is time to take training up a notch and apply a proven training protocol. The 5x5 program was a favorite of legendary bodybuilder Reg Park and for good reason. It simply works when done properly. First, do two warm up sets and then begin your first working set. The goal is to complete five sets of five using the same weight on all of the sets. Lets say that you nail three sets of five, but only hit 2-3 reps on sets four and five. No big deal, just stay with that weight until you can complete all five sets. Once you achieve five sets, increase the weight by five to ten pounds. Because more volume is being used you are only going to hit each muscle group twice a week. Here is how the program will break down:

Day 1: Monday-Thursday

A-1: Bottom Position Bench Press

A-2: Bent-over Row

B-1: Weighted Pull-up

B-2: Military Press

Again, do each pair in antagonistic fashion. Do a set of A-1, wait two minutes and then do a set of A-2. Wait two minutes before completing another set of A-1. After you have completed all five sets of A-1 and A-2, take a three-minute break and then move on to B-1 and B-2. Apply the same rest periods there.

Day 2: Tuesday-Friday

A-1: Stiff Legged Deadlift

A-2: Barbell Squat

Same Instructions as Day 1.

Make sure that you rest up as much as possible on all of your day off. While this program does not look like that much on paper you will find that it is very challenging (assuming that you are putting in maximum effort).

Phase 3: Pump Up the Volume

Now that you built a good foundation with Phase 1 and took it up a notch with Phase 2 you are ready to play in the major leagues. Now it is time to apply a method called the German Volume Training (GVT) method. GVT calls for doing ten sets of ten reps for each exercise at each workout. While the 10x10 program worked for many trainees, a lot of trainees found the volume to be way too much. One hundred reps per exercise is a hell of a lot and will get old real fast. I have found that either 10x5 or 10x3 works much better. Thus, I am going to have you do 10x5 in week one and 10x3 in week two. Then in week three you will return to 10x5. Finally, in week four you will wrap up with 10x3. By varying the reps each workout you will be able

to avoid burnout and get stronger and bigger faster. Because the volume is much higher in this phase you will only be hitting each exercise once a week. Here is how it will breakdown:

Monday: Chest and back

A-1: Bent-over Barbell Row (week one and three 10x5, week two and four 10x3)

A-2: Weighted Dip (week one and three 10x5, week two and four 10x3)

Take ninety-second breaks between each set of A-1 and A-2. Stick with the same weight until you can complete all ten sets. Once you can complete all ten sets, increase the weight by five to ten pounds.

Wednesday: Legs

A-1: Stiff Legged Deadlift (week one and three 10x5, week two and four 10x3)

A-2: Barbell Squat (week one and three 10x5, week two and four 10x3)

Same directions as Monday

Friday: Shoulders and lats

A-1: Military Press (week one and three 10x5, week two and four 10x3)

A-2: Weighted Pull-up (week one and three 10x5, week two and four 10x3)

Phase 4: Every Ending Has A Beginning

After four weeks of super-high volume you will welcome going back to full body workouts with much lower volume. In fact, the full-body, low-volume workouts will feel like active recovery in comparison. Thus, we are going to end the program where we began. Repeat phase one for the final four weeks.

After sixteen weeks on the “Compound Solution Program” you should have increased your size and strength tremendously. Your arms should look bigger than ever. At this point you have a great foundation in the most effective exercises for size and strength. Feel free to add in some variety to your program by trying out some other similar exercises such as Dumbbell Press, Dumbbell Clean and Press, Front Squat, Dumbbell Row, etc. In fact you could do the entire sixteen weeks again with a dumbbell only routine to really rock the stabilizers and really bring in some thick muscle growth. While variety is important, make sure that you focus on compound exercises to maximize your time and to achieve the best results.

Want To Get Bigger? Train Your Legs

Sounds crazy doesn't it? Of course you have to train legs properly to gain weight and build a balanced physique. Regardless, you might be amazed by the volume of e-mails that I get from trainees around the world that do little or no leg training. Many of the trainees that do leg training make the mistake of focusing on leg curls, leg extensions, leg presses etc. They avoid the exercises that pack on a lot of weight rapidly such as deadlifts and squats.

Why? Probably due to the fact that both squats and deadlifts are difficult exercises. In addition, both exercises send many trainees running to the bathroom to lose their lunches. As hard as exercises such as squats and deadlifts are, one or the other is necessary to increase leg size tremendously in the minimum amount of time. Here are two leg specialization programs to get you started.

The Twenty-Rep Squat Routine

Serious trainees that wanted to gain size rapidly used the twenty-rep squat routine abundantly many years ago. Coaches often had their athletes do high-rep squats to transform them from boys into men. The twenty-rep squat program was popularized again by Randall Strossum a few years ago in his outstanding book "Super Squats." Here is how it works. Take a load that you can squat ten times with solid form and get in a squat rack. At the top of each rep, take in three deep breaths and then descend into a deep squat. That is right, I want you to do full squats. No partial squats or stopping at parallel (Be sure to clear this with your doctor if you have any existing knee issues).

Using this breathing pattern will allow you to do more than ten reps. If you are stopped at 14-15, no problem. Just stay at that weight until you can do twenty full reps. Once you can do that, increase the weight by ten pounds. Make sure that you have a good spotter when doing the twenty-rep squat program and be sure to do the squats on an empty stomach. A good rule of thumb is to make sure that your pre-workout meal is taken a minimum of two hours before your workout. Do this squat workout two to three times a week and place the rest of your workout on maintenance mode. Try the twenty-rep squat program for six weeks and be sure to increase your caloric intake significantly.

For more information on Randall Strossum's Super Squats program go to www.ironmind.com

EDT (Escalating Density Training)

Recently I read a great book by top strength coach Charles Staley entitled "The Ultimate Guide To Massive Arms: Escalating Density Training." Yes Sherlock, I am well aware that the book is about how to pack on some size on your arms. However, the EDT philosophy can be applied to any body part (well just about any part) for massive gains. Here is how it works. Take two antagonistic exercises such as squats and stiff legged deadlifts. Squats focus on the quads and stiff legged deadlifts focus on the hamstrings (at least when done properly).

Do both exercises back-to-back for as many reps as possible in a fifteen-minute period. Now I am not telling you to use some puny poundage and go for fifteen minutes straight without resting. Take a weight that you can do ten times in solid form and do five reps. For a solid leg program, do five reps on barbell squats, rest thirty seconds, then do five reps on stiff legged deadlifts, rest for thirty seconds and so forth. As fatigue kicks in, take longer breaks and do fewer reps. At the end of the fifteen minutes record how many total reps you did for each exercise. Write down that number in your training journal (if you do not keep a journal, start doing so right now).

Your goal at the next workout is to beat that number. Avoid going to failure when doing EDT and take two days off between each EDT workout. Again, place your upper-body work on maintenance mode and put all of your energy into bringing those tooth pick legs of yours up to a respectable level. Here is an EDT program that you can follow for four weeks:

15-Minute Zone One

A-1: Barbell Squats

A-2: Stiff legged Deadlifts

Once the fifteen minutes are up, take a break for five minutes and then proceed to zone two for ten minutes.

10-Minute Zone Two

A-1: Dumbbell Squats (hold a dumbbell on each site and squat until the dumbbell touches the floor)

A-2: One arm Dumbbell swings (Swing a dumbbell between your legs, quickly reverse the position taking the dumbbell overhead and driving through with your hips)

For more information on Charles Staley's EDT training system go to www.edtsecrets.com

Recovery Tips

Both the Super squats program and EDT are very intense and I recommend that you apply a few active recovery methods to maximize results. First, make sure to have a protein shake after each workout that has both a good amount of protein and carbs (no fat). I would suggest 25-30 grams of protein and 40-50 grams of simple sugar carbs will do the trick. Second, take a cold-hot shower after each workout. Start off with thirty seconds of cold water followed by one minute of hot water. Go back and forth for about ten minutes. Finally, take advantage of the ice treatment known as cryotherapy.

I like to use a product called a "Cryocup"(do a google search) to ice muscles after a workout. Finally, get a deep tissue sports massage twice a month or every week if you can afford it.

Okay stop wasting time on the computer and get started on your leg workout. Who knows, after a few months you may finally be able to wear shorts without looking like a chump!

Size And Strength Training For The Busy Executive

You wake up at 5am grab a cup of black coffee and head to the office. You have a long day ahead of you and there are many important deals on the table. The second you walk in the office it is chaos already. Three deals are about to fall through and it is damage control time. After playing phone tag for the first half of the day you get what needs to be done finished and save the day. Another day of business success is in the bag and you are amped! Then you get a glimpse of yourself in the mirror and your excitement disappears like you and your prom date did many years ago.

Who is this guy with the double chin and estrogen-packed gut staring back at you? What happened to your muscular shoulders and chest? If you did not know better you would think your stomach devoured them! The brutal, depressing reality of your physical state sinks in and your mood plummets like the stock market during the internet bust many years ago. How can you accept being a badass businessman and a fat ass man at the same time? You cannot and it is time to make some dramatic changes now before it is too late. The only problem is there is no way you can add in several strength training workouts per week. You work a minimum of twelve hours per day and then you have responsibilities as a father and husband. Regardless, you know that something needs to be done and just do not know where to turn. Fortunately you bought my book.

You do not have to be a business strongman and a physical weak man. Lets get started on what you can do to build strength and muscle and get the fat down where it belongs.

One advantage about being extremely busy is you cannot waste time on non-essentials. Just as watching four hours of TV every night is out of the question, wasting time on unproductive training programs is also out of the question. You need to focus on the exercises that will provide the most bang for your buck. Hell, more often than not you will only have time to do one or two exercises and they better be winners. The first option we are going to cover is the “exercise break” program. If you have time to take a coffee break you have time to take an exercise break. Obviously exercises breaks have to be convenient. Going to the gym around the corner is not going to work. Not with your schedule. Thus, you need to bring the gym to you. Fortunately, there are several options for building an effective office gym. Here are the equipment options to choose from*:

Kettlebells

Dumbbells

Lifeline TNT Cable

Lifeline Power Push-up 2

Lifeline Portable Power Jumper

*You can get all of the above at: [Mike's Store](#)

You do not need to have all of the above. However, if you have space in your office you should add some variety. If you pick the kettlebells or dumbbells option, you only need one or two of each. Personally I would go for two so you can do some double work.

Here is what you are going to do. At the beginning of every hour you are at work, do one set of Clean and presses and one set of bent-over rows. You can use one or two kettlebells or one or two dumbbells. Do a clean before each military press and limit the reps to six or fewer. Same instructions for the rows. You do not want to get a sweat going as smelling like you just worked out in the gym will not help you in business meetings.

When you clean a dumbbell or kettlebell, you engage your lower body and when you press it overhead you work your core, shoulders, triceps, and chest. Focus on full body tension. In other words, when you clean the kettlebell to the rack position, contract your legs, glutes, stomach, lats,

triceps and biceps and grip as hard as possible. Building tension will help tighten up your body and build rock hard muscles. The rows will work the biceps and lats for a complete upper body workout.

Sounds good so far and you are probably wondering what else you will be doing? For the first four weeks of the program the clean and press and bent over row are it. That's right, the strength portion of your workout routine will consist of two exercises. How can you get stronger and more muscular with only two exercises? Presses and rows cover the upper body. Moreover, if you work eight hours per day and take an exercise break every hour you are doing eight total sets per day. Done five times per week you are doing forty total work sets for each exercise per week. This is assuming that you are only working forty hours per week. The longer your workdays, the more exercise breaks you will be talking.

To build up some cardio and help get the fat off do three high intensity cardio workouts per week. Yes, I know you are busy but you can fit a few ten-minute workouts in per week. Just wake up a few minutes earlier or get it done once you get home from work. Make it a priority and it will happen. Or you can just be fat and out of shape indefinitely. If you do not make time for health, make time for illness. Also, it is important to do some form of squatting for size and strength training so start off each cardio workout with some squat work. Here are a few options:

Option 1: Kettlebells:

Double Front Squat 3x6 (60 second breaks)

Do six rounds of the following:

Two-arm Swing 25 reps (two arms on one bell)

Bodyweight Squat 30 reps

Do the swings and squats back-to-back and then take a one-minute break. This workout will take you less than ten minutes to complete. However, do not have the illusion that it is easy. It will be a long ten minutes.

Option 2: Bodyweight drills

Lifeline Portable Power Jumper Squat 3x12 (60-second breaks)

Do ten rounds of:

Squat Thrust 25 reps (squat down, get in top position of a pushup, stand up)

Hindu Squat 35 reps

Do both exercises back-to-back and then take a one-minute breaks between each round.

Option 3: Dumbbell and Bodyweight combo

Dumbbell Squat 3x10 (one-minute breaks)

Do six rounds of:

One-arm Dumbbell Swing 15 reps l,r (left and right)

Bodyweight Squat 30 reps

Do both exercises back-to-back and then take one-minute breaks between each round.

Focusing on the lower body will provide the greatest caloric expenditure and metabolic enhancement. In other words, you will burn fat and get in great cardiovascular shape.

Another option you can do in place of the high intensity workouts or in addition to them is a weighted vest walk. Put on a weighted vest that weighs 50-80lbs (or whatever you find challenging) and go for a one-mile walk. Put some headphones on and listen to your favorite music. Walks in the morning or evening are a great way to clear your head and with the addition of a weighted vest you turn the walks into a great form of cardio that will strengthen your legs tremendously. You can get a high quality weight vest at [Xvest](#)

The Exercise Break Variety Approach

After you have put in a minimum of one month with the above program, you can add some variety to your training. Here is a sample breakdown:

Monday: Double Kettlebell Clean and Press, Renegade Row

Tuesday: Alternating Hang Clean and Press, Double Bent-over Row

Wednesday: Lifeline TNT Cable Mil Press, Doorway Pull-up

Thursday: Lifeline Power Push-up 2 Pushups, One-arm Row

Friday: Dumbbell Clean and Press, Dumbbell Bent-over Row

To add some variety to the cardio, do the kettlebell cardio program on Monday, the bodyweight cardio program on Wednesday and the dumbbell cardio program on Friday. The possibilities are endless. Just do not make the mistake of trying to add too much too soon. If necessary, just focus on the clean and press sets at work for one month. Then add two to three cardio workouts in the morning or evening for a month. Then add the weighted vest workouts.

Now lets talk about diet. Seventy percent of fat loss is diet and to build quality muscle you need a quality diet. Having the right snacks at work will go a long way to ensuring you do not eat junk food all day long. Load up on the following to keep at your office:

Raw Almonds

Pumpkin Seeds

Pistachios

Sunflower Seeds

Apples

Pears

Dried fruit such as: blueberries, raisins, cranberries

The nuts and seeds are loaded with protein and healthy fat. Whenever you get hungry have a handful. You can also make some trail mixes from three parts nuts and seeds and one part dried fruit. Forget about protein bars as most are loaded with sugar and low quality protein. Focus on real food. You could also have a small blender at work for protein shakes. However, it is likely that it will be a messy process so that is out for most.

Have a high-protein breakfast with a spinach salad every morning to ensure you start the day right. Then have another high-protein moderate-carb meal in the evening to end the day right. Some meat and vegetables is an example.

Just because a program is simple does not mean it is ineffective. Get some exercise breaks in your routine today and in a few weeks, you will wonder why you did not think of it sooner. For more information on exercise breaks check out Pavel's "Naked Warrior" book and read the section on GTG.

Breaking Into A Size And Strength Kettlebell Program

Before I wrote several articles and came out with a comprehensive DVD on using kettlebells for size and strength many trainees confined the benefits of kettlebell training to muscular endurance and fat loss. No doubt kettlebell training is a very effective component of a fat loss program (the other component being pushing yourself away from the kitchen table more often).

In addition to fat loss and muscular endurance training kettlebells can be used effectively for adding size and strength. However, many trainees are confused with how to transition into a kettlebell-focused size and strength program. If you have been using kettlebells for endurance and fat loss you have to gradually transition into high-volume strength training for muscular development. Many trainees make the mistake of jumping into a 5x5 (five sets of five with heavy weights) paradigm or worse a 10x5 paradigm and go into an over-trained state rapidly. A much better plan is to get used to the most effective kettlebell exercises for size and strength with a few sets and a few workouts per week. Once you get the hang of these size and strength exercises you can start adding some volume and intensity.

Lets start off with the exercises:

Primary Exercises

Double Kettlebell Clean and Press: In addition to being a full-body exercise that will stimulate overall growth, the Double Kettlebell Clean and Press is an incredible upper body developer with particular emphasis on the shoulders and triceps.

Alternating Kettlebell Renegade Row: In addition to working the lats, mid-back, and biceps, the Renegade Row works the core and oddly enough the pecs as well. The pecs have to work overtime to keep you stable and do not be surprised if you wake up with sore pecs the next day. Thus, men with "breast envy" will love this exercise.

Double Kettlebell Swing: Great hamstring blaster that focuses on fast twitch muscle fibers which are by far the most important for developing size and strength. Great transfer to the "midnight move" as well. Hopefully, you do not need me to elaborate on this further.

Double Kettlebell Front Squat: It all start with a strong foundation and the Front squat will develop strong quads. Just make sure you hold the bells higher up like I do on my Size and Strength DVD to take the emphasis off of the shoulders.

Optional

Double Windmill or Turkish Get-up: Two great exercises for the core and shoulder stability and flexibility. Core work is no doubt important. However, you get a lot of it indirectly with the primary exercises so do not obsess about doing a ton of abdominal work. If you want a six pack, you need to have low body fat.

What about variety? Do you get bored with doing the same exercises over and over again? That is why you have a forgettable physique and strength levels that are far from impressive. Get exceptional at a few basic moves first and then add some variety down the road. Forget about variety for at least one month. Get good at the primary exercises and it will be much easier to transition into other exercises such as the Alternating Military Press, Sots Press, Double Bent-over Row, and Double Snatch. Yes this will

require an attention span that most TV addicts will find painful. Too bad, life is about making sacrifices to win the prize.

Now lets go over a sample "break in" program:

Month One

Monday-Wednesday-Friday

A-1: Double Clean and Military Press 2x5

A-2: Alternating Renegade Row 2x5

Do A-1 and A-2 in alternating fashion and take ninety-second breaks between each set of A-1 and A-2.

B-1: Double Front Squat 2x5

B-2: Double Swing 2x5

Do B-1 and B-2 in alternating fashion and take ninety-second breaks between each set of B-1 and B-2.

Double Windmill 1x5 l,r (left and right)

In month two go to three sets per exercise. Keep the core work (TGU and Windmill at one set). In month three, go to four sets per exercise and split up the exercises as follows:

Month Three

Monday-Thursday

A-1: Double Clean and Military Press 4x5

A-2: Alternating Renegade Row 4x5

Do A-1 and A-2 in alternating fashion and take ninety second breaks between each set of A-1 and A-2.

TGU 1x5

Tuesday-Friday

B-1: Double Front Squat 4x5

B-2: Double Swing 4x5

Do B-1 and B-2 in alternating fashion and take ninety second breaks between each set of B-1 and B-2.

Double Windmill 1x5 l,r (left and right)

Month Four: 5x5 Program

In month four you are ready to start the 5x5 program and can start adding some variety to the program. For example:

Monday

A-1: Double Clean and Military Press 5x5

A-2: Alternating Renegade Row 5x5

Do A-1 and A-2 in alternating fashion and take ninety-second breaks between each set of A-1 and A-2.

Turkish Get-up 1x5 l,r

Tuesday

B-1: Double Front Squat 5x5

B-2: Double Swing 5x5

Do B-1 and B-2 in alternating fashion and take ninety-second breaks between each set of B-1 and B-2.

Double Windmill 1x5 l,r (left and right)

Thursday

A-1: Alternating Military Press 5x5

A-2: Double Bent-over Row 5x5

Do A-1 and A-2 in alternating fashion and take ninety second breaks between each set of A-1 and A-2.

Turkish Get-up 1x5 l,r

Friday

B-1: Double Clean and Front Squat 5x5

B-2: Double Snatch 5x5

Do B-1 and B-2 in alternating fashion and take ninety second breaks between each set of B-1 and B-2.

Double Windmill 1x5 l,r (left and right)

Next, you can pick any of the other programs in my Kettlebell DVD E-book which comes with my Size and Strength DVD. Do not have it yet? Pick it up today at [Kettlebell DVDs](#) and start making some real progress.

Also remember that without optimal levels of Testosterone and Growth Hormone you can forget about developing a strong and muscular body that commands respect. Have your Doctor test your T and GH so you know where you are. Ideally, everyone at age 25 should have these levels checked but it is never too late to ascertain where you are.

How To Structure A Kettlebell Workout For Size and Strength

I get tons of emails from kettlebell trainees on how to structure kettlebell workouts for getting bigger and stronger. Many trainees make the mistakes of doing too many exercises, applying improper use of volume and using the wrong training frequency. Training frustration is soon to follow with the inevitable lack of progress from not having a clear target. When designing a program you must consider that you can only be good at so many things. Thus, one of the keys to designing an effective program for strength and size is to keep things simple and focus on doing a few things well. Moreover, balanced development and proper exercise selection are critical. Let's get into some key ingredients for maximizing a kettlebell program for size and strength.

The first thing you need to do is focus on exercises that provide the most bang for your buck. I like to break down a full-body workout into five categories. Pick one pressing exercise, one pulling exercise, one exercise for the quads, one for the hamstrings and one core exercise. This ensures that the entire body is getting a workout and prevents you from focusing too much on one area. For example, men like to focus on the upper body and women like to focus on the lower body. To avoid imbalances and being mistaken for a California bodybuilder focus on working the entire body and pick one exercise per category. Let's discuss each category:

Pressing: A pressing exercise will take care of the shoulders, triceps and, depending on what you pick, the chest as well. Here are some kettlebell pressing exercises to choose from:

The Double Clean and Military Press (clean before each press)

Double Military Press

Double Sots Press

Alternating Military Press

Floor Press

Alternating Floor Press

Pulling: pulling exercises are necessary to ensure balanced development for the upper body. Moreover, there is a synergy between pulling and pressing muscles. The better you get at pulling, the stronger your pressing will be and vice versa. Here are some excellent pulling exercises for you to choose from:

Pull-ups with a kettlebell attached (use a dipping belt)

Renegade Row

Double Bent Over Row

Alternating Bent-over Row

One-arm Rows with two kettlebells (see Pavel's "More Russian Kettlebell Challenges DVD")

Quads: To avoid looking like a California bodybuilder you need to work on the legs. Even if you do not care about leg development, a strong foundation is necessary for good upper-body development. I have had online clients that blast through pressing plateaus by increasing leg strength. Your body is only as strong as your weakest link. Build a strong foundation with the following exercises:

Double Front Squat

Double Lunge

Suitcase Squat

Double Front Box Squat

Hamstrings: The next critical area is the back of your legs. You need to balance the quad development from the squats with some hamstring exercises. In addition, if you are an athlete you need strong hamstrings for explosive strength and speed. Choose from the following:

Double Swing

Double Clean

Double Snatch

Full Body Attack (on my new DVD, The KB Solution Speed)

Double One Legged Squat

Core: The last important area to cover is the midsection. The midsection is the hook that connects the lower body to the upper body. If your core is

weak so is your entire body and you will not be as strong as you could be. Choose from the following list:

Double Windmill
One-arm Windmill
Turkish Get-up
Turkish Get-up Sit-up

Now that we have all of the bases covered, let's go over some program design options. If your main goal is to get bigger and stronger then split your workouts into upper body and lower body and workout each area two times per week. Here is a sample program:

Monday: (Upper Body Focus)

A-1: Double Clean and Press 5x5

A-2: Double Bent Over Row 5x5

Do A-1 and A-2 back-to-back. In other words, do a set of A-1, wait a minute and then do a set of A-2, wait a minute and so forth. Continue in this fashion until you have completed 5x5 on both exercises. When you can do 5x5, add another set and do 6x5. Your long-term goal is to do 10x5.

Tuesday (Lower Body Focus)

A-1: Double Front Squat 5x5

A-2: Double Swing 5x5

Do A-1 and A-2 back-to-back. In other words, do a set of A-1, wait a minute and then do a set of A-2, wait a minute and so forth. Continue in this fashion until you have completed 5x5 on both exercises. When you can do 5x5, add another set and do 6x5. Your long-term goal is to do 10x5.

Take a one-minute break and then do:

Turkish Get-up 2x5 l,r (left and right with one-minute breaks)

Thursday: (Upper Body Focus)

A-1: Double Floor Press 5x5

A-2: Pull-up with a kettlebell 5x5

Do A-1 and A-2 back-o-back. In other words, do a set of A-1, wait a minute and then do a set of A-2, wait a minute and so forth. Continue in this fashion until you have completed 5x5 on both exercises. When you can do 5x5, add another set and do 6x5. Your long-term goal is to do 10x5.

Friday (Lower Body Focus)

A-1: Double Front Lunge 5x5 each leg

A-2: Double Snatch 5x5

Do A-1 and A-2 back-to-back. In other words, do a set of A-1, wait a minute and then do a set of A-2, wait a minute and so forth. Continue in this fashion until you have completed 5x5 on both exercises. When you can do 5x5, add another set and do 6x5. Your long-term goal is to do 10x5.

Take a one-minute break and then do:

Double Windmill 2x5 l,r (left and right with one-minute breaks)

Now if you are under some time constraints and only have time for two workouts per week then try doing two full-body workouts per week. This is also a great program for people that require more rest days for adequate recovery. Here is a sample program:

Monday

A-1: Double Floor Press 3x5

A-2: Pull-up with a kettlebell 3x5

Do A-1 and A-2 back-to-back. In other words, do a set of A-1, wait a minute and then do a set of A-2, wait a minute and so forth. Continue in this

fashion until you have completed 3x5 on both exercises. Your long-term goal is to work up to 6x5 per exercise.

Take a one-minute break and then move on to:

B-1: Double Front Squat 3x6

B-2: Double Swing 3x6

Do A-1 and A-2 back-to-back. In other words, do a set of A-1, wait a minute and then do a set of A-2, wait a minute and so forth. Continue in this fashion until you have completed 3x6 on both exercises. When you can do 3x6, add another set and do 4x6. Your long-term goal is to do 6x6 per exercise.

Take a one-minute break and then do:

Double Windmill 2x5 l,r (left and right with one-minute breaks)

Thursday

A-1: Double Clean and Military Press 3x5

A-2: Renegade Row 3x5 l,r (left and right)

Do A-1 and A-2 back-to-back. In other words, do a set of A-1, wait a minute and then do a set of A-2, wait a minute and so forth. Continue in this fashion until you have completed 3x5 on both exercises. Your long-term goal is to work up to 6x5 per exercise.

Take a one-minute break and then move on to:

B-1: Double Front Lunge 3x6

B-2: Double Snatch 3x6

Do A-1 and A-2 back-to-back. In other words, do a set of A-1, wait a minute and then do a set of A-2, wait a minute and so forth. Continue in this fashion until you have completed 3x6 on both exercises. When you can do

3x6, add another set and do 4x6. Your long-term goal is to do 6x6 per exercise.

Take a one-minute break and then do:

Turkish Get-up 2x5 l,r (left and right with one-minute breaks)

To summarize, the keys to building an effective kettlebell program for size and strength is to focus on compound exercises and balanced development. Make sure to cover the five major categories for balanced development and organize a program in such a way that all of the bases are covered in the appropriate number of training days with the appropriate volume and intensity.

How To Incorporate Kettlebells Into Your Size And Strength Program

This is one of the most frequently asked questions that I get. Kettlebell only programs are not for everyone and many trainees want to know how to use kettlebells in addition to other training implements. One thing that many trainees often forget is kettlebells are actually weights! Yes, kettlebells are part of the resistance training family along with barbells, dumbbells, sandbags, your bodyweight and anything else you pick up. Okay no more smart-ass comments from me. Let's get started.

Let's take a look at some common kettlebell exercises and see what muscle groups they work. Once we determine this it is easy to see where they belong:

Kettlebell Military Press: Shoulders, triceps and, to some degree, pecs

Kettlebell rows: Lats and biceps

Kettlebell Front Squat: Quads and, to some degree, the core

Kettlebell Swings: Hamstrings

Kettlebell Snatch: Hamstrings and, to some degree, the shoulders

Windmill: Core and shoulder stability

Turkish Get-up: Core and shoulder stability

Now let's determine how your workouts are going to break down. With the first option we are going to assume that your kettlebells are at home and that you go to the gym for your barbell and dumbbell work. Thus, we are going to cover a size and strength program that has two workouts in the gym and two workouts at home.

5x5 Option

Monday: (Gym: upper body)

A-1: Barbell Floor Press 5x5

A-2: Weighted Pull-up 5x5

Take 90-second breaks between each set of A-1 and A-2. When you can do five sets with the same weight, add five pounds.

Hanging Leg-raise: 2x5 (one-minute breaks)

Tuesday: (Gym: lower body)

A-1: Barbell Squat 5x5

A-2: Romanian Deadlift 5x5

Take 90-second breaks between each set of B-1 and B-2. When you can do five sets with the same weight, add five pounds.

Thursday: (Kettlebells: upper body)

A-1: Double Military Press 5x5

A-2: Alternating Renegade Row 5x5 l,r

Take 90-second breaks between each set of A-1 and A-2.

One-arm Windmill 2x5 l,r (60 second breaks)

Friday: (Kettlebells: lower body)

A-1: Double Front Squat 5x5

A-2: Double Swing 5x5

Take 90-second breaks between each set of B-1 and B-2.

With this option you spend the first half of the training week at the gym and the second half at home with kettlebells. Of course you could also do

Friday's kettlebell workout on Tuesday and Tuesday's Gym lower body workout on Friday. You could switch the upper body days around as well. Every four weeks, change the gym exercises and the kettlebell exercises and you are all set.

HFT (High Frequency Training) Option

With HFT you are going to do one set of 5-7 reps on four to five exercises. Take 90-second breaks between each exercise. See the chapter on HFT for more info.

Monday (gym)

Barbell Floor Press

Weighted Pull-up

Barbell Squat

Romanian Deadlift

Hanging Leg Raise

Tuesday (kettlebells at home)

Double Military Press

Alternating Renegade Row

One-arm Windmill

Double Front Squat

Double Swing

Wednesday (gym)

Barbell Incline Press

Lat Pulldown (palms facing you)

Barbell Deadlift

Barbell Ab Roll Out

Thursday (kettlebells at home)

Alternating Military Press

Double Bent-over Row

Turkish Get-up

Double Suitcase Squat

Double Snatch

Again, you decide which days are gym days and which days are kettlebells days. You could do three gym days in a row followed by two kettlebell days. Or you could do a week of kettlebell training and then a week of gym training. Have fun with it.

The next option assumes that you do all of your workouts at home. You have a barbell with a squat rack and a full set of kettlebells at home. With this option you can mix and match equipment at every workout. This leaves a great deal of room for variety. Let's look at a few samples.

Option 1: 5x5 Program

Monday: (Upper Body)

A-1 Barbell Military Press 5x5

A-2: Alternating Kettlebell Renegade Row 5x5

Take 90-second breaks between each set of A-1 and A-2.

Kettlebell Turkish Get-up 2x3 l,r (one-minute breaks)

Tuesday (lower body)

B-1: Double Kettlebell Front Squat 5x5

B-2: Barbell Romanian Deadlift 5x5

Thursday: (Upper Body)

A-1 Kettlebell Floor Press 5x5

A-2: Weighted Pull-up 5x5

Take 90-second breaks between each set of A-1 and A-2.

One-arm Windmill 2x5 l,r (one-minute breaks)

Friday (lower body)

B-1: Barbell Squat 5x5

B-2: Double Kettlebell Swing 5x5

Option 2: HFT Program

One set of each exercise and five reps per exercise. Take 90-second breaks between each exercise.

Monday

Barbell Bench Press

Double Kettlebell Bent-over Row

Barbell Squat

Double Kettlebell Swing

Slow and controlled sit-ups (4 seconds up and 4 seconds down)

Tuesday

Double Kettlebell Military Press

Weighted Pull-up

One-arm Kettlebell Windmill

Double Kettlebell Front Squat

Romanian Deadlift

Wednesday

Barbell Incline Press

Alternating Kettlebell Renegade Row

Kettlebell Turkish Get-up

Barbell Deadlift

One-arm Kettlebell Swing

Thursday

Kettlebell Alternating Military Press

Barbell Bent-over Row

Double Kettlebell Snatch

Kettlebell Suitcase Squat

Kettlebell Side Bend

Friday

Kettlebell Floor Press

Weighted Pull-up

Double Kettlebell Windmill

Barbell Squat

Double Kettlebell Swing

Wrap-up

By now you get the idea. Look at what muscle groups various kettlebell exercises work and then incorporate them into the program. The basis of this book is to concentrate on presses, pulls, squats and hamstring work. Keep this in mind when you structure your workouts. Yes, kettlebells are weights and in the future they will be considered another great tool to add to your program rather than the ultimate in strength and conditioning. No one system is the ultimate and a combination approach is the best way to avoid falling in the cracks.

When Life Gets Stressful, Turn To Back-up Training Programs

You are two weeks into a killer training program and everything is going well. Your nutrition plan is dialed in, you are getting eight hours of deep sleep every night, and you are focused and energetic at every workout. You love the feeling of being stronger at each workout and the sense of accomplishment that comes with finishing every workout like a winner. The way things are going you have no doubt that you are on track to achieve your training goals for the year. Then all of a sudden something unexpected happens. The harsh realities of life hit you like a snowball in the face. All of a sudden you are only getting five hours of sleep per night and you are stopping by Starbucks so often that their quarterly earnings have doubled on your purchases alone. The training program with which you were making incredible progress is no longer realistic, so you decide to quit working out for a while until the storm of life quiets down. Unfortunately, that time does not arrive for several months. When you finally make it back to training, all of the gains that you had made are gone. Even worse, you are weaker than before you started the last program. If only you had had a back-up plan.

Training, like anything else in life, requires a back-up plan. When you go on a road trip ideally you will not get any flat tires. However, life is rarely ideal. If and when a flat tire does occur, you want to have a spare so you are not standing on the side of the road with your thumb in the air.

The problem is that many trainees approach working out with an all-or-nothing attitude. Either you are training with all guns blazing or not at all. Mottos such as “train heavy or go home” or “no pain, no gain” are ingrained in the psyches of many trainees. As a result, many trainees do not think that condensed workouts are not even worth doing. This is far from the truth. In this chapter I am going to use the well-known 5x5-training program as an example of an ideal program and provide some sample back-up options.

5x5 Program For Strength And Size

The classic 5x5 program really does not need much of an introduction. I have written about it many times and it is a well-known program for building strength and size. Put briefly, it calls for doing five sets of five repetitions for each exercise. When you can do five reps on all five sets, add five pounds. Here is a sample 5x5 program:

Monday and Thursday (Upper Body Focus)

A-1: Incline Dumbbell Press 5x5

A-2: Barbell Bent-over Row 5x5

Do A-1 and A-2 back-to-back. In other words, do a set of A-1, wait 90 seconds and then do a set of A-2 and wait 90 seconds. Continue until you have completed all of the sets.

Barbell Curl 2x5 (one-minute breaks)

Tuesday and Saturday (Lower Body Focus)

A-1 Barbell Box Squat 5x5

A-2: Barbell Stiff-legged Deadlift 5x5

Do A-1 and A-2 back-to-back. In other words, do a set of A-1, wait 90 seconds and then do a set of A-2 and wait 90 seconds. Continue until you have completed all of the sets.

Hanging Leg Raise 3x5 (one-minute breaks between each set)

While the above 5x5 program is not exactly a brutal program, it can be too much for many trainees when stress is high. Thus when your cortisol levels are surging, switch gears and apply the following:

5x5: Back Up Program (Option A)

Monday and Thursday (upper body focus)

A-1: One-arm Dumbbell Bench Press 2x5 l,r

A-2: Renegade Dumbbell Row 2x5

Do A-1 and A-2 back-to-back. In other words, do a set of A-1, wait 90 seconds and then do a set of A-2 and wait 90 seconds. Continue until you have completed all of the sets.

Why did I pick the One-arm Dumbbell Bench Press and the Renegade Row? In addition to working all of the muscles in the upper body, both of these exercises activate the core tremendously. Thus, in addition to covering the pushing and pulling muscles your core is strengthened in a time-efficient manner. Translation: you do not have to do any additional abdominal work.

Tuesday and Friday (Lower Body Focus)

Barbell Deadlift 2x5 (three-minute breaks)

Only one exercise! Are you crazy? No, but you are if you think that you can get away with training with high-intensity and high-volume when stress is high. Just because a program is very simple in terms of lack of complexity does not mean that it is not effective. In fact one of the main reasons why most trainees fail with programs is due to picking overly complex programs. Enough on that; let's get back to the deadlift. The standard barbell deadlift is basically a mix of the squat and stiff legged deadlift. While it will not provide as complete a leg workout as doing squats and stiff legged deadlifts, it will get the job done and is the ultimate exercise for the trainee with limited time. In fact if you only have time for one exercise, the barbell deadlift is your weapon of choice.

This 5x5 back up program can be used in many ways. If you are having a rough week you can replace the 5x5 program with the back-up program completely. If you have a moderate increase in stress, you can replace two of the workouts from the 5x5 program with two of the workouts from the back-up program. For example replace Thursday's upper body workout with the back-up option and Friday's leg workout with the deadlift workout from the back-up program. Finally, if you are having a rough day, just replace your scheduled workout with the corresponding workout from Back-up Program A.

While Back-up Program A is sufficient for many trainees, it may not be enough for those under a higher level of stress. At that point it is time to

reduce the program even further and become the ultimate minimalist. Check this out:

5x5 Back-up Program B

Monday and Thursday

One-arm Dumbbell Bench Press 2x5 1,r (three-minute breaks)

Barbell Deadlift 2x5 (three-minute breaks)

Well, it does not get much more basic than this. The One-arm Dumbbell Bench Press takes care of the upper body and the Barbell Deadlift takes care of the lower body. What about a pulling exercise such as pull-ups or bent-over rows? In addition to being a great lower body exercise, the Barbell Deadlift is a pulling exercise as well. Yes this program is not perfect and would not be what I would pick when stress is low. However, worst-case scenario you will maintain strength with this program and more than likely you will make progress. It is much easier to do a bang-up job on a few things than it is with several things.

Now what do you do if you cannot even find time to get the back-up program B program into play? It is time to find a new job or get a new life. There is no reason why you cannot find time to get two 10-15 minute workouts in per week. If your stress levels are so high that you cannot recover adequately from the above program then you need to re-evaluate your life. Regardless, if you fall in this category take the sets down to one per exercise. Where do you go after that? Check out Tony Little's Gazelle machine as clearly strength training is not for you.

Back-up Program For Kettlebell Training (Strength focus)

Back-up Program A

Monday and Thursday (upper body focus)

A-1: One-arm Clean and Military Press 2x5 1,r

A-2: Kettlebell Renegade Row 2x5

Do A-1 and A-2 back-to-back. In other words, do a set of A-1, wait 90 seconds and then do a set of A-2 and wait 90 seconds. Continue until you have completed all of the sets.

Tuesday and Friday (Lower Body Focus)

B-1: Double Kettlebell Front Squat 2x5

B-2: Double Kettlebell Swing 2x5

Do B-1 and B-2 back-to-back. In other words, do a set of B-1, wait 90 seconds and then do a set of B-2 and wait 90 seconds. Continue until you have completed all of the sets.

Back-up Program B

Monday and Thursday

Kettlebell Side Press 2x5 l,r (three-minute breaks)

Double Kettlebell Swing 2x5 (three-minute breaks)

Next time I will go over some back-up programs for muscular endurance and fat loss workouts.

Q&A Section

Q: What program should I start off with?

A: This depends on many factors including stress, quality of sleep, diet and your testosterone and IGF-1 levels. If your T levels are low forget about building muscle. It will not happen. If IGF-1 levels are shot your recovery time will be poor and body composition changes will not come easily. Thus, get your T and IGF-1 levels checked. Get some quality sleep and get your diet in check. When in doubt start with the HFT program and do three workouts per week. When you are more rested try the 5x5 program or Rest pause training.

Q: You have some many great programs in your book and I do not know which one to start first.

A: Just pick one and get going (based on your answer to the above question). Do that program for four weeks and then switch to another. A sample training cycle:

Four weeks of EDT

Four weeks of HFT

Four weeks of RPT

Four Weeks of GVT

Damn that is a lot of acronyms!

Q: You do not talk about exercise tempo much. What tempo should I use?

A: Forget about exercise tempo. Lifting heavy weights is hard enough without having to worry about the correct speed. Just lower the weights under control and lift the weights as fast as possible. Focus on tensing the muscles as you lower the bar and contract everything as you raise the bar. Full body tension will help you build hard and dense muscles rather than soft and bloated muscles.

Q: How come you do not have isolation exercises in any of the programs? How am I supposed to get big guns without curls man?

A: Curls, triceps pushdowns, and skull crushers are useful when you actually have some mass to work with. If you are a sculpture you have to have some clay to work with before you start the shaping process. Your body is no different. Build some mass with presses, rows, squats and deadlifts and when you actually have a solid physique you can throw in some curls and other isolation drills. Just do not turn into that loser at your gym who has been bench-pressing 185lbs for ten years and reads the wall street journal between preacher curl sets.

Q: Most of your programs contain the same exercises. I need some variety and get bored easily. What do you recommend?

A: To quote the movie Troy, "That is why no one will remember your name." Sorry, I had to throw that in. Okay, while I feel that boredom is irrelevant with training, variety does not have to be a bad thing. Here is a list of alternative to the basics:

Military Press:

Barbell Clean and Press

Hang Barbell Clean And Press

Seesaw Dumbbell Press

See-saw Kettlebell Press

Alternating Dumbbell Military Press

Seated Kettlebell Military Press

Sots Kettlebell Press

Double Kettlebell Clean and Military Press

Double Kettlebell Hang Clean and Military Press

Alternating Hang Kettlebell Clean And Press

Lifeline TNT Cable Press

Bench Press:

Barbell Floor Press

One-arm Dumbbell Bench Press

One-arm Dumbbell Floor Press

Double Dumbbell Floor Press

Alternating Dumbbell Floor Press

Incline Bench Press

Weighted Dips

Weighted Pushups (weight vest or put plates on your back)

Lifeline Power Pushup 2

Explosive Push-up (feet and hands off of the floor)

Kettlebell Floor Press (one-arm and two-arm)

Alternating Kettlebell Floor Press

Military Press looking up with hips pushed forward

Barbell Row

One-arm Dumbbell Row

Double Dumbbell Row

Alternating Dumbbell Row

Dumbbell Renegade Row

Double Kettlebell Bent-over Row

Alternating Kettlebell Bent-over Row

Alternating Kettlebell Renegade Row

Kettlebell Renegade Row

Pull-up

Lat Pulldown

Lifeline TNT Cable Pulldown

Rope Pull-up

Towel Pull-up

One-arm Pull-up

Barbell Squat

Barbell Box Squat

Dumbbell Squat

Kettlebell Front Squat

Kettlebell Suitcase Squat

Kettlebell Front Box Squat

One-legged Squat

Hindu Squat with Lifeline Portable Power Jumper

Weighted Vest Squat

Barbell Deadlift

Dumbbell Lunge

Barbell Lunge

Kettlebell Lunge

Deadlift

Dumbbell Deadlift

Kettlebell Deadlift

One-legged Dumbbell Deadlift

One-legged Kettlebell Deadlift

Double Kettlebell Swing

Barbell Clean

Q: What should I do to get the most out of each program?

A: Personalization is very important and you need to fine-tune each program to your individual needs. Some trainees will have to modify the exercises. Others will have to do less upper-body work and more lower-body work.

Many of the programs leave you refreshed and energetic rather than wiped out. This is the way it should be most of the time. However, many trainees are stimulus junkies and train for the stimulus of working out rather than for a specific goal. Big mistake!

Make sure you sleep eight hours every night. Deep REM sleep is important and eight hours of tossing and turning will not cut it. Try meditating for thirty minutes before going to bed. Sit in a quiet room on a chair, couch, or in the lotus position. Breathe in through the nose to a count of four and out to a count of four. Do so for 20-30 minutes. Let whatever thoughts come to mind surface. Get it all out before you go to bed and you will sleep well. If

that does not work, good sex or bad sex before sack time often does the trick.

Sleep is critical for testosterone and growth hormone production. Without good levels of both, forget about getting bigger and stronger. If men have morning wood several times a week then your T levels are most likely doing fine. If only 1-2 times per week you are not doing well. If less than that you are on your way to a sex change and need help! Okay, maybe it is not that bad, but you are certainly not producing enough T and need to make some adjustments. Again get some blood work done and work with a Doctor that can give you some real feedback.

Have a post recovery shake after every workout. Twenty-five to forty grams of protein mixed with 25-50 grams of carbs works well. An example is one scoop of rice protein and 8oz of apple juice. Apple Cider Vinegar is a good addition as it is loaded with potassium. One tablespoon will do. I prefer the “Bragg” brand, which you can find at most health food stores. Now the more volume, the more carbs you will need for post-workout recovery. For example, you may want to go up to 50 grams of protein and 80 grams of carbs after an EDT workout or GVT session. Experiment and find what works best for you.

Two hours before each workout have a mix of protein, fat and carbs. One example is a peanut butter sandwich with 100% whole wheat bread and an apple. Or a protein shake consisting of 25 grams of protein powder, 8 ounces of apple juice and ½ tablespoon of olive oil or flaxseed oil.

An interesting pre-workout mix that I learned about from Dr. William Wong is also useful:

5 grams of Ribose (helps with ATP production for energy)

3 grams of TMG (replenishes ATP during the workout)

1 tablespoon of Apple Cider Vinegar

1 tablespoon of organic raw honey (optional)

Take the mix thirty minutes before your workout and get ready for a nice boost of energy. I am co-writing a sports nutrition book with Dr. Wong and we will provide more great info when it comes out. One more tip is to have

4oz of black coffee with the above mix before training. You can get Ribose and TMG at BodyBuilding.com. Make sure you visit Dr. Wong's Site.

Another pre-workout supplement that I really like is Biotest's Powerdrive. I also like it first thing in the morning or before seminars for mental clarity. Check it out at T-nation

A great way to reduce the inflammation that is caused by intense training is to supplement your diet with systemic enzymes such as "Vitalzym." Vitalzym breaks up scar tissue and is one of my favorite supplements. You can read more about it [here](#).

I personally take five caps three times per day between meals. Five in the morning, five before training and five before going to sleep.

Finally, make sure you keep a training journal. This is one of the most overlooked areas of effective strength training. Would you run a business without keeping track of revenue and expenses? Only if you want to go out of business in six months or less. How are you supposed to improve if you do not know where you are? Record sets and reps, energy levels, sleep the night before, how your energy was after the workout, stress levels, pre-workout nutrition, post workout nutrition, supplement intake, caloric intake, sex drive. The more detailed the journal the better.

Q: What do you think about Creatine Monohydrate?

My verdict is still out on Creatine. In large doses 20 grams or more, it causes a strain on the kidneys and can even lead to erection problems! Moreover, if you already get 5 grams of creatine from your diet, it is worthless and it like putting gas in a car that is already full.

For vegetarians like me, it works great at 5 grams a day after workouts only. In other words only take it on strength training days. Not after cardio or on non-workout days. You simply do not need it unless you deplete ATP stores via hard training. Creatine works great with Ribose so 5 grams of Ribose before training and then 5 grams of Ribose and 2-5 grams of creatine after training. Look for the creapure brand at bodybuilding.com

Glutamine is pretty much worthless for muscle building. It is great for building immunity in the gastro intestinal tract, which is of course very beneficial. It does seem to work well with other amino acids such as BCAA thus, I recommend BCAA/Glutamine combos such as "xtend" which you can get at bodybuilding.com 10-20 grams during workouts and only on training days. Otherwise it is wasted.

Q: How do I combine kettlebells with gym workouts?

A: There are many options; check out the chapter on that topic. Here is a brief answer. Let's say you are doing a 5x5 workout in which you are training four days per week. On Monday do your upper body gym workout and on Thursday do an upper body workout at home with your kettlebells. On Tuesday do a lower body workout at the gym and on Friday do a lower body workout with kettlebells. Here is a sample breakdown:

Monday: (Gym workout)

A-1: Barbell Floor Press

A-2: Weighted Pull-up

90 second breaks between each set of A-1 and A-2.

Tuesday: (Gym workout)

B-1: Barbell Squat

B-2: Romanian Deadlift

90-second breaks between each set of B-1 and B-2.

Thursday: (kettlebell workout)

A-1: Double Clean and Press

A-2: Alternating Renegade Row

90-second breaks between each set of A-1 and A-2.

Friday: (kettlebell workout)

B-1: Double Front Squat

B-2: Double Swing

90-second breaks between each set of B-1 and B-2.

If you have all of your equipment at home you can combine what you have into a single workout. Do bench presses and renegade rows back-to-back. Then do some barbell squats and swings back-to-back etc. You get the idea. Just remember that kettlebells are weights and should be treated as such.

Q: I am a fan of Clubbell Training and want to add it to my routine. Any recommendations?

A: Clubbells are great for active recovery on off days. In addition to increasing shoulder stability and flexibility, they are great for loosening up tight shoulders. Shoulders can easily get tight from heavy overhead pressing and some clubbell training at the end of a workout or the day after can be useful. Thus one option is to do one clubbell exercise such as the Double Swipe at the end of a workout as a finisher. Or you can do the following active recovery workout two times per week on off days:

Alternating Shield Cast 2x6 reps l,r

Double Shoulder Cast 2x6 reps

Double Pendulum 2x6 reps each side

Double Arm-pit Cast 2x6 reps

Double Swipes 2x12

Pick some clubs that are fairly light as the goal is not a strenuous workout. Basically you want a nice joint mobility workout to get some blood flowing. For more info on clubbell training, go to: [clubbell info](#)

Q: I am a big fan of grip training. How can I work that into my program?

A: You have to be careful with grip training as an over worked grip will make you weaker in your workouts. Thus, keep your grip training limited to

no more than two sets at the end of each upper body workout. If you are on a full-body workout plan, work the grip at the end of 2-3 workouts per week. Certainly avoid training to failure. If you have more questions, contact grip master [Brett Jones](#).

Q: How do I get my cardio in a strength and size program?

A: If your main goal is strength and size (and it should be since you bought this book), you want to keep cardio to a minimum. No more than two twenty-minute sessions will do the trick. This can take the form of my HOC workouts (see my site for a few [HOC articles](#)). It can consist of jogging at a moderate pace for twenty minutes or you can do some interval training. Jog for 100 yards and then sprint for 50 yards and do ten intervals.

Q: I travel quite a bit. However, I am home at least two to three weeks out of every month and want to combine the weight workouts with your Road Warrior recommendations? What should I do?

A: This is an easy one. Follow the designated program when you are at home and when you are on the road follow the Road Warrior recommendation. More than likely the Road Warrior week will be a nice change of pace and will make your program even more effective.

Q: I want to get stronger and I do not want to put on any size. What program should I pick?

A: You picked the wrong book as this one is for people that want to get bigger and stronger. Regardless, try the HFT program and do not take in additional calories. Just take in enough to maintain your bodyweight. Putting on size is not easy so it is highly unlikely that you will get huge by accident. Find something else to worry about.

Q: Most of the year I have a pretty good handle on stress. However, there are periods in which stress is very high. What should I do?

During the periods in which you are more rested, test drive high volume programs such as EDT, GVT and the 5x5 program. When the stressful time of the year kicks in switch to the back-up program recommendations. The more stress you have the more you will benefit from supplements such as BCAA, phosphatidylserine, Reishi mushroom and cordyceps.

Q: If you had to pick on exercise for building size and strength, what would it be and why?

A: I would go with the Barbell Clean and Squat Press. Clean a barbell and do a front squat. Stand up and when your legs lock out press the bar overhead. Take the bar back to the floor and repeat. Five sets of five with 90-second breaks will get the job done. Try two to three workouts per week. This is the ultimate minimalist program for super busy people. This exercise works the quads and hamstrings, which are the two most important muscle groups for overall size and strength. The overhead portion works the shoulders, triceps, and to some degree the pecs. Add in a few sets of the barbell bent over row and you are all set.

Q: What do you recommend for warming up?

A: While there are no studies that prove the merits of warming up for strength training, I understand the psychological benefits. After all, starting your first set with the deadlift with 500lbs is brutal mentally. A great compromise that provides the best of both worlds is Pavel's "ramp up" tip. Using the example of a deadlift working set of 405lbs for 5x5 a ramp up would be:

135x3, 225x3, 315x3 and then 405x5x5. Take one-minute breaks between each ramp set.

Q: Why do you recommend the avoidance of training to failure?

A: Training to failure can be useful for size and strength training. However it is very potent stuff and needs to be used judiciously. Training to failure at every workout for months on end is a great way to burn out and develop muscle and joint pain that will stay with you forever. It also takes much longer to recover from training to failure, which means you cannot workout as often. The more you can workout the faster you will achieve your size and strength goals. Of course you have to be able to recover from each workout. By staying a rep or two short of failure, you do not tap into your reserves as deeply and can hit the weights more often.

Training to failure can also burn out the CNS (Central Nervous System). Forget about getting stronger when your CNS is shot. The longer it takes your CNS to fire the weaker you will be. Training frequently and avoiding high intensity training makes your CNS more efficient. The more efficient

your CNS is the stronger you will become. The stronger you become the more likely you are to build real muscle. Real muscle meaning you look as strong as you are. Who wants to be big and weak? Unfortunately a lot of trainees would not mind. Do not be one of them.

Bottom line is high-intensity training can be used for four weeks per year. Hit it hard for four weeks and get a nice boost in strength. Then do some moderate-intensity training for two to three weeks before starting another high-volume program. A possible cycle is:

5x5 for four weeks

HIT four weeks

HFT four weeks

RPT four weeks

Start off with some volume training via the 5x5 program. Then lower the sets and jack up the intensity with HIT training. Then lower the intensity and work on CNS efficiency with HFT training. Then move onto some very low-rep super-heavy weight training with RPT. A solid plan for building a great deal of strength and size.

Q: I want to get bigger and lose fat. What should I do?

A: Accept the reality that you cannot have it all, all of the time. Pick one goal and focus on it. That said, focusing on a muscle-building program and eating very clean food will certainly help with fat reduction. However, to get ripped you have to reduce calories and that is not amenable to a muscle-building program. Lowering excess estrogen and getting testosterone levels into optimal levels will also help with fat loss. If you have a fat stomach then you have high estrogen levels. Take some herbs such as Myomin and DIM to lower the estrogen levels and clean up your diet.

Q: What kind of diet should I follow?

The Zone, The Anabolic diet, John Berardi's recommendations are all good places to start. Personally I like a balance of protein, fat and carbohydrates at most meals. For adding muscle multiply your lean bodyweight by fifteen and break it down to 30% protein, 40-50% carbs and 20-30% fat. You will

have to experiment to see what works best for you. Focus as much as possible on organic food rather than meal replacement powders or protein shakes. Save your protein shakes for busy days and post-workout recovery.

Regarding organic food: yes it does cost more. Especially if you get organic food at stores such as “Whole foods”, “Wild Oats”, and “Trader Joe’s.” A cheaper alternative it to go to a local farmer’s market for fruits, veggies, eggs, cheese and possibly some meat as well. Regardless, you have one body and you need to give it the best fuel possible. People spend more money on their cars and homes and are often frugal when it comes to high-quality food. Big mistake! Cut out all of the junk food and desserts and stop eating out. Use that money for healthy food. If that is not enough, get rid of cable and use that money for food. Training hard and not providing your body with healthy high-quality food is moronic. Be smart and give your body what it needs. Make sure you check out John Berardi’s program at: [No Nonsense Nutrition DVD](#)

Q: I read that you are a vegetarian. How did you get so big on a veggie diet?

A: The key is to think like a meat eater in terms of getting protein and fat at every meal. The vegetarian diet is naturally low in protein and fat so careful planning must be applied to ensure that proper nutrition is available. I get my protein from pumpkin seeds, pistachios, almonds, almond butter, peanut butter, black beans, lentils, pinto beans, kidney beans, Pea Protein isolate protein powder, hemp protein powder, rice protein powder, some veggie burgers such as the non-soy “Garden burger” brand, hemp bread and Ezekiel bread. I get the healthy fat from much of the above and flaxseed oil, hempseed oil and Udo’s Choice oil. I also like olive oil and coconut oil.

Regarding protein powder I like:

Pure Advantage Pea Protein Isolate: [vegan protein powder](#)

Nutribiotics Rice Protein

[Thor’s Raw Food Protein Powder](#) Superfood

Q: What nutrition supplements do you recommend for size and strength?

A: There are several supplements that have an application for size and strength goals. Just keep in mind that supplements do not take the place of a proper diet. Do not think that you can have a crappy diet and take a few supplements and do well. That said, here are some beneficial supplements:

Protein Powder: protein powders are great for post workout recovery and to ensure that adequate levels of protein are supplied. No need to overdo protein consumption as many of the bodybuilding magazines recommend. Two to three grams of protein per pound will result in immense gas and bubbly urine. The immense gas is great if you want to be antisocial and the bubbly frothy urine is a nice sign that your kidneys are stressed. According to top legendary bodybuilder Franco Columbu, one gram of protein per kilo of bodyweight will get the job done. Remember, building muscle has a lot to do with adequate testosterone and growth hormone levels. If your T levels are low all of the protein in the world will do you no good. If you take animal products, then check out goat milk protein powder, which is very high quality stuff. Do a web search for “goatein.”

Zinc: Zinc is the most important mineral for proper testosterone production. Men need 100mg per day. You can get a high quality zinc supplement at: [click here](#)

ZMA: a combination of zinc, magnesium, and Vitamin B6 that is great for high-quality sleep. Take it one hour before bedtime on an empty stomach. Three caps will get the job done. Get it at: [click here](#)

Fountain Of Life Doctor's Testosterone Gel: All-natural formula that many find useful for increasing free levels of testosterone. Free levels indicates how much T you have access to. Also contains some herbs that help metabolize estrogens and clear harmful estrogens. Rub one teaspoon on clean skin twice per day. [click here](#)

UMR's Strength Energy Cream: Another topical cream that frees up testosterone and clears out harmful estrogens. One to two pumps for men and ½ to one for women. [click here](#)

Maca Powder: Maca has the plant sterols your body needs to make progesterone and testosterone plus the DIM needed to block estrogen. Increases libido and fertility while controlling estrogen all in one package. Two to three tablespoons per day with food. [click here](#)

Myomin: helps fight estrogen and has been shown in studies to lower estradiol levels. May also help with blocking the conversion of T into DHT and Estrogen. Two caps twice per day will get the job done: [click here](#)

DIM: Helps control estrogen dominance and can help clear harmful estrogens. Blocks estrogen from tissues. 200mg to 400mg per day: [click here](#)

B Complex: B vitamins are very important to anyone that has stress in their lives. Exercise is a form of stress and can deplete B vitamins. [click here](#)

Vitamin C: Reduces cortisol and keep the immune system strong. One to five grams per day with meals: [click here](#)

Vitalzym: reduces inflammation and helps remove scar tissue. Every lifter should be taking this one. Three to five caps three times per day between meals: [click here](#)

Phosphatidylserine: Reduces cortisol levels which will speed up recovery time. Take one tablet after (not before as you do not want to lower cortisol before training) on training days and one tablet before bedtime on non-training days. Best value around is at: [click here](#)

BCAA (branch chain amino acids): Essential amino acids that are important for recovery. Very useful when consumed during workouts and immediately after. Try ten grams during your workout and ten grams after. “Xtend” by Scivation is my favorite brand: [click here](#)

Q: You talk a great deal about the importance of testosterone and growth hormone for well-being, fat loss, and muscle building. Do you recommend hormone replacement therapy?

A: While I am certainly not against the appropriate use of testosterone and growth hormone, both should be looked at as a last resort rather than the first line of defense. In other words, modify your lifestyle, eat properly and take some natural supplement for at least six months before thinking about taking testosterone or growth hormone. If your levels are still low then talk to an anti-aging Doctor (Not a regular MD as they generally do not know jack about hormones) and see what he or she recommends. Hormones are powerful and should not be taken without a doctor’s supervision. This includes the hormones that you can get over the counter such as DHEA. A

good research book for more information on sex hormones is Suzanne Somers' "Ageless." That is right "Chrissy" from the show "Three's company" and the lady in the thigh master commercials has put together a fantastic book on sex hormones. Check it out: [click here](#)

Q: Do you have any other recommendations for avoiding estrogen?

A: Avoid plastic bottles and switch to glass bottles. Just buy a bottle of Perrier water, dump out the carbonated water and fill it up with filtered water. You can put it in the dishwasher once a week or more often. Plastics contain tons of harmful chemical estrogens. Avoid food that is wrapped in plastic whenever possible.

Make sure all of your meat is organic. Yes it costs more and hopefully you think you are worth it. If not, get some therapy sessions and develop some self-worth. Non-organic meat is loaded with hormones and you will be as well.

Be cautious with soy products. Avoid soy protein isolate and fake meats, which contain soy protein isolate. Both are concentrated with phytoestrogens, which mimic estrogen in your body. Now some feel that the weaker estrogens help clear out stronger estrogens. Then there are some who feel that consuming soy increases estrogen and lowers testosterone. Personally, my estrogen levels are low. However, I do not consume a lot of soy. Maybe once a week or less. If your estrogen levels are high then you should avoid soy. Basically, when in doubt avoid it.

Lower your body fat. The more fat you have the higher your estrogen levels will be. Get your body fat down to between 8% and 12%.

Q: What else can I do to increase testosterone?

A: Every time you have a success that is meaningful your testosterone levels go up. For example, if you close a big business deal your T levels will elevate. Thus, lead a successful life. Make goals and achieve them. Every time you do you increase T levels.

The opposite is also true. Every time you let people push you around, your T levels plummet. Doing that job you hate and being in a relationship you do not want to be in both have adverse effects on your T levels. Low T equals low quality of life so make whatever changes you need to make.

Basically, take charge of your life and be a man. Make your own decisions and stick up for yourself. The quality of your life is dependant on it.

Get rid of negative people in your life and surround yourself with winners. People that make you want to be a better person and bring out the best in you.

A regular sex life is also an important part of testosterone health. However, do I really need to sell you on the idea of having regular sex? I hope not.

Q: What is the deal with all of the sex talk? What does it have to do with productive training?

A: Sexual health is an obvious sign of adequate levels of testosterone production. If you have a low sex drive it is a certain that you have inadequate testosterone levels. This applies to both men and women. You may also have low levels of dopamine, a neurotransmitter that is important for mood and well being.

We live in a funny country in which we are bombarded with sexual images and at the same time sex is a taboo subject. People are uncomfortable talking about it and many people, especially men, have trouble seeking help for sexual dysfunctions. In addition, women who have strong sex drives are often labeled as “sluts” or other derogatory terms, which is a real shame.

In the classic book “Think And Grow Rich,” Napoleon Hill states that a common trend among successful men and women is the presence of a strong sex drive. Basically, if you have a low sex drive forget about being successful. Many people will argue that Mr. Hill’s comments are garbage. However, my guess is that such people have low sex drives.

Health is not something that is compartmentalized. Mental health, physical health, sexual health and spiritual health are all important elements of overall health. If you are lagging in one area it will carry over to other areas. Yes, there are always exceptions but it is highly unlikely that you are the exception.

Finally, one of our biggest drives is to impress the opposite sex (or same sex depending on what thread you are cut from). We have all had experiences of an increase in strength and energy when in the presence of someone we find attractive. My attitude is to work with this part of our nature and to transfer

the energy to our workouts and career goals to increase the likelihood of success. Use your desire to impress the opposite sex as an impetus to be successful in whatever you do.

Q: How important is the mental side of training?

A: The mental side is critical for success in any endeavor in life. It certainly is a critical component of training success. Applying visualization is an effective way to increase the probability having of great training sessions. Before you start your workout, do the workout in your mind. Visualize yourself training with strength and power and go through the exact workout in your mind. Then start your workout. After you practice this for a while you will program your brain to start the workout from a point of success. You have typed in the proper codes into your brain and now have to follow through with your body. Your brain knows what the goal is, and the more targeted your goal the more likely you are to be successful.

Recommended Reading List

Gourmet Nutrition By John Berardi

Franco Columbu's Complete Book Of Bodybuilding By Franco Columbu

Serious Growth Training Manual by Leo Costa

Brother Iron Sister Steel by Dave Draper

Dinosaur Training by Brooks Kubik

Rock Iron Steel: The Book Of Strength by Steve Justa
High Intensity Training The Mike Mentzer Way by John Little
The Complete Keys To Progress by John McCallum
Brawn by Stuart McRobert
Modern Trends in Strength Training by Charles Poliquin
Supertraining by Mel Siff
Ageless by Suzanne Somers
Super Squats by Randall Strossum
Black Book Of Training Secrets by Christian Thibadeau
Beyond Bodybuilding by Pavel Tsatsouline
The Best Natural Sports Medicine Book Ever Dr. William Wong

Recommended Websites:

Testosterone Nation: www.t-nation.com
Dave Draper Site: www.davedraper.com
Brooks Kubik: www.brookskubik.com
Bodybuilding.com: www.bodybuilding.com
Bud Jeffries Site: www.strongerman.com
Pavel Tsatsouline www.powerbypavel.com

Westside Barbell www.westside-barbell.com

Equipment:

[Kettlebell Info](#)

[Lifeline TNT Cable](#)

[Lifeline Power Pushup 2](#)

[Lifeline Portable Power Jumper](#)

[Lifeline Power Wheel](#)

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